

Mariusz Dobijański*, Arkadiusz Kamiński**

* University of Białystok

* m.dobijanski@uwb.edu.pl; ORCID: 0000-0002-4825-796X

* University of Wrocław

** arkadiusz.kamiński@uwr.edu.pl; ORCID: 0000-0003-0042-5968

Activities of the National Association of Rehabilitation Workers for the rehabilitation of minors in Poland

Abstract: The article presents the activities of the National Association of Rehabilitation Workers, which, as an NGO, for twenty-eight years of activity, has shown a wide activity for the environment of social rehabilitation workers, but also for the benefit of socially maladjusted youth placed in educational institutions. The active promotion and initiation of organizational, legislative, and systemic changes and transformations have become the focus of the Association's work, which over the years has expanded to include training activities, the organization of scientific conferences, international exchanges, and the conduct of preventive, educational and therapeutic programs and projects for young people at risk of social maladjustment and socially maladjusted, for which the organization has raised or directly sponsored funds, as well as scientific and promoting activities. The study indicates the direct impact of the Association on the social rehabilitation of minors in Poland.

Key words: youth educational centers, delinquency, association rehabilitation workers, resocialization.

Introduction

Modern society, in addition to well-developed state structures, needs well-functioning non-governmental institutions, which should not only strengthen

various areas of social life, but in many cases should be the originator and implementer of new trends and solutions. One area of social life includes activities for the upbringing and care of young people, which result in the proper psychosocial development of an individual. The result of disturbances in the socialization process becomes the problem of social maladjustment, the genesis of which should be sought in biopsychic and sociocultural factors (Urban, 2000). Interactions with such people require the involvement of many institutions and specialists in the fields of pedagogy, law, sociology or psychology, and the conduct of activities at the levels of upbringing, care and therapy. Important to the effectiveness of social rehabilitation is the organizational and structural sphere that forms the logistical basis of the process. All these activities should be carried out on the basis of cooperation between state institutions and non-governmental organizations.

National Association of Rehabilitation Workers as a non-governmental institution

The significant role of various associations and social organizations was emphasized as early as 1974 by Professor Aleksander Kamiński (1974). Their intensive development took place in Poland during the social and economic transformation after 1989, which unleashed tremendous social energy, a sense of solidarity and a desire to help those most affected by these changes. The conviction of the effectiveness of community action prompted many community workers to create structures whose task was to support upbringing, educational or preventive institutions in the sphere of organization and implementation. This is because associating with others is essential to the effectiveness of working for a good human life. Working in an organization reinforces a sense of commitment and effectiveness and provides a mechanism for developing social sensitivity, encourages cooperation and strengthens individual initiative in solving problems. It also helps meet the needs and aspirations of both the organization's members and the recipients of their activities.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be defined as specific forms of social self-organization, organized structures that integrate groups of citizens, characterized by a common mature social identity, a certain degree of involvement, the private nature of the initiative, voluntary participation, independence and non-commercial nature, as well as a significant share of volunteer service. NGOs play an important role in shaping human attitudes, both of those who are members and those who have any contact with them (Radziewicz-Winnicki, 2008). They can be both local and supra-local. One function that is of particular importance according to researchers is the care and upbringing, as well as integration function (Pilch, 1995).

The organizations in question include the National Association of Rehabilitation Workers (OSPR – Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Pracowników Resocjalizacji). It was established in October 1993 in Łękawa near Bełchatów on the initiative of employees of youth educational centers from all over the country, who wanted to consolidate the efforts of mutual cooperation at the level of a non-governmental organization. This gave them an organizational and legal basis for their activities on behalf of staff working in social rehabilitation institutions and socially maladjusted youth placed in these institutions. The Association's activities were based mainly on the activities of more than 20 local groups scattered across the map of the country, whose members were recruited primarily from among the employees of educational centers, although police officers, employees of courts and other institutions, including emergency care centers, were also affiliated with the association. In accordance with the adopted Statute, OSPR was and is managed through the General Board with a President, and control functions in the association are performed by the Supervisory Board. The first President of OSPR was dr hab. Irena Motow (PhD), who at the time served as a director of the Youth Educational Center in Łękawa, where the first headquarters of the Association was located. Then, in 1996–1999, the headquarters of the Association became the Youth Educational Center in Radzionków, and dr Tadeusz Wolan (PhD) became the next President. After subsequent changes, for three terms (1999–2008) the Association was headed by dr Arkadiusz Kamiński (PhD) from the Youth Educational Center in Herby, which became the headquarters of the organization. For the next 12 years (2008–2020) the Association functioned in the Youth Educational Center in Kuźnia Raciborska, with Julian Zieliński as its President. Since 2020, the headquarters of the Association has been the Youth Educational Center in Jaworek, and it is headed by dr Mariusz Dobijański (PhD) (OSPR Bulletin, 2013; Conclusions of the OSPR Convention, 2020).

