

Summary

Inclusion in special needs pedagogy and social pedagogy. Questions, contexts, debates

Social exclusion is a universal phenomenon that anyone can experience; it includes significant emotional, social and economic effects. Various criteria of social selection determine whether we are accepted or we face marginalization or exclusion strategies used by particular social structures: institutions, social networks or interpersonal relations. Usually the basis of such actions is a mix of lack or insufficient social competences, different priorities and values or points of view on the same matter, or simply the fact that we are not the same. The social context determines the exemplifications of exclusion. Functioning beyond current social norms, behaving differently from social expectations, having strong individual character, unusual appearance, excess weight, wearing shocking clothing, having different skin colour, or disability can be – and sometimes are – enough reasons for exclusion processes.

Strategies for changing this situation are diverse. One of them is the concept of „repairing“ a person who is at risk of exclusion. The ostracism, social isolation, or conflicts are the signals of a needed change. In the first place, one thinks of taking actions that identify and eliminate factors that cause them. The scope of „improvement“

obtained by the „repaired“ individuals determines the social consent for their „tolerated stay“ in society – in a form of social recognition, the allocation in the social structure or by creating a new meaning of their difference (e.g. in the context of the social role). In the worst cases, it leads to re-marginalisation. However, change is not always possible. From a societal point of view, a person may change his/her behaviour and this change depends mostly on his/her willingness to comply with social expectations, the perceived benefits of change, and the assessment of costs and losses incurred in connection with it. From that standpoint, it is an individual choice and an autonomous decision of free will that as a consequence may lead to disapproval by the majority.

In the book, we argue that integration and social inclusion are not only caused by a free choice and do not depend only on individuals who wish/do not wish to change. Social fears and emotions as well as certain societal exclusion mechanisms are extremely resistant to change. Despite the huge involvement of various social actors and numerous prevention or integration programs, social exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization are still shared by various social groups around the world, and inclusive strategies to counteract social inequalities (that seem to represent both the cause and the effect of exclusion) are still not very effective.

Inclusion always involves processes of individual and group dimensions. On the one hand, society strives to satisfy the needs of minorities or marginalised groups and individuals, and on the other – it works on a change of the majority attitudes or wider social systems reforms. However, it is not simply a connection and understanding of different groups in an existing social system or work that needs to be done towards the new (sub)systems. The discussion here is about new quality and systems' values.

The individuals, groups and the society at large have certain features, resources, but also motivations for action. Their understanding of events and situations may contradict each other. This raises many questions about the conditions, course and results of the inclusion process, as well as about its limits. Can inclusion effort – in certain situations – be a threat to the good functioning of the individual or the community? How to implement the ideals of inclusion in given unjust conditions so that they would support developmental and emancipatory processes? How to make sure that it does not become an

act of violence itself? Who, whom and what shall it include? The complexity and multidimensional patterns of the inclusive processes force us to take bigger consideration of social inequalities and various risk factors of individual, communal and societal characteristics. They also mandate reflection on the arguments that various strategies are used by various social actors to justify the exclusion of „Others” from the social space and inspire reflection on areas particularly protected from integration by social systems and institutions.

The desire to jointly – by social pedagogy and special pedagogy – tackle these problems led to the establishment of the Department of Inclusion, Integration and Social Education at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of Warsaw (within the Department of Social Pedagogy and Special Education). The attempt is to look at the problem of exclusion as well as social and educational inclusion from the perspective of these two scientific subdisciplines.

This publication is the result of several months of discussions and scientific meetings of the Department of Inclusion, Integration and Social Education team. Reflecting on the social and educational changes of recent years as well as on the tradition and contemporary tasks of Polish special education and social pedagogy, we have realised the shortage of studies that would show the common ground of interest in both subdisciplines of pedagogy. In our opinion, such a common view of phenomena happening in the sphere of education and upbringing has a significant cognitive potential for a new reading of social issues.

Bearing in mind the differences resulting from the specifics of the research fields of these subdisciplines as well as the history of building their identities, we have taken up the challenge of looking at inclusion and social and educational integration as a common field of pedagogical reflection, taken in the past separately. It has become an extremely inspiring beginning of the exchange of our knowledge, ideas and finally work on this publication. Our intention was not to create a full systemic study, but to open a discussion on this subject among social and special pedagogues together. Bearing in mind the fact that in 2018 we celebrate the 61st anniversary of the establishment of the Social Pedagogy Department and the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Special Education Department at the University of Warsaw, we hope that this publication will also become a valuable

contribution to the reflection on the changes and research on future aspirations of the two pedagogical subdisciplines.

