

## The Bipolarity of the Institutional Social Rehabilitation Process

It must be assumed that the process of institutional social rehabilitation is bipolar in nature. This bipolarity comes down to the existence of two mutually interwoven and interrelated dimensions.

The first dimension is related to the implementation of certain institutional organizational assumptions and formal and legal procedures, which must be closely linked with the objectives of the educational process, and therefore, a *strictly* methodical process based on specific principles, rules and techniques of proceedings. The second dimension relates to the process of social readaptation of isolated people, so integrated and planned activities for making possible the return of these people into the conditions of an open environment. Only then can we talk about a full and functional social rehabilitation process. This statement is very important for further understanding of the pedagogical essence of the social rehabilitation process.

The first dimension is inscribed in the nature of every social rehabilitation institution (prison) and consists in the realization of planned interactions both of a formal and regulatory character, as well as an anthropotechnical, psychotechnical and sociotechnical character, aimed at educating and starting up personal and social adaptation mechanisms enabling the adaptation of an incarcerated individual to proper functioning in the correctional facility. In this process, reconnaissance issues should also be taken into account, with particular emphasis on positive diagnosis (diagnoses of potentials and resources).

The second dimension is based on strong functional links with the non-institutional environment, and thus open social environment to which the person staying in an educational, correctional or penal institution is to return. While the first dimension of the social rehabilitation process can be treated in terms of obtaining the effect of internal social rehabilitation changes, in the case of the second dimension we can talk about external effects of this process.

Contextual understanding of the social rehabilitation process is not only an intellectual procedure. It results from many contemporary scientific concepts and theories, among them Kazimierz Dąbrowski's "Positive disintegration", assuming the phase and alternating nature of our development. This means that realized within institutional social rehabilitation, psychotechnical and sociotechnical procedures are precisely targeted primarily at the development of the first effect of phase development of personality structures of charges (obtaining the effect of positive disintegration). It should also be emphasized that the implementation of the first dimension of the social rehabilitation process, and its effects, are not sufficient to obtain the final result, which should have the character of permanent internal and external social rehabilitation changes, thus *strictly* pedagogical.

Therefore, also in the social rehabilitation process we distinguish the second dimension of interactions, understood as activities of an environmental and developmental nature, focused on improving those potentials of charges, which enable them to function in the place of residence after leaving the facility. While by the definition of social rehabilitation activities we speak generally about adaptation aspects in the context of the social circle (facility, peer group, school class, etc.), then the social rehabilitation process is also, perhaps above all, to activate readaptation processes enabling charges to prepare for active participation in culture (accepting and internalizing models and values of culture), in social life (through properly exercising life and social the functions) and professional (by acquiring specific competencies and professional skills).

Only two intertwined dimensions create a comprehensive and complete social rehabilitation process, which by nature should take place bipolarly, thus ensuring proper educational effects of interpersonal relationships and other factors making educational success possible.

However, the institutional social rehabilitation process has its conditions and limitations. They can have a personal or non-personal character. We can divide personal conditions and restrictions into conditions associated with the subject of interactions (charge), with the people heading the process and other people being in social rehabilitation interactions (educators or instructors, other youth or adults who are in the closest social circle).

The personal conditions of charges include: permanent personal characteristics, abilities, talents and skills, social skills and involvement in activities, as well as personality disorders, mental and physical diseases, the level of intellectual development. It must also be remembered that one of the major personal

prerequisites enabling the proper implementation of the social rehabilitation process are substantial competences of the educational personnel (so those in charge of this process).

Non-personal conditions can include a favorable or limiting administrative and legal system, housing conditions, institutional social climate, etc.

Both poles of the institutional social rehabilitation process complement each other and intersect in content. Their course and dynamics determine social rehabilitation efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the objective. This means obtaining new individual and social competences of people who are socially maladjusted, providing them with proper social readaptation.

