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## Self-empowerment of Charges of Youth Educational Centers

**Abstract:** Youth Educational Centers (YEC) are social rehabilitation institutions for socially maladjusted adolescents who are placed in such centers by court order. The process of self-empowering of charges returning to their usually destructive educational environments raises many concerns. There is a risk that various social rehabilitation and educational measures taken in the center will be undone. If a person is to function well, they will need to be provided with the necessary assistance during the so-called self-empowerment process, which will prepare the charges to life in society. The aim of this article is to draw attention to the impact of the YEC aiming at the self-empowerment of charges on the example of the project "Trampolina" (Trampoline) by the Orionist Fathers (YEC, ul. Barska in Warsaw) and the project of opening and conducting a self-empowerment group "Damy radę" (We will manage) at YEC in Radzionków.

**Key words:** Youth Educational Center (YEC), self-empowerment of charges, self-empowerment programs, socially maladjusted adolescents

### Introduction

Youth Educational Centers are social rehabilitation institutions for socially maladjusted adolescents who are placed in such centers by court order. Youth aged from 13 to 18 years old are directed there, who have specific interests, in varying degrees threatened by risk and social deadadaptation factors (Greczuszkin, Ostrian-ska 2005, p. 169–170).

The Act on proceedings in juvenile cases (art. 4 § 1, the Act on proceedings in juvenile cases, 26 October 1982, Journal of Laws 1982, No. 35 item 228, as amended) lists the symptoms indicating the demoralization of youth, which require a response of the court and can be a reason for placement in the YEC:

- breach of the principles of social coexistence;
- committing an offense;
- systematic evasion from the obligation of school education;
- use of alcohol or other drugs;
- practicing fornication, vagrancy, and participation in criminal groups.

Demoralization is treated as a particularly intense and relatively fixed form of social maladjustment. Leszek Lernell (1978, p. 275) points out that “in minors, the boundary between acts prohibited by criminal law and other deviant behaviors, which are an expression of social maladjustment, is almost elusive”. Social rehabilitation is a “totality of treatments aimed at adapting the individual to social life in accordance with the norms and rules of that society, and social rehabilitation education encompasses strategies, procedures and methods of action which are designed to produce beneficial changes in behavior, motivations and regulatory structures of the maladjusted individual” (Pytka 2003, p. 13). Creative social rehabilitation allows to look at the charge from a different perspective and take measures in terms of all parameters of the existence of the individual (biological, personality, spiritual) and take corrective and developing measures through creative participation in culture and alternative forms of pedagogical (social rehabilitation) work (Konopczyński 2006). The totality of educational measures in the YEC should lead to such personality changes of the charge as a result of which the behavior of the individual will transform, its resistance to adverse environmental influences will strengthen, and conditions for self-empowerment of the charge will be created, when the function of the educator is replaced by own mechanisms of internal control. Thanks to this, they will have the ability to act independently and function emotionally, which means achieving “a level of physical, mental and social development that allows relatively autonomous and independent functioning in society” (Dabrowski, 1995, p. 354). It is a complex process and requires an individual approach to each charge (Górski 1995).

## **Subjectivity, responsibility and autonomy – towards preparations for independence**

In the humanities, an attribute of a human is his subjective status. Objectification is associated with taking away from a person their inalienable right to self-determination and freedom. In the personalist concept of Wojtyła (Wojtyła 1969, p. 44–48) activeness and independence of the human are highlighted, expressed in their ability to make decisions and choices consistent with their own good and

the common good, which is human subjectivity, shaped in the being and action of the community. According to Wincenty Okoń, the activity of an individual is associated with activities in areas such as: learning about the world, experiencing values and changing the world, or in other words, intellectual, emotional and practical activities (Okoń 1998, p. 196–198).

