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ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL WORK WITH YOUTH IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND UKRAINE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Abstract. *The article presents the results of a comparative study, which aim is to analyze the organizational aspects of social work with youth in the UK (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and Ukraine, based on the following parameters: definition of youth; youth policy and legislation; social work; youth and representation; youth work as a profession. The defined parameters are based on analytical materials from the Youth Policy Labs (Berlin, Germany).*

The main research methods were identified as: comparative analysis of foreign and Ukrainian sources on social work; materials from official portals of international social work organizations (International Federation of Social Workers); regulatory documents on social work; generalization and systematization of data.

The research is based on youth social work strategies in the UK (Positive for Youth: A New Approach to Cross-Government Policy for Young People aged 13 to 19; Youth Policies in the UK (England) – 2019; Our Ambitions for Improving the Life Chances of Young People in Scotland: National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019; Youth Work Strategy for Wales; Children and Young People’s Strategy 2020-2030; Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland)) and Ukrainian strategies and laws (Laws of Ukraine: “On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy”, “On Social Work with Families, Children and Youth”; “On Social Services”, National Youth Strategy until 2030).

It is summarized that social work with youth is an essential field in both countries, regulated by international and national normative documents that define the principles of social work, rights, and obligations of social workers. In social work with youth in Ukraine and the UK, youth organizations implementing youth policy play a significant role. At the same time, there are significant differences in social work between the two countries. Ukraine’s broader definition of youth (up to 35 years) represents a distinctive feature of social work in Ukraine. At the same time, the main difference is that social work in Ukraine adapts and responds to significant challenges caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Key words: *social work with youth in the Great Britain (the United Kingdom), social work with youth in Ukraine, youth policy, youth work, international social work.*

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Introduction. Ukrainian social work is developing within the context of global and pan-European trends, adopting the general principles and priorities of international social work and the progressive experiences of other European countries in this field. At the same time, Ukrainian social workers have unique experience providing social support during wartime. Therefore, a comparative study of social work with youth in the United Kingdom (official name – United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (the UK) and Ukraine is highly relevant.

The theoretical foundation of the study is based on works dedicated to the conceptual foundations of social work in Ukraine (O. Bezpalko, I. Ivanova, T. Kunytsia, V. Panok, N. Seiko, V. Shakhryay, T. Fedorchenko, and others); research on international social work (M. Lukashevych, T. Semihina, Z. Petrochko, and others); and works by foreign scholars and social work professionals (Catherine Kendall, James Midgley, Tony Tripodi, and Miriam Potocky-Tripodi,

Lynne Healy) [14].

Aim and tasks. The purpose of the article is to briefly present the results of a comparative study on the organizational aspects of social work with youth in the United Kingdom and Ukraine.

The task of the research is to present the results of the comparative study based on the following parameters:

- Definition of youth.
- Policy & legislation. Social work.
- Youth & representation.
- Youth work as a profession.

The identified parameters are based on analytical materials from Youth Policy Labs (Berlin, Germany) [9].

Research methods. The main research methods are defined as: comparative analysis of foreign and Ukrainian sources on social work, materials from official sources and web portals of international social work organizations (International Federation of Social Workers); regulatory documents on social work, generalization and systematization of data.

The research is based on youth social work strategies in the UK (Positive for Youth: A New Approach to Cross-Government Policy for Young People aged 13 to 19; Youth Policies in the UK (England) – 2019; Our Ambitions for Improving the Life Chances of Young People in Scotland: National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019; Youth Work Strategy for Wales; Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030; Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland)) and Ukrainian strategies and laws (Laws of Ukraine: "On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy", "On Social Work with Families, Children and Youth"; "On Social Services", National Youth Strategy until 2030).

Research results. The summarized materials for the defined comparison parameters are in the table below (Table 1).

We will present a comparative description of organizational aspects of social work with youth in the United Kingdom and Ukraine according to certain parameters.

