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Non-governmental, Non-profit Organisations in the Czech Republic and the Deinstitutionalisation of Services for People with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the status of non-governmental organisations since the creation of Czechoslovakia until present. In the first part the authors focus on NGOs that were forming a new democratic society. Their areas of interest primarily included: equality, charity and health, environment protection and organisation of leisure time. The next chapter describes the totalitarian regime era: fascism and communism. These two periods strongly influenced peoples' thinking and behaviour. All organisations were under control of the totalitarian regime and their activities were imposed by the communist dictatorship. The last part depicts problems of the new democratic society. NGOs play a major role in human rights protection and the development of civil society. In addition, the underlying principle of volunteer work, and conditions of financial support of NGOs by private donors are described as well. Finally, authors present the contribution of NGOs to the employment and deinstitutionalisation of care for handicapped people. This picture of the Czech non-profit sector is completed with the presentation of various efforts undertaken by the state to control the development of the third sector.

History

The history of non-profit organisations in the Czech Republic has its own historical context that was linked with altruism and, in particular periods, was strongly emotionally tinted by nationality (Klimek 2003).

After the foundation of the independent state in 1918, many possibilities for free activity of various volunteer and charitable organisations emerged. In this newly founded Czechoslovakia, more than 10 000 groups from the time of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy existed. However, new groups were established supporting culture, enlightenment, education, book publishing, etc., as well as the evolution of unions (Cesar 1971).

The setting up of volunteer organisations in the independent Czechoslovakian state was based on association law and involved a variety of organisational structures ranging from private, municipal, religious, and national groups to so-

called groups of a semi-official character that had relatively wide competences (i.e. Czechoslovakian Red Cross, Masaryk's League against Tuberculosis, Regional and District Youth Care and others). The structure and organisation of volunteer groups was, in this period, already on a very good level, including a network of small groups and subsidiaries up to district, regional, or state headquarters (Müller 2002).

Within the scope of the formation of the welfare state (Czechoslovakia passed a law proclaiming equal rights for men and women, including the right to vote, right after passing the constitution), many of those organisations were tied to nationality or religion (Malý 2010). Thanks to this, Catholic, Czech, German, Jewish or Slovenian groups were formed, often focusing on charitable work in their own community (Dohnalová 2004).

In the interwar period, a non-eligible group of associations devoted their work to the poor and to youth. In 1931 there were 5140 groups and 1450 institutes and facilities as assets of the groups, registered in Czechoslovakia solely in the field of social care. It is worth mentioning that the share of non-governmental organisations in the total costs of social and humanitarian care was approximately 26%.

In addition to these "social" and "healthcare" groups, other groups that we could nowadays call leisure associations existed, such as choirs (the best known of them, Prague Hlahol, was founded in 1861) and sports associations (the most prominent of which, Sokol, was established in 1862).

After WWI, the number of newly founded decorative associations and environmental activities rose. In the 20's and 30's, the Union of Decorative Associations comprised of about 400 groups devoted to cultivating the surroundings of cities and nature protection (Procházka 1922).

The evolution of the non-profit sector during the first republic basically derived from the situation during the last fifty years of the Habsburg monarchy. Some other organisations emerged which were tied to the existence of the independent state (e.g. Czechoslovak Red Cross in 1919). Fundamentally it was largely a continuous evolution (Kodymová 2013).

Occupation and Protectorate 1939–1945

Volunteer organisations kept improving their work and expertise during their evolution, extending the area of activities and leading to higher institutionalisation. The fascist dictatorship, however, brought drastic and destructive changes to the NPO system.

Not only political parties, but even scientific, educational, humanitarian, cultural and other organisations were dissolved. After the closing of Czech universities in the autumn of 1939, all student organisations were banned. Many organisations that were not closed down were radically reformed by the occupation regime (Matoušek 2012).

Only one hierarchical organisation was allowed to exist in individual areas of social life: instead of political parties only the National Partnership, instead of different union headquarters only the National Trade Union Centre, instead of youth organisations only the Curatorium for Youth Education in Bohemia and Moravia, etc.