Józef Lipiec, in his observations of the subjectivity of the human, refers to the development of the individual as the basis for self-empowerment, leading to their self-reliance, independence and autonomy (Lipiec 1997, p. 13). Franciszek Adamski defines the human as the subject of upbringing, while pointing to the goal of education, as shaping the person towards their harmonious development, taking into account the improvement of their innate physical and moral abilities for their own good and the good of the community in which they live. Understanding human freedom in the sense of independence and responsibility should be expressed, according to this author, in making choices, “seeking and learning what is worth human aspirations” (Adamski 1999, p. 183). Likewise, Józef Górniewicz stresses that human subjectivity should be considered in light of their thoughts, actions, and will (Górniewicz 2001, p. 26–27). Self-awareness and a sense of own distinctiveness are elements of the structure of human subjectivity. In psychology, the concepts concerned with subjectivity revolve around a particular person, growing up in a specific cultural environment, subject to the influence of external factors and other people. However, human subjective behavior is closely linked with the internal factors of the individual. The K. Korzeniowski indicator of subjectivity derives from the conscious activity, psychological distinctiveness and autonomy (Korzeniowski 1993, p. 45, 56, 71). The properties of subjectivity listed in psychological terms are: independence, self-awareness, activeness, responsibility, action contributing to the human self-agency and creation. In the field of sociology, subjectivity is associated with the activities of the individual and their causative power in influencing a group (Sztompka 2005, p. 536–537, 566).

In philosophical, psychological and sociological concepts, the term of human subjectivity is combined with autonomy, freedom, distinctiveness, self-awareness and self-realization, development and causative activity for one’s own good and the good of society. Indicators such as: conscious, free and independent action, the desire to change yourself are among the most important in the education and preparation of a young person for independent adult functioning (Kwiatkowska 1998, p. 119).

## Life independence

The period of entry into the adult world and beginning to function independently is difficult for all young people, especially those who grew up outside of the natural family. The whole process of upbringing serves to prepare for “adult” life.

Mikołaj Winiarski believes that independence should be understood as “a personality trait or situation, a state of independent living. An independent person is characterized by the fact that they are not dependent on anyone, they can cope alone in life, they don’t need any help, and they are not subject to anybody else’s power. Psychologists recognize this property in behavioral terms, reducing it to the activity of an individual consisting in undertaking tasks, realizing them, controlling the course of realization and their consequences without the participation and interference of other people” (Winiarski 2000, p. 189). The Author states that independence is characterized by the ability to manage one’s own life according to recognized values, which results in problem-solving skills and the ability to meet one’s own biological, psychological and social needs.

Irena Mudrecka writes that self-reliance is a category that is inextricably linked to activity, independence and self-control, “which is a condition of proper development, known as the individual’s courage to be themselves, becoming an individual human being, ready to perform social roles” (Mudrecka 2006). In contrast, Włodzimierz Szewczuk treats independent as a phenomenon associated with taking action preceded by planning. (Szewczuk 1979, p. 259–260). In considerations on independence it is also important whether the independent person is effective in their actions. The measure of the effectiveness of social functioning is the ratio of realized roles to the group standard of these roles (Paluchowski 1982, p. 110).

Independence is also taking responsibility for your life, the need for autonomy and further development (Mudrecka 2006). According to Piotr Stępnia, being independent requires a young person outside the walls of an institution to take responsibility for their “social legitimacy” (Stępnia 2008). It is understood that the self-empowerment of charges of YEC leaving the facility should be implemented as a gradual process of entering “adult” functioning under the guidance of an educator-guardian.

## **The self-empowerment of charges of YEC as a form of combating social exclusion**

Youth Educational Centers fulfill reeducation tasks relatively well, which allows minors to even out educational deficiencies; however, they function worse when it comes to cooperating with the family and in the field of social rehabilitation of minors (Greczuskin, Ostrihanska 2005). Many concerns are raised by process of empowering charges.

The process of self-empowerment is an extremely important part of ending social rehabilitation and educational interaction at the center. Young people, once they turn 18 years old, return to their environments, mostly destructive, which causes the effects of social rehabilitation interaction to be nullified (Górnicka

2010). Even if charges are positively motivated when leaving the centers, even if they want to follow the rules of social coexistence, continue their education or get a job – the family of origin is often not able to sustain these motivations, and sometimes its effect is demoralizing. Only few of those returning to the family environment function well. The fates of a large part of former charges lead through addiction, conflicts with the law, to correctional facilities and then to prisons, despite the realization of various kinds of institutional support. Therefore, properly implemented self-empowerment is a great opportunity; it is regarded as the process of preparing the charge to participate in society.

