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NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS AND CURRENT PROJECTS OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

Abstract. *The materials of the article present the results of the analysis of normative foundations and current projects of international social work, in particular those aimed at international support of Ukraine in the social sphere.*

It is accentuated that for Ukraine in the conditions of a full-scale war there is a need to urgently solve a number of important social issues, therefore the theory and practice of social work, which responds to those challenges, becomes especially significant. At the same time, successful steps towards Ukraine's European integration, in particular, in the social sphere – the entry of the Ukrainian Association of Social Workers into the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in December 2022 – increases the relevance of the study of normative foundations and current projects of international social work.

The main research methods are defined as: analysis and synthesis 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 (IFSW) and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), social work organizations in Ukraine; regulatory documents regarding social work, generalization and systematization of data.

It is summarized that the normative foundations, key principles and priorities of international social work are based on a number of documents, such as the Global Definition of Social Work, The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Extending the Influence of Social Work, The Global Agenda: Commitments to Action and others.

Among the relevant documents, these should be noted: Climate Justice Program, Peoples Charter for an Eco-social World, which integrated voices from all around the world, emphasizes the importance of democratic participation in bringing about transformative change. It proposes a transition from economies whose success is measured purely by profit to “sustainable welfare societies”.

Normative foundations and key principles of international social work are embodied in practical actions and projects. A number of projects are presented on the website of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). Their topics cover a wide range of social work issues: support for Ukrainian social work (Hub of Social Work Ukraine), increasing sensitivity to the voice of citizens in social services throughout Europe, development of ecological wisdom for social workers, realizing the potential of the young generation of social workers for social change and others.

Key words: *international social work, normative foundations, key principles and priorities of international social work, current projects of international social work, support of Ukrainian social workers.*

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Introduction. For Ukraine, in the conditions of a full-scale war, there was a need to solve urgently a number of important social issues, so the theory and practice of social work, which responds to those challenges, becomes especially significant.

The relevance of the theory and practice of social work for Ukraine motivates turning to

international social work, studying foreign experience. At the same time, successful steps towards the European integration of Ukraine, in particular, in the social sphere – the entry of the Ukrainian Association of Social Workers into the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in December 2022 – increases the relevance of the study of normative foundations and current projects of international social work.

Aim and tasks. The aim of the article is to present briefly the results of the analysis of normative foundations and current projects of international social work, in particular those aimed at international support of Ukraine in the social sphere. The reaction of international social work organizations, primarily the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) to the war in Ukraine is also of interest.

The theoretical foundations of the study is built on the works devoted to the conceptual foundations of social pedagogy and social work in Ukraine (T. Alekseenko, O. Bezpalko, R. Vainola, N. Zaveryko, I. Zvereva, I. Ivanova, A. Kapska, G. Laktionova, M. Lukashevich, V. Panok, I. Rogalska-Yablonska, N. Seiko, N. Chernukha, V. Shakhrai, L. Shtefan, S. Kharchenko, T. Fedorchenko, etc.); research by foreign scientists and specialists in the social sphere (G. Eichsteller, L. Eriksson, R. Hugman, K. Kendall, M. Hokenstad, J. Midgley, etc.). Among Ukrainian researchers of international social work, M. Lukashevych, T. Semigina, Zh. Petrochko, T. Fedorchenko and others should be noted. Various aspects of international social work are presented in the works of foreign scientists: Catherine Kendall, James Midgley; Tony Tripodi and Miriam Potocki-Tripodi, Lyn Healy, Merle “Teri” Hockenstad (T. Semigina) [10; 11].

The study is based on the provisions of international documents (Global Definition of Social Work [4] and others). International documents regarding the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development for 2020–2030 are also relevant within the scope of the problem: The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Extending the Influence of Social Work [7] and The Global Agenda: Commitments to Action [8]. The content of the state social policy in this context was reflected in the main provisions of the Laws of Ukraine: “On social work with families, children and youth”, “On social services”, etc.

