# HUMAN RESOURCE POTENTIAL: THE BASIS FOR THE RESILIENCE OF ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING SOCIAL SERVICES

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*Abstract The article analyzes the features of the human resources potential that help ensure the resilience of organizations providing social services to difficulties. Organizations providing social services work with individuals at increased risk and often face various difficulties. Therefore, strengthening the resilience of these organizations, the potential of which is human resources, becomes a particularly important task. The purpose of this article is to reveal the potential of human resources in the process of strengthening the resilience of organizations by identifying the most important factors and measures that help ensure resilience. The article analyzes how leadership, employee competencies, motivation, focus and other factors help strengthen the resilience of organizations providing social services to difficulties.*
*The purpose of the study is to identify the main difficulties and measures that influence the resilience of organizations providing social services.*
*Methodology – quantitative research method – questionnaire survey, in which employees of organizations providing social services – decision-makers (managers, deputies, heads of departments and divisions) participated.*
*Key findings: Human resource potential is a key factor in the resilience of social service organizations, as employee competence, motivation and engagement directly correlate with the organization's ability to adapt to challenges. The resilience of social service organizations is enhanced by a strong organizational culture that promotes cooperation, trust between managers and employees, and clear communication during change. The study revealed that the resilience of social service organizations directly depends on the ability of managers to make strategically sound decisions that ensure the strengthening of employee competences and motivation.*

*Keywords: human, resources, social, services, organizations, resilience.*

## Introduction

When social service organizations operate in an environment of uncertainty, in crisis situations and difficulties, it is necessary to ensure the resilience of organizations. One of the most significant factors determining the resilience of organizations to difficulties is the potential of human resources. The scientific literature provides various information about human resources that ensure the successful operation of the organization, but there is a lack of empirical research-based insights into the potential of human resources in social service organizations. Therefore, this article analyzes the features of the potential of human resources that help ensure the resilience of social service organizations to difficulties. Various researchers present different approaches to human resources: Juodeikaitė and Fominienė (2016) argue that human resources are the use of human capital to increase competitive advantage and to perform assigned duties in a timely manner. Berber et al. (2014) note that it is human capital as a factor of success in an organization. Gao (2025) defines human resources as the greatest asset of an organization, which depends not on financial or material resources, but on the quality of employees' work and their behavior. Meanwhile, Kuliešis et al. (2012) argue that it is a person, his work and his abilities, acquired knowledge, skills, which are not material and easily tangible. Summarizing the definitions of human resources provided by the authors, we can state that

human resources are human capital in an organization, performing the intended duties, classified as intangible resources, which helps to ensure success in the organization. Considering the importance of human resources for the success of the organization's activities, there is a natural need to examine how these resources are related to the organization's ability to adapt to changes and maintain stability of operations - this is associated with the concept of organizational resilience. Organizational resilience is defined as the ability of organizations to maintain a balance of various elements in the event of difficulties, mobilizing available resources and competencies, the ability to manage needs, challenges and changes (Erol et al., 2010). The ability of an organization to respond promptly and adapt to environmental changes depends on the interaction of internal and external factors (Hillmann and Guenther, 2021). Defining organizational resilience reveals the essential characteristics of organizational resilience, which include organizations' response to shocks, the ability to plan, adapt, overcome difficulties and continue to operate or become even stronger in the context of the changes that have occurred. The ability of organizations providing social services to overcome difficulties and maintain resilience primarily depends on how effectively they are able to mobilize, maintain and strengthen their human resources. It is the person – their competencies, experience and motivation – who becomes the essential source of organizational resilience.

*Relevance of the article*. Social service organizations operate in a constantly changing, challenging environment, which is significantly affected by demographic trends, emigration rates, and changes in the age structure of society. In the context of these factors, social service organizations are increasingly viewed as dynamic systems, the effectiveness and resilience of which is determined by the role of human resources. The potential of human resources is becoming a key factor contributing to the ability of organizations to overcome external and internal difficulties and ensure long-term functioning in a changing environment.

*The aim of this article* is to reveal the potential of human resources in the process of strengthening the resilience of organizations by identifying the most important factors and measures that help ensure the resilience of organizations providing social services.

To achieve the research objective, a quantitative research method was applied – a questionnaire survey, in which employees of organizations providing social services – decision-makers (managers, deputies, heads of departments and sections) participated.

The first part of the article, based on theoretical analysis, highlights the potential of human resources, which helps to ensure the resilience of organizations providing social services to difficulties. The factors of resilience of social service organizations and measures that influence the resilience of organizations are identified.