Self-empowerment of socially maladjusted youth staying in YEC is governed by: Act on social assistance of 12.03.2004 (Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 64, item 593 as amended), Act on supporting family and the foster care system of 9 June 2011 (Journal of Laws of 2011, No. 149, item 887 as amended), and Regulation of the Minister of Social Policy on providing aid to self-empowerment, continuing education and development of 03.08.2012 (Journal of Laws of 2012, item 954).

Those provisions say that a person leaving 24h educational centers, care and educational centers, is embraced by aid aiming to self-empower and integrate with the environment through social work, as well as by:

- providing money for self-empowerment;
- providing money to continue education;
- in obtaining adequate housing, including a protected flat;
- in obtaining employment;
- development – in kind (Journal of Laws 2004, No. 64, item 593, art 88, item 1).

The implementing act to this law is the Regulation of the Minister of Social Policy of 3 August 2012 on granting aid for self-empowerment, continuing education and development. It regulates the conditions and procedure for granting financial aid, the way in which the individual self-empowerment program is prepared and executed as well as the tasks of the self-empowerment guardian and the procedure for suspension of this aid. The financial aid can be transferred only on condition that the self-empowerment guardian (registration in PCPR – Powiat Family Support Center) indicates, two months before the charge reaches the age of majority, and presents their written consent to accept the obligations, submit an individual self-empowerment program and application for granting aid (§ 2.1). The regulation indicates that the person being self-empowered is obligated to a written declaration for allocating the aid to satisfying important needs of life, such as: improving housing conditions, raising professional qualifications, creating conditions for earning activities, to cover expenses related to learning, other than those mentioned in art. 88 sec. 1, item 2 of the Social Assistance Act of 12 March 2004 (§ 2.3). Granting aid to continue learning takes place on the basis of a plan to continue learning contained in the individual self-empowerment program and the submission of a declaration at the beginning of each semester certifying the

continuation of education in a middle school, secondary school, junior high school or university (§ 2.4).

The Individual Self-empowerment Program should include: a plan of actions taken and the deadlines for their realization, commitment of the person being self-empowered to realize the program and specify cooperation and support of the person being self-empowered in contacts with the family or environment. It should also specify the education of this person (in line with the aspirations and abilities), the way of obtaining it, the method of obtaining professional qualifications, assistance in establishing rights to health insurance, allowing to obtain adequate housing conditions (including through the possibility to live in a protected flat, dormitory/boarding home until completion of education or assistance in obtaining social housing from municipality funds); total or partial coverage of expenses related to accommodation for the person being self-empowered; help in undertaking employment and obtaining due benefits (Górnicka 2010; 2015).

## **The choice and the role of the self-empowerment guardian in light of the psychosocial problems of YEC charges**

Adolescence is a period of a clear evolution covering the whole sphere of a young person's life, which is why psychologists define this stage of development as the most difficult and complex, having a decisive impact on the fate of the individual, their attitudes and life orientations, values, interests, attitudes, etc. A teenager, especially one who is devoid of family support while coping with intense emotions and problems, can reach for the only known to him – destructive – coping strategies (cf. Wycisk, Ziółkowska 2009; Brzezińska, Bardziejewska, Ziółkowska, 2003). Youth brought to a YEC lack a sense of security, predictable situations and support in adults. In the families of origin, his basic needs are often unsatisfied, there are no explicit and stable rules and expectations. However, regardless of the objective state of affairs, if an individual feels unsatisfied needs for love and security, it results in frustration. The consequence of frustration and deprivation may deepen emotional disorders and aggressive tendencies, which will result in a form of hostility. Attitudes of hostility shaped in the family can then be transformed into more complex personality structures and are transferred to a wider social system. Bronisław Urban stresses that emotional distress caused by the impact of unfavorable organic or environmental factors, expressed in experiencing negative psychological states of hyperactivity, continuous and uncontrolled expression or taking the form of apathy, withdrawal of inhibition, may turn into social maladjustment and consequently in criminal behavior (Urban 2007). Initially neutral in relation to the normative system, emotional disorders can sometimes cause violations of accepted standards, behavioral and moral norms. Children

