

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL WORK

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*“The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,*

*Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way,
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.”*

[Tolkien, (a) 1991, p. 52.]

Absztrakt

Marshall McLuhan a '60-as években alkotta meg „globális falu” elméletét, melyben a különböző kommunikációs technológiák és eszközök rohamos fejlődésével, a „tér” és az „idő” megszűnésével, a világnak egy olyan utópiáját vázolta fel ahol a globális egymásrautaltság meghatározza az emberek mindennapjait. Az akkor még felthetően szélsőséges és különc teória, beigazolódni látszik. A napjainkban zajló globális kommunikációs forradalom, az egyre erősödő gazdasági egymásrautaltság, a társadalmi és ökológiai kihívások arra hívják fel a különböző tudományterületek szakembereinek a figyelmét, hogy a saját területükön kialakítsanak egy egységes elméleti tudásbázist, ami alól a szociális munka sem kivétel.

Kulcsszavak: nemzetközi, szociális munka, kultúrákon átívelő, kulturális kompetencia, globalizáció, lokalizáció

Introduction

We are living in the 21st century. Because of the different technological achievements we have developed – like the computer, the internet, the mobile and public transport etc. – our lives have changed radically. *“Increasingly, technology and access to technology are significant issues in the global environment and in international social work. New technologies can provide many opportunities for international social work and social development.”* (Schriver, 2004, p. 548.)

On 15th December, 1955 we finally (re)connected to the United Nations and on the 1st May, 2004 we acceded to the European Union. With these steps, we have made partnerships with other European countries and the countries all over the world. We have opened our borders for foreign people and we have given a better chance to

ourselves to discover the globe. Our international relations have been reinterpreted and openness to new experiences has become a core value. Due to these changes, my generation has to realize – irrespectively of one’s professional field (education, economy, social sciences, medicine etc.) that we are not just living in Hungary but we also live in the European Union, on a planet called Earth. Every kind of activity what we perform has a number of positive or negative impacts, and affects our broad or narrow environment. As I am a professional social worker it is important for me to empower my local community. As there are different job opportunities and international exchange programs, we, social professionals also have a chance to invest and improve our knowledge in different (global) social contexts. *“In addition, we have the responsibility of using the benefits of our privileged status to advocate both locally and globally for social and economic justice in its fullest sense. As social worker we need to develop a true worldview that transcends national borders, belief systems and way of life.* (Schrivier, 2004, p. 556.)

In 2009 I got a chance to join a long-term international voluntary exchange program called European Voluntary Service (EVS), one year later I joined a long-term exchange internship program called Leonardo. With these programs I got a chance to work in Croatia, and in England as a social worker. My basic motivation was to live somewhere else for a while, to meet social workers from other countries and to learn from them. I would like to quote a sentence from my motivation letter, what I sent to my hosting organizations: “As a professional special pedagogue and social worker I would like to learn new methods, newest directions to be a better, effective and powerful expert.” When I was writing this sentence I didn’t know that being an EVS volunteer or Leonardo intern is much more than “have a practice semester abroad, learn new methods, newest directions”. It is unique combination about learning as a professional, and learning as a private person, doing social work in another country; working with a target group that has got a different cultural background than the same target group in my own society. This is probably the most effective way to obtain cultural knowledge about a foreign society and to learn about myself, to develop self-reflective capacity.

In the United States, *“the new educational policies and standards adopted in July 2001 by the Council on Social Work Education and implemented in 2002 reflect increasing emphasis on knowledge of international issues in social work education. The increased emphasis was significant because of the recognition of growing global interdependence in most sectors of society and its related concern for social work.”* (Schrivier, 2004, p. 544.)

After conducting a substantial library research about international humanitarian activity and international social work I had to realize that there are only few foreign authors (and even less Hungarians) who write and publish on the subject. With my work I would like to direct professionals’ attention to the importance of international humanitarian activities; and to inform the readers about the positive and negative impacts. How does international social work become an important resource for the entire local society and for the professional social workers as well? With my work I attempt to fill the gap in the literature and summarize the basic theories in this field. I would like to encourage those persons who are interested in doing international humanitarian work (no matter what profession they have) but are afraid to make the first steps.