The second part describes the research methodology, presents the most important research results, revealing what human resources, factors and measures help to ensure the resilience of organizations providing social services.

The conclusions presented at the end of the article, based on the indicators of the research results, reveal that the potential of human resources is one of the essential factors of the resilience of organizations providing social services. The resilience of organizations is closely related to the ability of managers to make strategically sound decisions, as well as to the competencies and professional training of employees.

## The importance of the interaction of internal and external environmental factors in strengthening the resilience of organizations providing social services

The increasingly modern world implies increasing public expectations for social service organizations in Lithuania. In a constantly changing environment, a new approach is being

formed to the social service organization as a system, in which human resources become an essential part of it, determining the success and resilience of the organization. The difficulties experienced by social service organizations have different short-term and long-term effects on the resilience of organizations, and major disruptions leave long-term traces on the organization (Foss, 2021). It is important that organizations operating in difficult conditions are constantly reborn stronger and more resourceful, because only resilient organizations can function properly in a constantly changing environment, facing unpredictable difficulties (Hillmann and Guenther, 2021). Social service organizations, according to the organization of their activities and the specifics of the services provided, respond to the needs of customers, which are constantly changing. In order for social service organizations to provide effective and high-quality services and find effective ways to solve the difficulties that have arisen, impeccable human resource management is necessary (Fahira ir Setyawan, 2024). Employees of social service organizations, who are distinguished by high competencies, professional skills, experience, and apply their knowledge at work, contribute to the implementation of the organization's goals and strengthening the organization's resilience. Thus, the quality of social services is determined not only by organizational factors, but also by human resources - the competencies of employees, which are ensured by professional standards and qualification requirements established in legal acts, defining the necessary knowledge and education of specialists (Law on Social Services of the Republic of Lithuania, 2006; Description of the Procedure for Improving the Professional Competence of Social Sector Employees and Managers of Social Sector Institutions, 2006).

A social service organization can ensure resilience to difficulties when its strategy is coordinated and developed together with a human resource management strategy (Aust et al. 2020). Human resource management is a strategic method of managing labor relations, based on a consistent and comprehensive approach to work functions and the inclusion of employees in decision-making processes (Collings et al., 2021). The pursuit of resilience in social service organizations requires continuous efforts that depend not only on their preparation, ensuring managerial decisions of leaders, but also on human capital, employees and their interaction with managers (Lv et al., 2019). The resilience of organizations could be strengthened through the interaction of individual people, to which the behavior of employees and the employer contributes - the resilience of the organization depends on both each member of the organization and the environment of the organization itself (Mitsakis, 2020). Thus, long-term positive changes in the organization can be implemented through effective interpersonal interaction between employees and managers. When making management decisions during crisis situations, it is very important to distribute the workload and systematically assess whether the activities will be carried out as effectively as possible in the event of a change in circumstances, whether their continuity will be ensured and at the same time the resilience of the organization will be strengthened (Weis and Klarner, 2022). Organizational leaders must find preventive principles, mindful action, operational optimization and adaptive innovation that correspond to the organization's mission, vision and balance. In this case, one of the most important actions of leaders in increasing the resilience of organizations providing social services is to create a clear and shared vision, therefore it is important that the organization's employees are involved, believe in shared success and contribute to decision-making in organizations (Brown et al., 2017).

Resilience in social service organizations is a relatively new field, integrating many areas of research and practice, including resilience, change management, organizational security, organizational culture, leadership, and business continuity (Istiqaroh et al., 2022). In order to ensure the successful operation of an organization, it is necessary to have the ability to respond,

monitor short-term changes and threats, anticipate long-term threats and opportunities, and learn from past events, which are influenced by external and internal environmental factors: Internal environmental factors include internal social competence and the ability to act. As certain processes take place, organizational, human resource management, and leadership characteristics are formed (Ramezani & Camarinha-Matos, 2020). Organizational leaders, by seeking to overcome difficult situations and reformulating specific positive steps in a short period of time, ensure that the organization does not experience shocks and is resilient (Hermawan, 2025). Internal environmental factors include adaptive operating models developed by the organization, allowing for rapid innovation, and the ability to strengthen and maintain its value during and after disruptions (Bailey & Breslin, 2021). External environmental factors include global changes, social characteristics, social networks that determine inter-institutional cooperation processes, etc. In the external environment, two foundations of organizational resilience factors emerge: structural-organizational and economic-social (Ruiz-Martin et al., 2018). Inter-institutional cooperation helps ensure organizational resilience and overcome difficulties - as inter-institutional cooperation strengthens, organizational resilience strengthens (Mazzara, Maione & Leoni, 2023).

