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DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS IN SOCIAL WORK: IS IT POSSIBLE IN UKRAINE?

ABSTRACT. The paper analyses the key issues related to dual degree social work programs in Ukraine. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed to explore the overall number of programs, the levels and types of degrees they award, Heads of Social Work Departments' perceptions and attitudes towards dual degree programs. The survey results have shown there are no dual degree social work programs in Ukraine, but the majority of respondents (81%) expressed confidence in positive outcomes of implementation of these programs both for students and higher education institutions. Some reservations were conveyed which highlighted difficulties for institutions in implementation and for students in completing these programs. The authors prove that combining social work with other fields of study within undergraduate or graduate dual degree programs is relevant to the labour market's and the profession's demands, and educational needs of practitioners. It also suits the interests of social work programs being one of the ways to address the challenges that higher education reform in Ukraine presents for social work education. The paper offers a platform to further discuss the value and possibilities of dual degree programs' implementation under the current situation in social work education in Ukraine.

Introduction

The profession of social work has been introduced in Ukraine in 1991 after the Soviet Union collapse. It had to deal with the increasing levels of social problems arising from changes in economy and life-styles. The programs of social work education have been offered since the early 1990s. They played a significant role in the process of the professionalization of social work in Ukraine. During the last decades, social workers have played important roles in addressing a number of social problems, such as unemployment, poverty, human rights violation, inadequate housing, child or spousal abuse, substance abuse etc. In recent years Ukraine confronts serious political, economic, and social challenges both global and national in origin. The most significant of these are separatist movements, terrorism, refugee crisis,

stratification between rich and poor, decline in living standards. To deal effectively with these challenges social workers often need skills and knowledge beyond the profession.

This request of social work practice reflects the needs of today's highly competitive labor markets in professionals whose expertise can be applied to several sectors. Nowadays, having only a social work degree may not be enough to address profession's challenges and make a fulfilling and rewarding career. Earning a dual degree may improve graduates' chances to land a job, perform their work at a higher level of efficiency, help them speed the advancement in social work career, satisfy their interests beyond social work, and can be useful in making a career transition.

The statistical data show that 56% of the professionals (unfortunately, we were not able to find statistics collected on social workers exactly) have to get second degree in another field of study to achieve their professional objectives (Second Higher Education, 2011).

Therefore, combining social work with other fields of study within undergraduate or graduate dual degree programs is relevant to the labour market's and profession's demands as well as educational needs of practitioners.

In Ukraine the higher education reform is now underway with the goal of raising quality of education and making it more relevant to the labor market needs. Social work education, being a part of the higher education system, but facing specific issues and challenges, has to look for its own ways of overcoming them and achieving the goals of the reform. Implementation of dual degree programs is seen as an adequate response for the demands of professional practice, labour market and educational reform.

Given the lack of information on dual degree social work programs in Ukraine the study was conducted to collect the data on them and to identify their benefits and constrains in the current situation of reforming higher education. Dual degree programs in the USA and England were examined to guide their development and improvement in Ukraine.

1. Literature review

There are some published researches focused on social work dual degree programs. The earliest articles are dedicated to the analyses of the possibilities of combining different fields of study within social work (Hartford, 1976), the process of socialization and status in profession of dual degree programs' graduates and social work-only graduates (McClelland, 1985). Later articles explore motivations, perspectives, experiences (Nelson-Becker, 2005; Frankowska *et al.*, 2015), salaries, career satisfaction (Ruth *et al.*, 2006; Bakotić, 2016) and identification with social work (Miller *et al.*, 2008) of dual degree programs' graduates.

Some studies outline challenges associated with the incorporation of inter professional education, like difficulties for students of establishing dual professional identities (Davis *et al.*, 1999; Sharland *et al.*, 2007; Svarcová *et al.*, 2011), different value orientations in social work and nursing which may produce conflicts in professional practice (Trevillion & Bedford, 2003), or logistical barriers, development and delivery of inter professional modules, integration of inter professional education throughout the whole student experience (Barrett *et al.*, 2003; Pérez-Bustamante Ilander *et al.*, 2016). One study highlights concepts useful in social work-nursing collaboration in helping members of vulnerable populations (Moxley & Washington, 2015).