Cross-cultural social work practice

“Culture refers to the way of life followed by a group. Culture binds a society together and includes its manners, moral, tools, and technologies. Culture can be thought of as those elements of a people’s history, tradition, values, and social organization that become implicitly or explicitly meaningful to the participants. Cultures differ in their world view, in their perspectives on the rhythms and patterns of life, and in the concept of the essential nature of the human condition” (Greene, 1999, p. 234.) Culture is getting visible in the daily life, in the reactions and communication between the group members. The perspectives of General System Theory can be useful for the social workers who are working in a different culture or country to get a deeper understanding of the cultural differences. (Greene, 1999, p. 234.) *“The word ‘culture’ is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group”* (NASW, 2001, p. 9.)

Social diversity, cultural tension

Social work was inspired by cultural studies and realized *“the multicultural nature of individuals”*; that every person is different and unique, is influenced by many levels and maybe their own culture is not coherent with the dominant culture of the society they belong to.

Figure 1. Cultural Tensions in Social Work Practice



Source: Yan, 2008, p. 321.

Many social workers may have experienced different kinds of tensions related to the cultural differences which affect their work. Miu Chung Yan has stated two main and five subtypes of tensions in his research that he conducted in the Canadian society with participants who had different demographic backgrounds. (Yan, 2008, p. 217.)

1st Type of Cultural tension: This type of tension comes to existence between the client and the culture of the majority society. The social organization or agency which is trying to provide help to the target group belongs to the dominant culture. This tension causes at least two more tensions. *The first one comes up between the client's culture and the dominant culture.* In every society the dominant culture declares its own rules and laws and the social workers need to enforce these. When the rules of the majority and the minority are different it is a difficult task. Yan have found several cases when the social worker had problems to make a decision because of the different definition and understanding of child abuse. *The other subtension comes up between the client's culture, and the organization's culture.* The organizational culture defines and regulates the practice of its own social worker employees, but the clients have their own expectations as well. The social workers need to find the way and form a workable compromise between these two requirements, which can be very different or even opposing.

2nd Type of Cultural tension: This kind of cultural tension comes up among the culture of the social worker, the dominant organizational culture, and the client's culture. Primarily the professional social worker from a minority group can be a target of this kind of tensions. The first subtension is manifested between the *employee's culture and the dominant culture.* The social workers usually say when they are confronted with this tension that the way the organization requires them to work in some cases is different from what they have learned in their own culture (for example, social workers, who came from minority groups). In this process, the values of the social worker and the values of the organization may clash with each other. In the other subtension, the problem comes up between the *organizational culture and the employee's culture.* The individual and organizational values are confronted with each other. In the third sub-tension, the problems come up between the *worker's and the client's culture.* This is probably the most critical tension from all. *"These tensions are manifested in various ways that have both positive and negative effects on participants' practice."* (Yan, 2008, p. 323.)

The professional social workers need to realize and understand that it is very probable that they will be confronted with these kinds of tensions in their daily practice moreover, they can find themselves in the middle of such conflicts. *"Cultural tensions require a high level of sensitivity of social workers to reflect on their own cultural position. Therefore it is not surprising that cultural awareness becomes a key requirement for social worker practitioners."* (Yan, 2008, p. 326.)

Cultural competence

"Social workers must understand that to develop cultural understanding, they must become lifelong learners, listeners and participants observers (...) Social workers must be authentic about their own discomfort in cross-cultural situations and examine their value base, biases, prejudices, and racism as part of their own self-assessment. They must be critical thinkers and recognize that there are multiple perspectives and interpretations of events and experiences. They recognize that resources are not always formal, but informal as well." (Mattaini, Lowery, Meyer, 2002, p. 76.)

The social worker works with clients who have got different cultural backgrounds. To successfully empower the client, the social worker needs to understand the way of thinking, the "worldview" or "cultural frame of reference" of

the clients. (Clark, without date) Why is it important for the social worker? The cultural background of the client's help-seeking behaviours influence what their problem definitions are; what they choose to determine as a problem; and what kind of coping strategies they have in order to solve them. The way a society plans their social services has to be culturally sensitive and effective.

So the basic question is "How can we understand those who are different from ourselves?" (Clark, without date) "Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enable the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (NASW, 2001, p. 9.)

