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JAN NIEWĘGŁOWSKI¹

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland

ORCID 0000-0001-9673-4989

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Report on the National Scientific Conference Entitled: Disability – a Task or a Challenge in the Modern World? Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, 25 November 2024

Sprawozdanie z ogólnopolskiej konferencji naukowej pt.: Niepełnosprawność – zadanie czy wyzwanie we współczesnym świecie? Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, 25 listopada 2024 r.

The main organiser of the conference was the Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences (Institute of Pedagogy) of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University. Other numerous universities and organisations joined in: Faculty of Family Studies of UKSW, Academy of Applied Sciences of the Alcide De Gasperi WSGE in Józefów, Department of Resocialisation Psychopedagogy of the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Pedagogy and the Board of Directors of the „Patronat” Penitentiary Association.

The conference had a one-day run and a hybrid format. The speakers and a large group of students were located in the University building. Other participants were able to follow the conference via the Teams platform.

The conference consisted of four sessions: a plenary session and three thematic sessions. All conference participants were welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences, Rev. Prof. Dr. Stanisław Chrobak. In his short speech, he emphasised the great importance of the conference theme and also its topicality. The phenomenon of disability still exists and every day we meet many people struggling with some kind of disability. He also recalled the words of John Paul II, who in his public teaching often drew attention to disabled people and their dignity. Wishing the participants fruitful deliberations, he concluded by thanking

¹ Jan Niewęgłowski, PhD habil., Associate Professor; Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. E-mail address: j.niewegłowski@uksw.edu.pl.

the organisers and the Scientific Council for organising the conference. The floor was then taken by the Vice-Chancellor of UKSW, Prof. Anna Fidelus, PhD. She addressed warm words of welcome to the representatives of various scientific communities who had taken up another invitation to participate in the conference. She also drew attention to representatives of various organisations who in practice undertake numerous activities for the benefit of people with disabilities, making their lives easier and more bearable.

After the official part, the plenary session began. It was chaired by Prof. Anna Fidelus, passing the floor to Mr Jakub Adamczyk, a representative of the Independent Students' Association UKSW. He gave a presentation entitled *Presentation of the Spectrum Project*, of which he is also the main coordinator. The speaker discussed the principles of the BON programme at the university. According to him, it is a very friendly programme supporting students with various problems. The author emphasised the significant role of the lecturers and students of UKSW in the implementation of the programme, in particular their openness and kindness.

The floor was then taken by Professor Radosław Mędrzycki (UKSW), who delivered a paper entitled *The Role of Law in Ensuring Information and Communication Accessibility*. The speaker showed the importance of law in human life. The law should be guided by the common good. In this process, a particular human being is supported by the administration. The term comes from the Latin language, which means to serve. The Polish administration is making many changes in the area of disability. A good initiative of the UKSW authorities was the appointment of a university-wide disability coordinator. At the end of his speech, the speaker cited passages of Scripture that speak of the right to respect for persons with disabilities.

The next speaker was Dr Krzysztof Czaderny (Cracow University of Economics). His presentation was entitled: *On the intergenerational significance of child illness. What do we know from statistical modelling of data on child illness up to the age of 5 and social support for their parents?* The author focused on two aspects of the problem. The first was child illness and the second was social support. The statistics support the fact that richer and more educated people have more friends than poor and uneducated people. Parents with lower social status and education receive less support and social assistance.

Ms Agnieszka Żabinska, PhD, representing the University of Radom, delivered a paper entitled: *The Impact of Social, Cultural and Educational Experiences on the Perspective of the Life of an Artist with Intellectual Disability*. Her presentation included a profile of Jan Ratyński, his everyday life, his family, his poetry and his cultural activities. The poet in question often refers to his stay in Laski and his experiences there. Jan Ratyński appeals to healthy people to notice people with disabilities and to make proper and constructive use of life.

The last speech in the plenary session was a presentation of the research work of Dr Tomasz Bierzyński (Podkarpackie Teacher Education Centre). In his

presentation entitled *Artificial intelligence in the service of families of persons with disabilities: innovations and challenges*, the author showed the role of artificial intelligence. The largest financial investments in the development of artificial intelligence are in the United States, China and South Korea. The biggest changes are taking place in the field of education. However, artificial intelligence has big problems in the dimension of emotional and emotional life. In normal situations, it happens that robots perform better and are rated higher than people. In Japan, elderly people preferred to talk to robots rather than humans. Tutor teachers are losing their jobs to robots. Artificial intelligence, despite its many achievements, will pose some problems for humanity in the future.

After this speech, the moderator thanked the speakers present in the plenary session and ordered a break.

After the break, the meetings in three thematic sections began. The first was chaired by Prof. Jan Niewęglowski (UKSW), the second section by MA Michał Stańczuk (UKSW), and the third by Dr Aleksandra Lukasek (Alcide De Gasperi Academy of Euroregional Economy in Jozefów). The following report concerns the first section.

It featured nine active speakers. The first speaker was Dr Katarzyna Pardej (Academy of Special Education). Her paper was entitled *Recognising and expressing emotions by a child with multiple disabilities – an individual case study*. Using Adaś as an example, the author showed the importance of a properly made diagnosis and then the role of pedagogical therapy and speech therapy classes. The friendly atmosphere created by the speech therapist and the tasks set make it easier for the child to express his emotions.

