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Mending the broken link

Finding an Innovative Approach for inclusive social policy for the most marginalized children and families in Shumen Region, Bulgaria

Author: Yassen Georgiev

Supervisor: Elsa Coimbra

Abstract

This paper explores the opportunities of developing innovative approaches for new types of social policies aimed at the most marginalized and socially excluded communities that live in the North-Eastern Bulgarian Region of Shumen. The study focuses on the processes of transition and the social conditions in post-communist Bulgaria, the reasons for marginalization, and seeks an appropriate model for a new type of service – the Family Counseling Centers sponsored by UNICEF Bulgaria. The paper explains how this case of partnership between State and nonprofit organization can lead to improvement of the well-being of communities. The findings of this thesis lead to problems, concerning the approach towards human development and social policies and the sustainability of every effort in current and future environments.

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1. Introduction

One of the most important events of the 20th century is the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. The victory of the Western neo-liberal economies has led to the transformation of former communist states in the East. This process is known as Transition and the countries that have undergone through it – transitional. For the past 24 years, many scholars have explored the socio-economic processes that took place in these countries. Yet, there is still much debate on where the transition has gone well, where it needs some amendments and where it failed completely.

The reform of its social policies is probably one of the most painful reforms that each post-communist country has undergone. The problem is that communist states have managed to establish a well organized, heavily subsidized planned economy with social security networks, offering generous pensions, sick leaves, healthcare, education, etc. for everyone and this system kept people in an artificial state of false security and carelessness (Fenger 2007:14). With the fall of communism and the quick liberalization of many aspects of the political and economic life in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, the livelihoods of many people living in this part of the world took a turn for the worse.

The transition was supposed to happen in the form of the so-called J-turn. This theoretical model states that in order for post-communist countries to undergo liberalization and transform into working, living and breathing market economies, they should experience a brief shock in the form of a slow drop in their public spending (including social policies), but will return to growth and will surpass the levels of income before the democratic transition, shortly after the political and economic systems have been reset (Sengoku 2002:232). Yet, the transition did not go as envisioned. What is even worse – much attention was given to the political and economic reformation of the system, leaving the social policy issues unattained (idem:242). Thus, the switch from planned economy to a liberal one paved the way for few phenomena that were forgotten during the years of Communism – poverty and unemployment. According to the same author the ones that took the worst hit from the early stages of the process of transition, were the most vulnerable groups – elderly, uneducated and marginalized groups and their children (idem).

The aforementioned scenario unfolded in Bulgaria as well. The main focus was on changing political and economic structures in the first half of the 90s that eventually led to an economic meltdown in the early days of 1997, leaving aside the reform of social policies. As a consequence, the unemployment numbers (mostly factory workers) rose, the ethnic communities (Roma) fell into poverty and marginalization, which lead to additional pressure on the already overstretched welfare system (Nikolov 2008:103).

Currently, due to extensive cooperation with International Organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations and European Union, most of the reforms are completed and the country is part of the EU and NATO. However, not all of the severe problems with marginalized communities are resolved. On the contrary, the country is struggling with a growing number of people falling into poverty and seems incapable of addressing the needs of the most affected communities.

A modern approach in addressing the problems of the communities, prone to falling into poverty and marginalization, is to give way to non-profit organizations to implement their own views and ideas on how to provide help. It is written within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies' "New Strategy in Social Policy" document from 2002, that non-governmental organizations (NGO) are an essential part of the future reforms within the social welfare system. The reasons given in the document state that NGOs are familiar with the specific background of certain communities, work directly with them and can provide high level of social services (MLSP 2002). The State is opening up to the idea of delegating some of its services to non-profit organizations. Having said that, many times, non-profits step in where State services are inefficient or inexistent, being more of a substitute instead of a partner in providing a quality product.

1.1. Research Question

The main purpose of this paper is to determine a partnership between State and NGOs that leads to improvement of the wellbeing of communities. After careful evaluation of the problems that have occurred in modern day Bulgarian social policy, this paper asks the following question:

How partnerships with non-profit organizations can lead to innovative approaches in social policy for the improvement of the lives of children and their families in marginalized communities in Shumen Region?

1.2. Looking back to previous models

For decades, researchers have argued which model is better: state-centered policies or a neo-liberal approach. This debate has been a focal point for scholars in economics, political sciences, sociology, etc. Each side seems to have its large share of supporters. In order to obtain a better understanding of how these models actually develop in the real world, this paper reviews what research has revealed about the process of transition of Bulgaria from a Communist regime to democracy through neo-liberal reforms. It also explores how social benefits and the provision of social services changed and how that affected the most marginalized communities in the country.

1.2.1. The Communist Welfare State

During the pre-communist era, Bulgaria was predominantly an agricultural state. Some classic welfare models existed, but they were implemented in order to facilitate people living and working in the cities, rather than those living in the rural areas (Cerami and Vanhuyse 2009:114).

With the ascension of Communism in Bulgaria and Central and Eastern Europe, this trend changed. According to Cerami and Vanhuyse (2009) it is a common misunderstanding that when talking about welfare and its provision, we usually talk about parliamentary democracies, liberal markets and free-market economies (2009:22-23). Communist societies are often excluded from different research on social policy and welfare, due to their social and economic differences. Cerami and Vanhuyse however argue that although civil and political rights were demolished in Central and Eastern European countries, there were guaranteed

social security benefits and heavy subsidies on housing, healthcare, goods, utilities, education etc (2009:22).

According to Bafoil (2009), the three pillars of communist social welfare are the national community, the national enterprise and the family. In order for the state to legitimately take away some of the civil rights and freedom of people, it had to give back a full package of guaranteed employment, housing, universal education and healthcare and generous conditions for families and children (Bafoil 2009:23-24). Compared to Western standards, the quality of these services was doubtful, yet globally distributed. All of this provided a sense of social security among people and an understanding that the State is there to nurture and take care for each and every person (2009:24).

A further examination of the social policies during the Communist regime reveals that families and children played an integral role in the system. Bafoil states that in addition to the subsidies on healthcare and education, the communist welfare state provided generous maternity leaves for working women that could have spanned from 6 months to 18 months in some cases. The author also underlines the role of the communist regime in terms of gender equality. Policies aimed at the inclusion of women on every level of the communist society, which paved the way to higher levels of employment (2009:25).

Although this system had its downturns, for many people in Bulgaria, as well as in other countries with communist regimes, a sense of nostalgia can be noted towards the “better” times, predating the democratic changes (Bafoil 2009:172). People that lived through this period seem to miss these “benefits” addressing employment, healthcare and personal security. But despite that sense of nostalgia, one of the biggest arguments against this system comes from Bob Deacon (2000), who states that all of the advantages of this “paternalist” system are undermined by one sole disadvantage – the freedom and right to articulate autonomously social needs from below (2000:147).

1.2.2. The Neo-Liberal Reforms

After the fall of the regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, the tendency for full liberalization of every sector was adopted in most ex-communist countries, including Bulgaria. These

reforms came with the support of organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Deacon and Stubbs 2003:18). As mentioned earlier, there was a focus on the liberalization of the economy and democratization of the political sphere, but the social politics were somewhat left unattained. In a volatile new environment (such as the early 90`s), budgets soon became overstretched and social benefits, according to Deacon, were the first thing to get cut (2000:151).