The social worker should understand the cultural system, the traditions, habits and behaviour patterns. Cultural competence is a knowledge about the individuals and groups, which enables the social worker to develop the quality of the professional service. With this knowledge, the professional is able to respect every client as a unique individual and respect their social diversity. Social workers should show "respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability." (NASW, 2001, p. 13.)

The National Association of Social Workers conceived the main standards of *Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*.

Standard 1, Ethics and Values: The professional social worker needs to know NASW Code of Ethics, which determine the key elements of ethical social work practice (for example how to handle private information etc.). In the process of the client empowerment, the professional is able to focus on the individuals but always in their social and cultural contexts. When speaking about cultural competences, the NASW's Code of Ethics and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights must be taken into account in the social worker's practice. (NASW, 2001, p. 16.)

Standard 2, Self-Awareness: Before the social worker starts to explore the culture of the target group they have to have knowledge of their own cultural values, attitudes, beliefs, in one word, they must be able to identify themselves in their own cultural context and be aware of the heritage of the given cultures. The social workers, even if they are professional help givers, inevitably have their own fears and stereotypes. In the concept of cultural competence it is included to get to know these fears and be able to handle professional social worker. (NASW, 2001, p. 16.)

Standard 3, Cross-Cultural Knowledge: The social worker should understand and should take every opportunity to expand his/her understanding of the client's history, values, family system etc. On the other hand the social worker has to know traditional theories of human behaviour, issues of prevention, rehabilitation, life cycle development and problem solving skills. But she also has to develop critical thinking and ask the right questions in the right moment and situation. She should be comfortable with talking about cultural differences. (NASW, 2001, p. 18.)

Standard 4, Cross-Cultural Skills: The social worker needs to have the right skills to work with people who have similar or different backgrounds than herself/himself. She should encourage the client and the group of clients to discuss the differences and have good interviewing skills and techniques (ask the right question at the right moment). She should be able to use the professional methods, techniques and skills, which are attuned to the client's culture and environment and acquire effective verbal and nonverbal, direct and indirect style of communication. "...understand the interaction of the cultural systems of the social worker, the client,

the particular agency setting, and the broader immediate community” (NASW, 2001, p. 21.) She should use the clients’ natural support system as an important source. Consultate with the colleges and supervisors, to be able to monitor (agency evaluations, supervision, in-service training, and feedback from clients) the quality of their service. *“Evaluate the validity and applicability of new techniques, research, and knowledge for work with diverse client groups.”* (NASW, 2001, p. 21.)

Standard 5, Service Delivery: “Matching their needs with culturally competent service delivery systems or adapting services to better meet the culturally unique needs of clients.” With the client group’s participation provide new researches to develop the service.

Standard 6, Empowerment and Advocacy: “Social workers shall be aware of the effect of social policies and programs on diverse client populations, advocating for and with clients whenever appropriate.” (NASW, 2001, p. 23.) With the cultural competence and knowledge the social workers know what kind of actions, social advocacy, does the client and their communities need to the successful empowerment.

Standard 7, Diverse Workforce: “Social workers shall support and advocate for recruitment, admissions and hiring, and retention efforts in social work programs and agencies that ensure diversity within the profession.” (NASW, 2001, p. 24.) Target groups are much more diverse than the profession itself. They can be different by age, colour of the skin, backgrounds, abilities, socioeconomic status...etc. With diverse cultural backgrounds, social workers’ can meet clients’ needs more and represent the equality of chances within the profession.

Standard 8, Professional Education: Social work is a practice oriented profession so the social workers should attend and participate in different trainings, education programs in order to improve their knowledge and their personality. Cultural competence is an important part of the social worker’s education. The professionals have to keep up with any kinds of transformations and altering needs of the client population. „Cultural competence is a vital link between the theoretical and practice knowledge base that defines social work expertise.” (NASW, 2001, p. 26.)

Standard 9, Language Diversity: „Individuals and groups have a right to use their language in their individual and communal life.” (NASW, 2001, p. 27.) Every client and every case is unique. The social workers need to accept the client’s culture and personal identity. Everybody have a right to use their own language. *“Social workers need to communicate respectfully and effectively with clients from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds; this might include knowing the client’s language.”* (NASW, 2001, p. 27.) If the social worker doesn’t speak the client’s language, the social agency has the responsibility to ask help from a professional interpreter.

