

The potential of rehabilitation pedagogy

In social sciences, the notion of potential is defined as objectified *values, features, parameters, resources*, which constitute the basis for the competent implementation of a specific goal or task. Therefore, potentials (understood in a broader or narrower sense) significantly affect the success of a specific project and can be divided into two groups: “personal potential”, which is related to specific characteristics of a person, which can include: identity parameters, personality traits, as well as their experience, knowledge, competences and skills, and “social potential”, which is the result of human activity in the social space and is measured by the ability to positively influence other people. This influence results from interpersonal competences, knowledge, experience, as well as the ability to be with and among people and to support their development in individual, personal, cultural and social aspects.

Among the many potentials constituting and defining various forms and contents of human activity, we can also mention the associated with this concept potential of rehabilitation pedagogy as a scientific activity practiced by people, as well as the spheres of human application activity, which are its distinguishing feature and which give it a special axiological dimension: *scientific potential of social rehabilitation, personal potential of social rehabilitation and social potential of social rehabilitation*. It seems that at this point it is worth paying attention to one of them, which is the sum of the others and thanks to which the surrounding world “becomes better”.

The scientific potential of social rehabilitation, as this is the case here, is a simple sum of collections of several dozen years of Polish and foreign theo-

retical and application research experiences inspired by and implemented in the academic environment, constituting an unquestionable objective autotelic value.

Rehabilitation pedagogy as a pedagogical subdiscipline was developed in Poland relatively late, as around the mid-1950s, based on special pedagogy and social pedagogy. Its scientific status is attributed to such scholars as: Maria Grzegorzewska (creator of the basics of special pedagogy), Stanisław Jedlewski and Czesław Czapów (the so-called “Warsaw School of Rehabilitation Pedagogy”), Jan Konopnicki (“Cracow School of Rehabilitation Pedagogy”) and Stanisław Kowalski (Poznań School of Rehabilitation Pedagogy).

This does not mean that earlier, both in the interwar period and until the mid-20th century, there was no scientific activity in Poland that addressed the issue of rehabilitation, but rather was usually attributed to psychological, criminological, legal or sociological sciences. The practical rehabilitation measures taken were usually based on the above-mentioned sciences and had clear theoretical and methodological associations with them.

Rehabilitation pedagogy has now acquired the status of an independent pedagogical subdiscipline and is less and less frequently assigned in the subject literature to special pedagogy, where its content was traditionally included, dividing the latter into two sections: revalidation and rehabilitation.

The first one dealt with people with disabilities in various areas of disability, while the second one with people with social maladjustment in the sense of pathologically disturbed interpersonal relations and criminal behaviors and activities. In the last period (2019), the upcoming statutory changes return to this concept and place rehabilitation pedagogy back in the space of special pedagogy.

The current scientific status of rehabilitation pedagogy is due to the outstanding students of the aforementioned authors of the basics of rehabilitation pedagogy in Poland, including professors: Bronisław Urban, Lesław Pytko, Kazimierz Pospiszyl, Wiesław Ambrozik, Henryk Machel, Marek Konopczyński and many other students of these persons.

From the very beginning of its existence, Polish rehabilitation pedagogy had the character and status of an interdisciplinary science. This means that both its theoretical and methodical basis was not methodologically homogeneous. The theoretical foundations of rehabilitation pedagogy were derived from pedagogical, philosophical, psychological, sociological, criminological and medical sciences, in an attempt to use the adopted theories to construct its own concepts to explain the mechanisms of social maladjustment, social and individual pathologies and other various forms of disorders in human behavior and functioning that are the subject of its interest.

The situation was similar in the case of the methodical dimensions of rehabilitation pedagogy. Its practical activity was based on the cooperation of many theories representing different trends and scientific disciplines. The classification of rehabilitation pedagogy as a practical science was for years its distinguishing

feature among many other scientific disciplines, including pedagogical disciplines. The broadened methodical approach was an unquestionable advantage of rehabilitation pedagogy. Over the years, it has been understood that in order to effectively assist the socially maladjusted in their social readaptation process, it is important to make comprehensive adjustments and improvements to the disordered structures and functions.

Traditional (classical) rehabilitation pedagogy, which can be called corrective rehabilitation pedagogy, both in its theoretical and methodical layer, looked for the possibility of helping the socially maladjusted primarily through a corrective modified change in their specific negative attitudes, faulty personal features and deviant forms and ways of social behavior.

This means that the basic target of methodical measures in the register of rehabilitation pedagogy is a faulty set of human characteristics in all its psycho-physical complexity, in the context of relations with the social environment.

Rehabilitation pedagogy understood in this way has a “corrective” character and focuses primarily on the personal and behavioral deficits of the patients. Therefore, in its practical aspects we talk about corrective, psycho-corrective or socio-corrective activity. Corrective and remedial vision of rehabilitation pedagogy was the essence of its methodical influences for the last half century not only in Poland, but also in some other countries in the world.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, new theoretical and methodical trends emerged in Polish rehabilitation pedagogy, including Marek Konopczyński's “Creative rehabilitation” (M. Konopczyński, *Twórcza resocjalizacja*, Editions-spotkania, Warszawa, 1996, *Metody twórczej resocjalizacji*, PWN, Warszawa, 2007, *Pedagogika resocjalizacyjna*, Impuls, Kraków, 2014)

The aforementioned intellectual and cognitive trend to a greater extent than before highlighted the rehabilitative importance of supporting personal and social development of socially maladapted people in place of the previous attempts to correct their deviant forms of functioning.

Since then, the need to support the potentials and development tendencies of the charges of various types of rehabilitation centers and institutions has become more and more widely discussed. In this way, a trend different from traditional or classical rehabilitation pedagogy emerged, which can be described as a trend of “positive rehabilitation pedagogy” (this is how it is defined, among others, by prof. Bogusław Śliwowski – Chairman of the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences), which differs from the scientific vision of the so-called “classical rehabilitation pedagogy” both in terms of the accepted theoretical foundation as well as the proposed methodical formulas.

Therefore, it can be concluded that in the Polish rehabilitation reality at the beginning of the 21st century in the academic and application spheres there are two rehabilitation pedagogies. The first one – traditional (classical) rehabilitation pedagogy, which can be called “pedagogy of enforcing behavioral change”, has so

far effectively dominated the institutional application space and has formal-legal and organizational support, inscribing itself into the climate of punitivism and social rigorism.

The second, on the other hand, “the positive rehabilitation pedagogy” (creative rehabilitation) has already established itself permanently in the academic (scientific-research) and educational space, gaining increasing interest and popularity, being an effective alternative to the current understanding of the essence of the rehabilitation process and its personal-social effects.

A new way of thinking about the theoretical and methodical premises of contemporary rehabilitation pedagogy is slowly penetrating into the realities of the Polish institutional system of rehabilitation. The nearest future will show which of the visions of rehabilitation pedagogy will not only survive, but above all will develop creatively in the theoretical scope and achieve tangible practical successes counted in tens of thousands of socially saved “lives”.

Prof. Marek Konopczyński, PhD
Editor-in-chief