from dysfunctional families live in constant tension arising from family conflicts and crises, therefore, they cannot concentrate and have poor memory, which in turn results in problems at school. Like parents, they live from day to day, not planning the future. They have problems communicating, small vocabulary and low skills in building expression. Parents, in general, provide them a poor cultural heritage (models, standards, knowledge of the world, the need for contact with culture). They do not have access to activities supporting artistic, sport and educational development. They lack motivation and a sense of responsibility and duty – which can be a source of school negativity. They cannot act long-term or learn from mistakes. They avoid setbacks and risks. They are often passive, demanding, selfish, have unrealistic ideas and expectations. What is characteristic for charges of YEC are various forms of compensation: lies, manipulation, fantasy, escape into addiction.

Robert Opora (Opora 2010), in characterizing the anti-social behavior of charges from social rehabilitation facilities, pointed to their egocentricity, external locus of control, concreteness (the perception of the situation without taking into account the general principles), instrumentality (behavior treated on the basis of absolute exchange), impulsiveness and short-term action (actions not taking into account future consequences ). All the activities in detention centers should take into account these manifestations of social maladjustment presented by the charges.

Irena Obuchowska drew attention to the fact that staying in the facility is conducive to the presence of features such as the lack of aspiration, lowered self-esteem, fear of starting an independent life (Obuchowska 1997). So it can be expected that the most common problems of charges being self-empowered are the lack of real self-evaluation and assessment of capabilities, low self-esteem, low sense of self-agency, lack of knowledge about the world, social skills, communication, insecurity, fear of new situations, self-centeredness, aggression, sensitivity to their own dignity and low and unstable motivation.

Therefore, the role of the educator preparing the charge for life independence is crucial. The empowerment model of YEC charges is a correctional process, addressed to people whose negative experiences in childhood and adulthood can cause problems in adult life. The aim of the work of a guardian is to prepare the person leaving the center to function independently and support them, motivate and accompany in the process of social reintegration in a manner that is appropriate to its needs. The main objective should be an individual approach to the charge – each person covered by assistance can place their own goals, strive for them in their own way, at their own pace. Effective help in self-empowerment should be focused on solving problems, the source of which are the previously mentioned deficits and emotional disorders of youth staying in the YEC. Unable to deal with them alone, they may seek ad hoc methods of compensation. A feature of young people who cannot cope with the challenges of independent life is the

ease of living in an unreal world (in a world of fiction) and escape into addiction. Therefore, one should take into account the presence of risky behavior, such as drinking alcohol or using other drugs, lies, manipulation, etc. Until they do not obtain help in the emotional sphere, you cannot expect a maturity of them, which is required of an adult. It will also be difficult to strengthen motivation to study or for professional development. Therefore, the choice and professional qualifications of the self-empowerment guardian are so important. If they are able to obtain trust and even initial motivation to change, thanks to a personal relationship with the charge, there is a chance for the success of this process.

In Poland, the process of self-empowerment begins, in accordance with the Act, 6 months before the charge turns 18 years of age. Unfortunately, it happens that the charge is not involved in creating the self-empowerment plan, they just sign the document prepared by the guardian. According to a report on research carried out in institutions in the Wałbrzych powiat (MOW, MOS, DD, ZP) and correctional facility in Świdnica powiat under the project “Angry Youth – creating new and efficient methods of social integration of young people who are excluded or at risk of social exclusion” in 2012, among 781 surveyed charges (17–19 years old), 64% were not involved in the implementation of the Individual Self-empowerment Plan. If the guardian is a social worker of the Powiat Family Support Centre (PCPR) (not an educator related to YEC) their contacts with the charge often come down to a few formal meetings to deliver certificates and sign documents. Therefore, it seems most beneficial to choose the self-empowerment guardian chosen by the charge, working that the Youth Educational Center. Such a guardian, who knows the young person they are to help self-empower, has a much better chance to give them real help in every sphere.

The optimal solution is to create special individual self-empowerment programs by YEC, allowing to gradually gain independence in a safe environment. Initiatives are interesting that are aimed at the widest possible learning not only of self-service or making independent decisions but also coping with life’s challenges and problems (including emotional) through the help of specialists; psychologists and therapists. Two initiatives are especially noteworthy: of the Orionist Fathers and of the management and staff of the YEC in Radzionków.