Standard 10, Cross-Cultural Leadership: “Social workers shall be able to communicate information about diverse client groups to other professionals.” The social worker’s main aim is to empower the target group and sharing relevant information with the public and with other professionals may serve that purpose. *“Advocate for their clients’ concerns at interpersonal and institutional levels, locally, nationally, and internationally.”* (NASW, 2001, p. 29.)

International professional social work

Why international social work? "Going beyond the national level in social work cannot be the personal hobby of a few specialists who are dealing with migrant and refugee groups or with ethnic minorities... or of a few idealists who want to promote international exchanges to widen their horizon and to learn more about methods and practices in other countries." (Healy, 2001, p. 2.) The professional and even the volunteer social workers can get in touch with international actions and activities through their universities, agencies and organizations. There are several activities which call for international collaboration and sharing of information. Global interdependence has considerably grown over the last decades. We have an international responsibility to act as an individual in international social problems and challenges.

The Council on Social Work Education has defined "international social work" in 1956. "(...) international social work should properly be confined to programs of social work of international scope, such as those carried on by intergovernmental agencies with international programs" (Healy, 2001, p. 6.)

Sanders and Pederson in 1984 used the following definition: "International social work means those social work activities and concerns that transcend national and cultural boundaries." (Healy, 2001, p. 6.) International social case work was determined in a similar way in 1939 by Warren *"the application of case work adjustments require cooperative action in two or more countries."*

The Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) between 1989 and 1990 has made a research about how 200 students (from all the continents of the world) would define international social work. The key words were the following: "cross-cultural understanding, comparative social policy, concern with worldwide, international practice, intergovernmental social welfare, and a sense of collegiality with social workers in other countries" (Healy, 2001, p. 7.)

Healy used the following definition of international social work in 2001: "International professional action and the capacity for international action by the social work profession and its members. (Healy, 2001, p. 7.) In the last decades the interest to participate of the international social work increased and as the National Association of Social Worker (NASW) quotes: *"As it becomes more obvious that the world's problems are everyone's problem it is likely that more and more social workers will play a part in world affairs."* (Tripodi, Potocky-Tripodi, 2007, p. 3.)

According to Healy the focus is on *"international professional action and the capacity for international action by the social work profession and its members. International action has four dimensions:*

Figure 2. Dimensions of International Actions



Source: Healy, 2001, p. 7.

1. Internationally related domestic practice and advocacy: In the last decades social workers treat problems that belong to this dimension, as e.g., social work at the country-border areas, refugee issues, international adoption, working with various international populations etc. (Healy, 2001, p. 7.) For the domestic professional responsibility also contains to influence the foreign policy in our own country, and understand how the national policy influences our policy. *2. Professional exchange and international practice:* sharing information (reading foreign books, and articles) getting knowledge, experience, improving the social work knowledge and practice at home as well as hosting foreign professionals. *3. International practice:* The main goal is to prepare social workers to connect with international movements through doing international professional social work. *4. International policy development and advocacy:* The social workers “worldwide movement’s” main aim is to find the solutions for global problems and negotiate different kinds of global social issues.

Cox and Pawar in 2006 have modified Healy’s definition. “*International social work is the promotion of social work education and practice globally and locally, with the purpose of building a truly integrated international profession that reflects social work’s capacity to respond appropriately and effectively, in education and practice terms, to the various global challenges that are having a significant impact on the well-being of large sections of the world’s population. This global and local promotion of social work education and practice is based on an integrated-perspectives approach that synthesizes global, human rights, ecological, and social development perspectives of international situation and responses to them.*” (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 20.) Most of the definitions emphasize “working in a different country,” or “making a research in other country”.

Dimensions of international social work

Figure 3. Perspectives of International Social Work



Source: Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 26.

There are four important perspectives in discussing international social work practice. (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 26.)