Post-war period 1946–1948

Structural reforms in all aspects of life were carried out. Many of these reforms corresponded with the wishes of the nation. In the beginning, the revolution had national and, partially, even a democratic character. The democratic system was broadly re-established. At the same time, volunteer work, volunteer groups and other publicly beneficial non-governmental organisations and associations could be re-established. This was not only because of the strong social sensitivity of the Czech population, but also thanks to the social role that civic groups had played in times of national or political oppression. All parties were associated in the National Front which represented the administration of parties in the new republic and was the most typical trait of the post-war communist political system. Due to the prohibition of legal opposition (foundation of new political parties was based on the will of parties associated in the National Front or their approval of the party's programme), a major difference compared to the first republic, all power was concentrated in the hands of parties that were members of the National Front. The stated conditions excluded the existence of legal opposition and were against the principles of democratic administration (komunisticképrávo.cz).

Mass organisations were another part of the National Front. These organisations were quite different from traditional groups not just in quantity, but also in diversity of members. The contest for a new manner of association began already during the resistance. The Kosice Government Programme and following agreements on joint action of political parties from June 1945 aimed to create unitary trade unions and unitary organisations of youth, women and physical education.

In new, rather democratic circumstances the grouping of people increased, various grassroots activities emerged and civil society was revived. During the years 1945–1948 neither self-organising mechanisms between people nor the opposition that supported them (churches or Democratic Party in Slovenia) were repressed.

Monopoly of power of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (1952–1956)

The monopoly of power that the communist party established in 1952 was in conflict with basic principles of democracy and Czechoslovak political traditions.

The monopoly, almost identical with that of the fascists, was responsible for the regression of political thinking, political culture and qualified leading. These facts were the cause of a political inability to determine the correct course of development (Špiláčková 2016)

The beginning of the 50's prefigured the end of foundations. These were definitively dissolved in 1953 with only one exception, the Josef, Marie and Zdeňka Hlávkových Foundation. Even though this foundation was the biggest and the richest, it somehow was not included in the list of disbanded foundations and was the only one that survived until the return of the democratic regime to Czechoslovakia in 1989. Though this foundation did not legally cease to exist, it could not completely fulfil its mission until 1989.

Post-revolution era 1989

After the Velvet Revolution, an abrupt boom of civil society began. The first non-profit organisations to respond to this newly won freedom were organisations with relations with foreign countries, churches or charities, and specialists with similar connections, mainly doctors working in mental health. Other non-profit organisations formed physical education groups and organisations aimed at children and youth, such as Junák, etc., reacted similarly fast. Another significant group consisted of organisations focused on children's and human rights, such as: UNICEF, Amnesty International, People in Need, The League of Human Rights, and NESEHNUTÍ – Independent Social Ecological Movement.

Since the first republic, non-profit organisations have not been divided by their services, but by legal status. A high degree of centralisation and control in some aspects of life remains, which is what non-profit organisations are divided by. It is generally valid that non-profit organisations cannot generate profit. If they do, they must reinvest their profit back into their own organisation.

Governmental – public-benefit corporations. These are organisations managed by self-governing units, such as hospitals, children's institutes, youth centres, retirement homes, schools and kindergardens.

Non-profit organisations (NPOs) – non-governmental (NGOs) – all the other organisations which as their only income rely on foundations, trusts, public collections, EU funds or state funds. However, the funds that distribute grants or social business do belong there as well. These are the organisations we will focus on in the following pages.

Due to the division mentioned above we are going to primarily focus on organisations without the participation of the state or regional self-governing units. Our next thoughts are oriented towards organisations in which the states, and state administration, do not figure as organisers. Organisations with the participation of the state or self-governing units are going to be mentioned in the final chapters.

Table 1. Numbers of non-profit organisations 1990–2017

Year	Foundations	Endowment funds	Civic associations	Public service companies	Registered legal entities	Organisational units of associations
1990			3879			
1992	1551		15 393			
1994	3800		24 978			
1997	5238		30 297	52		
1998	55	71	36 046	129		
2000	282	735	42 302	557		
2002	330	825	49 108	762	4785	30 547
2005	368	925	54 963	1158	4605	33 178
2009	429	1168	68 631	1813	4347	30 640
2012	458	1278	77 801	2183	4348	32 104
2013	532	1430	84 430	2685	4400	34 536
2014	508	1407	2926	4158	123	86 956
2015	505	1518	2894	4166	388	89 584
2016	516	1635	2792	4177	686	92 878
2017	515	1670	2774	4171	752	93 651

Own work, sources: Czech statistical office (ČSU)¹, AVPO ČR², CZSO³.

There are two crucial moments in statistics of development of the numbers and types of NPOs.

