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Inaugural meeting of the Pedagogical Counselling Section at the Pedagogical Sciences Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poznań, 27 November 2020

The inaugural meeting of the Pedagogical Counselling Section of the Polish Academy of Sciences was held using the Microsoft Teams application in the domain of the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań. The session was opened by the Chairman of the Section, Professor Magdalena Piorunek. Recalling the definition of the Advisory Psychology Division of the American Psychological Association, Professor Piorunek recalled that counselling is *helping individuals to overcome obstacles on the way to their personal development (...) and to optimally stimulate individual sources of this development* (Murgatroyd, S., 2000, p. 16), and added, quoting Anna Jones, that counselling is *a process that helps individuals come to terms with their own life as it is and ultimately helps them become more mature by learning to take responsibility and make decisions for themselves* (Murgatroyd, 2000, p. 17). Thus, she introduced the meeting participants to its thematic scope. Moreover, she pointed out that counselling is sometimes equated with advising and is treated as a social activity, interpersonal interaction, consisting in the counsellor providing advice or guidance to the counselee or as an activity of counselling institutions, while from the point of view of social policy as a form of assistance (Kargulowa, 2005).

So broadly understood, it can serve both as the implementation of therapeutic and promotional and optimization goals (Sęk, 2004), especially as it coexists and is associated, among others, with such aid activities as social support, therapy, crisis intervention, social assistance and can be considered:

- ♦ in the micro-social context as a help relationship (with such areas of reflection as, for example, the subjectivity of the participants of the relationship, their autonomy, motivations for entering into relationships, their conditions);

- ♦ as the activity of institutions, formal and informal groups in real and virtual space;
- ♦ on a macro-social scale as a component of social and educational policy.

She also raised the problem of defining the effects of counselling activities, measuring them and correlating them with other influences, such as upbringing, education, and prevention.

Pointing out multiple aspects of counselling, Professor Piorunek thus outlined the substantive area of the Section's activity.

Then she provided general information about its structure and defined the goals of this meeting, as well as the goals of the future activity of the Pedagogical Counselling Section. As the main ones, she indicated:

- ♦ critical reflection on the existing trends in counselling, help and social support and the need to develop new theories
- ♦ interparadigmatic, transdisciplinary research into the area of aid activities;
- ♦ interdisciplinary discourse of science and practice related to counselling and its various types;
- ♦ development of cooperation between institutions, organizations, units dealing with the above-mentioned issues.

After this introduction, the meeting was formally inaugurated by the Chairman of Pedagogical Sciences Committee of Polish Academy of Sciences (KNP PAN), Professor Agnieszka Cybal-Michalska, who was invited as a special guest to the meeting. She started off by emphasising the importance of establishing the Pedagogical Counselling Section Committee, for the first time in the history. Then she briefly presented the history of the functioning of KNP PAN and indicated its tasks "whose aim is, in the most general sense, to integrate the scientific community of educators and to maintain awareness of the social importance of pedagogy as a science and the social responsibility of educators (...)". Professor Piorunek expressed her gratitude to the President of the Section, for the preparation, in response to the call by the Ministry of National Education, of the opinion on the new market qualification "Conducting mediation in education" to be include in the Integrated Qualifications System, as well as drawing up an action plan for the Social Counselling Section, which sets the direction for the creative and expert activity of the Pedagogical Counselling Section.

In the next part, the Chairman, Professor Piorunek, gave the floor to individual members of the Section, asking them to present their profiles and scientific and research interests.

The first speaker was Professor Bożena Matyjas, whose research interests focus on the following subjects: child; childhood in various types of educational environments: family, school, local and global environment, and the problems of helping and supporting families and children in crisis situations. She is the author of six

monographs and over 280 scientific articles, the co-author of one book, and the editor of twelve monographs devoted to these issues.

Then Professor Zdzisław Wołk took the floor, presenting his research interests that are related to the humanistic aspects of professional work, work culture and career counselling, as well as problems of social work. In this field, he published over 200 scientific and popular science works, including ten monographs and textbooks, and thirteen collections of studies, of which he was the editor. He was also an initiator and participant of research programs devoted to employee activity and professional activation, as well as the local dimension of social assistance. He is the author of numerous expert opinions on career counselling and recommendations on the professional activation of the unemployed. For two terms, he has been a member of the Provincial Labour Market Council of the Lubuskie Voivodeship.

Professor. Elżbieta Siarkiewicz, who took the floor next, is a teacher, researcher, diagnostician, and university lecturer. She is a founding member of the Counselling Association and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Studia Poradawnicze/Journal of Counselling*. She focused her scientific and research interests around microworlds in which aid, support and counselling activities are created, launched, maintained and implemented. Reaching for the possibilities offered by field and participatory research, she constructed an immersionist model of research on counselling. She has published two original and one co-authored monographs, numerous articles and is an editor or co-editor of three collections of studies on counselling issues.

Dr Violetta Drabik-Podgórná, Assistant Professor at the Department of Counselling Studies and Deputy Head of the International Chair of UNESCO Lifelong Guidance and Counselling at the Institute of Pedagogy of the University of Wrocław, career advisor, personal development trainer, certified ICC coach and co-coordinator (with Marek Podgórný) of the international academic cooperation network UNITWIN network “Life designing interventions (counselling, guidance, education) for decent work and sustainable development”, bringing together 20 universities from around the world. She is the author of one book, editor and co-editor of four collections of works and two issues of the bilingual periodical *Studia Poradawnicze / Journal of Counselling* (2018, 2019). Moreover, she is the organizer and co-organizer of national and international conferences and scholarly seminars. In her works, she takes up the issues of contemporary career and life design counselling, emphasizes the importance of dialogical relations and analyses the consulting situation from an ethical perspective.