1. *Global Perspective*: This is a discourse on *diversity* and *unity*. *Unity* as a concept of the “global village”; and diversity that we can find on every level of our lives, mostly in cultural and social dimensions. All of us are living on the same planet, have the same origins, and have the same basic needs (Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs). *Diversity*: the human nature and even the physical features are all different. The place where we live, our culture, traditions and historical identity affect our lives, our thinking, and our values. According to a core value of social work the diversity of the differences should be respected. The degree of *interdependence* is formed by the interactions and communication – we have learned to benefit from each other. In addition to this positive aspect we have to realize that there are several cases which have negative dimensions. We are living in interdependence in an *economical, political, technological, ecological, social and cultural sense*. (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 29.) Let us think of the recent fall of the stock market that has had global economic and social consequences. The multinational social corporations’ main aim is to find solutions for these problems from one country to another. The next binary opposites to be discussed are *globalization* and *localization*. Many writers make differences between “*globalization from above*” and “*globalization from below*”. *Globalization from above* means an interaction cooperation, and reciprocity on the macro-political and economical level. *Globalization from below* means interaction, cooperation and reciprocity provided by the civil society, and by international civil organizations through their activities. *Localization* refers to the

phenomenon when local aspects become the only reality. (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 29.) The last perspective is called *world citizenship*. „*A world citizen has knowledge of global forces, both physical and social, that affect the lives of all persons, understands culture and cultural difference, can analyze world issues from a variety of perspectives, and can generate new ideas about the world.*” (Burrows, 2004)

2. *Human rights perspective*: The United Nations have declared the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which stated the basic human rights in 30 articles on the following major themes: “*right to life, slavery slave trade and torture, discrimination, fundamental rights, arrest, detention or exile, privacy, freedom of movement, right to have a nationality, right to marry, right to own a property, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, right to freedom of opinion and expression, right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, right to social security, right to work, right to free choice of employment, right to rest and leisure, right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, right to education, right participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits, right to a community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.*” (UDHR, 1948)

3. *Ecological perspective*: Cox describes three kinds of possible response to solve this problem (ecological crisis). This perspective is a summary on the main approaches in the professional literature of the question. The *first theory* had and maybe still has the dominant role saying that technological development will solve the problems. According to the *second theory*, the change of the social, economical, and political situation is much more important than the technological development. The *third theory* that is a spiritual approach asserts that, “*the blight wrought upon the environment is in reality an externalization of the inner state of the soul of the humanity whose actions are responsible for the ecological crisis*”. The ecological perspective has four different dimensions like *holism and unity, equilibrium, diversity and sustainability*. (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 34.) *Holism and unity*: “*The world and all phenomena are “part of a seamless web of complex interconnecting relationships, characterized by integration and synthesis.*” (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 34.) *Equilibrium*: The changes of the nature which have already been started (species variation, extreme climatic conditions...etc.) is the best example of why the balance (equilibrium) is important. “*...The impact of people on an environment and the inherent needs of the environment must be kept in balance...*” *Diversity*: “*Just as humanity benefits from its immense diversity on many levels, so nature benefits from, indeed requires, diversity – diversity of species and conditions with the web of life.*” (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 34.) *Sustainability*: “*The danger of exhausting land, water, fish, mineral, and other stocks is very real in many parts of the globe, and only an active concern with the principle of sustainability will result in careful management of all natural resources.*” (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 34.)

4. *Social development perspective*: This term may have many different meanings. Cox and Pawar are focusing onto the following people-centered definition: *Social development is a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with the dynamic process of economic development.*” (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 35.) In this perspective the following dimensions are emphasized: value-based, involving proactive intervention, multidimensional and multilevel. When “*Value-based*” social development is discussed three different values may be raised: “*sustenance – the ability to meet*

basic needs, self esteem-to be a person and freedom from servitude-to be able to choose.” (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 36.) “Proactive Intervention” functions as “responses to identify the problems”. “Multidimensional” “...recognizes the inherent importance of the economic, social, political, cultural, legal, and ecological dimension of a society’s life, and seeks to develop each and all of these dimensions in an integrated and holistic sense.” (Cox, Pawar, 2006, p. 36.)

Gray and Fook (2004) could identify the four following tensions in international social work: „Globalization and localization: the tendency for globalizing and localizing tendencies to occur together. “Westernization and indigenization”: the balance between Western and alternative conceptions of practice. “Multiculturalism and universalization”: the implication and response to inbuilt cultural biases Universal-local standards: the incorporation of both universal and localized conceptualizations of social work within our thinking.” (Payne, 2008, p. 5.)

