Challenges of human resource management in the institutions for care of elderly people

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Challenges of human resource management in the institutions for care of elderly people

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Abstract. Human resources are the most important resources of any work organization or institution. They are the bearers of the work process and are key in determining the quality of a product or service. The staff employed in an institution contributes with their work to its business success which is why the institution management should pay close attention to human resources management. Functionally, the successful management of social protection institutions implies the attainment of balance in the process of satisfying interests of beneficiaries, interests of the institution management (founder-owner), and interests of the employees (service providers to elderly people). Interests of beneficiaries (elderly people) who are placed in residential care are reflected in the need for high quality and accessible services. Interests of the institution management are recognized as the need to achieve economically sustainable and profitable institution. An interest of direct service providers (employed caregivers, social workers, etc.) is in the safe premises and good working conditions. The term "human resources" in institutions of social protection implies overall knowledge, skills, abilities, creative capabilities, motivation, loyalty and personal characteristics owned by employees in the institution. It is the overall intellectual and emotional energy of employees that the management can count on and that can be engaged to achieving the objectives of the institution.

The objectives of human resource management in social protection institutions are related to providing capability with job demands, fulfillment of professional and optimal number of competent workers, improving socio-economic status of employees, ensuring full time engagement of workers, improving the quality of work conditions and work environment, creating and maintaining a flexible and adaptive potential of employees, reducing resistance and increasing the sensitivity of employees to changes in the institution.

The activities carried out in pursuit of the objectives of human resource management in institutions for the elderly are analysis and planning of working positions, recruitment and selection of candidates, socialization, training and professional development of workers, performance assessment and evaluation, reward and motivation, the determination of salaries, information, development of interpersonal relations, supervision and support to employees (prevention of "professional burnout"), ensuring the realization of the legal rights (regularity of salaries and contributions, affairs and records related to employment, health and safety at work etc.)

The absence of these activities or lack of attention to achieving the objectives of human resources management calls in question the basic sense of existence of institutions for care of the elderly, and this is to provide a decent life to an elderly person.
1. Introduction

Demographic trends in contemporary society indicate a sudden increase in the proportion of elderly people in the total population. The increased proportion of elderly in the total population imposes the need for well-organized means of social protection. Challenges faced by social protection as a key area of support for the elderly, point to the need to create new management models based on the application of modern methods in planning, organization, and management as well as the use of control mechanisms. Today, social protection, especially protection of the elderly, is faced with the need to find optimal ways of management that will accept the fact that the needs for social services are increasing, and those system resources, human and material, are insufficient. In such adverse conditions, social protection systems try to look for possible ways out through the introduction of elements of management, where the control mechanisms are placed in the service of achieving efficiency of overall social actions aimed at the senior citizens.

Placement in social care institutions (homes for the elderly) is even today the most recognized and most common way of systematic care for the elderly. Institutional (residential) placement has become a synonym for systematic care for the elderly. It represents the element of tertiary level of social protection and is usually the last option in the care for the elderly. Residential care has become an indispensable way of caring for the elderly, especially those who are no longer able to care for the most basic life necessities, and who have no help from their relatives. Regardless of more frequent criticism of residential placements, this model of care provides for the most demanding needs of the elderly, especially needs related to long-term care and continuous medical supervision. In some situations, residential care is the only possible option of achieving high-quality protection of the elderly.

The institutional form of care for the elderly implies integral protection that is achieved in particularly isolated areas, in conditions of collective placement, under the supervision of professional services and taking into account the specific needs of the elderly caused by the aging process and age status. Institutional form of care for older people is realized in social protection institutions (homes for the elderly) that provide housing, food, clothing, personal hygiene, care and rehabilitation, medical surveillance/supervision, psychological and social support, cultural, entertaining, recreational and occupational activities. In addition to the standard services provision, homes for the elderly may provide temporary shelter and assistance to the homeless, provide assistance and care in their homes, organization of day care centers (clubs) for elderly, organization of cultural, entertaining, educational and informative activities, humanitarian activities, etc.

In order for the placement in homes for the elderly to achieve a satisfactory quality of services, it is necessary to achieve efficient management process. The management of social protection institutions is the process of planning, organizing, managing and routing the resources in order to achieve high quality of social protection of the elderly. Functionally, the successful management of social protection institutions implies the attainment of balance in the process of satisfying interests of beneficiaries, interests of the institution management (founder-owner), and interests of the employees (service providers to elderly people). Interests of beneficiaries (elderly people) who are placed in residential care are reflected in the need for high quality and accessible services. Interests of the institution management are recognized as the need to achieve economically sustainable and profitable institution. Interests of direct service providers (employed caregivers, social workers, etc.) are in the safe premises and good working conditions.