They are both unmistakably praxeological in character. In special pedagogy, there is a concentration of theoretical reflection on pedagogical actions taken to deal with social problems of the disabled persons and on modelling the process of upbringing them. The focus on eliminating educational problems of people with special needs is related mainly to the concept of integration and system's inclusion. In social pedagogy concept of various social environments' roles in providing (just and balanced) system of upbringing for all people to live a happy life special attention is put on those aspects that signal the potential risk of exclusion, so inclusive practices through educational programs are at the centre of its attention. These approaches are opposite categories for exclusion, marginalization, segregation of people who differ from social norms in aspects of health, culture or social standards, or do not meet normative expectations or patterns of institutions and dominant groups (Slee, 2009). And although both subdisciplines include the pursuit of social integration of discriminated or excluded people, the attempts to recognize the educational implementations are still being considered from separate, disciplinary angles, partially as an effect of different methods and possibilities of counteracting social exclusion. Social pedagogy focuses on the individual with a disability and uses a variety of rehabilitation strategies for damaged or preserved processes and functions of a body and mind, while special pedagogy focuses on the conditions of human development in the social environment and on the possibilities of their transformation towards the common good.

In special pedagogy until recently, social integration of disabled people has been achieved through rehabilitation – improvement based on the biomedical disability model. Concentration solely on eliminating limitations caused by the type and degree of disability turned out to be a failing strategy. It was believed that the level of improvement usually determined the chances of social integration and justified the refusal of participation in the mainstream of social life or started the processes of self-marginalization (understood here as resignation from the right to participate in the mainstream of social life).

A significant change in this regard took place at the end of the 1960s, when the concept of socially related disability and the social

model of disability began to spread in special education. The first concept is related to the attempt to integrate individuals into the society, in particular people with disabilities who suffered social exclusion (based on Thomas H. Marshall's paradigm of citizenship, 1963). The second one was a manifesto issued in 1976 in the United Kingdom by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), which proposed separation of the biological (physical) aspect of disability and functional limitations caused by it (damage, impairment) from social context (disability or social disability, handicap) (Karaś, 2012).

The change in the definition of disability and, in consequence, in its meaning made the social model of disability popular and created new possibilities for opposing the social exclusion practice of people with disabilities. At the beginning of its implementation, all attention was directed to the living environment of people with disabilities, seen as the main source of barriers favouring their social marginalization and ultimately deciding about the scope of their social exclusion. The practices such as standardisation, integration, inclusion and better understanding of the social model of disability have had a huge impact on special education as a scientific discipline.

It is worth noting that the signs of this way of thinking can already be seen in the scientific output of the classics of special education. The social dimension of disability is present in the views of famous Polish special pedagogue Maria Grzegorzewska (1989) regarding the norm and functioning of people with disabilities and the special purpose of special pedagogy. Grzegorzewska understood it as „social revalidation of handicapped, sick, socially maladjusted or otherwise deviated children” (1964). With proper implementation, it hopes to change the fate and situation of disabled people and to improve the quality of their lives.

Otton Lipkowski (1974) expressed similar views, formulating three goals of special pedagogy: humanitarian, economic-utilitarian, and educational. However, the existing at that time biomedical disability model was focused on the individual with a disability, and on its improvement and rehabilitation. The level of improvement obtained in the rehabilitation decided, therefore, on the inclusion, social integration success or on marginalization and exclusion of a person with a disability from the mainstream of social life.

Aleksander Hulek perceived this problem in another way: he saw the normalisation of the living conditions of people with disabilities as an opportunity for their full social integration in the society. He justified his position on this matter with the theory of „common and specific problems in the rehabilitation of disabled people“, which emphasised the primacy of environmental factors over the biological state of individual strengths in obtaining and perpetuating the expected effects of rehabilitation and rehabilitation activities. He contrasted the specific features of development and functioning, which are a direct consequence of the type of disability, with the disabled people's common mechanisms of adaptation, psychological dispositions and social functioning strategies (Hulek, 1977b).