Definitions of youth

The definitions of youth *in the United Kingdom* vary. The cross-cutting basis of youth policy Positive for Youth [6] defines youth as persons aged 13 to 19. In England, there is no single age range for youth policy. The Scottish National Youth Work Strategy (Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland. National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019) [5] and the Youth Work Strategy for Wales [7] apply to young people aged 11 to 25 years. The Children and Young People's Strategy of Northern Ireland (Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030) [3] adheres to the principles of cooperation of children's services (Children's Services

Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland)) [4], the relevant law defines children and youth as persons under 18 years of age. However, the Strategy recognizes that “there may be different definitions of a child or young person in policy and service delivery” (concerning youth work, for example, extending to 25 years). Thus, there are two main definitions:

13-19 years (Positive for Youth);

11-25 years (Youth Work Strategy for Wales).

Table 1

Organizational aspects of social work with youth in the United Kingdom and Ukraine

Parameter	Youth work / social work with youth in Ukraine	Youth work / social work with youth in the United Kingdom
<i>Definitions of youth</i>	Youth - young persons - <i>persons aged 14 to 35 years</i> who are citizens of Ukraine, foreigners and stateless persons legally staying in Ukraine (On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy).	The definition of youth in the United Kingdom varies. England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales have different youth policy strategies. - <i>Persons aged 13 to 19 years</i> (Positive for Youth) - <i>Persons aged 11 to 25 years</i> (Youth Work Strategy for Wales).
<i>Policy & Legislation. Social work</i>	Basics of youth policy of the United Nations, Council of Europe. European Youth Forum. Commonwealth Youth Council. Laws of Ukraine: “On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy”, “On Social Work with Families, Children and Youth”; “On Social Services”, National Youth Strategy until 2030.	Youth policies in the United Kingdom (England); Civil society strategy: building a future that works for everyone; Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland. National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019; Youth Work Strategy for Wales; Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland). Law “On Children and Social Work”.
<i>Youth & Representation</i>	<i>National Youth Council of Ukraine (NMRU)</i> (protection and representation of youth interests through consolidation and development of democratic youth organizations in Ukraine). NMRU acquired the status of a full member of the European Youth Forum.	The <i>British Youth Council (BYC)</i> runs campaigns such as Votes at 16, UK Youth Parliament and UK Young Ambassadors. BYC is a full member of the European Youth Forum and the Commonwealth Youth Council.
<i>Youth work</i>	In Ukraine, youth work is professional; a professional standard for the profession “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker)” is approved; since 2014, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine has launched a Youth Worker Training Program.	In the United Kingdom, youth work is an officially recognized profession. National Occupational Standards for Youth Work operate throughout the United Kingdom, defining common approaches while allowing for differences between the four countries in their approach to youth work.

In Ukraine, youth – young persons – are persons aged 14 to 35 who are citizens of Ukraine, foreigners, and stateless persons legally staying in Ukraine [12]. The National Youth Strategy until 2030 [11] aims to “create opportunities for youth living in Ukraine to be competitive, participate in society, and consciously contribute to its further development”.

Therefore, there are differences in the definition of youth, one of the factors of the specificity of social work in the United Kingdom and Ukraine.

Policy & Legislation. Social work

First, it is worth noting the *standard foundations of youth policy* in the United Kingdom and Ukraine, which comprise the youth policy foundations of the United Nations (UN) and the Council of Europe. The British Youth Council (BYC) and the National Youth Council of Ukraine (NMRU) are full members of the European Youth Forum.

In the United Kingdom, youth policy is primarily the responsibility of decentralized governments. However, in 2011, several government departments published a UK-wide policy framework “Positive for Youth: A New Approach to Cross-Government Policy for Young People aged 13 to 19”.

Social work with youth in the UK is an important field aimed at supporting and developing adolescents and youth, creating favourable conditions for their self-realization and well-being. The regulatory foundations of social work in the UK comprise several documents, including *the Law “On Children and Social Work”*, which defines the rights and obligations of social workers, as well as establishes mechanisms for control and responsibility. Youth organizations play a significant role in social work with youth, implementing youth programs and projects, and participating in the implementation of youth policy.

In Ukraine, under the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war, youth policy is being reformed. In particular, the Law “On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy” [12] and the National Youth Strategy until 2030 [11] have been adopted. Among the main challenges in youth development in Ukraine, the National Youth Strategy until 2030 identifies: “demographic changes taking place in Ukraine”; “challenges in the field of national security, lack of personal security”; “armed aggression of the Russian Federation”. In the field of social work in this context, the Laws “On Social Work with Families, Children and Youth” [13] and “On Social Services” are in effect.