1. The year 1998 when the law on foundations and endowment funds was passed. This law changed the size of the basic capital of foundations. This caused some foundations, which were established to lower the tax base of some companies without redistributing their finances, to disappear. Moreover, this law strengthened the possibilities of foundations to fulfil the goals of their founders. The effect on the numbers of foundations and endowment funds is noticeable in the table.
2. Another important change came during the years 2013 and 2014. In 2013, the new civil code no. 89/2012, which adjusts forms of NPOs and defines their possible benefit for civil society, came into force. From the report of the Centre for Non-profit Sector Research it is evident that this change strengthened organisations focused on advocacy of, for example, gender roles, human rights, work with minorities, etc.

The official division of NPOs does not usually convey anything about their focus or activities. From statistical data it is possible to deduce that the capacity of the NPO sector is filling up.

NGOs financing

According to the report of the Czech Donors Forum (2015), Czech foundations and endowment funds copy world trends; mainly investments in support and development of education, culture, social, health and humanitarian field, children and youth. They invest the least in the field of human rights' protection, real estate cultural heritage and development of the non-profit sector.

The development of the non-profit sector and human rights protection is mainly funded by the state and European sources (Index of Sustainable Development of Civil Sector in the Czech Republic for the Year 2015).

Organisations focused on advocacy (human rights, gender, equality) are primarily funded by European funds and in some cases by private donors. This division would be possible only by analysis of annual reports of individual organisations.

Private donors

The most important reason for NGOs funding by private donors is the possibility of a lower tax base. It is not possible in the Czech Republic to direct a percentage of taxes to NGOs, but there is a possibility to give funding to organisations and then deduct this money from the tax base. Individuals can deduct up to 15% of their income (tax base) this way, whereas legal entities, companies, etc., can deduct up to 10% of their tax base. NGOs have the opportunity to not pay taxes at all if their profit is under 300 000 Kč (12 000 eur). However, they have to reinvest this money in the development of the organisation.

It is necessary to point out that NPOs, without the participation of the state, struggle with important existential uncertainty due to their dependence on government subsidies. State subsidy programmes are valid for one year only and are assigned as late as March of that year. Therefore, some organisations use bank loans to fund the first three months without the assurance that they will have finances from the state budget for their existence and to pay off these loans. This should slowly change according to the strategy of development of NGOs that was approved by the government in 2015. According to this programme, state support of NGOs should function in three-year cycles as of 2020 (State policy towards non-governmental non-profit organisations for the years 2015–2020).

According to the report of the Ministry of Finance (2016) there is no uniform methodology regarding financing sources of NGOs in the Czech Republic. Each ministry and each territorial administrative unit can list grant programmes. Then it depends on the organisation to select grants to apply for. The financial resources of ministries are provided by the state budget or EU funds. It is practically impossible to analyse what portion of which finances is used to fund the

NPO sector in the Czech Republic since organisations with the participation of the state have other sources of funding from different parts of the state budget.

Quality of management and work in NGOs

Private foundations bring changes in the culture of management of NGOs because they demand strategic planning.

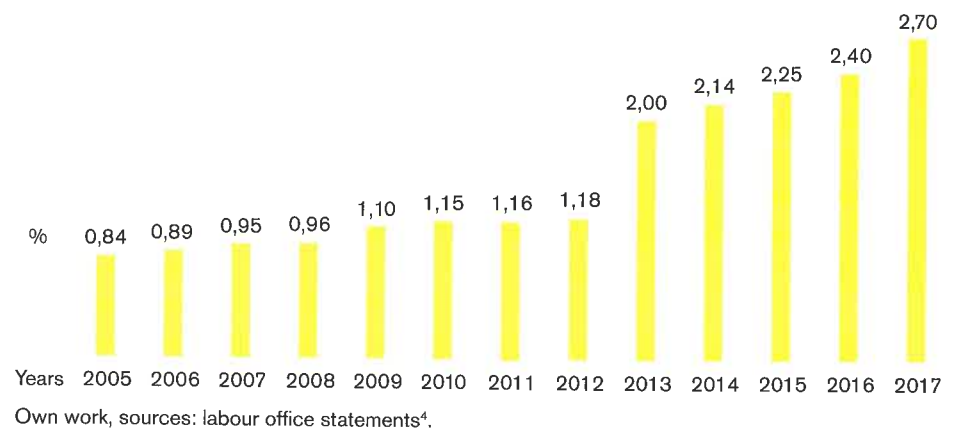
Furthermore, even the state raises quality control of provided social services and the work of NGOs due to supervision of direct service required by law. The obligation of supervision applies even to volunteer work, if the volunteers work directly with clients. Supervision for managers is solely recommended. In their practice, the authors of the article met with just two cases of coaching within NGO management. This refers to coaching intended for the organisation as a whole or for a team of managers. The introduction of coaching is hindered by its cost and generally low acceptance by managers.