By resources of social protection institutions are implied organizational, material, and human capacities that institution has. Human resources are the most important resources of any work organization or institution. They are the bearers of the work process and are key in determining the quality of a product or a service. The staff employed in the institution with their work contributes to its business success which is why the management of an institution should pay close attention to human resources management. This is emphasized in the most commonly used definitions of management in the literature which suggest that the field of management is focused on the art of doing things (work) by people [1] or, that it is coordination of activities related to the job, so that they are performed
efficiently and effectively - with the people and with the help of other people [2]. The term "human resources" in institutions of social protection implies overall knowledge, skills, abilities, creative capabilities, motivation, loyalty and personal characteristics owned by employees in the institution. It is the overall intellectual and emotional energy of employees that the management can count on and that can be engaged to achieving the objectives of the institution. Professional and business results of social care institutions depend on the state of "human resources".

2. Human resources management in social protection institutions

Human Resource Management (hereinafter HRM) is one of the strategic functions in the management process of social protection institutions. It is an unavoidable topic of modern management in social protection. This component of management is very important for the establishment of an adequate method of organization of the services provision process in homes for the elderly. In order for the organization to respond to the requirements set before it, managers must establish an adequate human resource management or human potentials management [3]. HRM presents a basic management tool through which the manager affects the employees, because the focus of his/her interest is placed on human resources, their potentials and their motivation. Some authors believe that HRM is special managerial function because it includes "all management decisions and activities that affect the nature of the relationship between the company and employees - its human resources" [4]. However, HRM can be seen as an integral part of the function of organization, because the professional structure, potential and motivation of employees are precondition for effective and advanced business organization. "The quality of an organization is mainly only a result of the quality of people employed and retained at work" [5]. Therefore, human resources are an indispensable item in the performance analysis of social protection institutions. Recruiting and hiring a competent professional staff is an essential condition for sustainability of the quality of work of the institution and its performance/success.

The activities of an organization, which are focused on HRM, are related to three general processes: the process of identifying and selecting competent staff, the development and adoption of new knowledge by the employees and the process of retaining skilled and productive employees. Implementation of activities in these processes can guarantee good results in human resource management. In the institutions of social protection, these processes involve the engagement of management in assessing personal competencies of employees and in terms of possession of empathy for the beneficiaries. The selection process, the development process and the process of retaining workers must be justified in assessment of the degree of their ability to understand the needs of elderly people and willingness to provide more than just technical performance of the assignment.

In homes for elderly employed are workers of different profiles, from professional to support staff. Among the workers who work directly with beneficiaries are mostly represented caregiver and medical technicians. In addition, in working with beneficiaries engaged are social workers, occupational therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists and physicians. Technical and administrative staff is responsible to provide material and technical conditions of placement and accommodation of beneficiaries in the resident care, such as hygiene, nutrition, purchasing, financing, etc. The task of management is to achieve efficiency in the work of institutions which includes, in addition to economic sustainability and customer satisfaction, achieving the optimum balance between the interests of employees and the results of their work. In particular, this applies to workers who have direct contact with beneficiaries and who provide different types of protection services to the elderly. Human resource management in homes for the elderly implies precisely achievement of this primary objective/goal.

The specific objectives of HRM in social protection institutions are relate to providing competences in accordance with the requirements of the position/job, professional and optimal number of competent workers, improving the socio-economic status of employees, ensuring full-time employment of workers, raising the quality of working conditions and working environment, creating and maintaining flexible and adaptive potential of employees, reducing resistance and increasing the
sensitivity of employees to changes in the institution. The first two objectives are aimed at satisfaction of interests of the institution, while others are aimed at achieving employee satisfaction, which is a prerequisite for business success of the institution.

Provision of abilities in accordance with the requirements of the position/job and meeting professional and optimal number of competent workers are related to the field of human resource planning in the institution. Human resource planning is one of the most important areas of HRM. Planning is a process in which managers perceive the optimal need for number of employees, their qualification structure and functional deployment. In doing so, it is essential to have an overview of the existing human resources in order to adequately analyze the educational qualification, experience and knowledge of employees and the nature of their work, description of activities and specification of knowledge that are needed to perform a specific job [4]. Assessment of needs for human resources, in fact, reflects the objectives and strategy of development of the company or organization. The relationship between the analysis of the current situation and development needs of the organization is the basis on which the manager builds estimation of deficit of human resources.

According to the research conducted [6] in homes for the elderly in Republic of Srpska, the chronic problem is the lack or shortage of workers and inadequate deployment of workers in positions for direct care for beneficiaries. The public homes owned by the state, which often have excess of workers, there is a mismatch between the professional and administrative workers at the expense of the first, and in private homes there is mainly a small number of employees who often do different kinds of work in order for the management of institution to pay less amount for salaries of workers.

