15th Edition of the International Conference on Sciences of Education,
Studies and Current Trends in Science of Education, ICSED 2017,
9-10 June 2017, Suceava (Romania)

Studies and Current Trends in Science of Education

Current Problems of Motherhood and Childhood Social Support in the Developed Countries

Viktoriia STYNSKA

<https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.icsed2017.45>

How to cite: Stynska, V. (2017). Current Problems of Motherhood and Childhood Social Support in the Developed Countries. In O. Clipa (ed.), *Studies and Current Trends in Science of Education* (pp. 414-422). Suceava, Romania: LUMEN Proceedings. <https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.icsed2017.45>

© The Authors, LUMEN Conference Center & LUMEN Proceedings.

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the conference

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited

Current Problems of Motherhood and Childhood Social Support in the Developed Countries

Viktoriia STYNSKA¹

Abstract

The article outlines the urgent problems of motherhood and childhood social support in the developed countries. Different types of state assistance to families with children in developed countries are analyzed: tax credits for families with children; at one-time childbirth assistance; support package for child care up to 3 years; special assistance for low-income families with children; grant support for the family; economic support for single parents; birth assistance for the second, third and subsequent children; special programs for young parents. The attention is devoted to the issues of international experience to overcome the demographic crisis and the main directions of its use in Ukraine. The conclusion: one of the areas of social policy support for mothers and children is the successful overcoming the demographic crisis by: reducing mortality through health reform and improve welfare of people; reducing the number of divorces; economic support for young families as child natural surroundings; improvement of living standards of large families; strengthening legal protection of children and others.

Keywords: social support, motherhood, childhood, developed countries, the demographic crisis, state assistance.

Relevance of research

The system of social support for motherhood and childhood is one of the institutions of social and economic policy implementation. Its aim is to provide social stability and development of the society. In most developed countries social support system includes system of social protection, including family assistance and other support to families in different situations. In this context international experience of social support formation in the developed countries is relevant to use key ideas in Ukraine.

Analysis of recent research and publications

The review of scientific and methodological literature showed that the problem of motherhood and childhood social support in Ukraine is not

¹SHEE " The VasylStefanykPrecarpathianNationalUniversity ", Ukraine, e-mail: svt9@ukr.net.

investigated completely enough. Some aspects like social and educational conditions for the maternity and childhood protection (I. Zvereva, L. Beztelesna, O. Karaman, B. Krymer, V. Orzhehovska, Zh. Petrochko, V. Stynska, I. Chekhovska, G. Yurchyk, T. Janchenko and others); conceptual basis of social and educational work with families (T. Alekseenko, V. Bondarovska, L. Bunin, T. Govorun, V. Kravets, I. Trubavina etc.); foreign experience of families' social protection (L. Kramarenko, S. Nychyporenko etc.) have been highlighted. At the same time, motherhood and childhood social support in the developed countries has not received full disclosure in pedagogical science. This determined the choice of the theme of the article. Besides, the outlined investigation continues the author's series of articles concerning the outlined problem (Stynska, 2016).

Presentation of the material

According to the analysis of sources, today there are the following types of state assistance to families with children in developed countries.

1. Tax benefits for families with children. An example of the successful application of this type of support to families with children are the USA, France and Luxembourg. In the US, families with children have the opportunity to reduce their tax liability to \$1000 (per child) every year. In France, the greater the number of children in the family, the less the costs incurred in the payment of family major taxes - income and property. As there is a progressive scale of income tax in the country, this policy promotes families with middle and high incomes. Parents are also able to write off from the tax base fee for private preschools, if not satisfied with the extensive network of municipal kindergartens. In Czech Republic, if the man – the father of two children receives an average salary (\$ 600), and his wife does not work, joint taxation can save 380 dollars a year if the family will have one more child – 460 dollars a year.

2. One-time birth allowance is paid in all the European countries except the Netherlands, Norway, Iceland, Sweden and Monaco. For example, in Australia for the child's birth parents receive 4 thousand Australian dollars (3075 US dollars), one third of this amount – immediately after birth, the rest 2/3 – during the first two years of child's life. The total sum of payments in Ireland is 1905 euros and is paid in three equal parts: after birth, and at the age of 4 and 12. In Luxembourg the entire amount of 1740 euros and Liechtenstein (2100 CHF or 1690 US dollars) is paid during the first year

after birth. Slovenia is the only European country where the specified type of assistance (at about 2 average salaries) is paid only with children's products.