The overall consistency of the findings argues that inter professional learning opportunities are one of the key ingredients for the development of critical practice and emergence of practitioners with a new professional identity capable of flexible career progression across professional boundaries. Two studies – although in favor of inter professional education – expressed reservations that the time and labour efforts are required

for it development and implementation, and some structural constraints and resistance may exist (Johnston & Banks, 1999; Powell *et al.*, 1999).

Descriptive literature analysis demonstrates different approaches to terminology that describes programs providing inter professional training and their degrees. The authors use a range of terms like "dual degree programs", "joint programs", giving them different meanings. Dual degree programs are defined by some authors as programs in which students work towards satisfying the academic requirements for two degrees within one area but on deferent levels, like a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree or an MSW degree and a doctoral degree (DSW or PhD) (Miller *et al.*, 2008). While others believe that dual degree programs are programs collaborating to offer graduates two degrees on the same level but in different areas, like an MSW and a Master of Public Health (MPH) (Jayaratne, 2008a). Jayaratne (2008) defines dual degree programs as the programs upon the successful completion of which "the student acquires two terminal degrees in two separate disciplines or professions at the same level, that is, a master's level" (Jayaratne, 2008a). Therefore, dual degrees are awarded for two programs separately and these two programs have some coordination and coordinated elements, but have not integrated their curriculum.

Unlike dual degree programs, joint programs are seen as programs upon completion of which the student receives a degree for accomplishing requirements of a unique combined degree program worked out between two or more disciplines, either within one university or among multiple universities (Jayaratne, 2008a; Nugaras & Ginevičius, 2016). Joint programs are defined as programs, conferring masters' and doctoral degrees, like an MSW and a doctorate in education (Ed.D), or those that allow students to acquire a Ph.D. in social work along with another discipline, not social work and another professional school (Jayaratne, 2008a). Students in these programs typically acquire an MSW degree in the process, but the terminal degree is one degree, the Ph.D. (Jayaratne, 2008a).

Literature analysis reveals that the most generic term used for or instead of dual or joint degree programs is "inter professional" programs/education/learning. "Inter professional education" is defined as "occasions when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care" (Freeth *et al.*, 2008). The emphasis is made on the process and results of learning rather than on levels of training and type of degrees earned.

Despite of different approaches to identifying degrees that allow combining two educational programs, we will use the term "dual degree programs" as it is more appropriate in the Ukrainian context. The current national legislation does not provide for the possibility to obtain two degrees on different levels of study within one educational program. But it doesn't forbid HEIs to provide training in two professions or disciplines on the same levels of study (within undergraduate or between graduate programs).

2. Methodology

This study is exploratory in nature. It was designed to collect data on key issues related to dual degree social work programs functioning in Ukraine. This analysis will provide the basis for future researches in this sphere. The research is focused on three-folds: a) to explore the challenges that are faced by social work programs under the influence of social and economic requests, and educational reform in Ukraine; b) to collect the information about HEIs that offer or would like to offer dual degree social work programs; c) to present the current issues on dual degree social work programs in Ukraine.

2.1. The Web Search Sample and Procedure

For the purpose of this study the information was searched in electronic databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, Web of Science / Web of Social Science, website of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the websites of Ukrainian and foreign HEIs that offer social work programs. Internet recourses helped us to identify potential benefits and difficulties in development, implementation, and administering of dual social work programs, and assess the possibilities of their establishment in Ukraine.

Initially, we tried to get the most recent data on all HEIs that propose dual degree social work programs in Ukraine. To get needed information we looked for all HEIs with accredited Bachelor's and Master's degree programs in social work in Ukraine. This information we could find on the website "Information system "Competition" (http://vstup.info/), which was created by Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine for the applicants of higher education establishments. The information on this website is updated every month. So, with the help of web search we have collected information about all HEIs in Ukraine that have accredited Bachelor's and Master's programs in social work and made a list of them (the sample). All HEIs offering social work programs were logged in a table. Received data was synthesized and organized by type of degree and HEI in an EXCEL database.

Then, to find out the most recent data on dual degree programs in social work we, in January 2016, have analyzed the websites of each university and academic program (that had website) from the sample. Search terms included "double degree" and "joint degree" programs. The process of searching each website varied depending upon the website's design. As information about social work programs was located in different places, so we started to look for it on home page of each HEI from the sample. If there was no link to social work program information on the home page of HEI, we tried to search in Google using the title of HEI and the title of the program.