Deacon and Stubbs go even further by stating that a neo-liberal approach towards reforming ex-communist states is dangerous because it can create an insurmountable cleavage between very rich and very poor (Deacon and Stubbs 2003:15). According to them, this type of society is called “an hourglass society” where there is a small elite of very rich, a large amount of poor or very poor and an eroding middle class, responsible for paying social security, taxes and providing for the poorest members of the social structure (idem:16).

Another phenomenon of the early 90`s was the spike in unemployment. Due to the dismantlement of many large factories and enterprises, a large number of workers were left unemployed. The lack of funding and the shrinking budgets have contributed to cutting down on social spending. Under-qualified and ill-educated workers were the first to feel the pressure from this process (Sengoku 2002:242). Some minorities, such as the Roma, spiraled into poverty and social exclusion, due to the large percent of unqualified and illiterate workers. Since there was no need for such kind of workforce anymore, those families were left to choose between moving to a bigger city, moving abroad or just resolving to begging and theft (Mizov 2008:144).

Although the neo-liberal reforms, recommended by international organizations, were supposed to bring better services, a working market economy and a democratic society, the immediate effects were negative (Sengoku 2002:233). Some countries, such as Bulgaria, tried to stir out of the calamity of immediate cuts in welfare spending, but this proved to be unsustainable – first because the system had to deal with a new phenomenon – unemployment and second - due to the large amount of needy and with budgets shrinking every year due to economic instability, the welfare system in its original shape was overloaded and on a collision course (Deacon 2000:151).

Another factor worth mentioning is the institutionally pluralized welfare system. Social security funds became separated from the state budget, pensions became separated from healthcare insurance, and social services became detached from the government, due to

decentralization or privatization (Sengoku 2002:233). This process of decentralization left many people wondering how to get access to different services and whom they should turn to if they require help and assistance. One possible reason for this decentralization of welfare provision correlates with Deacon's criticism of the Communist welfare system – not conforming with a bottom up approach in developing its services (Deacon 2000:147). Local authorities are considered closer to people and should have better knowledge of their needs, thus leading to services that are better addressed and reach more people. The introduction of private players in the field of social policy and welfare was also part of the restructuring of this sector. In reality this didn't turn out as planned due to many reasons, one of which is the unpreparedness of the new actors to take such responsibilities (Standing 1996:250). Sengoku (2002) argues that it is not the guidelines of reforming and restructuring that proved to be harmful for states such as Bulgaria, but the fact that organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank distanced themselves from influencing and enforcing the correct path to reforms in sovereign countries (2002:238).

In the aftermath of this social and economic meltdown a more adequate reform took place, leading to a more stable financial, economic and social environment. Markets were opened, a stricter control was imposed on privatization of social services provision and politics in accordance with the EU accession procedures were adopted. Still, the harm was done, and social security networks had already decreased their coverage. Less fortunate communities with low level of education and income were left outside some of the social security schemes and networks (Cerami and Vanhuyse 2009:121).

1.3. Marginalization of communities

As Dennis Goulet and Marco Walshok found out in their research on marginalized communities in Spain, there are two types of marginalization – the first is a population that resides in rural areas or has migrated in the cities, but is left uninitiated to urban values and lifestyle; the second is smaller in quantity than the first but suffers exclusion and lack of understanding not only from society but from the first type of marginalized as well, due to some ethnic or historic reason (Goulet and Walshok 1971:454). The second type of communities suffer a double layer of marginalization: being excluded from society and at the

same time – being excluded from other communities that they might relate to ethnically, historically or in another way (idem).

Dobrinka Kostova (2003) brings up the discussion of double isolation by using some communities in Bulgaria as an example. She confirms the founding of the previous research that the most marginalized communities suffer double discrimination –from the majority and from their own elites (2003:53).

During communism, these marginalized communities became an important part of the State`s emphasis on equality. Minority and Majority members used to work together, had access to universal free health coverage, regardless of ethnicity. Education was mandatory for everyone and those who lacked proper literacy were assigned to the so-called “construction forces” in the army – providing men with professional qualifications and employment (UNDP 2006:14). Although there has always been discrimination, segregation and prejudice against representatives of minorities (mainly Roma), the communist human development and integration policies provided development opportunities for all communities in three important sectors – healthcare, education and employment (idem).

These benefits were given to people who were willing to work either in collectivized farming or in big factories and the perspective of staying unemployed during communist times was considered unacceptable and a sign of indolence and unwillingness to change and improve (Kostova 2003:52). But after the neo-liberal reforms came and swept away the privileges and social benefits of the communist welfare scheme, unemployment became widespread, especially within ethnic Roma communities with low levels of literacy and professional qualification (Mizov 2008:153-154). This echoed in a quick decay of neighborhoods and villages with mixed ethnic profiles, closing communities to the outside world and pushing them into poverty, marginalization and isolation (MLSP Report 2014:7).

Lack of proper requalification schemes aimed specifically at the communities that were most at risk of falling into poverty, pushed these families into a vicious circle of social exclusion, disconnection from society and deep poverty that led them to further marginalization. Sources of income for these people vary from collecting herbs and mushrooms and going through the garbage to theft, prostitution and other criminal activities (MLSP Report 2014:15). Education levels among these communities are very low, family planning is non-existent and parents with many children usually neglect the education of their young in favor of their economic

potential or simply abandon their children, due to the fact that they cannot take care and spend time and money on them (UNICEF FFEC IR 2013:4).

All of this is happening in the context of another severe effect of the process of transition – the aging population and the steep drop in birth rates in the last 25 years. This tendency can be observed in most high income countries, but Bulgaria is still far from that category. The country is still in the middle income section, and with rapid depopulation accelerating in the past few years due to the effects of the Economic Crisis the chances of the country to sustain its social policy through growth are slipping away (WB 2014). From nearly 9 million people living in the country prior to 1989, today the number has fallen to 7.3 million (NSI 2014). This process is having a serious impact on children`s well-being as well. According to Eurostat, more than 52% of the children in the country are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat 2014).

The fact that there are poor and marginalized families living today in Bulgaria is not as alarming as the fact that poverty and marginalization is close to becoming a closed reproductive process leading to further isolation, as described by Goulet and Wolshock and Kostova earlier. With families struggling on a daily basis, refusing to let their children go to school or the lack of educational facilities in remote urban areas, is bringing up a new generation of uneducated young people, who just like their parents are at risk of becoming excluded from society, giving motion to yet another cycle of this vicious circle of marginalization. The inadequate healthcare for these children is another problem. Lack of access to proper medical care and basic health education can lead to the spread of different diseases that can threaten children`s lives (Shumen Region Strategy 2012:10).

Although it lacks the scale of the social services schemes prior to 1989, the State has tried on several occasions to approach these marginalized communities throughout the country. There have been Community Support Centers, welfare schemes and other services that have the sole purpose of helping them. Unfortunately they have not been very successful in their work, because such institutions often lack the capacity, funding and motivation to actually address the root of the problem instead of just dealing with the consequences. Usually their work is structured around methods and understandings that are considered outdated and of low quality (FFECP 2010:7). A good example of the self-reproductive problems of exclusion is the bureaucratic processes that need to be completed, such as filling in forms and documents,

whereas many of the beneficiaries are unable to write and read or don't speak Bulgarian (FFECP 2010:4).

