Abstract

This paper attempts to describe the main changes in the resocialization policy which was implemented in Russia during the last 3 years (from 2008 to 2010). Two main key issues become the targets of changing the resocialization policy for homeless: absence of state resocialization strategy for homeless and absence of tolerance to poor people in society. The wide range of organizations (NGO, charity funds, religious organizations, municipal and territorial state bodies), which operates in Russia, work with the problem of resocialization by using different ways. However NGOs without official help from state bodies have less opportunity to give real help to homeless. Due to these and other factors, the main challenge now for public authorities is the reanimation of the process of legal regulating the homeless’ status on the national level. Developing and implementing of new package of laws should be based on close dialogue with homeless care organizations.

Key words: homeless, Russia, resocialization policy.

Introduction

Financial crisis brought serious changes in housing sphere: not only in housing behavior of the population and housing production, but also in public policy. Many social programs were cut down and low’s development was stopped.

This paper describes two key issues on the way of resocialization policy after 2008 in Russia.

First of all, there is no official strategy or support program which could be approved by authorities on the national level. The "Prevention of vagrancy and social rehabilitation of persons with no fixed abode, occupation and livelihood" draft bill had been prepared by 2008 and still has not been approved, keeping the state care system for the homeless still just within the realm of discussion.

Secondly, Russian society is faced with the growing problem of homeless’ stigmatization and violence to them. In fact, mass media form the distorting image of ‘BOMZH’ and extrapolate their imperfections, in affect appealing to character defect as a justification of their condition. The homeless are generally faced with indifference and hostility from ordinary people.

The overall aim of the paper is to show the successful models of resocializing activities by different types of homeless care organizations which could be recommended as a base of new State resocializing strategy. To achieve this aim a number of key objectives need to be met. The objectives are as follows. First, to analyze how the problem of homeless is solving on national level by studding
the laws and practices from open sources. The second objective is to provide research in analyzing the form and effectiveness of organizations activity in resocializing sphere. Organizations which help the vulnerable and at-risk do exist and work in practically every major Russian city. We can point to a wide range of such organizations: NGO, charity funds, religious organizations, municipal and territorial state bodies.

The final objective is to assess the policy potential for generating ‘mixed’ communities under the National Strategy. NGOs and other organizations in Russia which take part in nongovernmental care of the homeless have rich experience not only in formulating effective policies of rehabilitation (documents renewal, employment assistance, food service, etc.) but also in overcoming people’s hostility. Therefore official policymakers are well advised to engage in close dialogue with such organization as experts in solving this very serious problem.

From the State point of view: are there any homeless in Russia?

History context

Homelessness of contemporary Russia routed in Soviet period of Russian history. The key issue for understanding the core reason of producing the phenomenon of homelessness is special system of local registration “propiska” which was established by a decree by Stalin of 27th December 1932.

Homelessness in the Soviet period was largely a result of this system, although it was concealed and in practice criminalized. During the 1990's, the number of homeless people increased dramatically due to legal changes, the disintegration of the Soviet state, and the introduction of market economy. In the middle of the 1990s about four million Russians were estimated not to have propiska.(1)

The propiska became (and to a large extent remains) the precondition for most civil rights and social benefits such as formal employment; access to housing; medical insurance; education; unemployment benefits; ration cards; the right to vote; even access to public libraries. Only in 2002, pensions were granted citizens without a propiska.(4) The propiska applies only locally, and citizens thus receive these benefits only on the condition that they stay where they are. Each oblast (territorial unit comparable to a county) or region is basically responsible for the welfare of its own inhabitants and have few duties against others. 'Crossing borders' without officially confirming the movement with a temporary propiska or a guest propiska thus mean a deprivation of civil rights.

The registration was created as a residence permit. Not to have a propiska, i.e. to be BOMZH (Bez Opredelennogo Mesta Zhitelstva, 'without fixed abode), was a criminal offence, just like 'violating the passport laws', i.e. leaving one's city or region of registration for more than three days without registering with the authorities. The offences could result in a couple of years of incarceration, which was about the same penalty as for 'vagrancy'. Homelessness was also criminalized indirectly in the sense that tuneiadstvo ('parasitism', i.e. long term unemployment) was outlawed, and the legal precondition for regular employment was a propiska.