As websites do not always contain needed options about the existence of dual degree social work programs or bury them so deep that they are not readily available, we decided to contact with the Heads of Social Work Departments to get necessary data.

2.2. The Survey Sample and Procedure

As we could not collect data about the dual degree programs in social work from the HEIs' websites (January 2016), we initiated mailing letters to all Heads of the Social Work Departments from the list. From the website we got their email addresses and sent them personal email-letter in the form of an EXCEL database (personal communication, January 2016) to ask needed information about dual degree programs. 65 self-report surveys were created for the purpose of this study. Respondents were asked to answer four basic questions to share their experiences on running dual degree social work programs, number of students and graduates, potential benefits and constraints of this type of programs.

The descriptive questions were the following:
1) Does your school/department offer dual degree program? (if "no" answer on the fourth question, please).
2) What kind of dual degree programs do you offer?
3) How many students were enrolled in the program and how many completed?
4) What are the benefits and/or the constrains of dual degree social work programs for the institution and/or students (graduates)?

The letters with attached EXCEL file were mailed to respondents at the end of January 2016. By this letter the respondents were informed that the survey is confidential but not

anonymous and were asked to send answer back in 1-2 weeks. The letters were coded and paired with a list of respondent names for the purpose of facilitating follow-up mailings.

So, by the end of February 2016 we had the following results: 46 responses were received (71% of those mailed); 9 (14%) letters, initially mailed, were returned due to change of address; 10 (15%) letters were not answered. So, these 10 respondents were sent letters secondly. And in a week we received 6 more answers. 4 of those 10 did not answer again.

As we combined qualitative and quantitative questions in survey, two types of data analysis were used. Answers on quantitative questions were entered into an SPSS database. A descriptive statistical analysis was performed.

Qualitative questions were designed to explore the perceptions and attitudes towards dual degree programs. MAXQDA database was applied to write responses for the one open-ended question. Responses were divided into themes that emerged from the data.

3. Results

3.1. The Web Search Findings

The data received from the web search sample shows that by the end of 2015 there were 65 HEIs with accredited 4-year Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree program and 35 accredited 2-years or 1.5-year Master of Social Work (MSW) (*Table 1*) degree programs in Ukraine.

By the way, at the end of 2015 in Ukraine there were 44 HEIs with accredited 4-year Bachelor of Social Pedagogy (BSP) programs and 34 – with accredited 2-years or 1.5-year Master of Social Pedagogy (MSP) programs (*Table 1*). But, under the reform of higher education in Ukraine, in the coming new studying year (2016-2017) all social pedagogy programs will be transformed in social work programs. It will cause some problems. Firstly, the number of social work programs will be nearly doubled. Secondly, the web search sample shows that, there are some HEIs that now simultaneously propose both Social Work and Social Pedagogy programs (18 – Bachelor's degree programs and 8 – Master's degree programs) (*Table 1*) either within one department or two separate departments. So, they will offer two social work programs both for Bachelor and Master degrees.

Table 1. HEIs offering Social Work and Social Pedagogy programs in Ukraine

	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree
HEIs offering Social Work programs	65	35
HEIs offering Social Pedagogy programs	44	34
HEIs offering both Social Work and Social Pedagogy programs (from the number above)	18	8

Source: Authors' own Internet search.

In order to avoid misunderstanding while conducting our research we took into consideration only those HEIs that offered accredited Bachelor and Master social work programs at the end of 2015. So, looking for detailed information about peculiarities of social work programs offering in HEIs from the sample we found out that of those 65 BSW programs, only 14 (21,5%) updated information on their websites, 22 (33,8%) – updated inaccurately (there was little useful information) and 29 (44,7%) – did not update information. The similar situation was with MSW programs. Web survey of 35 websites of MSW degree programs showed that 14 (40%) of total sample updated information, 6 (17,1%) – updated

randomly and 15 (42,9%) didn't update any information. So, the data received from the websites provided little relevant information about dual degree programs.

3.2. The Survey Findings

The survey results received via email communication with respondents (personal communication, January 2016) proved that on February 2016 there were no dual degree programs in social work in Ukraine and none was planned to be implemented in the following studying year (2016-2017) neither for bachelor's no for master's degree. It goes without saying, there were no students earning dual degrees in social work in Ukraine.