Therefore, there are standard international foundations of the youth policy of the United Kingdom and Ukraine, as well as national differences (peculiarities of policy and legislation).

Youth & Representation

Great opportunities for youth participation are being created *in the United Kingdom*. The British Youth Council (BYC) is the central organization of over 200 national and local youth organizations that support young people to “influence and inform decisions that affect their lives”.

Member organizations elect an annual board of young trustees (aged 16 to 25) who manage all policy and strategic decisions. BYC runs campaigns such as Votes at 16, and participation programs such as the UK Youth Parliament and UK Young Ambassadors. BYC is a full member of the European Youth Forum [1] and the Commonwealth Youth Council [2].

The main goal of the National Youth Council of Ukraine (NMRU) is to protect and represent the interests of youth through the consolidation and development of democratic youth organizations in Ukraine. In addition, NMRU lists the following objectives:

- Uniting the youth of Ukraine;
- Protecting rights and representing the interests of youth and youth organizations of Ukraine at national and international levels;
- Involving youth in decision-making processes at local, national and international levels;
- Engaging youth in active civic activities and others.

Members of NMRU are youth public organizations and regional youth councils. In 2021, NMRU became a full member of the European Youth Forum.

Consequently, in the United Kingdom and Ukraine, opportunities are being created for youth participation, which is embodied in the activities of youth councils and youth organizations.

Youth work

In the United Kingdom, youth work is an officially recognized profession. Moreover, the Youth Work National Occupational Standards (2019) operate throughout the United Kingdom, defining common approaches while allowing for differences between the four countries in their approach to youth work. In England, the National Youth Agency (NYA) is the national body for youth work and the professional statutory regulatory body. It sets national frameworks for youth work and qualifications for youth work, distinguishing between young workers and experienced youth workers. In Scotland, YouthLink Scotland is the national youth work agency that represents over 100 youth organizations, collaborates with the government on policy issues, and conducts independent research. In Northern Ireland, youth work is covered by the Department of Education and the policy document “Priorities for Youth: Improving Young People’s Lives through Youth Work”. The Youth Work Strategy for Wales is the main policy document on youth work in Wales. It provides an overview of the Welsh government's understanding of youth work and sets goals for sector development.

In Ukraine, according to the Law of Ukraine “On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy” [12], *youth work* is defined as “activities aimed at involving children and youth in public life, carried out by children and youth, together with children and youth or in the interests of children and youth through tools of joint decision-making”.

In 2014, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine launched a Training program for

youth workers, which aims to: improve the knowledge and competence of youth leaders and specialists of the youth sector for effective development and implementation of evidence-based local and regional youth policy; promote effective dialogue between state authorities and civil society organizations for youth development in Ukraine.

The youth worker training program continues to operate in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In 2023, the National Qualifications Agency approved the professional standard for the profession of “Youth Specialist (Youth Worker).”

As a result, youth work is an official profession in the United Kingdom and Ukraine, relevant professional standards are in force, and youth workers are trained.

Discussion. Youth work/social work with youth in the UK and Ukraine has standard features, particularly regarding youth policy, youth participation, and more. At the same time, the main differences are due to the Russian-Ukrainian war and its significant social risks.

Sociological research data confirm these conclusions. Since 2015, at the request of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, an annual study of the state of youth has been conducted, including socio-economic status, values, and preferences. In 2022, the Cedos Analytical Center and the Info Sapiens Research Agency, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), conducted a study on «The Impact of War on the Youth of Ukraine» [10].

The focus of the study was on the following aspects:

- Young people's perception of the current situation.
- War losses and plans for a full-scale invasion.
- The position of vulnerable groups concerning a full-scale invasion.
- Vision of security conditions of Ukraine.
- Youth participation in public and political life [10].

The study data shows that overall, 82 % of young people reported losses due to the war. “It can be assumed that 18 % of respondents who did not report losses from the war are unaware of them or consider their losses insignificant compared to the losses of other people, as stress and economic factors likely affected everyone,” the report states [10]. Such data confirm the need for social support of Ukrainian youth, which determines the specificity of social work in Ukraine.