The main external and internal environmental factors that help organizations providing social services overcome difficulties and influence organizational resilience are depicted in Figure 1:
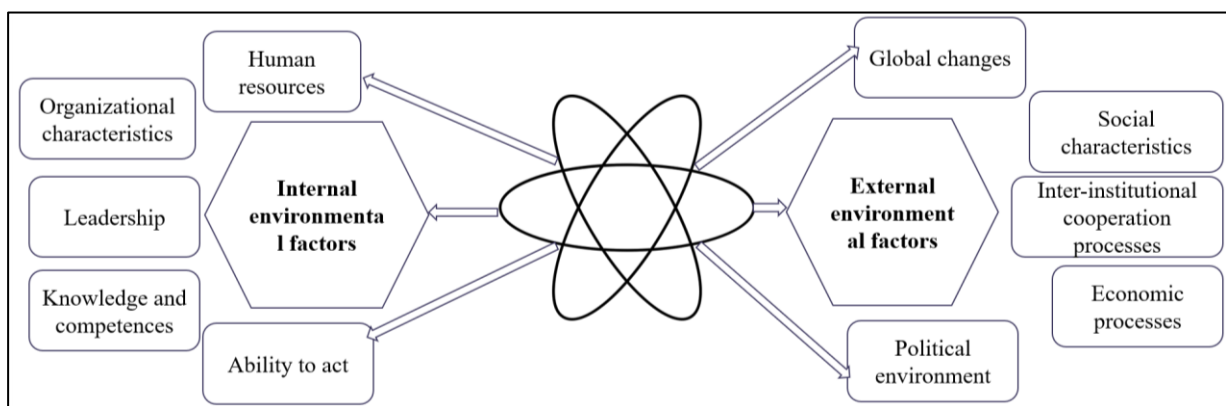


**Figure 1. Factors that ensure organizational resilience.**
*Source: compiled by the author, 2025.*

Theoretical analysis reveals that the resilience of social service organizations is influenced by external and internal environmental factors, including organizational characteristics, human resource management, knowledge, competencies and skills, enabling leadership, the impact of global changes, socioeconomic characteristics, political decisions and aspects of inter-institutional cooperation. When difficulties arise, organizations pay special attention to those work practices that are related to job stability, adaptation to a changed environment, good internal communication, development of competencies and appropriate working conditions.

In summary, it can be stated that the resilience of social service organizations is most influenced by both external and internal factors, among which the most important is the role of human resources. Research shows that resilience to difficulties can only be ensured when the organization's strategy is closely aligned with the human resource management strategy. Special attention is paid to employee involvement, ensuring job stability, adaptation to change, internal communication and development of competencies. Such factors allow organizations

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not only to overcome difficulties, but also to successfully adapt to a changing environment, because without the potential of employees, positive changes would be impossible. Positive changes in organizations are perceived as a self-evident and inevitable phenomenon, which requires bold managerial, financial, human resource management and other solutions, which are not possible without the potential of human resources - the organization's employees.

**An empirical analysis of challenges and measures influencing the resilience of social service organizations**

The theoretical part identified the difficulties of social service organizations and the most important factors for strengthening resilience, on the basis of which an empirical study is conducted. The quantitative research method chosen for the study was a questionnaire survey. The research questionnaire consisted of 11 closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was submitted to the survey.lt system, and the questionnaire link was sent to respondents by e-mail. The study involved employees of social service organizations - decision-makers (managers, deputies, heads of departments and divisions). 235 respondents participated in the study. The study is conducted from 2023. December 11 to 2024. January 29.

*The purpose of the study* is to identify the main difficulties and measures that affect the resilience of social service organizations.