To process data from quantitative questions a descriptive statistical analysis was performed. The fourth question was asked whether the respondents believed the institutions and/or students (graduates) could benefit or lose from the implementation of dual degree programs.

The opinions were almost unanimous. Of those 52 (100%) who answered the emailed letter 42 (81%) respondents had confidence in positive outcomes of inter professional programs both for HEIs and students alike; 10 (19%) expressed doubts as to the institutional capacity of adopting and embedding dual degree programs under the current situation in education.

In *Table 2* we highlighted the most general benefits from implementation of dual degree social work programs for HEIs that were pointed out by respondents. The following reasons for establishing dual degree programs in social work were mentioned: 22 (52%) respondents believed that it would attract a growing number of students enrolling in social work programs; 6 (14%) – in possibility for the program to differentiate itself from the rest and only 3 (7%) – in more secure faculty positions as a result of program's stronger field marketability. And the biggest number of respondents 32 (76%) expressed the opinion that dual degree would open new horizons in development of social work practice and research.

Table 2. Highlighted benefits of dual degree programs for HEIs

Highlighted benefits	% of those who gave positive responses
Open new horizons for development of social work practice and research	76%
Increase in number of students	52%
Underline the uniqueness of the program	14%
Secure faculty positions	7%

Note. Percentages are based on the total number of responses of the respondents who gave positive answers.

The respondents also expressed their opinions on the potential benefits of dual degree social work programs for students and graduates. As it is shown in *Table 3* the following student's benefits were mentioned: 37 (88%) respondents believed that dual degree would improve graduates' marketability; 31 (74%) supposed that students would have a possibility to satisfy their interests outside social work; 30 (71%) suggested the dual degree would give a wider array of job opportunities for graduates and 26 (62%) – that it would help students acquire multiple perspectives and a wider skill set to better handle professional challenges.

Table 3. Highlighted benefits of dual degree programs for graduates

Highlighted benefits	% of those who gave positive responses
Increase marketability and competitiveness in the job market	88%
Give opportunity to satisfy students' interests outside social work	74%
Provide wider array of job opportunities	71%
Provide wider skill set to better handle professional challenges	62%

Note. Percentages are based on the total number of responses of the respondents who gave positive answers.

In *Table 4* some common difficulties that would face institutions while implementing dual degree social work programs were highlighted. Legal recognition of this type of programs through the accreditation and licensing procedures was called the biggest problem by 6 (60%) respondents of those who expressed doubts. 4 (40%) considered the problem in poor understanding of these programs among the general public. And almost all of those 8 (80%) who had doubts saw the problem in administering of such type of programs. Moreover, completing two degrees simultaneously was regarded as a challenge for students by 5 (50%) of the interviewed.

Table 4. Highlighted difficulties of dual degree programs

Highlighted difficulties	% of those who expressed doubts
Problems of administering	80%
Legal recognition of dual degree programs through the accreditation and licensing procedures	60%
Challenges for students to accomplish program requirements	50%
Poor understanding of these programs among the general public	40%

Note. Percentages are based on the total number of responses of the respondents who expressed doubts.

The received answers show the respondents acknowledge a lot of benefits of dual degree programs, but they also hold some doubts as to the expediency of their implementation, most of which they refer to the administrative issues in running such programs. Further we will discuss the key issues of dual degree social work programs implementation in Ukraine with the focus on the results obtained in the survey.

4. Discussion

Social work in Ukraine does not have such a long history as it has in the USA and Europe. But it has gone quite a rapid way in its formation. Social work as a profession and academic discipline has been introduced in Ukraine in early 1990s. In response to economic and political crisis, growing social problems connected with general situation in the country, the government has recognized the value of the social work profession and has encouraged the training of first social workers in 1991 (Lukashevych, 2002).

Today, in 25 years, a network of state social services, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and system of HEIs with accredited Bachelor (65 HEIs) and Master (35 HEYs) social work programs are established. However, in spite of some success achieved in social work development, the profession is now being faced with numerous challenges.

From one side, they are caused by the low status of the profession, low salary, and limited opportunities for promotion, lack of high-quality placements, poor working conditions, and high work loads of social work practitioners. As a result, social work

programs face the problems of recruiting and training motivated social workers and social agencies have problems with retention of effective and experienced social workers. Failure to develop an effective social work workforce means that vulnerable groups in society will not get the support or help they require. So, there is a strong need to develop effective training programs that fits the Ukrainian background and meets core international professional standards.