In 1993 the propiska was formally abolished and replaced by 'registration at a place of permanent living', but most people (including bureaucrats) still use the old name because no practical changes have been made to it. A disjunction between law and administrative practice permits the old system to linger on, even though the Constitution of 1993 affirms a number of civil rights that in effect makes it illegal. Citizens have successfully turned to the Constitutional Court to be able to register with acquaintances, arguing that the limitations set by the sanitary norm contradict the constitutionally granted freedom of movement. Nevertheless, the relevant administrative instances as well as low- and middle-level courts persistently ignore these precedents. The same constitutional right to freedom of
movement ostensibly grants the right to free settlement to people who abandon the new CIS-states on grounds of persecution. Throughout the 1990’s, Moscow and St. Petersburg nevertheless demanded a propiska from applicants in order to give them the status as 'forced migrant' (a term applied on Russian citizens) or refugee in these cities and thus the permission to live there (Pilkington 1998:40-42, Zajontjkovskaja 1998). The prerequisite for a residence permit was thus - a residence permit.

The most important changes in the law during the 1990s concern the former connection between criminality and homelessness. The homeless were no longer per definition criminal when the paragraphs about parasitism and vagrancy (§209) disappeared from the criminal code in December 1991 (Stephenson 2000:17). 'Trespassing the passport laws' (§198) remains, but only as an administrative offence penalized by fines.

Current situation

Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development is responsible for solving the problem of homelessness of national level in Russia. But it is also an area of responsibility of other ministries and state bodies. The "Prevention of vagrancy and social rehabilitation of persons with no fixed abode, occupation and livelihood" draft bill describes the system of prevention and social rehabilitation of homeless which will includes:

- bodies of internal affairs;
- bodies of migration registration
- employment services;
- bodies which responsible for health care system and social protection
- guardianship and custody bodies
- bodies carrying out sanitary and epidemiological control
- municipalities
- other bodies which connected with social rehabilitations.

Nowadays the process of interactions between these state bodies doesn’t exist on practice and there are no any lows or documents which describes the interagency cooperation. We have no definitions of “homeless” or “homelessness” in Russian lows. This indeterminacy on the federal level extends on regional and local levels.

On regional level there are some examples of development new procedure of interagency cooperation and interaction. This experience should be spread as examples of good practice as part of common strategy. Current situation is characterized by lack of real complex help form different state bodies. Moreover simple actions of renewal the civil passport could become impossible due to contradiction of lows. Absence of interagency relationship it is not only absence of common programs of rehabilitation and procedures, but also it is a lack of information about the duties and opportunities to help homeless from different participate of rehabilitation policy on local level.

As Russia still have no common strategy or low about prevention and rehabilitation the homeless the problem is not exist for state bodies. However there are a lot of organizations of Russia which try to help people with difficulties. But the most effective and somehow complex practice have not NGO but state local organizations (Rostov-na-Donu, Petrozavodsk). Development and implementing of Common strategy should be based on the model and examples of activities of such organizations.

Resocialization Policy in Russia

This part of paper is contains activity analysis of different actors which take part in development of everyday resocializing and rehabilitating policy in Russia. The analysis has several points: first of all,
we consider the system of actors. The second point describes the sphere of their activity and results. And finally, third point of analysis is an assessment of efficiency of such organization.

**Policymakers**

Among organizations we could define 4 main types which are differ by the source of their financing. Operating as part of non official care systems for homeless they have various functions and possess different opportunities for solving the homeless’ problems. There are a lot of NGOs in Russia which works with excluding groups of peoples. Some of them were established in the beginning of 90-s (as fund “Nochlegka” in St-Peterburg), some of them works only during last 3 years and have less than 10 active volunteers (“Home for people” Kaliningrad). The main financial resources these NGOs get from private donation. In Kaliningrad small group of volunteers drew attentions to the problems of homeless (warm clothes, foods) and attracts local entrepreneurs to take part in permanent charity actions in the City.

Religious organization is the second type of organizations which provide sizeable activity in this area. We could mention such organizations as: Catholic international organization "Caritas", Centre of social help "Lepta", Synodal department of church charity and social service of Russian Orthodox Church (“Miloserdie”), Community of St. Egidiy in Russia, Russian Orthodox movement "Kursky vokzal -- homeless children", “Danish Church Aid” ect. And besides the private donations this type of organizations use financial resources of international (or local) funds. Thereby funds have more flexible opportunities to work with vulnerable peoples than NGOs. Besides of that religion organizations have various experience of solving such problems in other countries (foreign organizations) or can use existent net for helping people on local level (church parishes all over the country). There is very interesting things that until 2010 many orthodox organizations worked separately as different organizations, but since 2010 Russian Orthodox Church began the development the common strategy for all perishes. And in 2011 was approved the document blessed the setting up the service system on the base of each perish for homeless.

The third and forth type of organizations local state and municipal agencies are almost the same, but the sources of their financing are the different states budgets. Practically every Russian town has special state (or municipal) organizations the main aim of which is to help homeless to rehabilitate and renewal documents. But as there are no common strategy in Russia all of this organizations works without overall standard and system of public control. And in spite of we have very successful examples of such organizations in Rostov-na-Donu (Complex social center for people without fixed adobe) and in Petrozavodsk (Centre of social adaptation for people without fixed adobe "Preodolenie"), there are a lot of towns and cities where functioning of state organizations is not very well managed and have no good results.

