

Anna Chańko, Emilia Wołyniec

University of Białystok

## **Report on the Third Forum of Social Rehabilitation "The meanders of modern social rehabilitation" Białystok, 23.10.2015**

On 23 October 2015, at the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Białystok, the Third Forum of Social Rehabilitation was held, which has for several years been an excellent opportunity to meet with people involved in issues of social maladjustment and research and practical activities undertaken in this area. The first edition of the Forum took place in 2013 and concerned the role of NGOs in the process of social rehabilitation of minors, and particular attention was directed to the concepts of restorative justice. Last year's meeting concerned the effects of educational and therapeutic interactions in people addicted to alcohol and psychoactive substances. This year, the theoreticians and practitioners involved in the process of readaptation of the individual to society, discussed the challenges faced by social rehabilitation and which are the result of broadly understood socio-cultural changes determining this process, which affect its specificity and lead to changes in the sphere of planned interactions, disrupt and deconstruct them, making some areas of correctional theory and practice lose connectivity with the mainstream, functioning not only as an alternative but in isolation from reality.

The Third Social Rehabilitation Forum was organized in cooperation with Pedagogium School of Social Sciences in Warsaw, the Association for the Integration of Children and Youth "Przyjaciele z osiedla", Street Educators and the Multi-disciplinary Scientific Committee for Violence and Discrimination. The honorary patronage of the event was held by: Ministry of Justice, Education Development Center, Pedagogium School of Social Sciences in Warsaw and the University of Białystok.

The Forum was officially opened by Dr Krzysztof Sawicki, Head of the Department of Social Rehabilitation of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology at the University of Białystok. After the greeting he presented the key thought of the Forum, focusing on the metaphorical meaning of the word “meanders”, which was also referred to by the speaker after him, Prof. Dr Jerzy Nikitorowicz, Head of the Department of Intercultural Education. The participants of the Forum were also greeted by the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Białystok, Dr Mirosław Sobecki, Professor at The University of Białystok.

Plenary sessions were begun by Prof. Dr Marek Konopczyński, who posed questions before the audience gathered, in what scope does the “extended reality” have socialization and educational capacity, so the ability to create parameters of identity? And so, to what extent is the process of identification, imitation, internalization, both non-institutional and targeted possible on the Internet? The speaker said that if we assume that human identity is the functional way of thinking about oneself and one’s own priorities in terms of their public perception, it seems that the space of the extended reality has an impact on the previously stressed process. According to the speaker, the participation of children and adolescents in the Internet reality may result in widening the parameters of identity in the form of readiness to seek new, alternative life and social roles realized outside the thus far real living space. It can also be argued that in the near future, a specific part of intellectual, emotional and behavioral activity of children and adolescents will move from the real world into the virtual space, which can already be observed today. The next speaker was Prof. Andrzej Bałandynowicz, who in his speech discussed model of probation guardianship, which is the system of integrated personal, environmental and cultural-civilization interactions towards people who violate social order. Dr Irena Mudrecka, a professor at Pedagogium School of Social Sciences in Warsaw, in her speech pointed out the lack of a clearly defined concept of “psychopathy” in the current diagnostic classifications. She also stressed that in literature on the subject the term “psychopathy” is increasingly used to describe individuals who are in conflict with the law and who do not manifest higher feelings towards people around them. The Author also tried to convince participants of the need to develop a specialized social rehabilitation programme for psychopaths, which will significantly enrich the effectiveness of social reintegration to this specific category of offenders. Dr Beata Maria Nowak, a professor at Pedagogium School of Social Sciences in Warsaw, presented system solutions in the field of social readaptation of convicts in Poland and in selected countries of the European Union, by creating a kind of compilation and comparison. The speaker characterized and identified the main problems of penitentiary systems in Denmark (the problem of ethnic minorities and drugs, violence used by organized groups of prisoners, mental problems of prisoners), France (dramatically increasing number of prisoners, the substantial prison overcrowding and the high proportion of foreigners), Germany (the growing role preventive arrest, com-

petence shifts in penal policy and development of post-penitentiary supervision), Great Britain and Northern Ireland (prison overcrowding, high rate of death of prisoners and very high rate of mental health problems of incarcerated people) and Poland (prison overcrowding, crisis of employment for convicts, insufficiency of specialized penitentiary personnel, outdated material substance of prisons and the dominance of protective functions in open and semi-open prisons). The speaker also pointed out the legitimacy of the appointment and functioning of District Offices of Readaptation Support, which would operate in the following areas: education – cooperation with Centers of Vocational and Continuing Education and universities located in the area; employment – cooperation with the District Employment Agency so that there would be a separate pool of job offers for former prisoners and qualifying professional courses; social assistance – cooperation with social welfare institutions. The priorities in the activities of District Offices of Readaptation Support would include mainly: social security, re-education and vocational education, supporting the development of potentials of former convicts and supporting families with the penitentiary problem. Next, Dr Anna Kieszowska spoke in the discussion, a professor at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, who during her interesting address discussed the inclusion-catalactic model used in the context of working with a convicted person. She postulated to include representatives of the local community in the assistance measures directed towards convicts, and that any social rehabilitation activity should primarily assume social reintegration of the convict in society. Imprisonment should be used among ruthless criminals who have committed the most terrible crimes. In any other cases, activities should be centered around de-stigmatization, fostering potentials and education and work of the convict. The conclusion of the issues discussed was expressed in the postulate to combine the use of multi-band theory of social rehabilitation in an open environment and the theory of creative social rehabilitation.