Over the period of transition, these communities have developed a severe lack of trust in government authorities. They consider themselves left out of society or at least not so important members of it and that can make integration through the provision of educational, medical and employment schemes very hard. According to Kostova (2003), marginalized communities are still in the process of integrating. They struggle in coping with the loss of the large scale human development effort during the Regime. And while others tend to carry on by relying mainly on themselves, some communities still expect help from the State. When this help doesn't come, they lose trust in the State and its services, leading to mutual disconnection and further isolation (2003:52).

This disconnection between State and ethnic minorities has led to widespread poverty in ethnic and mixed neighborhoods and villages. Some families and communities suffer not only from deteriorating living conditions, but also discrimination and lack of understanding from their own communities. In order to reach these capsulated communities, the State has to consider a new form of social policy or at least a new approach addressing the specific needs of these people. The State's expertise as a main provider of social services is insufficient and the NGOs in Shumen Region, where this research is situated, do not have the capacity to provide a serious service. This means that another way should be found so that the most marginalized families can be reached and helped.

1.4. Theory for a new model?

Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier in their work "Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Nonprofit Sector Cross-Nationally" (1996) give an interesting insight on how government and non-profit organizations work together. Their Interdependence Theory, states that although some perceive the relationship between the State and the non-profit sector as competitive, there is a high degree of interdependence between both. The State cannot always reach all intended beneficiaries, or needs guidance (from Non-Profits for example) in order to react (1996:16). This leads to a natural need for cooperation, where State and Non-Profit

Sector are considered partners and work together in order to reach as many people as possible. Salamon and Anheier (1996) state that this concept is most applicable and easy to test in sectors, such as healthcare and social services (1996:29). Areas that this paper have already considered.

Salamon and Anheier (1996) believe that State and Non-Profit are partners that need each other`s help and support in order to provide the best services possible to the beneficiaries (1996:28).

The model presented by Salamon and Anheier is a good foundation that could describe the innovative services that are applied in partnership with the State. But there are certain assumptions or factors that should apply to this model. In order for the State and the non-profit organization to cooperate and coexist in the same field, without actually competing, a certain degree of decentralization should be present. This means that the State no longer executes its responsibilities from one Central Policy. In Bulgaria, there have been several steps towards decentralizing the social and welfare systems, by delegating some of the services to Regional and Municipal authorities throughout the country (Terziev 2006:1-2). Thus, non-profits can actually negotiate with people that are closer to the problems and issues, which is considered more efficient than having a centralized scheme, responsible for everyone and everything. This also means less bureaucracy and an easy access to beneficiaries.

Herrington J. Bryce adds a few more assumptions and criteria that should be met if non-profits are assigned a role in the process of public policy making and service provision. He states that both State and non-profit must share a common interest and orientation on how the service should be provided and they must share a close idea of what the outcomes might be (Bryce 2012:230). This common understanding between both parties is described by Bryce as trust.

1.5. Object of research – FCC`s working in Shumen Region

The author of this paper, during his internship at UNICEF Bulgaria, explored the Organization`s different programs and projects throughout the country. When researching the Children`s Fund work in Bulgaria, as part of the LUMID assignments, the author was

introduced to the Family Counseling Centers who seem to fit the idea about innovative service for reaching and helping marginalized communities. Currently, there are three centers operating in Northeast Bulgaria within the Shumen Region. They are situated in the towns of Shumen, Novi Pazar and Veliki Preslav. Their work is centered on the provision of an universal package of integrated services to the most marginalized and poorest communities in the region. The services are aimed at prevention of risks that can lead to child abandonment, provision of training sessions and seminars for parents, presenting good examples for better care for children in vulnerable and marginalized ethnic communities. Services can also target the parents themselves – providing mediation, promotion of family planning and provision of both medical and psychological support for parents. The goal is to help children grow and develop in their families and at the same time, support the families in taking better care of their children and by doing so, providing better conditions for themselves. To sum all of the FCCs goals, it can be stated that the Centers target:

- Increase of the parents` capabilities of taking care of their children
- Decrease in the number of babies and small children abandoned by their families through primary prevention, change of attitude towards children in marginalized communities, facilitating access to basic needs and services and support for better parenting
- Better conditions for the development of children, coming from marginalized communities, with a special focus on early childhood development
- Limit the chance of risks for children and families reappearing through mobilization of the community potential for the development of marginalized families (Methodological Guidelines for FCCs 2013:7).

The services are developed via a new approach of social work, based on three main activities – mapping the potential beneficiaries, evaluating their most urgent needs and elaborating and implementing programs, based on the findings of the mapping and evaluation. In order to reach as many people as possible, the FCCs have mobile teams of social workers, medical staff and a psychologist that have access to remote villages and isolated families in the region. Thus, the team can deliver the integrated package of services directly to the communities and to the homes of families, which often makes the beneficiaries more comfortable and willing to cooperate (UNICEF AR 2013:5-6).

1.5.1. Why Shumen Region?

What entailed the necessity of such services in Shumen Region? Initially, the idea of the project “Family for every child” was the closing down of the specialized home for social and medical care in the city of Shumen, where many small children and babies were abandoned by their parents. The conditions in the specialized institution were shocking: chronic malnourishment, lack of medicine, bad hygiene and a high number of babies and small children under the age of three abandoned by their families (UNICEF FFECF 2010:1-2). But the second phase of the project and the establishment of the FCCs in the Region was implemented to address the specific needs of families and communities and their unique ethnic, economic and social characteristics.

Shumen Region is known for its high unemployment and high risk of social exclusion. In 2010, when the project was inaugurated, the unemployment rate in the region was 28,8% - the highest rate for the whole country, and one of the highest rates of people living under the poverty line – 26,3% (NSI 2010). These have proven to be factors for child abandonment for many families (unicef.bg). The cultural and ethnic diversity of the region also plays an important role – Shumen Region has several different ethnicities with the Bulgarian dominating at 59,1%, followed by Turkish and Roma minorities with 30,3% and 8,2% respectively (Shumen Region Strategy 2012:8). These indicators drove UNICEF into establishing the first three pilot centers in Shumen Region.

1.5.2. FCCs as a positive outcome of a previous project

The Family Counseling Centers are an interesting example of a positive outcome of another project. In 2007 the British television BBC aired a program about the horrible conditions that children placed in specialized institutions in Bulgaria lived in. The documentary was called “The abandoned children of Bulgaria” and echoed in a huge wave of criticism and protests,

both internationally and nationally (Blewett 2009). At this point it was obvious that it was not just one institution that treated children badly, most of them had similar conditions. That was one of the reasons why UNICEF decided to expand its country office in Bulgaria, and commit resources in order to change this situation (UNICEF FFCP 2010:1-2).

According to UNICEF, children placed in specialized institutions develop slower than their contemporaries that live with their families. If the child is placed in such a specialized home before the age of 3 the effects on his/her mental and physical development could be damaging (UNICEF FFCP 2010:2). In order to stop the placement of children in institutions, UNICEF collected the best practices from the country and abroad and initiated the project “Family for every child”.

Initially, the project was aimed only at the Specialized home for medical and social care in the city of Shumen, to the North East of Bulgaria and tried to stop the new placement of children and integrate the ones that were already there back to their families, in a family type home, or placed in foster families (UNICEF FFEC IR 2013:5).