Human resource planning plays an important role in ensuring the economic sustainability of an institution. In the market conditions of business, when institutions for placement of elderly must offer economically acceptable price, while at the same maintaining the quality of services, the number and professional competence of employees are becoming a significant factor in its success. The goal of the management of an institution is to offer high quality and as attractive as possible service for fewer costs. Excess of workers and the low level of their expertise is a major threat to the future business of that institution. Therefore, the institution’s management should approach to assessment of the need for workers very systematically which includes conducting analysis of the situation and optimization of number of users, accommodation capacities and coordination of work processes. The potential of an institution to cope with business risks in the market of social services for the elderly will depend on how coordinated these elements are.

The planning of human resources is also affected by processes that are not directly related to the needs of the institution itself. Education is very important area, which indirectly affects the offer of qualified specialists. Lack of full time education programs for caregivers has opened possibilities for additional training and requalification. Increased interest in the opening of private homes for the elderly in BiH has increased the demand for educated profiles of caregivers which opened space to conduct additional training programs [7]. Lack of qualified staff on the labor market makes it more difficult to plan human resources in this area. In countries where the care and nurturing of elderly people is highly developed, there is constant lack of such profile of the workforce. So, for example, in Germany, the demand for caregivers in recent years has doubled. It is anticipated that by 2020 Germany will have around three million people that should be provided with long-term care services. According to the analysis, in 2009 there was shortage of around 110 thousand of new caregivers and total of 4,300 new homes for care of people [8]. More recent data from the Federal Labor Office (Arbeitsamt) say that this demand has increased, particularly for the purpose of care of the elderly people. According to their forecasts, by 2030 Germany will have shortage of about 200 thousand caregivers. In the end of 2013, Germany had shortage of about 30 thousand caregivers for the elderly [9]. The situation is similar in other Western European countries where they annually employ tens of thousands of nurses and caregivers from other countries, specifically on positions of caregivers of the elderly.

Very poor offer of caregivers on the labor market and the increased need for caregivers refer management of institutions to create and have a human resource plan. Human resource planning in the
field of social protection of the elderly includes the creation of employment dynamics of trained and experienced competent experts. The results of the research conducted in social protection institutions in Republic of Srpska [10] show that there is very poor practice of making plans of human resources. According to the survey, only 17% of managers of these institutions said that they have a plan of human resources. Most managers do not use human resource planning as a relevant mechanism for new employment. The need for new workers in social protection institutions of Republic of Srpska is usually determined ad hoc and is often not caused by reasons that have essential connection with the developments in the field of social protection. The results showed that when hiring new employees in the institutions of social protection, much less attention is paid to the needs of the work process of organizations. In most cases, people who are employed do not have any experience in working with the elderly people. The results of researches carried out in the social protection system of Republic of Srpska confirmed that the management of human resources is not developed and thereby makes the work of institutions for the care of the elderly difficult as well as their functionality and their sustainability.

In order to achieve good business results, institution’s management should implement activities in the field of human resource planning which includes, in addition to recruiting new employees, the investment in the existing professional staff. Namely, it is difficult to achieve good operating results if employees are not satisfied with the work that they do, and this is achieved through their motivation. Work motivation is an essential factor of HRM and it is directly aimed at employees whose results affect the business success of the institution. Older research in psychology and sociology of organizations indicate the relationship between work motivation, job satisfaction and the possibility of worker participation in the process of planning the workflows [11]. Recent motivation strategies indicate that unmotivated employees have lower productivity, they are not interested in quality of products, do not identify with the organization and are not interested in organizational problems, development and success [3]. For the management of social protection institutions of special importance is the identification of employees with the institution. The mechanisms that the institution’s management will use to achieve this goal may be different, from wage/salary increases to the increased participation in the process of services planning. Which mechanism will the management apply depends on the structure of employees and established interpersonal relations, both among workers and in the relation workers - management.

3. Working with employees
A special part of HRM in institutions for placement of the elderly is work with employees. The aim of that work is to achieve the highest possible commitment to the work tasks and thereby achieve the higher operating results. In addition to individual characteristics that the workers bring to the institution by their employment, the results of each employee are affected by a range of interventions, measures and activities undertaken by the management of the institution towards them. These activities are the backbone of the work with staff employed in institutions for placement of the elderly.

Working with employees can be seen as: recruitment and candidate selection, socialization, training and development of workers, performance assessment and evaluation, reward and motivation, the determination of wages/salaries, information, development of interpersonal relations, supervision and support to employees (prevention of "professional burnout") ensuring the fulfillment of legal rights (regularity of salaries and wages, affairs and records related to engagement, occupational safety, etc.).

