

Social Planning

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Abstract: Rothman's three models of community organization include locality development, social planning and social action. These three models are the important approaches to community work and have their own characteristics. And this paper will focus on social planning model. Because social planning focuses more on solving substantive problems, it is very suitable to use in many social situations.

Keywords: Locality Development; Social Planning; Social Action

Introduction

Firstly, this paper will tell us what is social planning, it is the foundation of this paper. Secondly, it will talk about how the social planning model can be put in practice situation with BASIC model for the sake of clear explanations. In this part, it also will analyze pros and cons of social planning with community participation and social planning without participation. Thirdly, this paper will try to reflect the relevancy of the model in the context of Mainland China. It will mainly talk about how social planning applies in the Mainland China and the limitations of social planning used in the Mainland China. In order to better illustrate social planning applied in the Mainland China, an example of Guangzhou Iron and Steel Enterprises Group Co., Ltd. will be used in this part.

1. What is Social Planning

According to the community toolbox, social planning is the process by which policymakers – legislators, government agencies, planners, and, often, funder – try to solve community problems or improve conditions in the community by devising and implementing policies intended to have certain results (Rabinowitz, 2016). And social planning focuses more on solving substantive community problems, such as mental and physical health, housing and recreation (Rothman, 1995). In the social planning model, not only more technical or “expert” roles are emphasized, but also the power structure is usually present as the sponsor or employer of the practitioner (Rothman, 1995). Besides, social planning is a data-driven approach, so there is heavy reliance on needs assessment, decision analysis, Markov chains, evaluation research and so on (Rothman, 1995). It is easy to find that social planning aims to solve substantive community problems. Moreover, policymakers and experts play the main role in the social planning model. As Rein (1965) suggests, much planning is by “consensus of elites” who are employers and policymakers in planning organization. It also is a limitation of social planning ^[1].

2. How it is used in the practice situation

In this part, this paper will tell us that how social planning is used in the practice situation. It will show the differences between social planning with community participation and without community participation in the practice situation. And it also will show the pros and cons of social planning with community participation and without community participation in the practice situation.

The six stages of planning based on BASIC model provide clear various steps to put social planning in the practice situation. These six sequential stages are from general to concrete. It contains global vision perspective, strategic planning,

tactical planning, operational design, implementation activity and evaluation review. The first stage is global vision perspective that is to determine area of interest and find out goals, targets or values within the area. Global vision perspective is a broad perspective of the planning. It also identifies the existing situation and thinks about the desirable situation after changing. And it helps the policymakers know more about the real situation of citizen and sets goals according to the actual situation. The second stage is strategic planning. This stage finds out the different between “is” and “should be”, and it will try to find key result areas to fill the gap. And it provides a middle-range goal in this stage. Besides, it needs assessment of citizen that can know what are the unmet needs. The third stage is tactical planning. This stage develops a specific time-limited object and implement strategic plan. The fourth stage is operational design. It explains the planning step by step clearly. This will help the planning proceed smoothly. The fifth stage is implementation activity. This stage not only implements the planning, but also makes some adjustment on the basis of the actual situation and makes some preventive measures to prevent unexpected situation. The sixth stage is evaluation review.

However, there is a big difference between social planning with community participation and social planning without community participation in the practice situation. Firstly, timing of changing and implement social planning can be different. For social planning with community participation, the time for change may be due to the community's demands to change, as the public feels that the problem directly affects their lives. But the time for change of social planning without community participation may be due to the problem attracted policymaker's attraction; a strategic planning process that the problem must be addressed or there are resources of government can be used to address the problem (Rabinowitz, 2016). For example, Guangzhou did a lot of work of landscaping in 2010 for the Guangzhou Asian Games. Secondly, people involve in social planning can be different. For social planning with community participation, it will involve policymakers, experts, all stakeholders and grassroots that directly affected in some way by the potential policy change (Rabinowitz, 2016). For social planning without community participation, it will only involve policymakers, experts and some public officials. Thirdly, the process of social planning also will be different. Social planning with community participation will involve the community of every step in the process^[2].