According to the Association's Statute, the most important goals of the organization can include:

- strengthening and uniting the community of social rehabilitation workers and representing their professional interests,
- spreading and supporting new methods and forms of social rehabilitation work,
- assistance in ensuring proper economic and living conditions for wards included in the social rehabilitation process,
- active participation in the overall social rehabilitation activity in the country (the Association is to direct its assistance to each individual undergoing social rehabilitation, regardless of his/her religious orientation, political orientation, national origin, recognized system of values and beliefs, focusing on the fulfillment of the care and upbringing, as well as integration function),
- modification of legal solutions to improve the functioning of social rehabilitation institutions, especially youth educational centers,

- consolidating the community of social rehabilitation workers and their activation in the process of adapting educational centers to new forms and methods of work,
- cooperation with universities, institutions and scientific organizations by organizing meetings, seminars and scientific conferences,
- active cooperation with representative bodies, state administration and trade unions in all matters arising from the objectives of the Association,
- organizing and conducting educational and integration activities for people at risk of social exclusion, including young people with disabilities,
- organizing active forms of counteracting addiction among children and young people,
- formation of ethical attitudes among social rehabilitation workers,
- taking positions before state authorities, professional organizations, etc., on issues relating to social rehabilitation in the broadest sense,
- establishing or cooperating in the operation of specialized centers, schools as well as care and rehabilitation facilities for socially maladjusted and marginalized children and youth (Statutes of OSPR, 2020).

OSPR, as a non-governmental organization, keeps full personnel, financial and substantive records under the Statute, and its activities are subject to state control – mainly financial and judicial. The Association's authorities are elected once every 3 years at the Association's General Meetings of the Association's Delegates, which sets the direction of the Association's activities. According to the organization's internal materials, 12 of them have been held so far, and they constituted the most important body that set the organization's directions for the coming period of activity.

Activities of the Association

The nearly thirty-year period of the Association's activities has abounded in various forms of activity both in the organizational and training areas, the organization of scientific conferences, the conduct of scientific and publishing activities, international cooperation, and the creation and implementation of programs for socially maladjusted youth. The activity had a strong and direct impact on changes and transformations in the Polish system of juvenile social rehabilitation and contributed to the introduction of specific legislative and organizational solutions and the promotion of innovative forms and methods of social rehabilitation work.

The supreme body of the Association remained the General Meeting of OSPR's Delegates, during which there were repeated nationwide discussions with the participation of delegates and invited guests from the central authorities, other NGOs, representatives of the world of science, foreign guests. Topics discussed included the directions of reform in the Polish juvenile social rehabilitation system,

legislative and organizational changes, preferred methods and forms of work, etc. (materials from OSPR Conventions). All Conventions ended with the development of conclusions, which, properly formulated, were material for the work of the General Board for the next term, but they were also addressed to state authorities and other institutions involved in working with socially maladjusted youth.

An analysis of the collected material available at OSPR headquarters shows that from the very beginning the association has taken initiatives to influence the formation and development of the Polish juvenile social rehabilitation system. During the Second Convention in 1994, delegates stressed the need to regulate issues related to the escorting of minors staying in youth educational centers, proper medical care and payment for the stay of wards. Attention was drawn to the educational authorities' failure to take action on the implementation of the project proposed in 1991 by dr Marek Konopczyński (PhD) during a meeting of representatives of educational institutions in Renice to appoint plenipotentiaries of the Minister of National Education for social rehabilitation.

During the Third Convention of OSPR in Debrzno in 1996, the *Concept of transformations in the system of social rehabilitation education* was developed and adopted, which, as a result of social changes in Poland, evolved over the following years becoming at that time an important material for discussion among practitioners and theoreticians of social rehabilitation pedagogy. The main ideas of the *Concept* were to link the system of social rehabilitation education with local government structures and to modify the legal system. The aim of the proposals submitted was to increase the effectiveness of educational and social rehabilitation work and link it to economic support for the best-performing youth educational centers. These solutions, revolutionary for those times (and perhaps even today, according to the article's authors), not only reverberated deeply in the community of social rehabilitation workers, but influenced subsequent organizational and legal solutions. It was as a result of the discussions that took place that the educational centers were transferred to the jurisdiction of the county offices.