In a similar way, social integration was understood by Aleksandra Maciarz (1981) and Władysław Dykcik (1997), for whom it was the main stimulating concept and the way of developing special pedagogy. They also saw in this idea the effective ways to overcome the marginalization and social exclusion of people with disabilities. Their views initiated the new paradigms and different ways of scientific explorations than the disability studies, although according to Antonina Ostrowska (2015), they did not lead to the significant changes in the social perception of people with disabilities.

The social model, though, emphasised the responsibility of various social institutions for deepening inequalities and excluding people with disabilities from important areas of social life. Thus, individual disability has become a social problem that had to be addressed by the science. This factor must be taken into account in determining the directions of social policy actions supporting the process of inclusion of people with different types and degrees of disability in the subsequent stages of their lives.

Currently, the disseminated bio-psycho-social disability model draws attention to the need to prepare the non-disabled and people with disability to establish, develop and maintain mutually satisfactory relations. This means that there is a need for pedagogues to undertake special pedagogical approach to build the readiness of both groups for creating models of coexistence. This should happen, as Otto Speck (2005) states, through upbringing and education as ways of help in integration in the personal and social spheres. Such activities are common in the field of social pedagogy as part of inclusive education,

and in special pedagogy they are seen as well but are still too small in scope.

Social pedagogy from the beginning of its creation was a discipline dealing with the conditions of human development in the context of various types of environments, and the possibilities of transforming them through pedagogical practice for the people's good. In its ideals and implementations, it is an expression of hope for the possibility of pedagogical intervention in society and its culture. Through changing the conditions of life, which many consider impossible to change, social pedagogues see the way of acting towards pragmatic disagreement on inequality and suffering. This is done through careful observation and diagnosis of human development conditions, identification of negative factors from a developmental point of view and search for subjects of positive importance to human being treated as a person.

This concern for personalistic approach in theory and practice applies to all people, regardless of age, gender, material status, but above all, it is turned to people who need help or support in regaining their place in the world or playing an active role in it. To this end, attention is paid to the current and possible conditions for shaping, improvement and organization to form the basis for proper development, which in turn will become the basis for active participation in caring for themselves and for others.

In this context, contemporary discussions about social inclusion are a continuation of the traditions of social educators who treat people's inclusion as one of the priority tasks in social pedagogy. For this role of educators we shall indicate, among others, Aleksander Kamiński (1972). He saw an important preventive and formative role of youth social organizations, especially scouts, as places to learn and experience being in a group, acting in it, seeking out the strengths of building strong character and training skills. Such a pedagogical commitment, in the more re-socialization trend, was seen in the creation of children and youth centres organised by Kazimierz Lisiecki called „Grandfather”, who was working with youth from difficult backgrounds, deprived of parental care and concern on a daily basis (Dąbrowski, 2007). Today, community centres and other out-of-school care facilities continue this work. The social pedagogy pioneer and founder in Poland, Helena Radlińska, saw this role of educators

as preventing from social exclusion. She initiated the development of theories and research on the environmental determinants of life in various local situations, appealing to professional and non-professional educators' help, mobilizing them and other professionals to increase supportive, preventive and intervening work.

Ryszard Wroczyński (1985), founder of the Department of Social Pedagogy at the University of Warsaw in 1957, who led it for many years, stressed the role and responsibility of educational institutions in creating conditions for social development, indicating that well-intentioned systems based on institutional and legal cooperation allow starting a support network of educationally aimed activities. These ideas, developed by further generations of social pedagogues in Poland and present in worldwide pedagogical discussions, sensitize educators to pedagogical responsibility for co-creating the conditions and forms and methods of inclusion.

The recognition of factors that lead to exclusion or put people at risk of exclusion is a basic element of pedagogical attention directed to the individual and socio-cultural environments' mutual relationship and influence. The reasons may lie in the social system and the redistribution of goods; in the educational institution and its selective role; in peer group factors guided by specific cultural and subcultural mechanisms; in family and local environments, sometimes limiting the ambitions of individuals to change, and finally in the persons themselves. Usually, we are talking about a number of interrelated factors, a complex of conditions, and a resultant variety of influences.