Research methods. The main research methods are defined as: analysis and synthesis 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 (IFSW) and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), social work organizations in

Ukraine; regulatory documents regarding social work, generalization and systematization of data.

Research results. The normative foundations, key principles and priorities of international social work are based on a number of documents, such as the Global Definition of Social Work [4], The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Extending the Influence of Social Work [7], The Global Agenda: Commitments to Action [8] and others.

The document “The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development”, adopted in 2012, is the response of the global professional community of social workers to numerous social challenges in different countries [7; 11]. It should be noted that this document does not have the force of a legal prescription. It is only a professional platform, a vision of specialists regarding the strategic goals of social development, to the achievement of which social workers should direct their efforts [11].

In 2014, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) adopted the Global Definition of Social Work [4]. The document specifies that “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels” [4].

Among the relevant documents, these should be noted: Climate Justice Program, Peoples Charter for an Eco-social World, which includes voices from all around the world, emphasizes the importance of democratic participation in bringing about transformative change. It proposes a transition from economies whose success is measured purely by profit to “sustainable welfare societies”.

Normative foundations and key principles of international social work are embodied in practical actions and projects. A number of projects are presented on the website of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). Their topics cover a wide range of social work issues: support for Ukrainian social work (Hub of Social Work Ukraine), increasing sensitivity to the voice of citizens in social services throughout Europe, development of ecological wisdom for social workers, realizing the potential of the young generation of social workers for social change and

others.

The topics and description of the projects of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) are presented below [6].

● **Project: Increasing responsiveness to citizen voice in social services across Europe.** A Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Action for the call “The future of democracy and civic participation”. Start date: 1 March 2023, 36-month project.

Short description: The project is framed around the concept of “responsiveness” within social services as a new way of thinking about democracy and co-creation in the context of citizen-government interaction (Table 1) [6].

Table 1

Project deliverables

№	Deliverable	Due date
1	Research report on normative, policy, legal and organisational contexts shaping social service responsiveness to citizens	Aug 2023
2	Research report about citizen experiences of consultative and participatory processes in social services	Feb 2024
3	Guidance leaflet for citizens taking part in consultative and participatory processes of social service development	Feb 2024
4	Research report about citizen-led actions for social sector change	Aug 2024
5	Online database of citizen campaigns to improve social services	Aug 2024
6	Research report on mechanisms of responsiveness in social services	Feb 2025
7	Self-assessment tool for social services to measure their level of responsiveness	Feb 2025
8	Recommendations for citizens, policymakers, civil society organizations, social services and practitioners	Nov 2025
9	Toolkit on pilot innovations to increase social service responsiveness to citizen voice	Nov 2025
10	Plan for dissemination, exploitation and communication	Every 6 months

● **Project: Community Social Work Centre and Social Work Hub Ukraine.** Date of implementation: July 2022 – ongoing. Projects Co-Funded by IFSW Global.

Short description: Community Social Work Centre’s founding values include recognizing the strengths of everyone in the community when it comes to solving problems; that the effects of trauma can be significantly reduced when communities work together; and that community centres and their activities need to be owned by the communities for sustainable and effective social development to occur. Working with and co-learning within IFSW’s networks and structures is one of the founding values of the Social Work Hub. IFSW strives to develop social services professionalism in accordance with its Global Statement of Ethical Principles. This is an example of

cutting-edge social work development under wartime and post-war conditions.

● **Project: *Developing eco-wisdom for social workers – leave no one behind.*** Date of implementation: March 2022 – ongoing. Projects Co-Funded by IFSW Global.

Short description: Climate change will affect us all, more than anything else. Especially people in vulnerable circumstances will suffer the most from the consequences of global warming, while their carbon footprint is the smallest. Human rights are at stake. The importance of the role of social workers as is still underestimated in lots of countries. In this document, we try to investigate and develop some thoughts and ideas, as a first step to establish an IFSW Europe policy on the subject in order to inspire and learn from each other.