A year later it became clear that in order for this project to be sustainable, a special package of social and medical services should be established and popularized among the most marginalized communities that held the biggest risk of abandoning their children. After a detailed research of the needs of families, mothers and children in the region, it was discovered that although there were social services available for the families at risk of abandoning their children, they usually didn't use them due to costs, doubt in the public services or simply because they didn't know about their existence (UNICEF FFEC 2010:5). The project was extended and UNICEF in partnership with Shumen Municipality began work on establishing special centers for the provision of an integrated social and medical services package – Family Counseling Centers.

The first one opened its doors in early 2012 in Shumen, followed by two more in the same year in the towns of Novi Pazar and Veliki Preslav. By late 2012, the foundations for a network of specialized services were laid with the aim of covering every family and child in need of help and support, focusing on the most poor and marginalized communities (UNICEF AR 2013:7).

1.5.3. How do they do it?

Mapping remote villages for marginalized families and children is one thing, but developing an effective program that can cope with some of the most urgent issues of poor households is a different story. After careful evaluation of indicators, observations gathered through the process of mapping, the Centers developed programs for their beneficiaries. According to the Methodological Guidelines of FCCs, their programs aim at:

- Case management for families at risk – it can include help with access to healthcare, prevention of abandonment or taking care of pregnant women and tracking their pregnancy. This module also includes family planning and the provision and use of contraceptive measures.
- Case management for children – Providing help for the prevention of abandonment and neglect of children. FCC always takes into consideration the best interest of the children in its work. Taking away the child from its family is considered a last resort!
- Social counseling and support for children and their families – increasing parents’ capacity and improving their skills to take care of their children, through special “Parenting Schools” and workshops within the community. Doctors, Psychologists and Mediators teach beneficiaries how to take care of a child and why.
- Individual psychological counseling – This service is specially made for parents that have hard time taking care of their child, when there are conflicts in the family and its goal is to keep the family together and overcome its hardships through psychological help.
- Social-pedagogical counseling to ease the communication between children and their parents.
- Social, legal, health and other consultations – informing parents of their rights and responsibilities when taking care of their children and also referring them to other services in the community.
- Mediation and Accompaniment – providing technical help and support for accessing social welfare and improving the social and financial resources of the families. By helping the marginalized families and families at risk with filling in documents and

forms, FCC workers contribute to the general improvement of their livelihoods – easing access to social welfare programs, access to education, access to job market and special employment schemes and most importantly access to healthcare.

- Group work – focused at different aims and topics in compliance with the identified needs of marginalized and risk groups.
- Information and technical help – for filling in application forms and documents.
- Campaigns – for the prevention of risks for children through information and by changing attitudes in the community (UNICEF FFCEP IR 2012:6-7)

Another important feature of the FCCs is case management. FCC staff provides case management work for every family, focusing on keeping children with their parents and at the same time, trying to resolve their issues. This is different than the State delegated services of Community Support Centers, who are placed in the regional center and work only with the child or with its parents, but never with both. FCCs try to resolve the problems, keeping in mind the best interest of the children (Methodological Guidelines for FCCs 2013:10).

One last feature of the FCCs is that they encourage mobile teams to have members that have a background in some of the communities that they work with. These people are used sometimes as mediators, sometimes they are employed full-time from the FCC, but in both cases, they act as gatekeepers to the beneficiaries since they come from an ethnic minority, speak the language, have friends or family in the community or have earned the trust of the beneficiaries (Methodological Guidelines for FCCs 2013:10-11).

The programs and services provided by each FCC differ, based on the results from the mobile field work, as well as the evaluations and monitoring of beneficiaries. In FCC Shumen there are more activities focused on education and child behavior at schools. In FCC Novi Pazar the main topic is taking proper care of children, while in FCC Veliki Preslav the services are aimed at preventing early marriages. Whatever the case, the specialists in the FCCs try to be as flexible as possible so that they can provide adequate services and support.

The FCC`s approach is to intervene when there is an issue, as well as to monitor and track its beneficiaries, establishing a stable link and make further work easier and more effective.

1.6. Methodology

In order to explore the possibilities of innovative policy making through partnerships between State and non-profit, this paper utilizes a case-study research design. As Bryman describes this type of research design is best applied when the researcher is going to use qualitative interviewing for a single case such as a community, life or an organization (Bryman 2008:62). The research, combined with the mixed methods approach of data collection can give the results needed for the purposes of this study.

The methods used for data gathering were semi-formal discussions with the workers and directors of the FCCs in Shumen Region and a semi-formal interview with a high ranking politician from Shumen Region Administration. The discussions were held in the centers. The FCC employees responded to a questionnaire, but were not limited to providing a brief answer. They were given the freedom to express themselves, which lead to many stories worth sharing.

The researcher also acquired access to the database of FCC`s beneficiaries, the programs they are involved in and the results from their work for the period between April and December 2013. This quantitative data will be used in the results and analysis part.

Another important source of information is the special survey on marginalized communities in Bulgaria, issued by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, in April 2014. This extensive survey provides quantitative data for some of the poorest people in the country.

Due to ethical considerations, the identity of all participants is protected and their real names are not used, since some of them have revealed sensitive information that might prove to be harmful for their work or for their acceptance among the beneficiaries.

2. Results and analysis

In the previous chapters, this paper depicted the social situation in the Shumen Region, concerning marginalized communities and presented the case that will be examined – the Family Counseling Centers. Next, the study will focus on how the partnership between State and FCC leads the way towards innovative approaches in social policy for the improvement of the lives of children and their families in Shumen Region.

The FCC is a good example of Interdependence between State and non-profit organizations. According to Salamon and Anheier`s study (1996), when State and non-profit work together and there is no competition between them, we can observe good results (1996:16).

In this case the State has problems in reaching out to the most marginalized groups in Shumen Region. Established services do not seem to properly address the needs of these people, thus deeming them unusable. (UNICEF FFCEP IR 2012:5).

The FCC is a byproduct of UNICEF`s “Family For Every Child Project” and as such is well accepted by authorities. Before inaugurating the FCCs, UNICEF`s staff in Bulgaria have been in constant contact with local authorities. They have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Shumen Region and by doing so they have also included the State as their partner in the project. With the completion of this formal act, it is safe to state that both parties have agreed on what their obligations are and they have joined forces to reach a common goal. With this, Bryce`s requirement for necessary trust between players has been satisfied

Salamon and Anheier state that there are two types of interdependence between State and non-profits. The first is when the State can be viewed as a source of financial income for the non-profits` work. The second is when the State can provide political support, but cannot afford to pay the price for the service (1996:16). The current case is part of the latter, because the local authorities understand the problems but lack financial and professional capacity to address them in the best way possible. UNICEF joins with secured financial resources for the project and with expertise.

This leads to the question of how exactly do local authorities contribute to this partnership? Aren`t they completely dependent on the non-profit`s project and secured funding? The answer is no. Local authorities don`t have a large amount of public finances to spend on this

service, but they have properties that they are willing to give for free. Another element of the contribution of local authorities to this partnership is the work of village and small town mayors in steering the mobile teams towards the most marginalized families and facilitating the establishment of “first contact”.