In order to determine what difficulties social service organizations are experiencing, respondents were asked "What difficulties does your organization face?". The results of the study are shown in Figure 2.
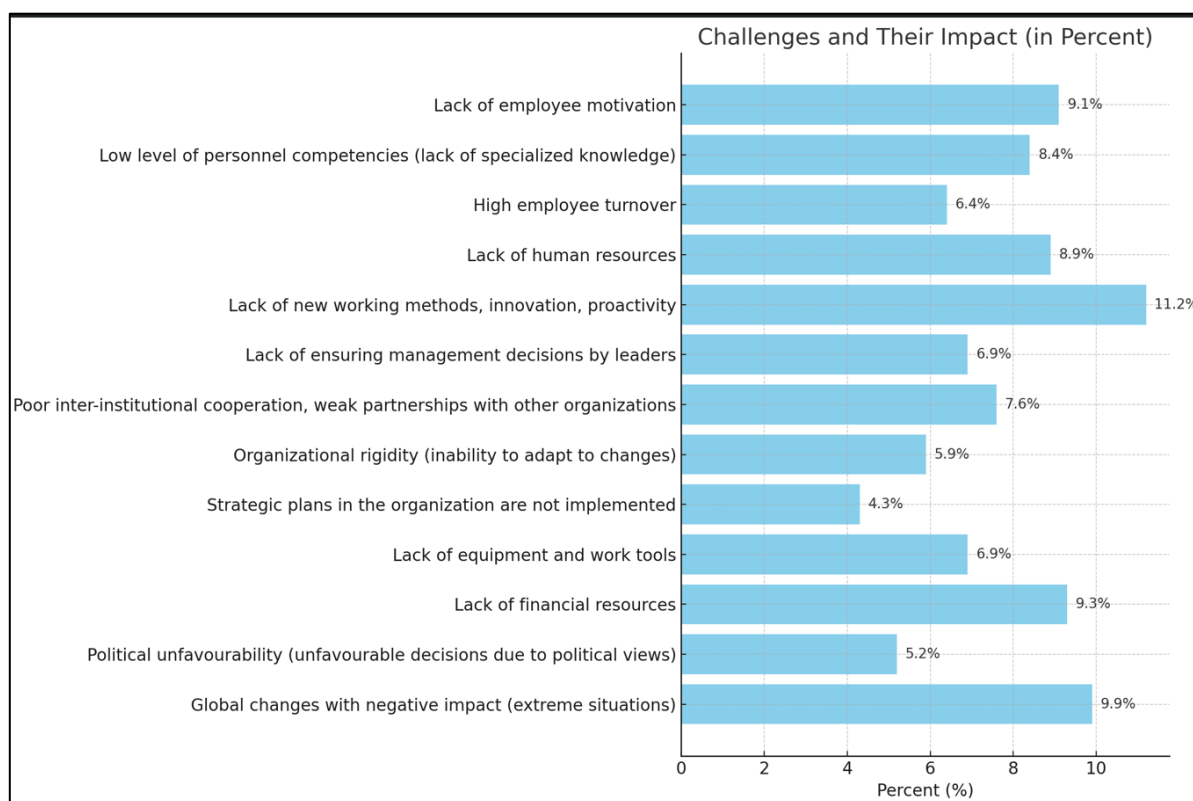


**Figure 2. Challenges faced by social service organizations**
*Source: compiled by the author, 2025.*

As the results of the study show, organizations providing social services lack new working methods, innovation, proactivity (11.2%), challenges are caused by negative global changes (extreme situations) (9.9%), organizations face a lack of financial resources (9.3%), employees lack motivation (9.1%), a lack of human resources is evident (8.9%), and a low level of personnel competencies (lack of specialized knowledge) (8.4%), difficulties are also caused by poor inter-institutional cooperation, weak partnership relations with other organizations (7.6%). According to the results of the study, organizations providing social services face multifaceted challenges, which include both internal and external factors. Based on the results of the study, it can be stated that organizations providing social services face complex and multifaceted problems that must be addressed in order to ensure the success and resilience of their activities.