From the other side, existing infrastructure of state social work services has been increasingly challenged in addressing issues such as poverty, income inequality, unemployment, forces displacement, disabilities and others. There are demands and expectations in the society for organizational structuring and reform of state social service agencies to improve the quality of service delivery in traditional fields of social work practice in Ukraine, like children's and family services, social work with the elderly and disabled. It is critically important for the profession to contribute to the society's most urgent challenges in new and emerging areas of social work practice such as military and veterinary social work, social work with migrants, public health, and social work in local communities. To keep up with society's demands social work education needs not only to reflect the context of social work practice, but what is more important to lead its development. Social workers with inter professional competencies have wider possibilities for development of social work practice and research.

Besides, social work education in Ukraine has to address not only challenges the professional practice imposes on it, but those inherent to education itself. The web survey results show that there are too many HEIs offering social work programs in Ukraine. And their number will increase in 2016-2017 academic year as the result of the higher education reform, initiated by the new Act on higher education, adopted by the Parliament of Ukraine in July 2014 (On higher education, 2014). According to the Decree on the fields of study and specialities in higher education (2014) (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine; Act, 2014) that was implemented by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine the number of fields of study and specialities in higher education were rationalized. For instance, "Social Pedagogy" a speciality that was very close to "Social Work" and existed up to 2014 had disappeared from the Decree. According to the data presented in Conformity Table of fields of study and specialities in higher education for which the training of students was carried out up to 2015and is carried out starting from 2015, two specialities – Social Pedagogy and Social Work merged into one – Social Work (Minister of Education ans Sciense in Ukraine, 2015).

This decision will result in the increased number of social work programs' graduates who will look for a job in existing social work agencies. Already today almost 75% of all graduates cannot obtain social work positions throughout the country (Ivanytska, Morohovets, 2015). The reason is not because there are any vacant positions. Very often social work agencies and NGOs propose jobs that are well-paid, with good working conditions, and career growth opportunities (State Employment Service of Ukraine, 2016; Services for job seekers and employers, 2016). But the employers put forward higher requirements for the practice ability to the graduates, including interdisciplinary knowledge and skills. But only few social work programs include interdisciplinary content into social work curricular (Tkachenko, 2016; Kashyn, 2015). Today having only a social work degree is not enough to obtain a fulfilling job. So, many social workers are looking for ways to differentiate themselves from the rest of the pack to get the positions they want. And, for some social work students, the way to stand out in the crowd is by completing a dual degree program.

The web survey shows the dual degree programs in social work are not new in the world, but are new in Ukraine. The survey findings demonstrate that at the beginning of 2016 there were no dual degree programs in social work offered by HEIs in Ukraine. Based on web

search and survey outcomes, it appears they will attract more attention from universities and students adapting to the profession's increasingly interdisciplinary nature (Reardon, 2009).

Dual degree programs have many benefits which were highlighted by Heads of Social Work Departments, who took part in our research, and authors of papers on dual degree-related themes. Recognizing the benefits, it is also important to aware of the difficulties associated with these programs and realizes how they can be overcome.

One of the concerns expressed by Heads of Social Work Departments was poor understanding of these programs among the general public. So, this article and further researches in this sphere will help to understand what dual degree program is, think critically about its purpose and goals, and assess its potential benefits and challenges.

Completing two degrees in parallel was considered by respondents as students' challenge. Undoubtedly, the programs are not for everyone. You need to invest more time and money and the logistics may be complicated. Students have to follow rigid course sequences closely or they risk not being able to meet programs' academic requirements. Sometimes students must travel long distances to take all of the courses they need for graduation.

Among the issues raised by Heads of Social Work Departments was the legal recognition of such programs through the accreditation and licensing procedures in Ukraine. Some steps in this direction were made in recent years. Implementation of the new Act on higher education (2014) opens new perspective for development of collaborative educational programs in Ukraine (On higher education, 2014). The most important innovations introduced that serve as a basis for establishment of dual degree programs in Ukraine are: endowment of HEIs with more academic and financial autonomy, including development and implementation of new educational programs within a certain fields of study; approval of the new range of areas of concentration within the list of licensed specialties in higher education institution; provision of the possibility for bachelors and masters to combine specialties and areas of concentration within one program of study; provision of combining fields of study, specialties and areas of concentration in the professional training of future specialists within one HEI; establishment of dual system of quality assurance through internal and external assessment (On higher education, 2014). So, the new Act on higher education (2014) made it possible to implement dual degree programs having introduced the legal mechanisms of their development, implementation, and recognition.