The next speakers were Dr Paulina Kamińska (Jagiellonian University) and Dr Sebastian Konrad Matyjek (Piotrkowska Academy). They presented a paper entitled *Persons with intellectual deficits as victims of sexual abuse. A study of the phenomenon*. The speakers began their presentation with a description of section 198 of the Penal Code. Sexual life is an important area in human life. This is confirmed by the long history of mankind and by modern science. There are prohibited acts in this area. This applies to the helplessness of a disabled person. Sexual abuse is *malum per se*. Every state criminalises these acts.

Professor Małgorzata Sidor-Rządkowska (Warsaw University of Technology) gave a paper entitled *Managing support programmes for people with disabilities. How to ensure an equitable distribution of wealth?* Every society develops various forms of support for people with disabilities. The most common are compensatory and distributive forms. However, it must be acknowledged that it is difficult to find an adequate and fair measure in the distribution of wealth towards people with disabilities. However, such attempts should be made.

The next speaker was Dr Marta Pietruszyńska (Medical University of Białystok). The topic of her presentation was: *Psychological support through the eyes of an ophthalmologist for a patient with sudden loss of vision*. The first part of the paper

presented the causes of sight loss. There are a very large number of people in the world who are blind or have problems with vision (about 43 million). Most of the stimuli we receive (80 %) are visual. A person who loses his or her sight is in a very difficult situation, which can even lead to severe depression. There is an extremely important role for near-living people who can provide assistance and programmes to help blind people. The next paper by Dr Kornelia Czerwińska (Academy of Special Education) dealt with similar issues. It was entitled *Corporeality and sight loss*. The author cited Berndtson's research. This scientist has been working for many years with people with sight problems and the breakdown of their lifeline. The loss of sight causes a narrowing of the horizon of action, resentment towards oneself and one's own body. Such people experience shame and fear of the community in which they live. It seems that we still know little about the mental, emotional and physical state of blind people. More scientific research is needed, but also a positive and friendly attitude of the environment towards people with sight problems.

Dr. Anna Bober-Kotarbińska (UWSB Merito in Gdańsk) spoke next. In her paper entitled *Can people with disabilities gain wider access to culture? The current state of legislation and proposals for change*, she presented the issue of the copyright of persons with disabilities. Currently, in the European Union, the 2001 legislation is in force in this regard. In 2013 there was an amendment to the above law. It is too narrow and is limited to print only and does not take into account the latest technological developments in this area. A new law on copyright for persons with disabilities is therefore necessary.

The next speakers were Dr. Grzegorz Kudlak, Dr. Inga Markiewicz and Dr. Przemysław Cynkier (University of Warsaw – IPSiR). The paper was given by Dr Grzegorz Kudlak on behalf of the whole group. It was entitled: *Disability of persons with mental disorders. Family and social challenges*. In Europe and worldwide, an increasing number of people with mental disorders can be observed. In Poland, about 25% of people suffer from one mental disorder. These situations create large economic costs. Mental disorders also affect social relationships. Research and practice are pushing for a shift from the asylum model to the community model. A person with a disorder should not be locked up and isolated, but treated in a family environment, which is best for the person with the disorder.

Dr. Agnieszka Gabryś (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University) elaborated on the *Pregnancy and Motherhood Evaluation Questionnaire (KOCiM) – Polish adaptation of the Pregnancy and Motherhood Evaluation Questionnaire (PMQ)* by F.R. Panuccio, A. Berardi, M.A. Marquez, M.P. Messina, D. Valente, M. Tofani, G. Galeoto. In her presentation, she drew attention to the problem of pregnancy in women with mobility disabilities. This area is little known and little researched. Italian researchers at La Sapienza University have developed an innovative Questionnaire that fills the current gap regarding the above issue. Work is currently underway to translate the Questionnaire into Polish and apply it to our realities.

The last speaker of the section was Professor Jan Niewęłowski (Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University). He presented a paper to the assembled audience entitled *Disability in terms of Christian pedagogy*. The problem of suffering has always been tackled by great philosophical currents in search of an adequate answer to the problem which constantly troubles man. Disability and its meaning are also dealt with by various religions. These include the Christian religion, especially the message of Christ contained in the messages of the evangelists. Contemporaries ask the Teacher from Nazareth about the cause and meaning of suffering. The Messiah unequivocally presents this question in the light of faith in God. Suffering, although difficult to understand and accept, in terms of the Christian religion, has a redemptive meaning in human life.

After the papers had been exhausted, the section moderator invited the participants to discuss, ask questions, exchange views and reflect on the topic under discussion. Several speakers took the floor.

At the end, Prof. Jan Niewęłowski thanked all the speakers for their active participation in the conference, for preparing and delivering their papers. He also thanked those connecting with the conference participants online for their presence. He also addressed words of thanks to all the organisers of the meeting. To the staff from CSI for handling the technical side, and to Mr Michał Stanczuk and a group of students for organising the entire event. He also invited everyone to attend next year's conference.