Other key issues for the operation of educational centers were addressed at the Fifth Convention of the Association in 1999, held in Sandomierz. OSPR members expressed their concern about the degree of funding for the centers, which was realistically leading to a reduction in the efficiency of services provided at the facilities – there were problems with the quality of food, securing medical assistance, and purchasing clothing and footwear for the wards. Of deep concern was the shortage of funds for the process of making wards independent after leaving the center, which is crucial from the point of view of the results of social rehabilitation. Questions were also raised about the lack of treatment facilities for wards with mental health and addiction problems, who, deprived of proper care and therapy, ended up in “ordinary educational centers”. The Ministry of Education was also approached with requests regarding the need to amend educational regulations that prevented wards of the facilities from completing

school at the center due to the extended period of study in middle schools, and to create legal conditions for wards to receive appropriate vocational training. Requests have also been sent to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy regarding, among other things, the issue of improving the quality of the mode of granting assistance to wards leaving institutions in the process of becoming independent. In the absence of concrete legal and practical solutions to these issues, similar comments were made at the next two OSPR Conventions, held in 2002 and 2005. At the same time, during these years, the Association began to promote the concepts of the need to introduce quality standards of services provided in youth educational centers. According to its members, the facilities have become heavily decentralized, there has been a lack of oversight over their operations, and a gap has been observed in monitoring their activities. In addition, it was noted that the system for referring and placing minors in social rehabilitation facilities was completely inefficient. Nationwide, more than 1,500 minors have not been placed in juvenile detention centers despite orders issued by district courts. It was emphasized that entrusting the referral of juveniles with county offices is a bad solution and should be abandoned as soon as possible by creating a central referral system. Such a solution was introduced in 2004 by organizing an appropriate ICT system at the Ministry of Education.

The Association's activities, when a major transformation was introduced in Poland in 2000, have had a significant impact on changes in the Polish child care system. All tasks in the field of institutional and non-institutional care for children deprived of parental care or at risk of such a phenomenon, including children and adolescents functioning in youth educational centers, were transferred from the structures of the educational system to those of social welfare. The change in the system required a major evolution of the legislation in this area. Legal solutions for helping children deprived of parental care are included in the *Law on Social Assistance* of March 12, 2004 (Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 64, item 593, as amended). The task of organizing child care has been entrusted to county governments through county family assistance centers. Children who, for various reasons (age, behavioral disorders, traumatic experiences in the family, etc.) could not be raised in natural or foster families, were placed in 24-hour care facilities. Such a situation aroused fierce opposition from the educational center staff community. The National Association of Rehabilitation Workers, among others, strongly articulated the need to place educational centers within the structures of the Ministry of Education, which consequently led to the return of these institutions to the Ministry of Education in 2002. The Association cited strong arguments such as: the fact of the operation of schools that are an integral part of the centers, the expectations of teachers and educators working in these institutions, and referred to tradition, which showed that institutions of this type were subordinated to the Ministry of Education in the past. Also, OSPR's efforts (applying to the Ministry of National Education and Sports, the Ministry

of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of Justice and direct meetings between members of the General Board and their representatives, initiating parliamentary questions, meetings with trade union authorities) led to the return of YECs to the structure of the Ministry of National Education and Sports. The event was announced during the 2002 National Conference of Directors of Youth Educational Centers in Antoniewo, during which the President of OSPR presented a paper entitled: *Sytuacja Młodzieżowych Ośrodków Wychowawczych po zmianach systemu opieki, wychowania i edukacji-zagrozenia i perspektywy* [Eng. *Situation of Youth Educational Centers after changes in the system of care, upbringing and education – threats and prospects*] (OSPR Bulletin, 2002).

The activity of members of the juvenile social rehabilitation community, as well as members of OSPR, has made it possible to bring about significant changes in the financing of the juvenile social rehabilitation system in Poland. The amount of educational subsidy at the time of the transition from the Ministry of Social Policy to the Ministry of Education dramatically reduced the possibility of organizing and carrying out educational and social rehabilitation activities in institutions. Bringing, with the participation of then Ombudsman Prof. A. Zoll to a broad discussion of the representation of Youth Educational Centers, which included OSPR members, with representatives of the ministries of education, justice, social policy and health resulted in a consequent increase in the subsidy importance, i.e., financial outlays for the operation of social rehabilitation facilities.

Another critical analysis of the functioning of the system of social rehabilitation of minors in educational centers was made by members of the Association in 2006 in the material *Trudności i bariery w funkcjonowaniu Młodzieżowych Ośrodków Wychowawczych* [Eng. *Difficulties and Barriers in the Functioning of Youth Educational Centers*] (OSPR Bulletin, 2006). It pointed out problems with the transfer of educational subsidies for the operation of the centers by the governing bodies (including county and marshal offices), despite the high funding of the centers at the level of the Treasury. They emphasized the need to improve the referral system and the irregularities in placing in the centers people addicted to psychoactive drugs, mentally ill or chronically ill people who require specialized medical care, for which the centers were completely unprepared from the technical, organizational and, above all, personnel side. A document submitted to the Ministry of Education, also addressed to all social rehabilitation institutions in the country, showed the difficulties associated with adapting the current educational regulations to the requirements of educating the wards of social rehabilitation centers (including problems with vocational training), and emphasized the continued lack of a nationwide system for monitoring institutions, taking into account their profile, specifics and the nature of education (OSPR Bulletin, 2006). In reference to the comments submitted, the General Board sent a questionnaire to all youth educational centers operating in Poland, asking them to provide suggestions for solutions to existing problems. The collected material was presented in June