3. Support package for child care up to 3 years does not cover the real costs of the child for most families in most countries. Most significant this type of assistance is in Germany, where parents of children born after January, 1 2007, during the first year of life receive financial assistance in the amount of 67% of their previous salary, but no more than 1,800 euros per month. If the child is cared by the father not less than for 2 months, then the family is entitled to an additional two-month assistance. In France, the parents of the child up to three years will receive 150 euros per month, regardless of the size of their profits. If a family has two children by the time they reach adulthood, parents receive 100 euros a month (this amount increases with the number of children). Most countries are paying for child care, exercising in the event of separation of parents from work due to child care. The size of such payments may depend on a previous income and have a fixed or tied to other social norms limit. For example, in Denmark it is 60% of unemployment payment; in Belgium when being on vacation without any employment, benefits are paid out at a rate of 685 euros in case of partial separation - 342 euros if the parent who takes leave is younger than 50 years, and 580 euros if over 50 years. In the Czech Republic assistance for child care is provided in the amount of 40% of the average wage, in Hungary – 70% preincome if one of the parents is on maternity leave. In Norway it is 80 or 100% of income, depending on the duration of leave and, until the child is 3 years old, 107 euros a month are paid, which can be received by grandfather or grandmother if they are engaged in child care. In Romania, at low amounts of monthly payments in case of being on leave for child care (2 years) 263 euros per month are paid. In Poland maternity payments are 104 euros per month. In such countries as Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Ireland there are no such payments.

4. Special assistance for low-income families with children is paid in Greece, Spain and Italy. In France, Ireland, Portugal and the UK poor families receive special social assistance depending on family income, in addition to what they get from state on general terms.

5. Economic support to single parents by the state is an important part of family policy in the leading countries in terms of birth rate in Europe – in Finland, the UK and Ireland. In France and Belgium, for example, such aid is in the form of tax benefits, and in Germany – in monetary and material terms. In Sweden, nearly a quarter of single mothers receive social assistance, which is 4 times higher than that of all of the country's households.

6. Birth assistance for the second, third and subsequent child can be a separate form of aid and additional to the main one. For example, in

Serbia there are no payments for the first child, whereas parents get \$ 1,000 for the second one, for the third one – 1800 dollars, fourth – 2400 dollars. In Latvia, for the birth of the second child to the amount granted for the first child (LVL 296 or 421 euros), since 2006, there is additional payment in the amount of 100 lats (EUR 142.3) for the third supplement increases to 150 lats (213.4 EUR) for the third and subsequent – to 200 lats (284.6 EUR). In the Russian Federation, the mother who gave birth to a second child after 1 January 2006, gets the money on a special account and it can be spent after 2010 only for certain purposes (children education, living conditions of the family improvement, or in addition to their own pensions). In France, for the third child mother or father are entitled to annual leave, for which the state, in addition to all other benefits and assistance, also pay 750 euros monthly.

7. Special programs for young parents exist in many countries, and the most attractive for citizens is a policy that is being implemented by the Government of Estonia. One of the young parents (father or mother) can receive within a year after birth their full salary for the last place of work, but no more than 1,200 euros – three average salaries in the country. In addition, since the beginning of 2004 there is a special program loan repayment by the state to education for young parents. Students who gave birth to their children in 2003 – 2004 or later are eligible to file a request for a partial repayment of its loans to the state. The father or mother of a child may apply for repayment of 50% of the loan. In the case of each subsequent child extra state covers 50% of the loan balance in the birth of twins – 75% of the entire amount at once, three children – 100% of the sum (The international experience of birthrate stimulation and basic directions of its use in Ukraine, <http://old.niss.gov.ua/Monitor/Oktober/3.htm>).

8. Financial support to parents at childbirth as a grant – one-time childbirth assistance, which can be paid immediately or within a certain relatively minor period of time (several months). In some countries (the Netherlands), there is no such an aid, or it may be paid not from the first-born child, but from the third one (Spain). A significant sum of money is paid in Norway – 4092 euros. In Italy, for example, there is a choice between the state, not tied to income assistance in the amount of 1,777 euros or municipal aid in the amount of 277 euros for 5 months. In some cases, the grant amount increases with the birth of two or more children. Differentiation of grant order is practised in some countries, but it is not common. In Latvia and Belgium grant is reduced for the second and subsequent children from 1064 to 800 euros. Also, as an exception, there is a choice between cash or relevant goods and services.

Grant payments are also made in case of child adoption, but it is not very common. This benefit is paid, for example, in Belgium, in the amount of

1,064 euros. In Finland, the size of the grant in case of adoption significantly varies depending on the country of child origin, and in Sweden a significant grant of 4432 euros is paid only when the foreign child is adopted in the family (Financial support to families with children in Europe: birth grants and other payments, http://demostudy.blogspot.com/2012/05/blog-post_110.html).

One of the main modern state family policy in Western Europe countries is to support families with children in which both parents work. Governments pursue policies designed to help women to combine employment and motherhood, among its activities - making and improving the legislation of maternity leave and protection against dismissal during maternity leave.