● **Project: *A Social Europe is Possible! The Young Generation of Social Workers are the Spearhead of Change!*** Date of implementation: 2020 – on going. Projects Co-Funded by IFSW Global.

Short description: Today, social work is an international profession. Many of the structures and processes of the EU have impact at the community level. The social policies implemented in one community have an impact on other communities and regions. Having in mind that complex and rapidly changing conditions, IFSW Europe is taking a major responsibility in facilitating the process of exchange of knowledge and good practice. We committed ourselves to transfer this learning experience to our young colleagues and students in social work. It is our responsibility to prepare our young generation of social workers to have a clear vision, a practicable strategy and that we enable them to transform the EU Social Pillar into a reality for the people and those social work professionals push forward reforms and policy measures at national level. It is now vital that IFSW Europe ensures that they are ready to be engaged now and become our spearhead of change [6].

Project deliverables: A turning point in the culture of the Federation's role in bringing people together in collaborative learning. Access to the Internet has led to a significant increase in the number of participants at the IFSW World Conferences. Normally we could expect 2500 people attending a conference whereas we achieved 20'000 registrations in July 2020. This enabled widespread participation from 185 countries and included representatives to participate equally without the normal financial and visa travel restrictions. This contributed to the involvement of young colleagues and students in social work.

2022 End of Year Report IFSW:

147 National social work organizations are Members of IFSW;

5 Regions represent IFSW around the globe;

5 million Social Workers are represented by IFSW;

5 Commissions are advancing the impact and visibility of IFSW;

13 Members of the Global Executive are responsible for the strategic government of IFSW.

● **Project: Social Workers for Transformational and Sustainable Social Protection in Europe.** Projects Co-Funded by IFSW Global. Date of implementation: 2017-on going.

Short description: The overall aim of the project proposal is to increase the capacity of IFSW member organisations to influence the development of European Pillar of Social Rights and the White Paper on Future of Europe in the interest of social work services development and service users support but also for covering the social workers needs for proper resources and tools to help people in needs.

● **Project: The Social Work Role and Identity.** Date of implementation: 2012-2015.

Projects Co-Funded by IFSW Global.

Short description: the project sets out to establish an effective understanding of the state of social work across Europe with a particular focus upon Education, Standards of Practice, the law relating to social work and the health of professional associations.

● **Project: Standards in Social Work Practice Meeting Human Rights.** Date of implementation: 2010-2012. Projects Co-Funded by IFSW Global.

Short description: the project consolidate the basic parameters within which Social Work in Europe operates into a common framework including Ethics, Professional Role, Training and Qualifications and Organisational Contexts for Social Work in Europe. This framework is considered a key step in contributing towards the ongoing development of Standards for Social Work Practice in Europe. At the heart of this work is the consideration that an integral part of Social Work Practice is the realization of Human Rights.

● **Project: Social Work Promoting Social Cohesion in Europe.** Date of implementation: 2005-2006. Projects Co-Funded by IFSW Global.

Short description: The project has aimed to explore social cohesion at a holistic level through the critical eye of social work professionals who have both the knowledge base as well as practical field experience. Further the project has also aimed to pinpoint the role of social workers as professionals who respond in practical and real ways to the changing demands and situations of people, communities and society in general [6].

Discussion. Studying and implementing the experience of international social work, in particular European countries, is relevant for the social sphere of Ukraine in wartime conditions.

The projects implemented by the international community of social specialists are relevant for Ukrainian social work.

The experience of Ukrainian social workers and volunteers in the conditions of war, assistance to internally displaced persons, solving many humanitarian issues - is a valuable resource for international social work.

International social work, the community of specialists, international organizations of social work and, first of all, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) – in every possible way support the struggle of Ukrainians for their own state and national identity.