The next stage, after careful diagnosis, involves undertaking appropriate actions addressed to individuals and aiming at changing the environmental conditions. In socio-educational work, this task is extremely difficult, as it requires from social pedagogues a range of educational competences that take into account work with individuals, with groups and the wider society. It requires enormous effort, enthusiasm and faith in the possibility of long-term intervention. It also requires careful listening to various parties involved in conflicts, who have exclusionary habits and recognize these as the norm. Moreover, it requires working in a specific culture of social, institutional and political relations, the change of which cannot be immediate and short term only. However, the effort is difficult since it does not absolve, as H. Radlińska (1935) wrote, from responsibility and

necessity of acting „towards the ideal“. According to her statement, it is also necessary to properly prepare social services and other institutions in the field of education and research, as well as work on mobilizing strengths existing in the social environments (Theiss, 1997).

The merely sketched here characteristics of the approaches and modes of operation of both pedagogical subdisciplines show that despite clear differences and disciplinary specificities they are not contradictory. On the contrary, it is worth emphasising their complementarity with each other and the potential to build a more complete, more comprehensive and complex picture of exclusion and inclusion processes in the educational perspective, their dynamics, causes and effects. This potential creates knowledge and research experience in counteracting the processes of excluding individuals and social groups. They pay attention to the search for new solutions to „old problems“. It seems that the primary task of pedagogy is to accept the assumption that interdisciplinary use and building knowledge are necessary to design a common social space for people's development. In special pedagogy, this means a skilful combination of activities focused on the individual and work with the environment, and in social pedagogy, including the perspective of people with disabilities into social organization approach. Above all, however, it is necessary to combine the efforts of representatives of both pedagogical subdisciplines.

In this publication, which is the result of the joint project of special and social pedagogues, we have made an attempt to outline the research and theoretical space combining both subdisciplines and reflection on their practical dimensions.

The publication consists of 5 chapters dealing with the issues of exclusion, inclusion and social participation of various groups in various theoretical perspectives and at different levels of analysis. What unites all texts is the reflection on the challenges currently faced by both subdisciplines in this area. Namely, there is insufficient participation of pedagogues in the design of such assistance activities which are addressed both to individuals/groups at risk or people excluded from possibilities that others have.

Grażyna Dryżałowska in the first chapter, entitled „Social exclusion – (un)changeable problem of education“, attempts to trace the social discrimination of people with disabilities in the context of changes in

special education paradigms, which on the one hand have radically changed the subdiscipline, and on the other triggered reflection on the effectiveness of strategies and programs for integration, social inclusion and inclusion of people with disabilities into the mainstream of social life.

In the next chapter, „Questions about the role of social pedagogy oriented towards inclusion in democratic society”, Agnieszka Naumiuk discusses the issues of inclusion and support in the context of the role and pedagogical tasks in the conditions of democracy. The author postulates reflection on the use of the concept of participation and activity of citizens themselves in cooperation for a greater understanding of social needs and the use of the potential of the local community, so that the inclusion process is discussed, worked out and implemented together with citizens.

Monika Skura in her article entitled „A few comments on the question about integration and inclusion processes” wonders what relations among people should look like, especially in situations when they differ in their appearance and functioning from generally accepted standards and often need help and support. She places her reflections in the philosophical concept of the French phenomenologist Emmanuel Lévinas.

In the next chapter, entitled „Global citizenship education in the perspective of inclusion”, Magdalena Kuleta-Hulboj looks at global citizenship education through the prism of inclusion and tries to answer the question of whether it is or aims to be inclusive.

In the last chapter, „The subject of school inclusion of people with psychological disorders”, Anna Steinhagen discusses the problems of school educational inclusion of students with emotional disorders. She begins by defining this group in an educational context and then proposes the terms of their inclusion.

In the conclusion, the authors state that exclusion has long been identified as a social problem and that instead of seeing it as the old, unresolved social problem it is time to think how to solve it (Makarewicz-Marcinkiewicz, 2015, p. 149). Agreeing with this statement, it should be emphasised that the low effectiveness of countering the exclusion processes forces us to look for more effective assistance programs, looking at the ways of protecting from marginalization mechanisms, favouring the reintegration of groups and people