Competences and skills acquired during such a social rehabilitation process constitute the parameters of their new identity, which is a kind of filter that allows functioning in life, social and professional roles. The end result of social rehabilitation activity is to equip people staying in social rehabilitation facilities with skills and competences of using new alternative ways of solving problematic situations, in a way that is socially acceptable and makes it possible to achieve family, social and professional success.

The academic community is with interest looking forward to the results of the control of the Polish penitentiary system carried out by the Supreme Chamber of Control in the years 2014 and 2015. We wonder if it confirms the belief of Polish social rehabilitation pedagogues that our country lacks a systemic solution to the problem of social readaptation of convicts, and penitentiary actions taking place inside prisons, are limited only to the first dimension described above.

This would mean that the social rehabilitation process is still conducted in closed conditions, identified and treated by prison staff as an interinstitutional dimension. Therefore, according to the academic environment, such activities do not produce the desired social effects.

If there is no comprehensive system to support social readaptation of people leaving social rehabilitation facilities, and only its elements of legislative character and those resulting from experiences of particular institutional entities, then we cannot talk about a systemic, holistic and complementary way of solving this problem.

Social rehabilitation pedagogues also notice the lack of proper coordination between public administrations, NGOs and specialized public services dealing with this issue.

By analyzing numerous studies and scientific papers, and also taking into account social experience, it is hard not to agree with the proposed thesis. It can be complemented by the statement that the existing penitentiary system undertakes support initiatives towards people leaving prisons under limited legal and financial possibilities; but neither they nor anyone else does not monitor the further fate of these people, and the existing probation system lacks the tools for supporting them in their homes. In the social welfare system, these people are

treated in the same way as other beneficiaries (e.g. the homeless or permanently addicted to psychoactive drugs), and/or they do not receive specialist help, or it is inadequate to the existing needs.

Undoubtedly, the most important problem is the level of substantive functioning of social rehabilitation facilities in the scope of implementing methodology programmes. How far do they take bipolarity into account, i.e. two dimensions of the social rehabilitation process? Academic experience shows that generally employees of this area indicate a high level of misunderstanding of the essence and objectives of social rehabilitation programmes, which may suggest a partial lack of professionalism of the educational staff in this regard.

According to the academic social rehabilitation pedagogues, educational propositions in the penitentiary system also leave much to be desired. Education can be one of the main “driving forces” of life and socio-occupational change of people undergoing social rehabilitation, as indicated by numerous empirical studies carried out in Poland and abroad. Therefore, it is necessary to intensify the training of charges at different levels of education, including education at the tertiary level. An example here is Warsaw’s Pedagogium, where several convicts are educating themselves with good results at the undergraduate and graduate degrees, including two who are sentenced to 25 years imprisonment.

The doubts of academics are also raised by the anachronistic system of education and improvement of the penitentiary service in the “systemic” Central Training Centre of Prison Service (officer school, penitentiary major), which ends with taking the appropriate examinations. Further training in the field of social rehabilitation and prison work takes place by specialist courses or vocational training. The analysis conducted several years ago by representatives of the academic environment on the forms and methods of education in said Centre, as well as the analysis of didactic materials in terms of them being scientifically up-to-date, have shown that they are heavily outdated. It is also worth mentioning that such educational measures were characteristic of the previous regime, while today, in Europe and the world, employees of this sector educate and train themselves in the normal open education system, rather than industry.

Numerous studies conducted by academics also show that in Poland there is no analysis conducted of the effectiveness of penitentiary interactions, which is undoubtedly a fundamentally substantial error. Imagine what would happen if a physician (medical system) did not verify the effects of treatment or the education system did not check the results of their work? This is what we are dealing with in the Polish prison system.

So it seems that as long as the cries of academic social rehabilitation pedagogues for a different understanding of the institutional social rehabilitation process than before are ignored by administrative and political decision-makers, then until then will we have an increasing level of recidivism (so-called coefficient

of recidivism which is more than 50%), as well as increasing social dissatisfaction with the effects of the penitentiary system. All this can result in subsequent voices saying that really “social rehabilitation does not exist and is only a sham invention of intellectuals”.

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