## **“We can do it” Project**

A good solution for increasing the efficiency of the social rehabilitation process is the possibility to create a self-empowerment group in a separate building on the grounds belonging to the YEC, as it is done in Radzionków. Charges that show a predisposition to live in accordance with the moral and legal standards live in the separate building, with limited educational care. They thus acquire the necessary skills to function independently and verify them in practice. The “We can

do it” program is a continuation of the initiated therapeutic-correctional process conducted at the facility, and simultaneously the last stage of adaptation of the charge for functioning in society. It prepares them for returning to the natural living environment, establishing proper interpersonal relationships and prevents the deepening of environmental dysfunctions.

The group participating in the program may have up to 10 girls who are 16 years old, learn in a middle school or junior high school in the facility or at the local school, who reveal a predisposition to function in accordance with social norms and are motivated to change and declare their willingness to change. The charges take part in the program until the cause of placement ceases to exist (usually until turning 18 years old). For each of them, an individual self-empowerment plan is prepared, tailored to their specific needs.

The main objectives of the program are:

- limiting the institutional system of education;
- functioning of charges in an environment similar to the natural one;
- equaling opportunities to take an independent adult life;
- providing charges with the conditions prevailing in family homes;
- preventing social exclusion of adult charges of the facility.

As detailed objectives, the authors of the project indicated the deepening of acquired skills of everyday life to enable proper and independent functioning in the living environment, learning independence, responsibility, the ability to make important life decisions, motivation to learn and full professional and social self-empowerment, stimulating mechanisms of self-control and self-awareness, improving family relationships (current and future) by changing the attitudes of the charges, implementing self-reliance and responsibility for themselves and others.

The expected results of the program are:

- increasing awareness of their needs and capabilities;
- adjusting self-image;
- acquiring the ability to strive for the goal;
- acquiring more life independence of charges – the ability to run an independent household;
- integration with the local community and gaining the skills of neighborly coexistence;
- development of communication skills and the ability to solve conflicts constructively;
- integration of the group around a common goal, developing skills of cooperation in the group;
- making decisions that develop the group, responsibility for the group members, self-discipline;
- internalizing norms by showing the values of the proper functioning in the social environment;
- acquiring skills for the proper use of the target residential premises after becoming independent (“We can do it” project YEC in Radzionków).

An important prerequisite for participating in the project is writing out a contract and treating it as a serious agreement binding the two parties. Each contract includes the objectives, conditions of implementation, the tasks of both parties and the anticipated results. It includes short time periods or tasks related to partial phases. The first level usually refers to the simplest goals resulting from learning proper self-service, rules of group coexistence, proper communication. The charges personally choose their self-empowerment guardian, which provides better communication with the educator, based on personal relationships and, consequently, strengthens the effectiveness of interaction and cooperation. With the conclusion of the contract the charge takes part in its process of self-empowerment, while the guardian treats them like a friendly partner.

The individual educational and therapeutic program includes:

- types and forms of social reintegration, scope, directions and forms of teaching, vocational training, in which the charge is to be included, and their individual responsibilities, related to the course of learning;
- the scope and forms of cooperation with the family and other people in order to achieve social integration and self-empowerment;
- program of preparing the charge for life after leaving the facility.

The charge should actively participate in the development of the individual self-empowerment program. During group work, when functioning together in the flat over the course of the project, the following principles apply:

- members of the group are to be familiar with the idea of mutual support and starting this support in the group;
- understanding and using the group process, i.e. a dynamic sequence of events occurring in the life of each group, and involving collaborative problem-solving, expressing emotional relations towards others;
- shaping models of interpersonal relations, efforts to strengthen the skills of participants for independent and autonomous functioning;
- teaching the participants the use of group experience for functioning in various real-life situations.

The basic form of group work is the creation of a correctional community. The principles of the functioning of a correctional community during the project are as follows:

- members of the correctional community are all charges and educators staying in the empowerment flat;
- the community establishes its own applicable rules and regulations;
- the aim of the correctional community is to support and mutually assist in the development, treatment and social rehabilitation of its members;
- participation in the community is voluntary;
- the condition of a well-functioning community is complete openness, honesty and responsibility of its members;
- each member of the community has the right to speak out about common issues;

- each member of the community has the right to call a meeting of the group and put forth a problem to settle;
- the community can determine the stages of treatment and social rehabilitation of its members and periodically evaluate their progress (“We can do it” project YEC in Radzionków).