Scandinavian "welfare state" demonstrate a model of social policies to support working families. Duration of paid leave for mothers in case of a childbirth ranges from six months in Denmark and Iceland up to over a year in Norway and Sweden. The amount of pregnancy and childbirth support are meant to cover completely the loss of income. They are comparable to the sum of sickness and unemployment support.

The social policy of modern states aimed at promoting more gender-balanced distribution of responsibilities in the family, in particular encouraging parents to take more part in caring for the newborn baby. The most advanced in this aspect social legislation of Scandinavia countries that provides paid parental leave for childcare for both mother or father depending on their choice.

In Sweden, the duration of parental leave is 480 days (16 months), and for the first 390 days it is paid at 80-100% of salary. Another 90 days of leave are provided at a lower payment, but the use of parental leave by men is not essential. Due to this fact, governments of these countries in the 1990s have established besides parental leave, special leave for parents ("quotas for parents"), provided during the mother's leave, usually in the first weeks after birth. In Sweden and Norway, their duration reaches one month, and if they are not used by the father, they are cancelled. In Sweden, parents have the right to work for 1 hour less getting for that hour not salary but cash benefits for children.

In 2003 the British government increased paid maternity leave up to 6 months. The amount of maternity aid is almost doubled. It reaches 90% of average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks and standard sum of 102.8 pounds per week for the remaining 20 weeks. With the aim to encourage fathers to take more part in caring for the newborn baby, a two-week vacation was introduced for them, which is paid approximately at the same

norms as the parental leave. In 2007 paid maternity leave was extended up to 9 months.

In France, maternity leave lasts for 16 weeks at birth of the first and second child; 26 weeks – for the third, 34 weeks – for the birth of twins. It is paid as the wages. Since January 2002 parental leave for 11 days was introduced for one child, 18 days – the birth of twins. In Germany 100 %-paid maternal leave is for 14 weeks and at 67% paid parental leave (split with the father) – 12 months (The state family policy in Western Europe, <http://shev.gov.ua>).

Making a final assessment of the impact of these instruments of state population policy based on relative terms, it must be concluded that the greatest success has been made by countries that have not yet reached the level of population replacement, but have been able to overcome the negative trends in its demographics. In Denmark, for example, since 1989 there is a steady increase. In Sweden, the natural increase in population began in 2002 after a five-year excess of deaths over births, observed since 1997. Britain had the biggest demographic problems in 1976 –1978 years of the last century and, since 1979 has a steady increase in the natural population. As the system of high level of social security through high taxes works well on fertility increase in France and the Scandinavian countries, the same measures do not provide the desired effect in Germany (Henderson& White,2004).

Thus, European countries that managed to avoid the demographic trap, not only could found an effective way to stimulate fertility and reproduction, but invented individual models of human resources according to their own development goals, economic conditions and cultural traditions. For example, the success of France can be explained with the fact that the government of the country realized the danger of falling birth earlier than other European countries that have not seen this phenomenon as a danger of their successful development. France embarked on stimulating the birth rate after the adoption of the Family Code in 1939.

The experience of the developed countries shows that when low fertility exists for a very significant period, its increasement is almost impossible due to the loss of "parenting culture" and negative social attitudes towards families with children, especially large ones. This phenomenon is observed in Germany, where the birthrate began to fall much earlier than in other European countries (the 20-ies). Inadequate system out-of-home childcare, inflexible labour laws, long term of getting higher education and high youth unemployment are not relevant to the desire to have children. As a result, in modern German society childlessness is most common among other countries - according to experts of the European Union, about 30% of German women are childless, and it is considered normal.

The same situation could be repeated in Ukraine, because of fertility declining in our country for a long period of time throughout the XX century. Unfortunately, none of the European countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was able to secure the success of policies to encourage fertility, carried them in 80 years. Under the conditions of transitional economy more women in these countries were forced to choose between career and motherhood, or give birth to only one child because of the increased risk of family poverty.

Until recently it was assumed that the situation will be improved with the beginning of economic stability and rising living standards. However, the presence of children in the family today still remains an obstacle to achieving its financial stability. According to the research by department of living standards of the Institute of Demography and Social Research of National Academy of Science of Ukraine, the level of average income and expenses of families with children and young families is 16-20% lower than the average one in Ukraine. In families with children the highest rates of poverty are observed: it is twice higher than in families without children. The value of the poverty rate is directly proportional to the number of children in the family. The appearance of each of the next child increases the risk approximately in half for the family to get into the poor category. If the poverty level of families with one child is 25.8%, for families with four children or more this figure increases up to 87.7%.