Among the reservations of dual degree social work programs' implementation expressed by the majority of respondents (80%) the difficulties in their administering were mentioned.

Given the lack of national models to guide the program development, implementation, and administering of this type of educational programs we considered it useful to examine how they operate abroad.

The web search results shows that the most progressive in this sphere are the USA and England. These countries were the first to launch dual degree programs in social work, In the USA such programs are defined as programs giving a student the opportunity to earn simultaneously two different degrees in the same subject area but on different levels, or in two different subjects on the same level. In England they are generally accepted as shared and interactive learning by students from different professions following the same integrated program (Sharland *et al.*, 2007). The graduates of this type of program usually hold a single interprofessional degree.

Started from 2007 the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in the USA started to survey schools offering dual degree programs. The data collected in the CSWE online Annual Surveys show the growth in the number of schools that offer dual degrees from 162 in 2007 to 223 in 2014 (Statistics on Social Work Education in the United States, 2007-14).

Unfortunately, there are no data on the size of dual degree programs in the USA (Jayaratne, 2008b).

The most frequently reported degrees earned in tandem with social work over the last years were law, public health, theology/divinity, public administration/public policy, business administration, education, urban planning, international studies, and criminology/criminal justice (Statistics on Social Work Education in the United States, 2007-14). Many universities offer more unusual pairings. The University of Michigan has a program that allows its students to learn social work with information technology; the University of Maryland and the University of Southern California – social work with Jewish studies and the University of Minnesota – social work with urban and regional planning (Reardon, 2009).

Most of the dual degree programs are housed within both large and small universities, either private or public. They can propose one or multiple dual degree programs. For example, College for Public Health and Social Justice of Saint Louis University proposes 7 dual degree programs. Jayaratne (2008) suggests that schools offering dual degree programs may play key role in increasing the number of underrepresented students, pursuing dual degrees in social work and any other area. The HEIs collaborate to share intellectual and financial recourses for the benefit of the students (Jayaratne, 2008a).

The concept of dual degree programs is less popular in England then in the USA, at least in social work education. A few universities run a dual social work and nursing degree programs (Davis *et al.*, 1999). Joint training in learning disability nursing and social work first emerged in the 1980s when the closure of long-stay hospitals for people with learning difficulties was at its height (Davis *et al.*, 1999). The programs were initiated and funded by local authorities who have identified a work force need for employees with the particular mix of clinical skills of the nurse with the networking and communication skills of the social worker. The experiment was supported by training councils of both professions and the dual degree programs aimed at training practitioners to work across the health and social care divide were implemented. In the 1990s, the idea of dual training took hold and was established in six universities (Davis *et al.*, 1999). In 2006 there were five universities offering the training, one of which also offered dual degree in mental health nursing and social work (Sims, 2006).

In 2012, there were ten of these programs in total at seven education providers. This dual provision has reduced significantly and as of September 2015 there are only two education providers running such programs (Social work education in England, 2016). Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the statutory regulator for social workers in England, claims all the programs met the standards as far as the social work training was concerned (it isn't responsible for approving and qualifying nursing programs) but nonetheless they were closed on education providers initiative (Social work education in England, 2016).

The analysis of the information presented on the dual degree programs' websites shows that they are structured in different way in the two countries. In the USA, dual degrees programs are proposed by two separate departments, schools, or colleges which are a part of the same institution. A few dual degree programs are coordinated across universities, and sometimes are referred to as "cooperative dual degrees" (Jayaratne, 2008a). Students must be accepted into both programs independently and meet each institution's admission criteria. The entrance requirements, such as the requirements for a particular GRE score or even the requirement of the GRE itself, for the two programs can be quite different. However, some programs require simultaneous admission prior to matriculation, while others allow for entry into one or the other program during enrollment in one program (Jayaratne, 2008a). Admission to one program does not depend on or guarantee admission to the other.

Dual degree students are required to take the core curriculum from both departments. The dual degree programs normally require three years to complete, except for the dual

degree program with the law school, which requires four years. The typical sequence of study is to spend one year taking courses in one program, the second year in the other program, then work to complete requirements for both programs in the third year.