In the case of the FCCs the State provides the premises of the Centers for free, facilitates their work by linking teams and marginalized communities from different villages and towns and also dedicates its political support to the project. The non-profit (UNICEF) is responsible for the training and employment of the workers and for the development and implementation of the different programs and services provided by the FCCs. The new service is not designed with the idea of ruling out the need for State-led programs. On the contrary! Establishing a link between marginalized communities and State services is one of the main goals of the Centers. FCC’s staff is well trained and not only provides specialized help and support, but can also use its expertise and qualification to support state-led organizations in improving their work and capacity. The FCCs usually interact with Child Protection Unit, Social Support Unit, employment bureaus, schools, police and hospitals. They consider them vital elements for their work, since an FCC is unable (and is not intended) to grow to a comparable size with State supported providers of social services.

2.1. Analysis of data from the National Survey on marginalized communities

The National Survey on Marginalized communities revealed that one of the main factors for marginalization not only in Shumen Region, but also in the whole country, is the combination of unemployment, illiteracy or low levels of education and poverty (MLSP 2014:8). These correlate to the same reasons for marginalization, as described earlier, as a result of the reforms and problems in social policies in the beginning of the 90s. The survey emphasizes on the assumption that not all State-led social services are working properly, by showing that most of the issues still remain unresolved. The National Survey identifies 10,110 marginalized households among ethnic and minority groups throughout the country. In order to better analyze the scale of the FCCs work, this study evaluates five indicators of the national survey that are deemed most significant in identifying who is marginalized,

according to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. This identification will provide a better understanding of the problems that remain unaddressed and probably require a different approach for their solution from both State and non-profits. Those indicators are education, income, housing quality, access to healthcare and possession of property rights, ID cards and other important documents.

The exact number of marginalized people in Shumen Region is unknown. The National Survey states that there are approximately 377 marginalized households that belong to the lowest socioeconomic level of society, which equals 10% of all the ethnic minority households in the Region (MLSP 2014:60). It should be noted that most households also have children, who cannot get basic accommodation and living conditions, do not go to school or lack access to healthcare.

2.1.1. Education

From the 10,110 households in the country that are considered marginalized, 99.2% of the people over 18 have not reached high school, 65.2% have primary or lower education and 1/3 have never attended school (MLSP 2014:9-10). Less than 1% have reached high school and had access to professional training, which in Bulgaria occurs in secondary (high school) and tertiary (university) grades of education. For the 15 towns and villages in Shumen Region, covered by the survey and shown in Appendix 1, the average illiteracy rate is 11.24% and the average share of the ones that have been to school, but have completed no more than 8th grade (main course of education), is 94.56%.

2.1.2. Employment

The high level of illiteracy is directly related to unemployment: 93.8% of all members of the marginalized households throughout the country describe themselves as unemployed or economically inactive. Another indicator covered by the survey is the average income per month per person of a member of marginalized communities – 25 Euro. Appendix 1 shows

that share of unemployed within the ethnic communities in Shumen Region is 24.51% and the share of economically inactive population is 63.31%.

2.1.3. Housing Quality

Most of the respondents in the survey come from mixed parts of cities and villages that usually have poor housing accommodations. Good indicators for determining the level of a household is the number of rooms and if the household has access to running water. Appendix 1 shows that the share of respondents living in homes with only 1 room can vary from none to 27.74%. The average percentage is 11.47%. With regards to access to clean water – the households that live within cities and towns (Shumen, Veliki Preslav) are less likely to be deprived of access to running water in their homes, contrary to the ones living in more remote villages (Ivanski, Varbitsa). The average percent of households living without access to clean water is 5.25% (Appendix 1).

2.1.4. Healthcare

Regarding healthcare, the situation is more than alarming for mixed ethnic communities. For example, the NS shows that 49% of the respondents from the most marginalized communities in the country do not have a personal doctor, which means that they are not part of the national health insurance scheme. Another problem is the access to healthcare for villages. The NS shows that only one fourth of households residing in villages to the North-Eastern Part of the country (Shumen Region is part of it) have a doctor close to them.

When asked the question why they don't have a doctor, the usual answer appears to vary from not having a health insurance, was denied treatment or simply doesn't have an idea where to go. There is also a serious lack of trust, showed by the NS – 66% of respondents throughout

the nation state that they are not willing to go to a doctor and rely on self-medication (MLSP 2014: 95).

2.1.5. Possession of land rights and ID

There is no detailed information regarding the number of people that live without an ID card in Shumen Region. The national survey states that the 2.5% of the respondents nationwide do not have an ID card (MLSP 2014:66-67). The percent for the North-Eastern Part of the country is 7%. As it was discussed earlier, this is an important indicator, because without an ID card the person is not able to access most of the social support services that the State offers. Reasons given by respondents for not owning an ID card are the cost and bureaucracy that people face during the issuing process, lack of permanent address or their ID card has expired and needs to be reissued. (MLSP 2014:66). This problem seems to be in the center of the vicious circle of self-reproducing poverty, in which these communities are trapped. Easing the access to administrative services is one part of solving the problem, but another is to promote actively the need to have proper documents in order for families to receive benefits and improve their lives.

2.2. FCCs and their impact on communities

This paper has already described the FCCs system of operation, their location and how they cooperate with local authorities. Below are the actual services and activities of the three centers that are aimed at reconnecting the most marginalized communities in the Region to the social services provided by the State.

“The truth is that nobody wants to go there. These slums are out of reach for most municipal authorities”, says a social worker from FCC Veliki Preslav who will be called Maria for the purpose of this thesis. Maria and her colleagues not only go to these slums and parts of villages where the most marginalized families live, but also try to get in contact with them, in every way possible.

Another worker from FCC Novi Pazar – whose name the researcher has hidden behind the alias Stoika adds to that:

“People know most of the times that we are there to help their children and this makes them more willing to accept us. In the towns and city it is ok, but in remote villages the situation is horrible. We work mainly with people that everybody else has given up on. In some cases I tend to think that they have given up on themselves as well.”

During the travels to Shumen Region and the conversations with people working in these centers, the researcher tends to believe that the reason for social isolation is not only poverty but also a number of factors leading to deep isolation and marginalization. The problem of double layer marginalization has already been discussed, but it is worth mentioning that the communities that suffer the most from this process are situated mainly in remote villages – deepening their isolation and exclusion. This view was shared by some of the workers of the FCCs as well.

In order for the services provided by FCCs to be effective, the workers in the centers keep track of their beneficiaries. The mapping activity is done when the team visits a village for the first time. It is not only statistical data that is gathered, such as how many people live there, are there any children, etc. The social workers and nurses also pay attention to the living conditions for the children in the household, they evaluate risk factors and on the basis of this initial evaluation, they develop an idea of what services are suitable for each individual case (Methodological Guidelines for FCCs 2013:15). In contrast to State led services, FCCs provide an integrated package of basic services directly to the beneficiaries and tailored to their needs. FCCs also rely on the fact that their prime beneficiaries are the children of marginalized families and all efforts are focused on improving their everyday life, which most of the time is considered a common goal for everybody involved in the process. Stoika from FCC Veliki Preslav explains this process:

“We evaluate on the spot and decide which way is the most appropriate to start working with these families. We have our indicators, our criteria. Sometimes when you see children wearing nothing more than duds, soaked in dirt you don’t need special evaluation to know that there is something wrong in this family.”

