

Description of the Project

Relevance of this study

Since its origins, the support to families belonging to the extreme poverty range or under certain social vulnerability level, has had an integrative design that includes different support methods, since money and funds are an important help but they do not guarantee an important or sustainable improvement. Taking this into account is that the Chile Solidario strategy has added to the already existing benefits - guarantees, funds and access preference to network programs and services- a remarkable component called PSYCHOSOCIAL SPECIALIZED SUPPORT SERVICE.

A very important part of SOCIAL PROTECTION is built upon the experience of networks interaction. Therefore, we need to assess results at an objective level (how social protection has improved their lives) and at a subjective level (how satisfied they feel about being socially protected). Using these two factors is that we figure out a picture of what Chilean people feel about the quality of public policies - particularly social policies.

Due to this is that when the expected result of Chile Solidario (oriented to families in extreme poverty situation) where posed, it was defined as reaching the autonomous management of families inside the service networks. This means that an important part of this task that seeks to give social protection using psychosocial support produces that:



Families orientate and manage themselves within institutions providing social services.
Families are efficient in their relationship because they solve and cover needs.
Families use services as an exercise of their rights.

Including a psychosocial support service to these families involves covering basic social protection demands related with minimum quality of life conditions that are not covered yet. The purpose is to reinforce personal functional abilities so that they can carry out tasks which are part of their stage of development taking into account -with special concern- the needs of the most vulnerable members inside the family and/or those who have special needs of assistance.

This implies having in mind the idea that vulnerability is the result of different structural and context factors that affect a family and also of some of its practices and dispositions. Thus, vulnerable families are those without knowledge about services, benefits and available assistance, without any link whatsoever with institutions, and without the ability for generating spontaneous demands for services.

This can be reverted through the motivational influence of a psychosocial support agent -like the Puente program's Family Support Agents- and through a service of orientation and advisory providing information while supporting the development of competences in order to develop a leaning towards change and commitment to take actions. The hypothesis is that all of these elements improve people's experience with services if they reach a level in which they feel sure about the existence of social protection and its easy-to-access help systems and, at the same time, they get the conviction that the fundamental point is their own effort.

The psychosocial support intervention strategy consists in generating processes so that people reach a virtuous relation with service networks. However, this is not only Family Support's socio-educational exclusive task. It depends on whether the preferential access to social programs and services is reached or not since by doing so is that we have the certainty that it exists. Also, if it implies the successful re-linking



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of users with institutions (the correct use of services), wellness feelings are developed within population, their confidence towards institutions increases, new opportunities are recognized and managed, and the right actions for sustaining the improvements are carried out.

If part of social protection is built upon the experience of interaction between people and social assistance networks, then an unavoidable task that institutions which have competences over these processes have is to move forward in terms of improvement of service quality. This is achieved by institutional intervention strategies that promote actions for improving the quality of services in order to facilitate people's management.

This can only be achieved if the perspective of users is included in the analysis and improvement of quality, results, and operation of the local service networks. This takes place only when conditions are optimal for people to identify the critical points which might be affecting the network's global intervention quality at user's service level and significant results level. Identifying poor aspects, in terms of competences and abilities, that agents who operate these networks might have in order to give users the proper service is also an important part of this process.

Following this idea is that, in 2007, families which were users¹ of the Puente Program, and the whole range of service networks which they have access to under the social protection framework, took a survey. This survey was meant to know their experience in terms of linkage with service networks, their rating about the quality attributes of this relation, and their criteria to evaluate an institution from the social protection demanding user perspective. This involved gathering their opinions and approaches towards:

(a) Networks general quality perception and critical points within areas such as Opportunities, Proficiency, Appropriateness, Utility, Transparency, and the Linkage created since implementation.

1 This study considered the completion of its main stages between October 2007 and March 2008 . ALA CONSULTORES was in charge of the study. This consultant company is specialized in organizational, social, and cultural affairs. It is ran by Sociologist Mauricio Rodríguez.



(b) The characteristics of the practical strategy designed by the families in order to interact with the networks. Pathways of the families inside the networks; Problems experienced in the interaction with the networks; Benefits of first and second degree obtained by the families in their condition as users of the network (acknowledging the stages and types of development regarding the acquisition of functional autonomy); Actions taken by the families in order to maximize the usefulness of the networks; Proposals of the families in order to improve the offers from the network (services and devotion).



Objectives

a. General Objective

Contribute to the generation of institutional capacities between the social protection system employees in order to reach better quality, accessibility conditions, and opportunities in terms of the service users receive.

b. Specific Objectives

Characterize the management of families using the Chile Solidario program, their expectations, careers, effective service access, opportunities and quality of the service they receive, and conditions influencing their management's success or failure.

Identify situations giving concrete clues about what management abilities generation within families is, regarding to their link with networks, what an autonomous management means, and what does it mean that they take awareness of their rights and take this approach towards institutions.

Characterize typical management circuits regarding to the system's more characteristic ways of making decisions or that concentrate the biggest amount of demand as they also involve more complex levels of decision making.

Contribute to the process of reflection inside the Executive Department as well as inside other public service institutions regarding to the quality of how social services are delivered using family management linked with their use of public services.