At the same time, not all theses of representatives of international organizations, highlighted on the official pages, are perceived unambiguously. There are signs of incorrect understanding and interpretation by representatives of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) of the impact the war had on Ukrainian and on Russian civilians, equally pitying both while only Ukrainian civilians are facing constant bombings and live under the threat of death, torture or deportation (on occupied territories), which is caused by the disinformation campaign orchestrated by the government of the Russian federation, which seeks to equalize both sides [1;5].

Conclusion. In the conditions of wartime, the study and implementation of the progressive experience of international social work, in particular the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), is relevant. The entry of the Ukrainian Association of Social Workers into the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in December 2022 contributed to greater integration of Ukrainian social work into international processes facilitated the implementation of current projects aimed at supporting Ukraine (Community Social Work Centre and Social Work Hub Ukraine. Date of implementation: July 2022 – ongoing, etc.).

In addition, current projects presented on the website of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) are aimed at solving urgent issues of social work: increasing sensitivity to the voice of citizens in social services throughout Europe, developing environmental wisdom for social workers, realizing the potential of the young generation of social workers for social changes and others.

At the same time, the experience of Ukrainian social specialists in wartime conditions is a valuable resource for international social work.

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НОРМАТИВНІ ОСНОВИ ТА АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОЕКТИ МІЖНАРОДНОЇ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ РОБОТИ

Анотація. Матеріали статті представляють результати аналізу нормативних основ та актуальних проєктів міжнародної соціальної роботи, зокрема тих, що мають на меті міжнародну підтримку України в соціальній сфері.

Актуалізовано, що для України в умовах широкомасштабної війни постала необхідність термінового вирішення низки важливих соціальних проблем, відтак особливої значущості набуває теорія і практика соціальної роботи, яка реагує на ці виклики. Водночас успішні кроки щодо європейської інтеграції України, зокрема в соціальній сфері – ухвалення в грудні 2022 року Української асоціації соціальних працівників до Міжнародної федерації соціальних працівників (IFSW), посилюють актуальність дослідження нормативних основ і важливих проєктів міжнародної соціальної роботи.

Основними методами дослідження визначено: аналіз і синтез закордонних, українських джерел із соціальної роботи, матеріалів офіційних порталів міжнародних організацій соціальної роботи (Міжнародна федерація соціальних працівників (IFSW) та Міжнародна Асоціація шкіл соціальної роботи (IASSW), організації соціальної роботи в Україні; нормативних документів щодо соціальної роботи; узагальнення і систематизацію даних.

Узагальнено, що низка документів, як-от: *Global Definition of Social Work (2014)*, *The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: Extending the Influence of Social Work*, *The Global Agenda: Commitments to Action* та інші – становить нормативну основу, визначає ключові принципи та пріоритети міжнародної соціальної роботи.

Серед сучасних документів слід відзначити: *Climate Justice Program*, *Peoples Charter for an Eco-social World*, Хартія, яка інтегрувала голоси з усього світу, підкреслила важливість демократичної участі в здійсненні трансформаційних змін. Вона пропонує перехід від економік, де успіхи вимірюються суто прибутком, до «суспільств сталого добробуту».

Нормативні основи та ключові принципи міжнародної соціальної роботи втілюються в практичних акціях, проєктах. На порталі Міжнародної федерації соціальних працівників (IFSW) репрезентовано низку актуальних проєктів, тематика яких охоплює широкий спектр проблем соціальної роботи: підтримку української соціальної роботи (Хаб соціальної роботи Україна), збільшення чутливості до голосу громадян у соціальних службах по всій Європі, розвиток екологічної мудрості для соціальних працівників, реалізацію потенціалу молодого покоління соціальних працівників для соціальних змін та інші.

Ключові слова: міжнародна соціальна робота; нормативні основи, ключові принципи та пріоритети міжнародної соціальної роботи; актуальні проєкти міжнародної соціальної роботи; підтримка українських соціальних працівників.

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