2006 at a national conference *Problemy systemu resocjalizacji dzieci i młodzieży w Polsce* [Eng. *Problems of the system of social rehabilitation of children and youth in Poland*] organized by Centrum Metodyczne Pomocy Psychologiczno-Pedagogicznej in Warsaw on behalf of the Department of Education of the Ministry of National Education in Serock near Warsaw. It called for the introduction of the possibility of profiling social rehabilitation facilities or educational groups in the facilities, so that there would be additional centers of more severe educational rigor and multifunctional Youth Educational Centers (which run groups for addicts or people in need of psychiatric care as part of their structure). Specific organizational and legal solutions have been proposed to improve the functioning of the referral system, as well as the creation of a nationwide monitoring system for the centers, taking into account their specificities and the nature of education. Proposals were given for ready solutions regarding changes in the education of YEC wards, as well as the issue of making purchases of clothing, footwear and granting so-called pocket money to wards. From today's perspective, it seems that the most important demand was the creation of a working team led by representatives of the Ministry of Education to develop standards of care, upbringing and education in educational and social therapy centers, which would make it possible to adapt models of assistance and specialized care, as well as forms of education, to the activity profile of each institution (OSPR Bulletin, 2006).

Later activities of the Association abounded in a number of activities aimed at improving the functioning of the Polish juvenile social rehabilitation system. Constantly, as the need arose, the members of the Association formulated proposals that were addressed to the relevant ministries, took part in meetings with their representatives, and participated in many conferences and meetings. The result of these activities was the participation of OSPR members in the work on changes to the juvenile social rehabilitation system. The Association's internal materials show that its representatives took an active part in the work of working teams on the *Catalog of extraordinary events in youth educational centers*, in expert teams, among others, working on *The functioning of educational teams* and *Procedures for the construction of Individual Social Rehabilitation Programs in youth educational centers*, operating at the Center for Education Development in Warsaw, or in the team working on the *Standards for the operation of youth educational centers* operating under the Ministry of National Education.

A valuable initiative of the juvenile social rehabilitation community in Poland is the organization of annual congress meetings by Młodzieżowe Centrum Edukacji i Readaptacji Społecznej w Goniądzu [Eng. Youth Education and Social Readaptation Center in Goniądz], headed by its director S. Moczydłowski. The first YEC Congress was held in 2009. The purpose of the meetings is to exchange experiences, present good practices and discuss the most important problems of the operation of social rehabilitation facilities. During the three-day session (with, among other things, the active participation of OSPR delegates), as a result of discussions with

representatives of educational authorities, the Center for Education Development, the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman for Children, local governments and the scientific community, conclusions and proposals for changes aimed at improving the effectiveness of the juvenile social rehabilitation system were developed.

In 2015, under the auspices of the Ombudsman for Children Marek Michalak, a team of specialists began working to define standards for education, upbringing and care in educational institutions. The work of the team was led by Prof. M. Konopczyński, and among the members of this group were representatives of OSPR – including dr Mariusz Dobijański (PhD). The initiative resulted in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 11 August 2017 *on public education centers, youth education centers, youth social therapy centers, special care-and-education centers, special education centers, rehabilitation-and-education centers and institutions providing care and education to pupils during a period of learning away from the place of permanent residence*, the essence of which is to increase the standards of operation of youth educational centers (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1606). The regulation, in its transitional and final provisions, included a clause obliging facilities that do not comply with the provisions set forth in the regulation as of its entry into force to comply with the requirements set forth therein by August 31, 2020.

Representatives of the Association (including both authors of this article) also participated in the development of a tool for assessing the degree of implementation of standards under the above-mentioned regulation. It consisted of 75 questions and covered 10 research areas. The lengthy work on its final version carried out by an expert team, consisting of a representative group of academics, practitioners working in these institutions and representatives of the Center for Education Development, consultations with representatives of pedagogical supervision and the conduct of pilot studies, after which its usefulness was verified, gives the guarantee that the created tool will already in the near future have an impact on improving the quality of the work of youth educational centers.

The National Association of Rehabilitation Workers conducted other valuable activities at the same time. As an institution that consolidates the staff of social rehabilitation institutions, it has conducted extensive training activities through the organization of various workshops, panel discussions, typical training courses as well as national and international conferences. An analysis of the Association's internal materials shows that training sessions were held at least once a year for the staff of social rehabilitation facilities. Their topics were adapted to the current needs of the environment and dealt with various aspects of social rehabilitation, educational and therapeutic work. Among the most important ones, trainings in the following fields can be included:

- methods of diagnosis, therapy, prevention and educational work,
- developing pedagogical skills in dealing with problems of social maladjustment: addiction to psychoactive substances, aggression, self-aggression (inc-

cluding suicide attempts), domestic violence, personality disorders, behavioral disorders and sexual violence,

- the effectiveness of social rehabilitation work, ways to study it and implement measures to improve the effectiveness of educational work,
- legal aspects and system solutions related to the operation of social rehabilitation facilities,
- cooperation with organizations and institutions that support the process of social rehabilitation,
- personal and organizational safety in working with socially maladjusted youth and youth at risk of social maladjustment.