As we all know, social policy is not for the government, but for the improvement of people's lives. Social planning with community participation is better to make planning according to the needs of the public. There are many advantages that involved community in social planning: participation provides the opportunity to educate policymakers to the community's real needs and concerns, participation allows community members to help create policy that really works to meet their needs, participation can make community members in control their own future, and participation builds community leadership from within (Rabinowitz, 2016). On the contrary, it is easily for social planning without community participation to ignore the real situation and unmet needs of the community. Because experts study and research policy basing on their professional knowledge and skills. Moreover, if policymakers don't understand the community, it will miss some important information and the planning may lead to negative consequences.

3. Reflect the relevancy of social planning in the context of Mainland China

Social planning is also suitable to use in the context of Mainland China, but the context of Mainland China is special. Policymakers are hard to know everyone's needs because of the population of Mainland China. So top-down planning is the mainly approach used in Mainland China. Usually government will allow experts and relevant departments to investigate, study and formulate the planning. After the draft, there will be time to collect the feedback and opinion. But not every direct stakeholder can give feedback due to the complicated procedures. Top-down planning also has its own limitations. It is obvious to know that the participation of social planning in Mainland China is not enough. Therefore, it may fail to consider the realities of the situation^[3].

In order to better illustrate the relevancy of social planning in the context of Mainland China, the example of Guangzhou Iron and Steel Enterprises Group Co., Ltd. (GISE) will be used in this part. GISE moved to Zhanjiang in 2014, before this it was a polluting enterprise located in urban and residential areas in Guangzhou. But why it moved and who made it move to Zhanjiang. Social planning is also used in this case. Because GISE is made of steel, the waste gas is harmful to

human body. So the nearby residents have relatively large dissatisfaction. In fact, this problem has plagued residents for a long time, but has not been much improvement. However, why GISE moved in the 2014? It is also a social planning. Because environmental protestation is a hit concern in recent years and Guangzhou municipal government has been committed to improving the environment in Guangzhou. The exhaust gas discharged from GISE has a great influence on the air quality in Guangzhou. It is also a strategic planning process. As a result of national policy reasons, it was purchased by Shanghai Baosteel Group and moved to Zhanjiang. Furthermore, all the employees are paid the compensation and then dismissed. The transfer location is also discussed and checked by policymakers and experts. After the transfer of GISE, it not only increases the living condition of residents, but also improves the air quality of Guangzhou. The limitations of top-down social planning can be seen from this example.

Social planning applied in Mainland China also has some same problems similar with the example. To promote the quality of social planning in the practice situation in Mainland China, policymakers should collect more opinions from grassroots and stakeholders that directly influenced by the planning. In addition to collect the advice form experts, policymakers also should know more about the actual situation of the community and what the grassroots really need. Policymakers also can collect grassroots opinions at different stages and make changes while deepening understanding.

Conclusion

This paper not only lays more emphasis on discussing how to put social planning in the practice situation in the light of six stages of planning of BASIC model, but also pays more attention to find out timing of changing and implement social planning, people involved in social planning and the process of social planning are different from social planning with community participation and social planning without participation. And it also shows the pros and cons of social planning with community participation and social planning without participation. Additionally, it provides some steps to teach policymakers to involve the community well. In this paper, it also talks about the relevancy of social planning in the context of Mainland China. Most of the social planning in Mainland China is top-down planning. It points out the limitation of social planning in Mainland China and uses the example of Guangzhou Iron and Steel Enterprises Group Co., Ltd to analyze the situation of social planning in Mainland China. Community participation is one of the biggest problems for putting social planning in practice situation in Mainland China. The policymakers in Mainland China should gradually enhance the degree of community participation of social planning. Generally speaking, social planning with community participation is more beneficial for policymakers or public officials to make planning that targeted to the problems and grassroots' real needs.

References

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