Her comments were aimed at a case she has worked on earlier in the small mountainous town of Varbitsa that is covered by FCC Veliki Preslav. This FCC has experienced a problem that

was not as common in the other centers – early marriages. The Center in Veliki Preslav has developed a number of programs in order to prevent early marriages among communities:

“They are children – no more than 12-13 years old. They get married and start giving birth to their own children. They can’t even take care of themselves and they are facing the responsibilities of being a parent.” adds to the discussion the head of the Center in Veliki Preslav.

The last interim report of the FCCs covers their work from April to December 2013. In this period, they show a steady increase of the coverage of their services. FCC Shumen has 1065 families visited in this time span, out of which 233 were mapped (visited for the first time) and put into their database. One hundred and fourteen families that might be at risk and that have become their potential beneficiaries were identified. FCC Novi Pazar reports 571 mapped and evaluated families and 482 were found in need of the services and support provided by the workers. In FCC Veliki Preslav 546 families were visited and mapped during the period and 281 of them were considered to be potential beneficiaries (UNICEF FFCEP IR 2014:6-7).

2.2.1. FCCs and the indicators of marginalization

Mapping the marginalized beneficiaries is not directly related to them being healthier or more aware of their role as parents. Yet, all three heads of the FCCs were unanimous that one cannot help others if one is not aware of their existence. All three also agreed that the existing welfare and social services are not developed in an adequate way, which is the reason for the negative image of State institutions. As one director of FCC stated:

“Current State services are established by clerks in the capital city that have never been to the villages or have never seen the people for whom they were actually working.”

The chronic underfunding for State delegated services was brought as another reason for low quality of social services.

All three directors of FCCs took pride in their work and especially in the mapping and tracking activities carried throughout the region.

“We make these people visible. We give them something that is theirs for the taking, but they don’t know that or can’t reach to grab it”, says the director of the center in Novi Pazar.

During the interview in Novi Pazar, the Center’s nurse came with the news that she was able to track a new family, with a pregnant mother and little children, all of whom have never been visited by a doctor. Then she rushed out, because she heard of another case of a pregnant woman that needs urgent medical attention.

“See! These are the kind of things we bump into every single day! Before the Centers, women would face more trouble finding a doctor or even a nurse.”, the center’s director concluded.

Fig. 1

Medical services and Family planning for women April – December 2013			
Service	FCC Shumen	FCC Novi Pazar	FCC Veliki Preslav
Pregnant women without health insurance covered	81	68	55
IDU contraceptives placed	61	25	18
Total number of people engaged in health programs and consultations	507	126	202

Source: FCCs

Figure 1 shows the number of pregnant women without health insurance that were supported in the tree centers, the number of IUD contraceptives provided and the total number of people, engaged in healthcare programs provided by the Centers. For the period between April and December 2013 in Shumen, the FCC covered 81 pregnant women and provided 61 IUDs. In FCC Veliki Preslav, 55 pregnant women that did not have health insurance have received

pregnancy consultations, assistance for visiting a doctor, labor support, family planning consultations and additional 18 women had an IUD contraceptive placed. In Novi Pazar 68 pregnant women have benefited from professional medical help and 25 decided to use effective contraceptives such as IUD.

“Often these women have untracked pregnancies that can lead to complications both for the mother and the baby. That is what we are trying to prevent. Some time ago there were home visitations provided by the State for every pregnant woman, now we have to do this.”, says the director of FCC Novi Pazar.

Fig. 2

Number of children benefiting from medical support		
FCC Shumen	FCC Novi Pazar	FCC Veliki Preslav
182	53	129

Source: FCCs

Figure 2 presents the same support and facilitation of access to healthcare for children. In FCC Shumen 182 children have received support in accessing healthcare by finding a personal doctor for the child or by having mobile pediatric teams in the most marginalized neighborhoods. For Novi Pazar, this number is 53 children and for Veliki Preslav – 129 children.

Fig. 3

Service	FCC Shumen	FCC Novi Pazar	FCC Veliki Preslav
Prevention of dropouts	3	6	2
Pre-school education	5	/	20
Support for placement in Kindergartens	41	4	63

Source: FCCs

In terms of education, FCCs have developed different programs for keeping children in school, preparing them for school and for the youngest – assisting in placing them in kindergartens. Figure 3 presents the results from three separate services aimed at prevention of dropouts, preparation of children for school and placement of children in kindergarten: The poor performance in Novi Pazar can be attributed to the fact that there are no specially developed educational programs, compared to the other two FCCs. One of the social workers from FCC Shumen, who the researcher calls Boyan, describes the situation with keeping children at school:

“We work with children dropping out of school because they are aggressive, not interested or prefer to hang out on the street instead of learning. We use a psychologist to resolve their issues and if we can’t get them in the classroom, we try to give them at least some basic knowledge through group games and activities in the Center. However, this cannot substitute proper education!”

More needs to be done in order for children from marginalized families to be kept at school. Another reason for dropping out of school early is the fact that children are usually considered as a helping hand or as economic entities that can provide income for their families. For FCCs this is still a developing service and more family focused educational programs will be implemented in the next period starting in 2015 (UNICEF FFCEP IR 2014:21).

Fig. 4

Number of people that benefited from technical help (ID issuing, house legalization, application for welfare etc.)			
From April to December 2013	FCC Shumen	FCC Novi Pazar	FCC Veliki Preslav
		920	739

Source: FCCs

The indicators involving possession of ID and land rights are hard to be examined on their own due to the lack of detailed data. The FCCs refer to activities such as support for house legalization, acquirement of land rights and issuing of ID cards as technical help. This service is provided to parents and families that are willing to apply for welfare, child allowances or simply to benefit from every legal right that they have as citizens. Figure 4 shows the exact number of people that benefited from technical support in the examined period.

It is appropriate to cite one of the social workers from FCC Shumen, who shared an interesting story with regards to how important it is to map and trace people:

“We had a case where a whole new quarter in the neighborhood with streets, plumbing and electricity has been erected. When we went to the Municipality and asked for maps of the neighborhood, we saw that there should not be anything in this quarter.”

If the Municipality is not aware of the existence of so many people within the city limits it would not be able to trace the movement of families in the smallest and most remote villages in the Region. This proves how important the mobile mapping and tracking is for an effective provision of services for marginalized groups.

2.2.2. The hidden perception of culture

Although the quantitative indicators presented from the National Survey are a good mean to create a better idea of the situation, they can easily miss an important aspect of the FCCs work – changing attitudes in communities. The cultural characteristics of these communities have been considered a valid reason for their marginalization adding to the previously discussed problems such as unemployment, lack of healthcare, illiteracy and poor housing conditions.

Goulet and Walshok give more weight to the cultural element by drawing the conclusion that in this vicious circle of poverty, packed with double layer of marginalization, one might lose hope, accept the current situation and live day by day, without any perspective (Goulet and Walshok 1971:464). Kostova on the other hand, describes the overwhelming role of culture and tradition as a consequence of marginalization. When an individual is subject to double

layer marginalization, he/she does not have relationship with the majority or with members of his/her own minority. This leaves the individual to rely solely on his/her family (Kostova 2003:55).