During the organized trainings and workshops, participants recruited mainly from educational centers, but also from socialization centers, intervention centers, correctional institutions, juvenile shelters, and from among university staff, became acquainted with traditional as well as innovative methods of working with children and adolescents, including: dialog card work, djembe drum therapy, survival therapy, genogram work, behavioral methods of psychotherapy, psycho-correction community work, contracting method, art therapy (finger painting technique, decoupage, pottery making, etc.) and dog therapy. Conducting this type of activity made it possible to become familiar with interesting methods and forms of work, which significantly raised the level of the workshop of practitioners participating in these activities, which directly translated into the quality of the care and therapeutic work carried out in social rehabilitation institutions, as well as other institutions depending on the employment of participants throughout the country. The documentation gathered at the Association's headquarters from the organization of these trainings (including attendance lists and certificates issued) confirms the participation of several hundred people trained by specialists in various fields employed by the Association's General Board.

The experience gained by members of the Association in organizing trainings, workshops and other forms of professional development allowed the organization of conferences aimed at integrating the community of practitioners of social rehabilitation pedagogy with the scientific world. The essential bridge to link these two groups – practitioners and theoreticians – turned out to be members of the Association, who combined scientific and didactic work with work in social rehabilitation institutions. It was also not without significance that the presidents of the Association mostly represented such a way of employment, i.e.: the first President of OSPR dr hab. Irena Motow (PhD) was a staff member at, among others, the then Jan Długosz Academy in Częstochowa (currently the Jan Długosz University in Częstochowa), dr. Tadeusz Wolan (PhD) was employed at the University of Silesia in Katowice, dr. Arkadiusz Kamiński (PhD) (the initiator of the organization of most of the conferences) works at the University of Wrocław, and current President dr. Mariusz Dobijański (PhD) is a research and teaching staff member at the University of Białystok (OSPR monograph, 2013, Conclusions

of the OSPR General Meeting in 2020). This combination of the popularization of scientific achievements, the joint conduct of scientific research, the presentation of didactic, educational and social rehabilitation achievements, and the exchange of the broad professional experience of these communities became an excellent platform for cooperation between practitioners and theoreticians, which mutually benefited both communities. A valuable enrichment of the organized conferences turned out to be the invitation of foreign guests, both representing universities and representatives of various educational and social rehabilitation institutions from Europe, which internationalized the conducted meetings. According to OSPR's internal materials, among the most important and valuable, from the point of view of reach and number of participants, one can include the following conferences organized jointly with the Institute of Pedagogy of the University of Wrocław in 2010–2016:

- in 2010 in Murzasichle – an international conference *Między praktyką, a teorią w resocjalizacji*, [Eng. *Between practice and theory in social rehabilitation*],
- in 2012 in Murzasichle – an international conference *Bariery w procesie resocjalizacji*, [Eng. *Barriers in the process of social rehabilitation*],
- in 2013, a national conference in Łazy near Mielno entitled: *Optymalizowanie profilaktyki społecznej i resocjalizacji. Tradycja, współczesność, perspektywy*, [Eng. *Optimizing social prevention and rehabilitation. Tradition, modernity, prospects.*],
- in 2015 in Murzasichle – an international conference *Możliwości oddziaływań wychowawczych i terapeutycznych we współczesnych instytucjach resocjalizacyjnych* [Eng. *Possibilities of educational and therapeutic interactions in modern institutions of social rehabilitation*],
- w 2016 in Białka Tatrzańska – an international conference *Rola bezpieczeństwa w funkcjonowaniu placówek resocjalizacyjnych* [Eng. *The role of security in the functioning of social rehabilitation institutions*] (the most numerous conference, which was attended, among others, by practitioners from many countries participating in the meeting of European educational and social rehabilitation institutions).

From the internal materials collected at OSPR headquarters, it can be concluded that several hundred people attended the above-mentioned conferences, representing practitioners from dozens of educational centers from all over the country, as well as employees of the prison service, correctional institutions, intervention and socialization facilities, probation officers and representatives of local governments. Representatives of the Center for Education Development, the Ministry of National Education and other state institutions also actively participated in each meeting. Definitely the group that constituted the scientific character of the conference were employees of universities from all over the country, who represented academic centers from Wrocław, Katowice, Częstochowa, Szczecin, Sosnowiec, Raciborz, Warsaw, Białystok, Gdańsk, Zielona Góra, Słupsk,

Opole, Siedlce and Dąbrowa Górnicza, among others. The internationalization of the meetings was made possible by the participation of invited guests from the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Germany, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia and Tennessee, USA. Organized conferences were an excellent form of exchanging experiences, presenting the results of scientific research in the field of social prevention and upbringing, education as well as therapy of socially maladjusted people. The staff of the educational centers also had the opportunity to present the social rehabilitation activities undertaken at the facilities. The organization of the conference contributed to the integration of the community of practitioners and representatives of science, which in many cases became the beginning of the implementation of research projects, and then their popularization, presentation of scientific achievements and publishing activities. Several initiatives launched at conferences organized by the Association have culminated in educational programs implemented at the facilities, based on previous scientific research, which demonstrates the excellent cooperation for the benefit of social rehabilitation pedagogy between scientists and practitioners.