International Social work: main types of activities

In the Social Work Yearbook (1937) the following definition was included: “International Social work includes four main types of activities” (Healy, 2001, p. 6.)

Figure 4. International Social Work’s Four Main Types of Activities



Source: Healy, 2001, p. 6.

“International social case work” is “the application of case work methods to the problems of families and individuals whose social adjustments require cooperative action in two or more countries”. (Healy, 2001, p. 6.) Payne discussed the following international activities:

1. Working in development agencies in the South.
2. Working for official international agencies.
3. Working for agencies dealing with cross-national issues.
4. Working for international social work organizations.

5. *Participating in international conferences, educational or professional visits, exchanges and placements and research.*
6. *Working as a social worker in a country that is foreign to them.*
7. *Working with refugees and immigrants in their own country.* (Payne, 2008, p. 3.)

Walton and el Nasr (1988) wrote about the two different forms of interaction between the local community and the social worker. "*Indigenization*": "*of non-local social work practice, by adapting imported ideas to make them relevant to local practice*". *Authentization*: "*of local practices to form a new locally-relevant structure of ideas.*" (Payne, 2008, p. 5.)

Conclusion

In the Middle Age it was well-known way to learn a profession that the young craftsmen, "*journeymen*" were travelling to other towns and countries to learn from different masters. "*Journeymen were able to work for other masters, unlike apprentices, and generally paid by the day and were thus day labourers. After being employed by a master for several years, and after producing a qualifying piece of work, the apprentice was granted the rank of journeyman.*" (New World Encyclopedia, 2010) A lot of things have been changed from the Middle Age, but the idea of having a journey which is both to improve the professional and personal skills and settle down, start the life and being a "master" is also known in the 21st century.

As I mentioned, I joined different international exchange programs which were part of my motivation to choose this subject in this work. I could experience the personal benefits of working in an international environment. Those professionals who choose this opportunity to improve their professional skills may feel when they have completed their work that this was more than part of their training.

In Hungary, a lot people are afraid to start their journey for financial reasons, fears from leaving the family or their jobs etc. I can understand these fears because I had the same feelings. However for many decades the average Hungarian citizen was not able to travel, not to mention work abroad, they didn't have the opportunity to learn languages, explore other cultures, and meet people from other countries. Now, our country borders are open and we are not just the citizens of Hungary any more but are also citizens of the European Union.

For many social professionals it is still hard to understand why it is important to tackle issues of international social work. I hope my work could convince the sceptical professionals from the social area who doubt the merits of international social work. International social work can be a unique field of our profession. The following quotation is a one-sentence summary of my own findings that are in accordance with international research of the theme:

"As a social worker and world citizen, you belong to a profession at a crossroads of taking leadership in issues of social and economic justice and human rights both at home and beyond. You are in a good company. You have colleagues all over the earth. (Deweese, 2005, p. 290.)

*“The Road goes ever on and on
Out from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
Let others follow it who can!*

*Let them a journey new begin,
But I last with weary feet
Will turn towards the lighted inn,
My evening-rest and sleep to meet.”*
[Tolkien, (b) 1991, p. 339.]

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A SZOCIÁLIS MUNKA NEMZETKÖZI PERSPEKTÍVÁI

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Összefoglalás

A különböző országokban megjelenő, hasonló társadalmi problémák megoldásához elengedhetetlen a szociális szakemberek közötti kommunikáció, tudás és tapasztalatcsere. A mai szociális munkásoknak már nem elég saját szakmájuk, klientúrájuk saját társadalmukban megjelenő problémáknak az ismerete.

A nemzetközi szociális munka elmélete a magyar szakirodalomban egy viszonylag ismeretlen terület, ezért tanulmányomban az eddig angol nyelven megjelent elméletek összefoglalását tűztem ki célul. Magától értetődően munkám nem hiánytalan. A nemzetközi szociális munka egy olyan kiaknázásra váró terület, melynek eredményeit, tanulságait minden nemzet a lehető leghamarabb ezáltal a leghatékonyabban a saját társadalmán belül megjelenő problémák orvoslására használni tudja.

Kulcsszavak: nemzetközi, szociális munka, kultúrákon átívelő, kulturális kompetencia, globalizáció, lokalizáció