Then Dr. Elżbieta Kwiatkowska took the floor. She was a member of the Elementary Education Team at KNP PAN (until 2019), and is a coordinator for pedagogical matters at the academic kindergarten of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (2016–19), and author of the educational program “Children will change the world for the better”. Her research interests focus, among others, on: multi-faceted optimization of the impact of kindergarten on a child, favouring

their integrated, harmonious development; issues of supporting a gifted child in the educational environment; broadly understood social competences and social functioning of selected groups (including intercultural groups).

Dr. Joanna Kozielska, an employee of the Social Counselling Department at the Faculty of Educational Studies of Adam Mickiewicz University, announced that her scholarly interests oscillate around issues related to transnational biographical counselling. She is also interested in using non-directive forms of supporting career development and counselling, including coaching and broadly understood vocational education. Dr. Kozielska is the author of several dozen scholarly articles, co-editor (together with Professor M. Piorunek and Dr. A. Skowrońska-Pućka) of three collective monographs and the author of two original monographs.

Dr. Agnieszka Skowrońska-Pućka is also an Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Counselling at the Faculty of Educational Studies of Adam Mickiewicz University. Her research interests oscillate around the issue of support and assistance to people in crisis, with particular emphasis on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. An important area of her scientific interests is the system of institutional and family foster care, biographical non-normative crises and, above all, the phenomenon of (pre) early motherhood. She is the author of numerous scholarly articles, co-editor (together with Prof. Piorunek and Dr. Kozielska) of three collective monographs and the author of one original monograph.

Finally, Professor Piorunek presented her academic profile, pointing out that she is the head of the Social Counselling Department at the Faculty of Educational Studies of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, and her interests and research are in the area of labour pedagogy, social pedagogy and counselling. She is the author of over 120 publications. Since 2009, she has initiated and chaired scientific committees of a series of nationwide conferences on counselling (2010, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020/21). In her previous term of office, she was a member of such groups as: Work Pedagogy Team, Youth Pedagogy Team and Social Pedagogy Team. An important element of her scholarly activities is the participation in the international project UNITWIN network “Life Designing Intervention (counselling, guidance, education) for decent work and sustainable development”; cooperation with the UNESCO Chair for Lifelong Vocational Counselling in Wrocław as well as organizational and teaching activities.

The members of the Section are also Professor Andrzej Radziewicz-Winnicki and Professor Andrzej Ładyżyński.

Professor Radziewicz-Winnicki is a sociologist and educator, a recognized authority in the field of sociology of education and social pedagogy. He is a member of the Polish Pedagogical Society, the Polish Sociological Society, the World Association for Educational Research and the initiator and editor-in-chief of the scientific quarterly *Auxilium Sociale – Social Support*, a member of the editorial boards of national and international scientific journals.

Professor A. Ładyżyński, began his scientific career in the Department of the History of Education, working under the supervision of Professor Mirosława Chamcówna. Currently, he specializes in the field of family pedagogy, family counselling and family therapy. He is actively involved in working with families in crisis. He is associated with the Family Therapy Team at the “Neuromed” Neuropsychiatry Centre in Wrocław. He uses trainings and supervision of his own work. He is the author of two books and over 100 articles.

An important role in the course of the meeting was played by the discussion on the detailed topics and forms of cooperation in the current four-year term of office (2020–2024), as a result of which it was agreed that two scientific meetings will be organized during the academic year. The subject of the meetings will be tasks that are part of the scope of activities of the Pedagogical Sciences Committee and that directly concern the issues of counselling, support, assistance and intervention.

There are also plans to prepare individual and possibly summary publications at the end of the Section’s term. The cooperation with national organizations and research centres, the area of interest of which is in the field of interest of the members of the Pedagogical Counselling Section will continue to be initiated and developed, as well as the cooperation with the UNESCO Chair and the UNITWIN international network, “Life designing interventions for decent work and sustainable development” and with the Scholarly Society of Counselling. The participation of Section members is also planned in the preparation of expert opinions on counselling, support, assistance and all accompanying activities as well as in diagnosing the state of education, taking into account, in particular, areas focusing on pedagogical counselling. It is also planned to prepare a map of centres and people providing counselling. In addition, the possibility of consulting training programs of academic and educational staff in the field of pedagogy in the area of counselling, support, intervention and aid was taken into account, as well as the evaluation of reform measures in the education system in the area of counselling, e.g. educational and vocational, social support and intervention.

It was considered very important to develop new concepts and proposals for model solutions in the area of pedagogical counselling, support, assistance and intervention, and to organize research in smaller teams in accordance with the scientific interests of individual members of the Section. With this in mind, it was planned to establish a broader Pedagogical Counselling Team of the Polish Academy of Sciences, that would support the initiatives and activities of the Section, the shape of which could change depending on the initiatives and projects to be undertaken.

At the end of the meeting, Professor Piorunek read out the opinion prepared together with Dr. Kozielska supporting the inclusion of the new market qualification “Conducting mediation in education” in the Integrated Qualification System, pointing out the importance of preparing young people to conduct peer mediation and adult mediation in broadly conceived area of education.

Before the closing of the session, it was agreed that the next Section meeting would be held in February 2021.

Translated by Joanna Kozielska

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