Those involved in the project, alone (without the help of support staff) jointly perform all self-service actions: preparing a menu, buying food products needed to prepare meals, preparing meals, cleaning, laundry, taking care of the house and household appliances (joint responsibility for their condition and repairs), taking care of the external environment, renovating rooms. The budget of the group consists of a board fee x number of charges x number of days in the month, funds for cleaning agents, funds for fees (rent, electronics, electricity, telephone, water, Internet), funds for the organization of winter and summer holidays. Shopping for the necessary products is done by the girls themselves (each of the charges shops for food products needed to prepare meals for the entire group, and every day a different person cooks) and cleaning products (every month a different charge draws up a list of needed items and purchases them). The charges can take up various forms of employment (the work should be part-time – distribution of leaflets, packing shopping in the supermarket). The remuneration earned may be used for purposes that satisfy own needs (books, clothes, cosmetics), joint excursions of the group, outings to the cinema, theater, swimming pool. Adult charges may work on the basis of a contract for specific work. Living and working together, the girls form a community, organize celebrations: birthdays, holidays, important anniversaries for the group. It is important to create a sense of intimacy and community, which in the future will build a tradition in their own families. Participants of the program have the opportunity to choose the school according to their interests and abilities. Each of them is obliged to participate in a chosen circle of interest in a culture house or center. It is mandatory, once a week, for the whole group to participate in English conversation lessons. The girls can choose to do volunteer work, e.g. in community centers, providing them contact with their peers and also meeting the sense of being useful and needed.

## **“Trampoline” project of the Orionist Fathers**

“Trampoline” is a project aimed at social rehabilitation, empowerment and preventing social exclusion of charges of YEC run by the Orionist Fathers, located in Warsaw (ul. Barska 4) and its branches in Anin (ul. Odsieczy Wiednia 13), where 99 charges aged 13–19 years old currently reside (“Barska” – 72 people, “Anin” – 17 people).

During the first stage carried out in the center in Warsaw, an Educational and Therapeutic Plan (IPET) is being created, helping in the establishment of part-

nerships in the education process and motivation to change attitudes and work of the charge on themselves. It begins at the end of year two of middle school with a series of lectures and classes for discovering one's own professional potential. Classes are taught by psychologists-therapists, trained vocational counselors in consultation with the center's social worker. Then, until the end of learning at middle school, in specially created, well-equipped classrooms, the boys obtain theoretical and practical knowledge in the professions of chef and carpenter.

In the second stage of the project, the boys move to the Branch of the Youth Correctional Center, Educational Center "Trampoline I" in Anin. Graduates from the parent center come here, who have completed at least middle school and expressed their desire to stay at the center (due to a lack of conditions in the family home, anxiety caused by going back, fear from returning to addiction, or due to new aspirations and goals) to continue to learning and take part in the second stage of empowerment. The program includes general development classes, educational classes, psycho-educational workshops, career counseling, vocational courses, social skills workshops. The project participants prepare for independent living, attend a junior high school in Warsaw, take professional courses, training and individual and group therapy (depending on their needs: psychological therapy, addiction therapy).

They receive help with learning in the center, use different forms of vocational training: driving courses, forklift truck operator courses. They develop their musical interests (learning to play instruments, classes in a recording studio), sports (gym, table tennis, pool table, using the swimming pool and fitness room) and others. They also learn financial management, running personal errands in public offices (e.g. address registration, driving license, identity cards), they open bank accounts. Although the center still has staff responsible e.g. for cooking, the boys help with shopping and take care of the common house. They undergo two-week psycho-educational courses (socio-therapy, training for replacing aggression, prophylactic programs for the prevention of drug addiction and alcoholism). The program also includes workshops in educational skills and family therapy (involving families of origin) and hippotherapy, conducted by qualified therapists. It is extremely important that the charges remain in the project until they finish school (currently there are four matriculation students at the center). Some of the boys after school undertake employment.

The next stages of the project are being planned (information obtained from the director of YEC).

