Crisis or development of Polish social rehabilitation practice?

The increasingly frequent opinions within the public space stating that the institutional space of social rehabilitation has been dominated by administrators and officials, and is therefore guided by its own regularities, find their justification in the social reality and are becoming an increasingly intensified problem, not only for academic representatives of social rehabilitation sciences, but above all for a large part of representatives of the community of practitioners-educators from various types of social rehabilitation facilities.

We can observe that the more or less contemporary concepts of social rehabilitation, which are passed on in universities and other institutions of higher education and which in principle have qualities of subsidiarity and service to another man, and therefore should be deeply integrated into the space of social rehabilitation, are distorted before our eyes in pedagogical practice and become a caricatured domain of strictly administrative activities, strongly affected by real political influences.

It is easy to notice that in the institutional space, the administrative (based only on formal and legal procedures) character, which is being shaped more and more clearly and with an increasing verve, of both the process of institutional social rehabilitation itself and the evaluation of its effects, which has shifted emphasis from the pedagogical essence of the process to the non-educational one, is starting to prevail. For this reason, it is difficult to expect successful social rehabilitation effects with the character of a permanent personal and social change in the persons under care.

In practice, the paradox of formal-administrative thinking results in the fact that the noticeable lack of educational effects is explained on the one hand by the imperfection of the work of the teaching staff, which results in the well-known „creativity" of administrative supervision, and on the other hand by the constant increase in repression (increasing the severity of criminal penalties, electronic monitoring, setting up bars, increasing the number of guards, etc.).

In consequence, this leads to seeming and not much substantial activities which, in addition, cause tensions and conformist-adaptive attitudes both among the wards and staff of social rehabilitation institutions.

It is therefore hardly surprising that, subject to various, often accidental pressures and influences, the social rehabilitation practice is surprisingly resistant to new theoretical, methodical and organizational suggestions coming from the scientific pedagogical community. Of course, this does not apply to all pedagogues-practitioners and all institutional social rehabilitation environments. There are examples of nonconformist activities based on the assumptions of contemporary concepts from the field of social sciences. In such cases there are real pedagogical successes measured by the high level of readaptation and social reintegration of the wards.

Perhaps it is still the case that those educators who have good intentions and would like to be innovative professionals are not able to act constructively without full support of the academic environment busy with their own affairs at the time of higher education reform. Or maybe academics do not have a common theoretical and methodical vision of the social rehabilitation process. Therefore, in the practice of social rehabilitation, quite chaotic attempts are made to find new solutions, often unfortunately not having much in common with pedagogical thought and idea.

I leave the search for answers to the questions posed in the introduction in the content of the articles devoted to the problems of Polish legal supervision in the hands of the readers of this issue of "Polish Journal of Social Rehabilitation". Since it is in the system of legal supervision that complaints, but also advantages and potentials of Polish social rehabilitation thought are clearly represented.

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