

Abstracts

Babken V. Babajanian: Rolling Back the Welfare State in Post-Socialist Armenia

The paper examines the system of social welfare in post-socialist Armenia. It argues that the existing formal welfare system provides important, but limited income support for poor individuals. There has been a drastic shift from strong social citizenship rights to a residual, privatised and informal model of welfare since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This has been conditioned by the weak financial and administrative capacity of the Armenian state. In addition, the neo-liberal reforms implemented on the advice of international financial institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank, have further contributed to reducing public provision of social welfare. The paper argues that excessive reliance on privatised and informal social welfare contributes to inequitable distribution of income and access to services and has a high social cost for the poor. Whilst at present the minimal role of the state is necessitated by fiscal and institutional constraints, welfare liberalism should not be the only policy choice for Armenia in the long run. Policy-makers can lay out foundations for a more interventionist state by promoting public awareness and political debate about alternative welfare arrangements.

Yossi Korazim-Korosy – Terry Mizrahi – Chana Katz – Amnon Karmon – Martha Lucia Garcia – Marcia Bayne Smith: Towards Interdisciplinary Community Collaboration and Development: Knowledge and Experience from Israel and the USA

This article looks at the conceptualization and practice of interdisciplinary community collaboration and development (ICCD) in Israel and the US. It is based on the work of two interdisciplinary professional groups which were initiated by social workers – one in Israel and one in the US. This article presents a mapping of key issues and concepts, including distinguishing between mono, multi, inter, trans-disciplinary and inter-perspectives. In addition, the article addresses the issues of multiple professional identities; identification of a common core knowledge base and skills among disciplinary specializations for community development practice; and an understanding of inter-organizational perspectives. A qualitative methodology was used to conduct a content analysis of data from dialogues among professional practitioners of ICCD and comparisons were made between the findings of the Israeli and the US group. Results suggest that despite differences in the purpose, frequency and intensity of the two forums on ICCD, there are more similarities than differences. The findings indicate that there is an underlying belief in the importance of these discussions and in the commitment to interdisciplinary practice. Both groups believe that multiple types of expertise are needed, alongside new models of both inter-organizational and interdisciplinary relationships as well as professional-community interactions. In a departure from previous research, this study adds community as a “discipline” in itself to community development and collaborations. Equally significant is the identification of the goals for future development, including identifying anchor and partner professions and directions for social work education and training and other social science professions. Recommendations include the need for further examination of interdisciplinary community collaboration and development.

Fónai, Mihály – Pásztor, Enikő – Zolnai, Erika: Social Status, Circumstances and the Way of Life of Persons with Disability in Hajdú-Bihar County

In the study the authors present the results of an empirical research carried out in 2004. The research examined the social status, circumstances and the way of life of persons with disability in Hajdú-Bihar county. The research sample consisted of those who agreed to be interviewed personally by questionnaires. Efforts were made to manage sampling by quota.

The sample included 387 families and during the research the qualification, employment status, income status, equipment of households, possible problems of families, support systems and the way of life of these families and their family members were examined. The data show that the different disabilities determine significantly the qualification, employment status and income status of the persons with disability. The problems of the examined families arise from being left alone: besides the family members they can rely principally only on the institutions and services offered by organisations of the disabled. Since they demand more attention, time and energy the disabled family members change significantly the way of life in the family. This is especially true in families with mentally handicapped and persons with multiple disabilities.

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