The number of credits and their distribution between the two degrees are determined by each dual degree program, but the total amount of credits is always less than would be necessary to complete both programs separately. Each school counts a specified number of credits from the other program to save students' time and costs. This mutual crediting significantly shortens the amount of time and saves cost otherwise spent to complete both programs. The number of credits that may be double-counted varies from program to program.

Despite some differences in the structure of dual degree programs across the USA, they all share some common features: they offer two degrees simultaneously; they reduce the time needed to earn the two degrees, compared with independent enrollment in the two degree programs; students are admitted to both programs, thus having to meet the admission requirements of each of them; students take courses in both programs; they count some subset of coursework typically toward both degrees; they reduce the cost of education by virtue of a reduction in terms enrolled (Jayaratne, 2008a).

Unlike the USA, in England dual degree programs are offered by different departments at the same institution. They have integrated curriculum and award a single interprofessional degree. The time is split equally between the two departments. All courses consist of integrated modules from social work and nursing. During the first year students learn theoretical courses. In second year 50% of time they spend on clinical and social care placements. The third year of study culminates with a 20-week integrated placement when students have opportunity to engage in professional practice that requires interactions of healthcare and social work practitioners. When graduates qualify, they are able to register as a qualified nurse with the Nursing and Midwifery Council and as a social worker with the Health Care Professions Council.

The findings on dual degree programs in the USA and England may be briefly summarized in three points. First, in both countries there is lack of clarity in the definitions of "dual" and "joint" programs. Second, in the USA the main distinction between them is in the number and types of degrees offered; in England the distinction is less obvious. Third, in the USA there is a large number and great diversity of programs, providing the opportunity to combine social work with another profession, while in England there are only a limited number of programs combining social work and nursing training.

Conclusion

Considering the absence of dual degree social work programs in Ukraine and the increased need of labor market, professional practice and practitioners in skills and knowledge beyond one profession, there is a reasonable premise for the implementation of a this type of programs. The emphasis on the training of dual professionals can help social work programs occupy a niche in the higher education market and reduce competition between programs, caused by significant increase in their number. The new legislation on higher education provides mechanisms for development, implementation and legal recognition of dual degree programs.

The brief overview of the USA and England experiences in running dual degree social work programs was given to dispel the doubts about the expediency of their implementation in Ukraine and to provide additional support and assist new programs in the decision-making process.

The analysis of literature, qualitative and quantitative research data show that benefits of dual degree programs for students are numerous: while studying they can be involved in interprofessional and interdisciplinary activities, gain other professions' perspectives and share social work's perspectives with others. Later when doing their job as social workers they are able to better understand people from different backgrounds and to encourage actions that promote social justice. Besides, two degrees pursued in parallel can be earned in less time than if they were earned separately. Dual degrees can offer graduates more options for their careers, thus making them more marketable in a tight job market.

Despite the benefits the students may be exposed to some challenges while earning two degrees concurrently. In particular, they are to invest more time and money to complete a dual degree program than needed to get an MSW alone. To complete the requirements for both degrees they should be more committed, motivated, and organized, to follow rigid course sequences. Switching between different academic programs demands personal qualities and skills to build relationships with their cohorts in either program. The potential conflicts between two profession's codes of ethics should also be considered.

HEIs offering interprofessional education are also exposed to some difficulties and risk. They must reach partnership agreements over important issues such as entrance requirements, application procedures, curriculum design, content and delivery, length of the program and so on. If one of the academic partners involved in a dual degree program decides to change the curriculum or course requirements of its program that can complicate the partnership. The same thing can happen if one of the partners has staff or faculty turnover. It also can be a challenge for a social work program to find field opportunities that complement dual degree students' academic paths.

Therefore, dual degree programs represent both challenges and new opportunities for social work programs in Ukraine. As a result of optimization of the fields of study and merger of social work and social pedagogy into one speciality the number of social work programs increased drastically. They found themselves in a situation of competition for students. Their survival depends on that, if they would be able to find adequate solutions to the challenges of reform. The implementation of dual degree programs seems particularly relevant in the current Ukrainian context of higher education reform and situation in social work education, and with work force strategies calling for permeability between professions. The question is whether they will be able to transform these challenges into opportunities for growth?

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