In addition to contacts with representatives of foreign social rehabilitation institutions and academic centers at international conferences, members of the OSPR General Board have twice made study visits to Ukraine. Admittedly, as early as the 1990s, members of the Association of local groups from Herby, Puławy and Jaworzno took part in international exchanges with centers for socially maladjusted youth from France, but the Association was not the organizer at the time (Kamiński 2005, p. 97). In 2008 and 2009, members of the General Board had the pleasure of visiting institutions and church organizations working with socially maladjusted youth in Ukraine. These meetings resulted in the establishment of cooperation with the Social Therapy Center in Fontanka, Odessa, as well as with representatives of the Catholic Church in Sevastopol and Kharkov. During the visit to Odessa, members of the Association participated in a conference on *The system of social rehabilitation in Poland and Ukraine – current status and prospects for change*. The purpose of the study visit to Sevastopol was to learn about the forms of work with “street children” in an open environment in Ukraine and to establish cooperation with organizations that run orphanages and outpatient facilities for homeless children. It should be mentioned that two years later, there was a revisit by the staff of the Social Therapy Center in Fontanka during an international conference organized by the Association in 2010 in Murzasichle (OSPR monograph, 2013).

One of the most fruitful activities of the National Association of Rehabilitation Workers, which has had a direct impact on social rehabilitation activities towards socially maladjusted youth, has been the implementation of programs and projects with wards of youth educational centers. Presented during meetings organized by the Association as part of its statutory activities (General Meetings of Delegates, meetings of the General Board and local groups) various projects and initiatives,

as well as practical ideas and methodological solutions developed during training and conferences, in many cases were implemented as those of an educational and therapeutic nature.

The Association, undertaking cooperation with educational centers and other institutions supporting education and upbringing, has led to the organization of many valuable nationwide initiatives. An analysis of OSPR's internal documentation shows that one of the largest tourist events held in Poland with socially maladjusted young people was organized together with Zespół Placówek im. Jana Pawła II w Lubaczowie (Eng. John Paul II Facilities Complex in Lubaczów) entitled *Ogólnopolskie Rajdy MOW na Roztoczu* [Eng. *National YEC Hikes in Roztocze*]. This event, which had eight editions (2001/2002/2003/2004/2005/2006/2007/2012), became a bridge to cooperation between more than a dozen social rehabilitation institutions in Poland and contributed to the popularization of the use of survivalist elements in work with socially maladjusted youth. It should be noted here that this method of work was previously used by the OSPR Group at the YEC in Herby, which as early as the 1990s began actively applying elements of the survival school in working with socially maladjusted youth (Kamiński, Jezierska, Kołodziejczak 2016, p. 92). The search for new forms of work led to the implementation of the idea of using survival methods for nationwide hikes. The inspired members of the OSPR Group at the YEC in Szczecin organized in the years 2006–2019 *Rajdy Survivalowe Orły* [Eng. *Eagles Survival Hikes*], in which wards from 30 educational centers from all over Poland took part. Continuation of *the National YEC Hikes in Roztocze* have become *Ogólnopolskie Rajdy dla wychowanków MOW- Bieszczady* [Eng. *National Hikes for YEC wards – Bieszczady*], which were held with great success in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. The Association has invited more than a dozen youth educational centers from around the country to co-organize. Wanting to conduct nationwide hikes, camps and exchanges between facilities on such a large scale, the OSPR authorities have begun efforts to raise funds for such projects. Thanks to the records kept by the Association, we can establish that it has raised funds for the organization, among other things, of:

- preventive and therapeutic programs for young people from dysfunctional families *Mój pierwszy krok w trzeźwą przyszłość* [Eng. *My first step into a sober future*], *Jak być sobą* [Eng. *How to be yourself*] and *Sprawni Razem* [Eng. *Efficient Together*], which were subsidized by the Podkarpackie Voivodship Office and the Powiat Center for Family Support (PCPR) in Lubaczów (thanks to the implementation of these projects in 2004–2006, socially maladjusted youth took part in therapeutic stationary classes and away classes),
- program *Zdrowo, trzeźwo i aktywnie* [Eng. *Healthy, sober and active*] implemented in 2007 at the request of the Ministry of National Education, the main objective of which was the implementation of outdoor workshops for the wards of the YEC in Werchrata on the Polish-Ukrainian border,