To achieve the aim of the study, it was analyzed what measures help to strengthen the resilience of organizations and overcome difficulties. Respondents were asked to answer what measures are applied in the organization providing social services in order to overcome difficulties and ensure the resilience of the organization in which they work. The results of the study are shown in Figure 3.
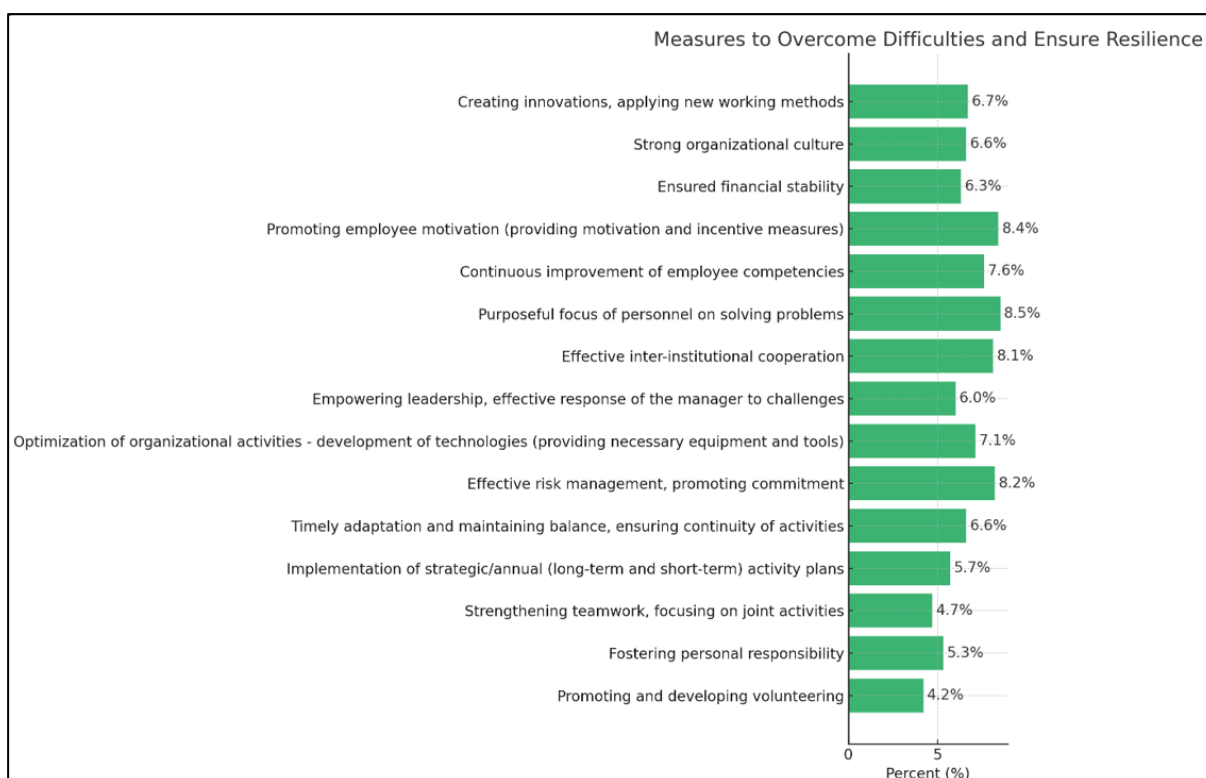


**Figure 3. Measures used in social service organizations to overcome difficulties and ensure resilience**
*Source: compiled by the author, 2025.*

As the results of the study show, in organizations providing social services, overcoming difficulties and challenges is helped by targeted staff focus on problem solving (8.5 percent). Respondents noted that promoting employee motivation (application of motivation and incentive measures) (8.4 percent) is very important. No less important are effective risk management that promotes commitment (8.2 percent) and effective inter-institutional cooperation (8.1 percent). As important measures that help overcome difficulties and ensure the resilience of organizations, respondents also name the continuous improvement of

employee competencies (7.6 percent), optimization of organizational activities (7.1 percent), creation of innovations, application of new working methods (6.7 percent), strong organizational culture (6.6 percent), timely adaptation and maintaining balance, ensuring continuity of activities (6.6 percent), and financial stability (6.3 percent).

The results of the study reveal that the most important factors for the resilience and overcoming of difficulties of organizations providing social services are related to the strengthening of internal processes and the empowerment of employees. In other words, the potential of human resources plays a particularly important role. The study data show that a comprehensive approach to the internal resources of the organization, employee involvement and cooperation with other institutions are essential factors that help organizations effectively overcome challenges and ensure their resilience.

Summarizing the results of the quantitative study, it can be stated that for organizations providing social services, seeking to avoid threats and overcome difficulties, it is important to optimize activities, adapt to changes and maintain a balance of operational processes, while nurturing the culture of the organization. It was found that the potential of human resources is very important in organizations - the focus of employees on solving problems, promoting motivation, and commitment to managing risks, thanks to which difficulties are overcome and resilience is ensured.

## Conclusions

External and internal environmental factors that influence the resilience of organizations help organizations providing social services overcome difficulties. Human resource potential is a key factor in the resilience of social service organizations, as employee competence, motivation and engagement directly correlate with the organization's ability to adapt to challenges.

The resilience of social service organizations is enhanced by a strong organizational culture that promotes collaboration, effective risk management, trust between managers and employees, and clear communication during change.

The study revealed that the resilience of organizations providing social services directly depends on the ability of managers to make strategically sound decisions that ensure the strengthening of employees' competencies and professional training.

Strategic human resource management, the sustainability dimension, and promoting employee motivation are essential for these organizations to remain effective and resilient.

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