A good example for how specific cultural understandings can affect the efforts of social services is the relations between family members. It is common for young women in marginalized communities to rely on the knowledge of their mother-in-law, who has the final say on dealing with pregnancy issues and taking care of children.(UNICEF FFCEP IR 2012:12). A gynecological check up, talking openly about family planning and contraception and other sex related topics are considered inappropriate, both by the men and the mother-in-law. Pregnant women or mothers of small children are forced to comply.

Another example is parents who are skeptical towards vaccinations. They would not let doctors perform the procedure on their children, which eventually leads to epidemic outbursts in the neighborhoods and villages (Shumen Region Strategy 2012:10).

It is encouraging that the FCC also targets stereotypes and works on changing attitudes among the most marginalized communities. FCCs rely on a community based approach and try to reconnect State provided services such as healthcare and social support with families by organizing events in the community, aiming to increase the knowledge and capacity both of parents and children.

In Bulgaria the State guarantees at least one full check up during pregnancy and a free birth in a hospital for every woman, regardless if she has health insurance or not. Children under the age of 18 have health insurance and should be assigned to a personal doctor, according to Article 40, Paragraph 3 of the Bulgarian Law for Health Insurance (BLHI 2014). But when families in closed communities are not aware of their rights and/or do not trust healthcare providers and social support, many problems arise, such as isolation, spread of diseases and bad living conditions.

2.3. Summary

Based on the data from the National Survey, FCCs and the interviews with the employees working in the Center, the following could be summarized. The National Survey revealed that marginalized communities suffer the most in sectors such as healthcare, education, employment and housing conditions. These are indicators that State policy should be focused on (and most of them are) when addressing the needs of communities. But what the National Survey cannot explain is the large distrust in the services provided by the State. For example, just because the indicator on health showed that 66% of respondents are not willing to go to a doctor, does not necessarily mean that there are no hospitals or doctors available. It shows that there is a hidden factor that can be made visible by introducing culture to the stage.

This study also introduced the work of FCCs and the results of their programs throughout the Region of Shumen. The centers have targeted the most problematic sectors of marginalized communities that also came up in the National Survey, but FCCs not only seek out people in order to deliver basic services and goods, they also try to engage with them in different community-based activities for changing attitudes and understandings. Thus, they would be able to develop better conditions both for themselves and their children. The FCCs try to involve communities in the process of their own integration, tailoring services to their needs and reconnecting them back to State institutions and society. According to Kostova, the way to do that is to take into account the specific cultural and traditional values that certain communities have (Kostova 2003:55). But to ensure a positive outcome, their active involvement in the process of human development and integration is required.

2.4. Sustainability of the service

The FCC is a new type of service not only in the eyes of beneficiaries, but also in its relationship with the State and local authorities. The integrated package of services and the proactive approach for its delivery to beneficiaries are working well and have been gaining popularity.

As one of the nurses from FCC Novi Pazar recalls:

“One of our beneficiaries had relatives visiting from Sliven (200 km away from Novi Pazar). When they heard about our work, they came to us and begged us to provide our service in their city.”, revealed Maria from FCC Novi Pazar. An example that evokes the question whether FCC can be part of National social policy framework.

In order to further research this question, the researcher met with a high level politician from the top of the regional administration of Shumen Region. Her views on the cooperation between regional authorities and FCCs were positive:

“The service that UNICEF has provided was greeted with much approval from the authorities in the Region. Since I was introduced to this service I have always supported the work of the FCCs. Mayors of towns and villages also support their work and are the ones that organize the first encounters between the mobile teams from the Centers and the potential beneficiaries. We consider this integrated service as a missing link in social services planning.”

When asked about the sustainability of the FCCs once the money from UNICEF stop, she was not so optimistic. She admitted that municipal authorities currently don't have the capacity and resources to take over the centers and their governance:

“I doubt that FCCs will be able to survive without UNICEF. We have considered options how to continue their work once the project's budget is utilized. This can be done by searching for additional funding via the European Union or other external international grants. There are options.”

2.4.1. The State's perspective

UNICEF will stop funding the Centers at the end of 2016. An option that is considered in the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by Regional authorities and UNICEF is FCCs to become a State delegated service – funded by the State and managed by the current staff in the

Centers. Thus the Centers can guarantee their future work by applying for funding from the State and not relying solely on tight municipal budgets. Yet, this option is not top priority for the State and has not found its place on the agenda.

“We can't leave them (FCCs) to the Municipalities in the Region. Our Region is poor and can rarely afford expenses of that kind. But it is not only the money. It will be hard for Municipal authorities to apply for funding and external grants, since they lack capacity. Local NGOs cannot be considered either, because there are too small or don't have the expertise that UNICEF provides with its work. I hope that by the time they decide to withdraw we will have the means to continue their work.”

The FCCs might be saved from oblivion by the newly issued Draft Plan of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for integrating marginalized communities on a municipal level (2014). In it, the methodology of the FCCs (mapping, tracking, individual case management, family and community approaches) is described as a primary approach toward integrating the poorest back to society and improving their life through complex social packages, tailored to their needs (MLSP DP 2014:75). The Draft Plan also includes technical assistance and mediation between marginalized communities and State, regarding education, healthcare, employment, housing conditions, social welfare and rule of law (MLSP DP 2014:82-83). This gives some hope since the successful work of FCCs in the Region have found a place in a document that is going to be distributed to every Municipality in the country. For now the Draft Plan remains only a draft, but it will probably become the foundation of future projects and initiatives in this field in the new EU Program period 2014-2020.

2.4.2. A Theoretical perspective

In the current political and economic conditions in Bulgaria, a partnership between State and non-profit can be considered innovative when it is sustainable. The results from this study reveal that the current situation will remain, if there are no reforms in the Social Policy sphere.

The reason is that the implemented policies, aimed at integrating marginalized communities are ineffective. They seem to be based purely on quantitative indicators, such as number of

children abandoned, newborn mortality rates, percent of enrollment of children at school, etc. The services are aimed mostly at improving the indicator, rather than addressing the reason for the problem. FCCs on the other hand, follow a different model. They strive is to target the attitudes, the problems that lead to child abandonment, child poverty, bad housing conditions, low literacy rates, poverty and unemployment. In order to reconnect and break the vicious circle of self replicating poverty that is present in marginalized communities, the State must follow a more bottom-up approach instead of dealing with the problem in a simple quantitative way. And even when there are services provided by external actors, they lack one crucial characteristic – sustainability.

Amartya Sen (1999) provides an insight on why free market approach for public goods, crucial in human development, social policies and welfare cannot be commoditized. He states that if the service is addressing the poor, the State should be responsible for its distribution because it can guarantee that it is accessible by everyone who needs it, rather than the one who can pay for it (1999:129). This statement raises the question of current limitations of neo-liberal policies in social services and human development and how society can go beyond the current trends towards innovative and sustainable systems. .

In the dawn of post-neoliberal world, how can the State improve its social policies and ensure their sustainability? How can growth and development come together and improve the lives of the most excluded and isolated communities? And is it really growth that is necessary for the improvement and development of social capital? Different authors have different views on this topic. For example, in their work “Developmental Politics in Transition” C. Kyung-Sup, B. Fine and L. Weiss (2012) talk about the prospects beyond the neoliberal State. They believe that today we should not look back at different historic models that have failed already – such as the communist “dead-end” economy or the neo-liberal State with its growing inequalities in wealth distribution. They conclude that in order to establish a new type of sustainable social and economic model, deep transformations in the structures, relations and processes of political participation and policymaking should occur (Kyung-Sup et al.2012:315). The goal of this reform will be to perceive human wellbeing and active participation of every aspect of the social and political life as a priority.