- prevention programs *W zdrowym ciele zdrowy duch* [Eng. *A healthy mind in a healthy body*], *Trzeźwe jutro* [Eng. *Sober tomorrow*] and *Nie alkoholiwi* [Eng. *Say “no” to alcohol*], which were attended by socially maladjusted and intellectually disabled youth from educational centers (these projects, financed from the funds of the Regional Social Policy Center in Rzeszów in 2009–2012, allowed the wards of the YEC in Lubaczów to organize many trips and camps, as well as to conduct additional activities in this institution),
- project *Tak to widzę* [Eng. *This is how I see it*] from the foundation *Młodzież* as part of EU funds, the implementation of which was carried out thanks to the OSPR Group at the center in Herby,
- a project implemented through cooperation between OSPR and the Youth Educational Center in Łękawa *Kształtować przyszłość* [Eng. *To shape the future*] (this project, co-financed from EU funds under the *European Social Fund*, was aimed at the professional activation and social integration of the wards of the YEC in Łękawa (under the project, in addition to classes preparing wards to leave the center, the wards took part in activities that developed their potential, including art therapy classes conducted in the ceramics studio).

Preparing socially maladjusted adolescents to leave a social rehabilitation facility, where they have often spent many years, requires a number of interventions and activities. However, only the full social integration of former center wards constitutes the value of ongoing social rehabilitation proceedings. OSPR members, the vast majority of whom are practitioners, have undertaken many activities aimed at introducing attractive forms and methods of correctional work, hence their use of Creative Social Rehabilitation Methods in their work with socially maladjusted youth, i.e. survival methods, sports, tourism and recreation in the broadest sense (canoeing, yachting, rock climbing, cave exploration, etc.), art therapy with theater, film therapy, photo therapy, dance therapy and fine arts, as well as psychosocial skills training. If it were not for the initiatives of OSPR members to obtain external funding, the use of these methods at work would be at a much lower level. It is worth mentioning at this point that funding for the implementation of educational, preventive and therapeutic programs and projects also came from the Association's statutory funds.

A kind of complement to the functioning of OSPR in the area of juvenile social rehabilitation in Poland, in addition to the previously described activities, is the support of publishing activities. The Presidents of the Association, among others, by combining scientific and didactic work with rehabilitation practice, conducted research proceedings that resulted in their books. Dr hab. Irena Motow (PhD) focused, among others, on social rehabilitation institutions (Motow 2006) or innovations in care and social rehabilitation (Motow 2008), and dr Tadeusz Wolan (PhD), among others, sought answers to questions about the role of a teacher, educator and co-creator of changes in education (Wolan 2004) and studied the process of social rehabilitation in the conditions of a youth educational

center (Wolan 2006). OSPR's organization of national and international scientific conferences has made it possible to carry out popularization activities by inspiring many scientists in the field of maladjustment risk and social maladjustment of youth to conduct research and publish works. The Association has published dozens of articles mainly authored by university staff and students from research clubs. Their work has been published in three items: *Uwarunkowania procesu resocjalizacji* (ed. Kamiński, 2011), *W dążeniu do skutecznej resocjalizacji* (ed. Kamiński, 2013) and *Współczesne tendencje w niedostosowaniu społecznym i oddziaływaniach resocjalizacyjnych* (ed. Kamiński, 2016). They summarized the aforementioned conferences and referred to the process of juvenile social rehabilitation carried out in the educational centers. The authors included materials from ongoing research proceedings and presented suggestions for organizational and methodological changes in working with socially maladjusted people. The latest item published by OSPR and the Institute of Pedagogy of the University of Wrocław *Uzależnienia jako wyzwanie dla współczesnego pedagoga resocjalizacyjnego* addressed the issue of contemporary threats among young people in the aspect of addictions (Kamiński, Dobijański, 2018). Thus, one may be tempted to say that despite limited financial and organizational capabilities (the Association has no full-time staff), OSPR has also been quite active in the field of scientific research and its popularization.

The Association was and is open to cooperation with academics, practitioners and others interested in the development of social rehabilitation, which allowed it to use its organizational potential and its field of coverage to conduct scientific and research activities.