**Activity**

**NGOs** works with homeless as first authority. In most cases not homeless seek NGOs, but NGOs looking for homeless (for instance, mobile help (medical care), bus “Miloserdie” (food)). On this first stage NGOs becomes a connecting links between different state bodies. Sometimes state bodies which is responsible for working with homeless or vulnerable people begins provide their services only after they get some kind of approval from NGOs.

However NGOs also take active part in resocializing policy: alcoholic rehabilitation, art therapy, labor therapy, involvement homeless to social important projects. The main goal of NGO is to help people with difficulties change by themselves. Some NGOs are also carry out prevention and support functions for people who has high risks of poverty and homelessness.

**Religious organizations** are focused on psychological work with homeless people, individual programs for personal development, rehabilitation through faith and arts therapy. Solve the problem of homelessness by helping people getting home in their soul. As NGOs religious organizations provides different activities for other people to increase the level of tolerance to homeless in society (exhibitions, mass actions in stores, tickets in bus with paintings of homeless ect).
State and municipal organizations first of all are responsible for keeping secure the society from homeless. So the first stage is the system of sanitary disinfections and free medical care for homeless. And due to lows no other organizations have legal opportunity to render such services. State organizations are also help homeless to renewal documents, get temporary registrations and find a job. Moreover state organizations can also help with temporary shelter or lodging for the night. But it is only a first step that couldn’t guarantee that homeless will live after this kind of help in society. They satisfied only their firsts needs. The second and very important stage which doesn’t exists, unfortunately, in every state organizations – the stage of rehabilitation of homeless. The best examples of Rostov-na-Donu and Pertozavodsk indicate that rehabilitation function of social centers helps not only homeless to include in society but to earn money for develop the center by themselves. In Rostov-na-Donu develop and implement the project of Workshops for homeless.

Results

As we consider in our analysis all kind of organizations have their own specialty in the sphere of resocialisation the homeless. It caused by different opportunities and accesses to resources (not only financial, but also power resources). Besides of great flexibility and amount experience NGO cannot operate without state organizations because of lack of financial resources (for example to buy or build a house for homeless) and lack of authority. Religious organizations have the same restrictions: having more power than NGO they also cannot solve some problems without states bodies.

We also can not admit that current system of social care which exist in every towns in Russia is successful, because there are no legitimate system of interagency communications. And all successful examples are only a result of strong non-official communications and personal relationships between the heads of organizations.

Conclusion and recommendations

According to our analysis we consider different models of organization which provides resocialisation services. The resources of their existence were also analyzed due to the understanding of their strength and weaknesses. NGOs has the best flexibility and opportunities to work with homeless on street. Moreover NGO is a nexus between homeless and state bodies. Nongovernmental organizations is very effective in the sphere of individual help. They can realize support in those territories where no special social care organizations. In our ideal construction of social care system NGO should stay as first step for homeless. All outreach work could be realized by different NGO according to contract of outsourcing for state (or municipal) social care organizations.

Specific of religious organizations is their ability to work in different stage of our process of care the homeless. They can operate as a first aid station (in perishes) and also as a centre of rehabilitation with strong legal support from state side of system.

The state system of social care for homeless people have to includes not only the sanitary disinfections and free medical care for homeless, but also legal support (renewal of passports and other documents) and employment assistance. Social care agencies should be organized as state autonomous organization with wide opportunities to using and earn money on legal way. We shouldn’t forget that the period of resocializing is two times higher than the period of homelessness. According to these new common strategy of resocialization of the vulnerable people have to includes detailed programs of rehabilitations which will be based on significant experience of NGOs and religious organizations.

As we take in account the second issue of our research – policy of tolerance for “other society” – we can see that in the sphere of social perception of homeless problems doesn’t solved on the national level. We should also admit the great experience of NGOs and religious organizations in such sphere. In spite of significant activity of different organization’s nets (such as “Esli doma net”, ) which unit
more than 20 NGOs and religious organizations they define a lack of state’s influence in this issue. According to last conference of the national policy in overcoming the people hostility was recognized as very important step of solving the problem of homeless and vagrancy. Moreover, the program of overcoming the people’s hostility should be aimed on building the “mixed” society. Homeless are the same people as others but in difficult situation. Policy of reservation and special lows cannot solve the problem of social disintegration. Even for NGO’s net it is difficult to share their experience on the whole country. That’s why development of new state strategy for homeless should take into account the great experience of NGOs.