- Rotation Flats – Trampoline II (from the second half of 2016): rooms received for the center's use, which were previously classified as "drying rooms" in buildings located in different districts of Warsaw, have been adapted into studio flats. They are inhabited by participants of the project, passing to the next stage of self-empowerment. A good direction is a systematic approach to the charge, to meet their needs at the material, psychological and spiritual (pas-

toral) level, while prolonging the support and care period, helping them in “small steps” to enter into adult life, by clearly defined stages. The boys that go to the training homes are those who have graduated from high school and are ready to independently (by paying rent and utilities), by working (and possibly continuing education), pay for the rotation flat entrusted to them. By leading a daily life they will be able at any time to benefit from the support of the guardians from Anin. Only after such a test, with the further assistance of the Center, will they attempt to find their own accommodation. It is important that each participant of the program “Rotation Flats” will function under the pedagogical supervision of YEC (accompanying educator – on the basis of a social worker), according to a specific plan, with support groups, periodic verification, etc.

- Therapy Center Trampoline III: The Center will be established in Warsaw at ul. Knyszyńska 1. It will consist of two parts of interdependent and mutually complementary parts. In the first – designed for charges of YEC – therapeutic and psychopedagogical goals will be realized. Within its framework there will be psycho-educational workshops organized, such as DDA, TZA, addiction therapy and career counseling classes. The activity of the second part of the planned center will be focused on diagnosis, psychiatric and psychological help for people unrelated to the facility. Their treatment will be financed by the National Health Fund, European Funds and others.
- Educational Center Trampoline IV: The Educational Center Trampoline IV in Anin will have professional school workshops moved from YEC at ul. Barska, where charges will be able to learn carpentry with special emphasis on the renovation of old furniture. Plans also include a small stud farm for the purpose of hippotherapy for charges and local residents (still in the design phase). Care of the horses and maintenance tidiness in the stable will be done by professionals (with the help of volunteers – participants of the Trampoline project and YEC charges).

## Summary and conclusions

The constantly changing social and economic reality requires adaptation of forms and methods of work in YEC institutions. The current system replaced charges in self-service activities, which resulted in little preparation of people leaving the facilities to perform basic daily activities. Currently implemented changes require the approval of educators working in the centers. Research shows that educators working in the YEC are mostly convinced of the rightness of changes (Zajęcka, Kaminski 2010, p. 226–227). They believe that extending the range of self-service activities will contribute to the better preparation for independent functioning of charges. The aim of the work carried out in the social rehabilitation institution is

to balance negative social influence, which charges are still subject to while being in the facility, necessary to obtain a change in the identity of the individual unsuitable, and possible only when the classes conducted at the center are more attractive than the pressure exerted by peers outside the center. If pupils actively participate in them, they are directly involved, they feel more connected with the peer group at the center.

The big challenge is also the staff of the center to undertake cooperation with social services and education authorities of the native gminas of charges conducive to self-empowerment. YEC which are organizationally efficient, modern, independent social rehabilitation institutions, working well with the local social environment can provide an opportunity for the self-empowerment of youth staying there.

The programs differ in several aspects, mainly by the fact that the project in Radzionków applies to girls and is performed during the stay of the charges in the center, until they turn 18 years old; while the project of the Orionist Fathers concerns boys and extends the statutory support by subsequent months until they complete high school, and as of the second half of 2016, if the next phase of the project is launched, even longer (rotation flats). Over time, the evaluation of these programs will be life scenarios of the charges. It seems, however, that they will meet the expectations of both participants and staff centers. Thanks to them, pupils will learn self-reliance (managing money, cooking, washing, cleaning), functioning in a small community, and will attempt to cope outside of the center, which can undoubtedly be the beginning of a new way of life. It is fully justified to search for solutions and ways to support young people leaving the YEC. An interesting proposal is the creation of training flats and houses (undertaken on too small a scale as yet), allowing to learn the simplest actions that are useful in adult life, such as paying bills and handling official matters. While the specter of returning to the family of origin and environment, which is necessary for the majority, constitutes a huge danger of destroying the social rehabilitation and education efforts undertaken, there are increasingly more initiatives giving a real chance to self-empowered charges.

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## Legal acts

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