Summary

The National Association of Rehabilitation Workers, as a non-governmental organization for a period of twenty-eight years of activity, has carried out extensive activities for the benefit of the community of social rehabilitation workers, but also for socially maladjusted youth placed in educational institutions. Actively supporting and initiating organizational, legislative and systemic changes and transformations became the axis of the Association's work, which over the years expanded to include training activities, organization of scientific conferences, international exchanges, up to the conduct of preventive, educational and therapeutic programs and projects. On a number of occasions, it has raised funds for its activities or sponsored them with their own funds. These forms of activity are complemented by the conduct of scientific activity and its popularization, among other things, by organizing and supporting publishing activities. The Association's overall achievements clearly demonstrate its direct impact on the social rehabilitation of minors in Poland. Particularly important is this activity at a time of dynamic socio-economic transformation in our country, in which it has a significant share

as an inspirer, organizer and implementer of many specific changes and projects of a national nature. Also in the last year, in which, as a result of the pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus, the Association has been trying to actively influence the current situation, monitoring and calling for action related to the operation of facilities that, despite the sanitary regime imposed by law, carry out their tasks within an almost unchanged scope. These measures are directed both at ensuring the safety of the YEC staff, but also of the wards, for whom this period and the ongoing isolation resulting from limited leave and furloughs has become even more difficult. Sanitary restrictions prevent the inclusion of wards to function in an open environment, resulting in the perception of the facilities as a kind of mini prisons, rather than as educational centers, carrying out their pedagogical and social rehabilitation activities. This situation has given rise to action by the Association, which, in letters to educational authorities, calls for concrete solutions to improve security at YECs, as well as immediate coverage with vaccination of all facility employees. As you can see, the dynamics of change and the multiplicity of contemporary emerging problems indicate new areas of activity that the Association will undertake in accordance with the care of the broadly understood system of social rehabilitation of minors in Poland.

References

- [1] Baranov B. B., 2009, *Organizacja procesu wychowania*, Wydawnictwo Palmira, Odessa.
- [2] Dobijański M. 2017, *Teoretyczne i praktyczne aspekty pedagogiki resocjalizacyjnej w pracy z nieletnimi w Młodzieżowych Ośrodkach Wychowawczych*, Marlab, Siedlce.
- [3] Kamiński A., 1974, *Funkcje pedagogiki społecznej*, PWN, Warszawa.
- [4] Kamiński A., 2005, *Młodzieżowy Ośrodek Wychowawczy – zagrożenia, zadania, perspektywy rozwoju*, [in:] *Profilaktyka, opieka, wychowanie i resocjalizacja*, (eds.) K. Socha-Kołodziej, B. Zającka, Wydawnictwo im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Częstochowa.
- [5] Kamiński A. (ed.), 2013, *W dążeniu do skutecznej resocjalizacji*, Ośrodek Wydawniczo-Poligraficzny „SIM”, Warszawa.
- [6] Kamiński A. (ed.), 2016, *Współczesne tendencje w niedostosowaniu społecznym i oddziaływaniach resocjalizacyjnych*, Ośrodek Wydawniczo-Poligraficzny „SIM”, Warszawa.
- [7] Kamiński A. (ed.), 2011, *Uwarunkowania procesu resocjalizacji*, Oficyna Wydawniczo-Poligraficzna „KONIKA”, Warszawa.
- [8] Kamiński A., Dobijański M. (ed.), 2018, *Uzależnienia jako wyzwanie dla współczesnego pedagoga resocjalizacyjnego*, Ośrodek Wydawniczo-Poligraficzny „SIM”, Warszawa.
- [9] Kamiński A., Jezierska B., Kołodziejczak L., 2016, *Funkcjonowanie placówek socjalizacyjnych I resocjalizacyjnych w aspekcie organizacyjnym I metodycznym*, Oficyna Wydawnicza ATUT, Wrocław.
- [10] Konopczyński M., 2010, *Metody twórczej resocjalizacji*, Wydawnictwa Naukowe PWN, Warszawa.

- [11] Pospiszyl I., Konopczyński M. (eds.), 2007, *Resocjalizacja. W stronę środowiska otwartego*, Wydawnictwo PEDAGOGIUM, Warszawa.
- [12] Motow I., 2006, *Standarty opieki instytucjonalnej dla nieletnich*, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Kmieckiej, Kielce.
- [13] Motow I., Marzec A. (eds.), 2008, *Innowacje w opiece i resocjalizacji dzieci i młodzieży*, Wydawnictwo im. S. Podobińskiego Akademii im. J. Długosza w Częstochowie, Częstochowa.
- [14] *Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Pracowników Resocjalizacji*, monografia upowszechniająca, 2013, Kuźnia Raciborska.
- [15] Urban B., 2000, *Zaburzenia w zachowaniu i przestępczość młodzieży*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków.

Legal acts

- [16] Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 11 sierpnia 2017 r. w sprawie publicznych placówek oświatowo-wychowawczych, młodzieżowych ośrodków wychowawczych, młodzieżowych ośrodków socjoterapii, specjalnych ośrodków szkolno-wychowawczych, specjalnych ośrodków wychowawczych, ośrodków rewalidacyjno-wychowawczych oraz placówek zapewniających opiekę i wychowanie uczniom w okresie pobierania nauki poza miejscem stałego zamieszkania (Dz. U. 2017, poz. 1606).
- [17] Ustawa z dnia 12 marca 2004 r. o pomocy społecznej (Dz. U. z 2004 r. Nr 64, poz. 593, z późn. zm.).