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## **Post-congress conclusions and tasks**

The Congress of Social Pedagogues initiated by the Social Pedagogy Team operating at the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) in cooperation with the Department of Social Pedagogy of the Faculty of Educational Studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań took place on 17–18 September 2018. The aim of the congress (apart from the always anticipated integration meeting of social pedagogues) was focused on a pedagogical overview of the state of involvement of citizens and institutions in the most difficult and newly emerging social, educational, social and care problems.

The fundamental importance of social involvement was pointed out by Helena Radlińska, the precursor of social pedagogy in our country, who indicated three possible types of attitudes towards the environment of one's life. The first is passive submission to the influences of the environment, that is, succumbing to it. The second is our adoption of a defensive attitude, separating ourselves with our own ideal world from the environment to which we do not want to abide. Finally, the third attitude of man towards the environment is manifested in the active attitude, in the attitude aiming at transforming the environment according to our own aspirations. It was this third attitude that was considered to be the most beneficial and shaping active attitudes to be the basic goal of the education process (Radlińska 1935, p. 33–34). According to H. Radlińska, an important direction of the education process should be shaping the relationship between the individual and the

society in which „the individual is able to find their own way of life and skillfully put their intentions into action. At the same time, however, they should do so with a sense of responsibility for others and an understanding of the common social good. According to Radlińska, the ideal of an active individual was someone who does not easily give up their aspirations and projects, but at the same time does not put their own aspirations above the common good”. (Kromolicka 2002, p. 32).

The task of taking an active attitude towards the environment resounded particularly in the speeches of the participants of the congress, who were extremely sensitive to the fate of people and social groups requiring support and at the same time revealed the enthusiasm and eagerness of reformers understanding that only profound social transformations can heal conditions and circumstances that influence the shaping of people's lives. Therefore, they correctly interpreted the words of Helena Radlińska, who indicated that „social pedagogy is primarily concerned with the interaction of environmental influences and the transformative powers of society”. (Radlińska 1935, p. 15).

As proved by individual speeches of the participants of the congress, based on scientific research and practical participation, social pedagogues are undoubtedly characterized by an optimistic concept of perception of social reality combined with faith in the possibility of its optimization. Definitely, „... the vision of the society of people and not only of the society of performers of roles, functions and services is a guide for the adopted educational tasks”. (Suchodolski 1989, p. 20) and the style of social functioning. And the autotelic value that requires special attention and care is man. Hence the following warning: „the humanity takes little effort for the development of man. The defense of the universe of man must be strengthened and urgently expanded. This fight must not be lost. (Łomny 1996, pp. 341–386).

Social pedagogues gathered at the congress noticed that today, in everyday situations, it is more and more difficult, without inner courage, to defend principles and values of humanism, which have always been the basis for the development of mankind. As Barbara Skarga wrote: „We live in times when the very word value loses its meaning and we are ready to throw it to the dustbin, together with other words, such as: truth, order, identity”. (Skarga 2007, p. 64), and we can add: as well as responsibility, and loyalty, and the common good.

Therefore, the creative solidarity of people in defense of basic universal values, human dignity, additionally tied to the transformation of oneself, is one of the most troublesome tasks we face today, also at the university level. We feel and experience more and more clearly that the world of ideas and practice of everyday life, the reality in which we function, are diverging.

An example of the importance of the creative solidarity of social pedagogues around the task of promoting and strengthening the principles of social justice, humanitarian values and influencing human-friendly and useful for the country directions of social, political and economic development is the activity of the Association called Movement of Socially Involved Pedagogues, established in 2015, which was initiated by Prof. Tadeusz Pilch – a long-time chairman of the social pedagogy team of the Polish Academy of Sciences (KNP PAN).

The participants of the congress unanimously emphasized that it is pedagogues, especially the social ones, who face the task of promoting the principles of humanism in social life, which in turn should contribute to the shaping of responsible people, because „the creator of new shapes of the world – as Anna Przeclawska and Wiesław Theiss claimed – is responsible man [...]. The man responsible for his/her thoughts and actions sees above all what unites people [...]. Someone who sees that the world is, or could be, a community focused on the common good, values that transcend the limits of individual interests [...]. Such a person is able to transform these ideas into a language of cooperation, solidarity and understanding” (Przeclawska and Theiss 1996, p. 15).

As it has been stressed many times, both in individual papers, group and panel discussions, contemporary social pedagogy is at the stage of symbolic return to its roots towards the creation of pedagogy of (co-)being, (co-)acting, (co-)citizenship, (co-)responsibility, (co-)existence in respect for another person. The measure of the evaluation of the quality of pedagogical formation, as well as an element of evaluation of the social importance of the discipline, remains the importance and extent of the changes occurring as a result of the participation in educational practices. It is therefore necessary for social pedagogues to seek opportunities for social pedagogization, to designate areas of participation, to show the threats and pitfalls that disrupt the development of civil society.

These tasks require focusing on scientific research, pedagogical expertise, implementation projects aimed at raising public awareness. This task, however, is neither a simple, nor an obvious one, guaranteeing success, due to the nobleness of the purpose and approach in the form of the desired change in human and social behavior.

The challenge for social pedagogues is to mobilize a variety of activities and efforts in the academic environment in order to maintain the „place” of social pedagogy in humanities, social and interdisciplinary studies programs, which are increasingly appearing in the offer of academic

education. A particular challenge for the community of social pedagogues – academicians in general is to provide a separate formative education of social pedagogues giving this formation a social dimension and cultural sense. The observation of changes taking place in the process of social change, revealing various social problems, confirm the validity of this call. There is an urgent need to educate pedagogues prepared to diagnose new social problems that are constantly appearing, to initiate pedagogical community work – local community organizers, to design a pedagogically captured change. In addition, the education of social pedagogues is also an important condition for the development of this sub-discipline.

I am convinced that the congress of social pedagogues met the expectations of its participants. The problems addressed during plenary sessions, table and backstage discussions probably inspired further scientific challenges and practical activity.

### Literature

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