Managers, especially in top management of NGOs, use individual supervision or private coaching.

Organisations that offer social services and draw funds from the state budget are subject to control of quality standards of offered services by the MPSV (The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) according to law no. 109/2006.

Another element that affects the quality of services is the required involvement of NGO associations into their work. This involvement is often one of conditions to be able to draw on state financial resources.

Figure 1. Share of NPOs in employment in the Czech Republic, including organisations with state participation



Organisations that offer social services have the biggest share in employment in the NPO sector. These organisations are, however, private and with

the participation of the state. Some criticise this situation by saying that social services should not be paid from funding earmarked for the non-profit sector, but from finances earmarked for social aid (Neziskovky 2015).

This situation affects the development of wages in NPOs. According to a report of the index of sustainable development of the civil sector in the Czech Republic (*Association of Public Benefit Organisations Czech Republic 2016*), wages in the non-profit sector are approximately 70% of the average wage in a given branch of social work in the Czech Republic.

On the other hand, NPOs that take on students as interns are a key segment for the preparation of social workers, workers offering social services, and health workers.

Volunteer work

The evolution of volunteer work within NPOs in the Czech Republic has gone through the most significant changes over the past few years.

In 2014 the government was drafting a Law on Volunteering in which it wanted volunteer work to be measured and regulated. Organisations focused on human rights were able to stop this law. On January 1, 2016 law no. 367/2016 that changed some options of volunteer work came into force. Most importantly, it allowed people in material need to profit from volunteer work

Until this law came into force, all volunteers could allocate from the tax base so-called non-financial gift for NPO, 5000 Kč (200 eur), which is no longer possible. On the other hand, people in material need can get a raise of benefits in in-kind support if they participate in volunteer work within NPOs, which positively affects the working habits of long-term unemployed people.

Due to this amendment, the registration of volunteer work that was based on tax returns and applied tax reliefs is difficult. NPOs should report approximately 60% of real volunteer work (ČSÚ 2016). Volunteer work in social services is the only volunteer work recorded accurately due to it being subject to supervision and insurance.

According to a report on the non-profit sector (*Statistics and us, 2017*) the ratio of volunteer work within the activity report of NPOs is 34.5%, which is the highest in the EU.

NGO services for people with disabilities

Problems of services for disabled people offered by NGOs, meaning services are concerned with deinstitutionalisation, is that they are strictly supervised by the state.

The initiators and implementers of much-needed changes in the field of disabled people's care were mainly specialists that took inspiration from West-

ern Europe. The idea of complex of care in isolated facilities had been prevalent in the Czech Republic. These specialists brought in new methods, focusing on community care. However, the turning point came in 2012 with challenge grants to deinstitutionalisation (MPSV 2012).

Step by step, first field and ambulant services oriented toward human rights and development of community life emerged.

Services tied with this development are especially health and social services and accompanying services focused on community life and the creation of a diverse, inclusive society that is able to integrate all its members into life and reduce the risk of social exclusion (Novotná 2012).

Organisations focusing on mental health have played an important role in this. After the revolution of 1989, people were deeply sensitive about human rights and civil solidarity. Due to this, services focused on home care and social inclusion of people with physical disabilities (wheelchairs etc.) arose. The evolution of services aimed at supporting people with mental or psychological disabilities was remarkably slower. The same applies to care for the elderly, which was lagging behind until a new law about social services passed in 2006. It was this law that created defined services including their possibilities of financing and allowed the development of this sector of NGO.

The development of NGOs in today's society depends on the development of civil society. Nowadays all big cities use community planning for the development of social services for disabled people, but there are services that develop only in certain regions. The first community plan emerged in the years 1997–2002 in Ústí n. Labem. For example, services for people with psychiatric disabilities. These services develop only in areas with large psychiatric hospitals nearby. This is understandably due to the concentration of specialists; on the other hand, services do not reflect the needs in other parts of the country.