Another prospect for dealing with the problems of the current model is given by David Woodward (2010). According to him, the problems in human development cannot be addressed solely on a national level. International cooperation, especially for developing

countries is required (Woodward 2010:45). This can also be attributed to the case of Bulgaria – being a country in transition, still relying on external help. Woodward talks about the same need of reforms towards human development as do Kyung-Sup et al. with the difference being the scale of the reform. Woodward insists that there is a need to differentiate human development from economic growth and this should start from the top-down - from International Organizations to national policies (idem). Thus, states will have an example and a framework that they can use, in order to enhance and improve their social policies and spending in human development.

However, this reach of international and intergovernmental organizations should not be the sole remedy for countries that are in need of increasing their capacity in dealing with social policy and human development issues. Thandika Mkandawire (2001) agrees that International players are essential in supporting social policy reforms and human development in developing and transitional countries. But Mkandawire also states that, although external actors enter the country driven by humanitarian objectives, there should be more emphasis on the role of the State within their projects (2001:20). Private markets, NGOs and IGOs can provide services in a country, leading to a “privatization” of the social services sector and leaving the State in the comfortable role of providing an “enabling environment”, while in the meantime reducing its expenditures and activities in the social sector (idem). This approach cannot be considered sustainable if there is no contribution and no further involvement of the State in the organization`s work.

The present study is based on Salamon and Anheier`s approach to partnerships between State and NGO`s that lead to Interdependence. However, Mkandawire raises a valid point about how to achieve Interdependence and sustainability. One thing is obvious - when one actor is actively involved in the process of social services and developing human capital whereas the other (State) is left with the obligation of providing an “enabling environment”, which most of the time means “not to get in the way”, there cannot be a sustainable model or service (Mkandawire 2001:46). This problem appears to be relevant in Bulgaria as well. As already stated, FCCs have the support of local regional and national authorities but this does not automatically make the State a proactive partner, at least not at first. UNICEF is responsible for the training of the staff, for renovating the Centers, provides them with enough resources for their budgets and basically does all the work. The State is involved with the provision of land rights and plots for the centers` needs and facilitating their work in reaching the most marginalized communities. This involvement of the State must be expanded in the near future,

because right now it can't ensure the sustainability of the service, once UNICEF leaves. And even if there is secured funding, an improvement in capacity and the understanding of the beneficiaries needs and potential should also be taken into consideration. Hence, based on Salamon and Anheier's idea of Interdependence, it should be clear that in order for a partnership between State and nonprofit organization to really achieve the desired effect of providing sustainable public goods, there should be equal (or at least close to equal) distribution of obligations between both actors. Only then partners will be interdependent and will rely on each other's work for achieving a mutual goal.

From a different perspective, the success and sustainability should not be linked to FCCs only, but to the entire sector of social services and human development. According to Amartya Sen (1999), every effort to bring human development and improvement in the lives of people should begin with the same people being actively involved in this process, rather than just being passive recipients of the end product of development plans, social services schemes or welfare (1999:53). This approach guarantees positive results of the implemented schemes. Disconnection between State and marginalized communities in Bulgaria can be attributed to this exact lack of understanding how to connect to each other

3. Conclusion

The transitions that started in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 80s towards an open democratic society have been considered a huge phenomenon. These transitions have led to many economic and social problems, one of which is alienating the State from the people that need it the most – the poor, uneducated masses, breaking the link with them and leaving them to fall into poverty and marginalization. Twenty five years after the transition's start, some of these problems are still unresolved. In the search of innovative approaches, this study focused on the FCCs, developed and funded by UNICEF's country office in Bulgaria. Due to their partnership with local authorities in Shumen Region, a foundation has been put together for reconnecting the marginalized with the State. By going to the most isolated villages and seeking out the most marginalized families, the workers in the FCCs have paved the way to a

new approach for improving the life of people, children and families living on the very bottom of the social pyramid. What has been found to be truly innovative is that FCCs not only try to solve the current issues of marginalized communities, but also work to ensure that they do not reappear, by performing individual case management and taking into consideration each beneficiary's need. The FCCs also try to work with communities on changing attitudes. They achieve that by actively involving families and children in educational programs and discussion.

By providing a basic package of services and by changing attitudes on a community level, the centers are paving the way to a new type of social development scheme, quite different from the models that have been implemented earlier.

Unfortunately there is a sense of doubt when talking about the sustainability of the integrated services, provided by the Centers. Although considered successful, the service could be terminated, once the money from the external partner is cut, unless it is tailored into the national social policy framework. The results and perspectives led to a question of how sustainability can be achieved. The present study explored the problem of sustainability from both the State's point of view, as well as from a theoretical perspective, leading to the very essence of fundamental questions such as how to actually promote development and social goods and how they can be both successful and sustainable.

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5. Appendix 1

Main Indicators of marginalization in Shumen Region

Region	Municipality	Town/village	Illiterate	Main course of education or less	Unemployed	Economically inactive	Main source of income: welfare	Main source of income: family welfare	Living in a house with 1 room	Without access to clean water
Shumen	Veliki Preslav	Veliki Preslav	5,37%	90,20%	25,27%	58,68%	5,06%	7,59%	8,88%	4,73%
Shumen	Vekiki Preslav	Zlatar	14,06%	91,98%	21,36%	66,36%	14,63%	10,88%	10,26%	2,56%
Shumen	Venets	Izhev	13,61%	98,30%	4,73%	89,19%	17,33%	9,90%	3,77%	3,77%
Shumen	Varbitsa	Varbitsa	6,54%	93,47%	16,82%	74,69%	4,13%	13,69%	27,74%	9,49%
Shumen	Kaspichan	Zlatna Niva	6,43%	95,92%	15,10%	69,39%	1,25%	6,54%	3,49%	2,33%
Shumen	Kaspichan	Kaspichan	7,80%	94,16%	29,27%	55,56%	11,18%	12,57%	5,74%	10,66%
Shumen	Nikola Kozlevo	Kriva Reka	17,57%	94,84%	35,12%	45,85%	8,30%	5,19%	3,17%	1,59%
Shumen	Nikola Kozlevo	Pet Mogili	25,00%	98,08%	34,45%	56,94%	11,84%	20,56%	6,94%	1,39%
Shumen	Nikola Kozlevo	Tsurkuvica	9,43%	95,90%	45,31%	43,75%	16,40%	5,56%	8,89%	5,56%
Shumen	Smyadovo	Smyadovo	16,46%	92,94%	26,72%	56,49%	5,24%	9,52%	16,28%	2,33%
Shumen	Smyadovo	Veselinovo	5,16%	96,89%	13,97%	79,41%	6,88%	2,65%	0,00%	4,00%
Shumen	Shumen	Shumen	5,35%	87,32%	21,94%	54,70%	4,76%	6,37%	16,28%	1,16%
Shumen	Shumen	Drumevo	20,75%	97,80%	38,04%	53,26%	14,00%	10,00%	22,37%	5,26%
Shumen	Shumen	Ivanski	3,88%	96,08%	14,98%	82,08%	3,85%	8,14%	15,25%	18,64%

Source: National Survey