After the plenary sessions, deliberations in the two sections began. The moderator of the first of them was Prof. Dr Andrzej Bałandynowicz. Dr Małgorzata Michel was first to speak, who focused her speech Contemporary discourse on designer drugs in the light of a modern model of prevention of risky behaviors in Poland, on the phenomenon of adolescents using psychoactive substances. She paid particular attention to the media reports on the threats to health and life of teenagers as a result of the use of designer drugs, which took place in the summer of 2015. The speaker made a critical analysis of government actions taken in this matter (legal conditions, medical help, social reaction) and examined all the preventive measures launched to prevent risky behavior among young people. Paweł Lesniewski, MA, in a speech entitled The role of the family in the social rehabilitation of minors, emphasized the important role of the family in the process of a child's socialization. He clearly emphasized the fact that the child's upbringing and the specific parental involvement is an important factor in protecting the teenager against coming into conflict with the law, and if it has already occurred,

he appealed for active participation of parents in the process of social rehabilitation of the child, which should be based on active involvement in all correctional interactions, as well as on the genuine cooperation of family members. The next voice in the discussion was Tomasz Prymak, MA who spoke on Legal awareness in the prevention of problem behaviors of middle school pupils. The Author presented the results of his own research devoted to legal awareness as a factor protecting middle school adolescents against demoralization. He also pointed out the previously underestimated force of the law, as a catalyst for all the tensions and conflicts in which the individual is entwined. In addition, the research conducted by the speaker provide a basis to conclude that the right legal awareness of young people can minimize the risk of criminal behavior occurring. To sum up his contribution to the discussion, the Speaker called to take measures to increase the legal awareness of pupils in Polish schools. To conclude the deliberations in the first section of the Third Social Rehabilitation Forum, Anna Chańko, MA spoke about the social readaptation of former female prisoners. According to the Author, the legitimacy of using the penalty of imprisonment should be considered taking into account a number of socio-economic conditions, which the convicted women will return to upon serving their sentence. While listing the risk factors, she also emphasized that they do not provide any life stabilization – difficulty in finding a job, no fixed abode, deficits in education, qualifications, lack of support from loved ones, financial difficulties (lack of funds to support the family, children). The Speaker also convinced the audience that these and many other factors threaten the social reintegration of formerly convicted women, which is why the institutions involved in the social readaptation of former female prisoners should consider them with special care.

After a short break in the session, the second section began, which was moderated by Prof. Dr Marek Konopczyński. The first to speak in the discussion was Dr Ilona Fajfer-Kruczek and Dr Łukasz Kwadrans with a speech entitled The need for intercultural competence in social rehabilitation work, indicating a clear need to build a bridge between social rehabilitation and intercultural education. According to the Speakers, the need to develop intercultural competence in social rehabilitation work is a response to the changing social conditions (migration, armed conflicts). In the face of them, social rehabilitation work with people culturally different does not concern individual cases but more and more social groups. Developing intercultural competences among personnel involved in the social rehabilitation of migrants is the key to success in the perspective of their social readaptation. Then, Father Dr Bogdan Stańkowski provided a closer look at the issue of social rehabilitation of minors in Italy, based on the activities of the local Salesian youth educational centers (*Comunita' educative per minori*). The Speaker directed the audience's attention to discussing the most important ideas underpinning the functioning of centers run by the Salesian Congregation, then moved on to present the results of his own research, for which he used

the documents of Salesian youth educational centers. Based on their analysis, research problems were selected which revolved around issues such as: the place of the charge in a center, the choice of working methods, ways of achieving the objectives of educational centers and the vision of an effective educator. Father Stańkowski summed up his speech with the question of how we can disseminate ideas and objectives of Salesian educational centers in the Polish area of social rehabilitation. The next speaker – Dr Krzysztof Sawicki – presented the paper *The Role of the peer group in the social rehabilitation of minors in the open environment*, highlighting the strong influence of peers on changing the behavior of young people at risk of demoralization. The speech by Aleksandra Pyrzyk-Kuty, MA related to the development of creative theater work with socially maladjusted youth being under probation. Creative social rehabilitation of minors using theater techniques, according to the Speaker, is the perfect tool for the implementation of approved patterns of behavior and expression of emotions by minors. The Speaker summed up her speech by reading a piece written by one of her charges, which is to be a confirmation of the fact that art allows young people to express their most hidden emotions. Emilia Wołyniec, MA focused on a comparative analysis of assistance and correctional interactions addressed to minors and underage mothers benefiting from the support of specialized institutions (social welfare institutions, correctional facilities, youth educational centers) in the country and abroad. As an introduction, the Speaker made the conceptual distinction of categories of teenage mothers due to legal recognition. Afterwards she presented the spectrum of assistance interactions carried out in relation to them in the US. According to the Author, a comparison of forms of assistance and methods of work in relation to this specific group of mothers in Poland and other countries will allow to see new courses of action making it easier to help young girls adapt to motherhood, as well as increase the efficiency of the process of social integration in the local environment.

After a full day of sessions, the participants took part in an artistic event – the prevention spectacle “Taboo...we don’t speak out loud about this”, prepared by the students of the Scientific Circle of Correctional Pedagogy and middle school pupils from the School Complex in Zawady, under the guidance of Anna Chańko, MA.

This year’s Social Rehabilitation Forum once again became a valuable platform for the exchange of scientific experiences and views in the area of the

widely understood social rehabilitation or correctional concept by theorists and practitioners who on a daily basis implement the ideas of correctional pedagogy in their professional work. It seems indispensable to wish the organizers of the Conference and its participants continuation of cultivated scientific thought and practical fruits of work through which social rehabilitation interactions will take on new and even more effective forms.