The Social Service Law 109/2006 initiated the total deinstitutionalisation of residential care. The state, throughout its regions, supported these services:

- Services for support in the field of living - community (group) living, sheltered housing, halfway houses, assisted living.
- Services for the support of work and employment – socio-therapeutic and sheltered workshops, social firms and social cooperatives, temporary employment, supported employment, supported education, supportive educational programmes during work rehabilitation (job clubs).
- Services for support in the field of free time and social contacts – centres of daily activities, self-help activities for clients or their relatives.
- Case management – community teams with the purpose of social integration and rehabilitation.
- Professional social and legal counselling.

Table 2. Examples of services needed for social integration, rehabilitation and residential care that NGOs offered in 2011. Services for people with psychiatric disabilities, which are by now the most consistent, were used here.

Areas of assistance	Type of service	Number of services
living	sheltered housing	20
living	supported housing	12
work	socio-therapeutic and sheltered workshops	41
work	supported and temporary employment	10
work	social companies	7
free time	daily activity centres	29
education	supported education	4
assertion of rights and interests	counselling	18
others	case management	32

Own work, source: Neziskovsky.cz⁵, MPSV⁶.

The submitted work aims to prove that NPOs are a fundamental element of civil society. Their existence points out the necessity of social solidarity between all groups of people and the protection of people with disabilities. At the same time, the state assumes that the sector of non-profit organisations would flexibly react to the needs of society and would in some cases participate in legal changes (Vajdová 2005). According to the report "Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe: Challenges and Opportunities" from 2017, the development of human rights and the protection of independent media are necessary. The countries of the Visegrad Group tend to be nationally right-wing. This report confirms a general negative attitude towards the protection of the rights of minorities and towards work in excluded areas. These tendencies were confirmed during the 2017 elections into the House of Commons in the Czech Republic.

The main problem of NGOs is financing. Financing of social services is always granted for a period of one year. One year is not enough time for the development of the NGO sphere and it does not allow for reacting better and faster to the needs of the people. This situation should be resolved by a new law of three-year financing of NGOs that should come into force by 2020. In organisations with the participation of the state or local authorities this uncertainty does not appear. In regions where the family-friendly community model was introduced, it is apparent that NGO and volunteer work are not only for disa-

bled people, but they also are indispensable to the maximum development of civil society. Moreover, private donors, foundations and companies, along with finances bring a positive change to the system of management of NGOs.

The lack of major political decisions from MPSV and direct practice in regions, where organisations controlled by regional offices are supported preferentially, show us a persisting effort towards social control that was typical for totalitarian governments.

On the other hand, it is important to mention new efforts from departments outside of social departments, such as healthcare, the judiciary, and education, to support to finance services that develop civil society. These ministries also offer various grants, for example, services including social inclusion of persons returning from prison, alternative forms of punishment, ambulant care for people with physical disabilities, etc. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education officially said that it would limit all non-state educational activities, primarily elementary schools.

The persistent view on the central control of government over activities in the Czech Republic remains the same. This phenomenon of control shows itself in the system of deinstitutionalisation of residential social services and the urge to control the NGO sector mainly in terms of financing systems. During the process of deinstitutionalisation, NPOs with the participation of the state have a slight advantage. They have the certainty of financing, however, they have to abide by a certain political line. It is the independent NPOs that bring elements of freedom and equality into civil society that are much more important for essential changes. On the other hand, it is important to point out that at the local level, civic activities that support civil society and that are independent of state finances and can support social inclusion, development of human rights, etc. are emerging, such as DROM⁷ in Brno. The current period of economic growth that brings apparent changes in society helps these phenomena. In a situation, where unemployment in the Czech Republic is minimal, the NPO sector is engaging groups of people formerly endangered by social exclusion into society and is able to diminish social stereotypes. New space for donations and volunteer work has also emerged.

NOTES

- 1 <http://www.statistikaamy.cz/category/analyzy/socialni-statistiky-analyzy/>
- 2 <https://www.avpo.cz/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/VZ-AVPO-%C4%8CR-2016.pdf>
- 3 <https://www.czso.cz/csu/xb/uzitecne-odkazy-neziskove-institute>
- 4 <https://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/stat/stro>
- 5 http://www.neziskovsky.cz/clanky/511_695/fakta_statistika-postu-nno/
- 6 <https://www.mpsv.cz/cs/3869>
- 7 <http://www.drom.cz>

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