who remain on the periphery of social life. The accumulated experience proves that this multidimensional, complex and extremely durable process requires reflection on who and why is being excluded as well as who excludes, how and from what. It forces us to focus on the characteristics of individuals and excluded groups, and social inequalities affecting them in everyday life as well as the multidimensionality and complexity of this process, cumulating various social and environmental risk factors. It also requires reflection on the arguments that are used by various social groups justifying the strategies of excluding „Others“, „foreigners“, „not-us“ from the social space. Of particular interest there should be the conditions reflecting on the selection areas particularly protected by social systems and institutions. Diagnosis, recognition of these mechanisms is not a solution to the problem. It seems only a starting point for recognizing the possibility of undertaking integration and inclusion work. Adequate social assistance in this area requires, above all, better understanding of details of the inclusion concept. Inclusion, as Lech Witkowski (2011) points out, may more or less consciously contribute to the perceived feeling of threats or tensions caused by external assistance intervention. It may be interpreted as a warrant, coercion or obligation to adapt to social expectations not always consistent with individual needs or preferences of the excluded ones. On the other hand, inclusion may provide the integrating group with anxiety resulting from formulated critical assessments of the actions taken. Therefore, there is a need to define the concept of inclusion or to reformulate it, which will minimise the concerns, anxiety and tensions on both sides. Secondly, equal involvement of those who include and are being included is important, that is, convincing interested parties about the mutual benefits resulting from the implementation of integration and inclusion activities. Thus, the changes are needed.

Reading the individual chapters of this study makes it possible to note that both in the field of special and social pedagogy, hope is associated with education. Education is a method of (re)socialization and (re)adaptation, and its role is in strengthening the sense of self-esteem and social usefulness. Professionals working with excluded individuals and social groups use this huge potential to change educational institutions, upbringing styles and educational programs as well as knowledge about co-forming processes of society (Biernat,

Malinowski, 2016). In special pedagogy, education is understood as an aid in integration in the personal and social aspect, though the old strategies of social integration proved to be unreliable, and in the new reality insufficient. In social pedagogy, work with the local community has not brought good results either, as formal, non-formal, and informal education are unable to solve many social problems that have been developing over the years. And perhaps one of the reasons is the search for solutions within individual disciplines, without attempting to combine their achievements and accumulate experiences. It should be noted, however, that the ongoing social changes that bring constant „novelties“ and „dissimilarities“ do not fit into the canon of „normality“ and impose the need for constant reflection on issues of relationship and coexistence with someone who is „outside“ the canon of existing norms and the rules established by the community and groups in everyday life. Expanding the limits of one’s understanding of the world and renegotiating a common future, based on the principles of equality, justice, and responsibility towards others becomes necessary for understanding and participation in the present society.

Is there a chance for change, for building new mechanisms preventing the exclusion of individuals and social groups, eliminating unjust societal divisions? The answers to such questions can be sought in both Levinas’s philosophy, various models of democracy, as well as in the concept of global education or in educational legislation with aspirations to lead education towards integration and inclusion of children, youth, adults, and seniors. Global and local civic education can be learning about the diversity of the world in dialogue with Others, with differences, with understanding oneself. It is also learning through the dialogue of various points of view and ways of perceiving the world. Numerous authors emphasise that it should be education that creates a special educational space, a community of people, groups, organizations and learning environments, open to diverse voices and viewpoints, especially those already marginalised (Andreotti, 2011a; Shultz, 2010; Swanson, 2011; Warming, Fahnøe, 2017). It is also possible to honestly, openly discuss, criticize, and question various perspectives and ways of seeing the world, especially our own. Dialogue with Others helps us to see our own, often unconscious preconceptions and the non-obviousness of what we consider to be legitimate and obvious. It leads to broadening the boundaries of one’s

own understanding of the world and renegotiating a common future, based on the principles of equality, responsibility towards others and justice, at the same time being negotiated in the context of economic, ecological, and other socio-political changes. It seems to be possible and not necessarily utopian, provided that such varieties of education are developed that are not hegemonic, paternalistic, and will not support unjust systems of power, but will be inclusive.

It became an incentive for authors to discuss, dispute and understand forms of inclusion/exclusion in the process of common reflection from the perspective of special pedagogy and social pedagogy over their role in social life, education, and in their own research, which in the work together cannot simply combine separate approaches. In our experience of working on this publication, individual perspectives have become the starting point, a constant confrontation with what is common and what is specific in our studies. This publication is not closing the issue, but it is opening, asking questions, showing often different contexts, which encourage the reader to discuss how social pedagogy and special education together can support and build a space for dialogue about the aim of education for social inclusion.