Recruitment and selection of personnel is done through the implementation of the procedure which is generally defined by law. It is very important that the conditions for the selection of candidates complies with the necessary professional skills needed for the job which involves having a formal qualification, required experience and social competencies. However, direct work with the beneficiaries requires developed skills of emotional intelligence among workers [12]. Empathy, communication and other social skills, self-awareness and self-control as components of emotional
intelligence, represent the major skills that should be owned by caregivers, social workers, medical technicians and other workers who directly provide services to the elderly.

Socialization, training and development involve direct investment in workers which raises the level of trust of the workers to the institution’s management and thus creates a sense of community. These activities are dedicated, first and foremost, to the new workers who just started working in the institution. To the newly recruited, managers must provide mechanisms for easy integration into the organization, so that they areas soon as possible ready to work, but they also have to offer support mechanisms to the employed. Their goal is to provide newly employed as easily and as quickly as possible to "fit" into the existing organizational structure and work processes. However, those activities can also be provided for the other employees as an investment in development. Any investment in the development of employees is at the same time allowing the transfer of new knowledge and skills necessary to work with the elderly. Besides that, this way of working with the workers has an impact on creating a good working atmosphere which is a prerequisite for creating a desirable living environment for the beneficiaries.

Performance assessment and evaluation, reward and motivation are important activities in HRM. These activities bring together the work of employees and their expectations with the results achieved, thus it rounds up the process of management in the institution. These aspects are mutually connected and are part of the control function in the management of the institution, so it is very important that they are performed in accordance with clearly defined criteria, transparently, and with the participation of employees. Expectations of employees are related to the improvement of their socio-economic status (higher income), ensuring permanent employment and raising the quality of working conditions and working environment. The combination of activities arising from the achievement of these objectives and activities aimed at the development of professional competencies and psycho-social potential of employees is the basis of work with the employees in the institutions of social protection.

Not taking into account only individual reasons (values and character traits), employee satisfaction is affected by how much attention and time the manager devoted to their needs. Employees have their expectations and achieved level of employee satisfaction is an indicator of the success of HRM.

Determining the wages/salaries and ensuring the realization of legal rights of workers means fulfillment of those obligations by the institutions management which are expected by the employees. Through the implementation of these activities, employees have access to the legality of operations of the employer. Any non-fulfillment of obligations towards the worker provided by law undermines business and interpersonal relationships in the institution, reduces trust, and ultimately affects the quality of services provided. For all these reasons, it is important that at the beginning of engagement worker is introduced to legal rights and obligations, and to have a clear insight into how his/her performance is evaluated and how the wage/salary is determined. Fulfillment of these goals is supported by the practice of regular, accurate and timely information of employees that can be implemented in different ways: meetings, talks "face to face", notices, newsletters, etc.

Supervision and support to employees is a key intervention of HRM in social protection institutions. It is focused on prevention of burnout of employees, especially those who work directly with beneficiaries. Professional burnout in social protection is very common and frequent phenomenon which has a significant impact on the effectiveness and performance of employees.

Occurrence of burnout syndrome, in addition to individual characteristics of service providers, is affected by factors arising from the specificity and nature of their work [13]. The characteristics of the workplace, professional characteristics related to the job of nurturing, the specifics related to customers, work that involves dealing with death and organizational characteristics of the work process are factors that play a significant role in the high-intensity of professional burnout in services providers to elderly people. This requires continuous provision of professional support to employed staff. Supervision presents the effort to strengthen professional competence in the work process with professionals through learning from their own experiences, to seek their own solutions to problems encountered during the work, including effective coping with stress, and it provides the overview of situations and resources of beneficiaries, their thoughts, emotions and resources and the client.
relationship from different perspectives. By integrating these different aspects of professional situations, a professional creates the preconditions to act as a professionally competent person [14].

4. Conclusion

Human resources are an important segment of management in social protection institutions. All specifics of work in social protection institutions indicate the importance and the significance of having high-quality professional staff. At a time of market-oriented system of social protection and increased demand for services of institutional care of the elderly, human resource management involves harmonization of actions of an institution with the services quality requirements and economic sustainability of the institution. This is one of the strategic management process that focuses on human resource development in order to ensure the competitiveness of the institution in the services market. A wide range of activities that make the human resources management provide for social protection institutions for the care of older people to maintain their competitiveness in the market. The main problem for the provision of human resources in homes for elderly people can be found in the absence of formally trained and competent workers in the labor market. Most employees in homes for the elderly for the first time face with the business of nurturing, thus the investment their professional development is the task that management of an institution should not forget. Employees must be provided with constant expert and professional development, and to have opportunity of enriching their knowledge and acquiring new skills. For them it will mean certainty in achieving economic security for them and their family, for an institution it will provide secure and efficient staff, and for customers it will mean quality and satisfactory social services.

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