Until the child reaches 3 years old the family not only bear additional costs because of its completion, but loses money because one of its members (commonly the child's mother) compelled to suspend employment, and monthly payments for child up to 3 years do not even cover its cost of living. Due to the introduction of increased assistance at childbirth in 2005 it was possible to reduce poverty in this family category to 35% (compare 41% in 2004), that practically corresponds to the average level of poverty in all families with children. It's not surprising that under such circumstances, three quarters of new families (according to the Ukrainian Institute of Social Research) reserves to replenish the family for later.

Another disturbing feature of demographic development is that, along with the birthrate increasement in recent years negative tendencies of it take place.

First, the number of illegitimate births is increasing annually. Thus, during the period of independence the number of illegitimate births has almost doubled, and in 2006 was more than 20% of all newborns. This is explained by the increased prevalence of unregistered ("civil") marriages and pregnancies rising in teenage groups, which often are unplanned and unwanted. If in 2001 the proportion of illegitimate births in the age group of

18 years was 29.5% in 2005 – 2006 it was of 42%. Even if a child born in a family, there is no guarantee that it will be brought up in a complete one. Most couples that divorced (58.6% of the total in 2006), have children and, therefore, the number of children growing in single-parent families each year is increasing. In 2006, single-parent families made up 27.5% of all households with small children. Under the circumstances where the level of income does not meet the full financial support even in complete families with children, parents' divorce is an additional risk of poverty for children.

Second, since 2001, together with the increasing birthrate, the number of deadborn children and number of babies that died during their first year of life remain high. Moreover, in 2005 and 2006 there was an increase in the mortality rate of children under 1 year (per 1,000 births). The index (per 1,000) mortality in 2005 is 16.7%; in 2014 up to 14.6%. The index (per 1000 people) birth rate in 2005 is 9.1%, in 2014 – 10.9%. The index (per 1,000) natural decrease in 2005 is 7.6%, in 2014 – 3.7%. Whereas, according to the State Statistics Committee, in Ukraine the same indices are 1.5-2 times higher than in European countries (Terets,2010).

Summary

Thus, one of the areas of motherhood and childhood social policy support in the developed countries is successful demographic crisis overcome by: reducing mortality through health reform and improving welfare of people; reducing the number of divorces; economic support for young families as child natural surroundings; improvement of living standards of large families; legal protection strengthening of children and others.

Based on the above mentioned conclusion should be made on significant diversification of policy instruments complex to stimulate the birthrate in Ukraine. In particular, along with providing direct assistance at birth, the main directions of state policy aimed at reducing the negative effect of the above mentioned events should be the following.

1. Assistance for childcare up to three years should serve as the equalization of income for households where children are educated, and others. This is possible if a family member who does not work will receive most of their wages during the first year of child's life (as in Germany and Estonia).

2. The mechanism of economic support of single parents should be considered. In modern conditions the child support payment system is not effective. The most successful in terms of demographic prospects of countries is single parents support as a central part of family policy. Children

should be provided with financial guarantees (at least at the level of its cost of living) regardless of the marriage circumstances of their parents.

3. Economic factors of childlessness have different evidence in urban and rural areas. Development and implementation of national standards of upbringing, education, health and social protection of children will help to overcome partially disparities in access to social goods and services between children in rural and urban areas.

4. In cities the biggest obstacle to large families is the lack of appropriate housing. For example, as in Estonia the state pays part of credit to education for young parents in Ukraine there may be a state program designed to pay housing loans for families with two or more children. On the one hand, it is less costly than providing social housing, and from the other – to encourage large families of those whose belong to the middle class (can afford to buy accommodation on their own, in case of provided compensation or reduced rates for loans).

References

- The state family policy in Western Europe*. Retrieved from <http://shev.gov.ua>
- Clipa, O. & Gavriluta, P. (2017). Early Childhood Education – Parents Perceptions, *The European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences* (EpSBS), pp.1716-1723, *Financial support to families with children in Europe: birth grants and other payments*. Retrieved from http://demostudy.blogspot.com/2012/05/blog-post_110.html
- Stynska, V. (2016). *Motherhood and Childhood Social Support in Belgium*. Humanity Studio: collection of scientific works Drohobych State Pedagogical University named after Ivan Franko. Pedagogy. Drohobych, V.2/34.
- Terets, V. (2010). Natural population movement and depopulation in Ukraine at the background of European demographic situation. Ukraine: Labour Aspects, V.4.
- The international experience of birthrate stimulation and basic directions of its use in Ukraine*. Retrieved from <http://old.niss.gov.ua/Monitor/Oktobre/3.htm>
- Henderson, A., & White, L. (2004). Shrinking welfare states? Comparing maternity leave benefits and child care programs in European Union and North American welfare states, 1985-2000. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11, (3).