Conclusion. The results of the comparative study of organizational aspects of social work with youth in the United Kingdom and Ukraine, based on the defined parameters, allow us to summarize the following.

Differences in the definition of youth: In Ukraine, the definition of youth is more precise: youth – young persons – *persons aged 14 to 35* [12]; in the United Kingdom, the meaning of youth differs, in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales, where different youth policy strategies

are in place. There are two definitions of youth in the United Kingdom: *persons aged 13 to 19* (Positive for Youth) and *persons aged 11 to 25* (Youth Work Strategy for Wales).

Common foundations of youth policy in the United Kingdom and Ukraine comprise the foundations of youth policy of the UN and the Council of Europe. In particular, the British Youth Council (BYC) and the National Youth Council of Ukraine (NYCU) are full members of the European Youth Forum, participate in Council of Europe projects, and embrace European values. However, distinctive features of youth policy are also present, as reflected in national youth strategies.

There are *similar approaches to youth work as a profession*: in the United Kingdom and Ukraine, youth work is an official profession, relevant professional standards are in place, and youth workers are trained.

In general, *social work with youth* is an essential field in both countries, regulated by normative documents defining social work principles, rights, and obligations of social workers. In social work with youth in Ukraine and the United Kingdom, youth organizations that participate in implementing youth policy and volunteer organizations play a significant role. However, there are significant differences in social work between the two countries. Ukraine's broader definition of youth (up to 35 years) represents a distinctive feature of social work in Ukraine. At the same time, the main difference is that social work in Ukraine adapts and responds to significant challenges caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war.

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ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНІ АСПЕКТИ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ РОБОТИ З МОЛОДДЮ У ВЕЛИКІЙ БРИТАНІЇ (СПОЛУЧЕНОМУ КОРОЛІВСТВІ) ТА УКРАЇНІ: ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ АНАЛІЗ

Анотація. Матеріали статті представляють результати порівняльного дослідження, метою якого був аналіз організаційних аспектів соціальної роботи з молоддю у Великій Британії (офіційна назва — Сполучене Королівство Великої Британії та Північної Ірландії) та Україні за такими параметрами: визначення молоді; молодіжна політика і законодавство. Соціальна робота;

молодь і представництво; молодіжна робота як професія. У основу визначених параметрів покладено аналітичні матеріали Лабораторії молодіжної політики (Youth Policy Labs) (Берлін, Німеччина).

Основними методами дослідження визначено: порівняльний аналіз зарубіжних, українських джерел із соціальної роботи, матеріалів офіційних порталів міжнародних організацій соціальної роботи (Міжнародна федерація соціальних працівників (IFSW); нормативних документів щодо соціальної роботи; узагальнення і систематизація даних.

Дослідження базується на стратегіях соціальної роботи з молоддю у Сполученому Королівстві (*Positive for Youth. A new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19*; *Youth policies in the United Kingdom (England)*; *Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland. National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019*; *Youth Work Strategy for Wales*; *Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030*; *Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland)* та українських стратегіях, законах (Закони України: «Про основні засади молодіжної політики», «Про соціальну роботу з сім'ями, дітьми та молоддю»; «Про соціальні послуги», Національна молодіжна стратегія до 2030 року).

Узагальнено, що соціальна робота з молоддю є важливою галуззю в обох країнах, регламентується міжнародними та національними нормативними документами, що визначають принципи соціальної роботи, права та обов'язки соціальних працівників. У соціальній роботі з молоддю в Україні і Сполученому Королівстві значну роль відіграють молодіжні організації, які беруть участь у реалізації молодіжної політики. Водночас, у соціальній роботі двох країн є значні відмінності. Більш широке визначення молоді в Україні (до 35 років) зумовлює значну специфіку соціальної роботи. Водночас, головна відмінність полягає у тому, що соціальна робота в Україні реагує на значні виклики, зумовлені російсько-українською війною.

Ключові слова: соціальна робота з молоддю у Великій Британії (Сполученому Королівстві); соціальна робота з молоддю в Україні; молодіжна політика; молодіжна робота; міжнародна соціальна робота.

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