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THE ROLE OF NON PUBLIC AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN WORK ELICITATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE

1. ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WORK ELICITATION

Subjects responsible for solving problems of disabled people are mainly all levels of local and central governments.

Local environment is the most important and first factor initiating social changes, changes having wider, not only local range. Individuals playing leaders' role in the local community have particular social role and often are bringing into action activities having wide and positive social sound.

Those people are of the chosen among other members of the local community due to their communication skills, resourcefulness and honesty towards disabled people, and also knowledge, experience, ability to solve problems. These are fundamental features of a leader, which give confidence, that he will be effective and will do his duty professionally.

It is on the local level, community level, in the district where the disabled person has registered address, where there is a possibility to quickly define and balance needs, in effect include missions for disabled people in community, district and also voivodeship programs, through which province development strategy is executed.

Unfortunately the analysis of the district and voivodeship programs for disabled people, in most cases do not reflect actual diagnosis of disabled people situation, including opinion of their rights resulting from the Constitution and other legal regulations fulfillment.

Actions taken on behalf of disabled people were mainly planned basing on the common knowledge about disability and generally known problems connected with it. This was the answer to many problems seen on the local governments levels.

In the actions taken by the local governments a new perspective is needed, which should include the needs of disabled citizens at the very early stage of designing the social and economy processes. Therefore it is essential to promote any actions focused on creating social awareness and better understanding the goals of community open to disabled people.

Ministries and central institutions should include the issues of disabled people to their works, and define the ways of supporting this group within regional and local initiatives.

It should be pointed out that in the local community local governments, different institutions, social assistance offices and educational institutions combine their actions directed to disabled people. And also disabled people often play an important role in their community by presenting their works, organizing sports events or concerts addressed to whole community.

Regional governments should define their policy of building local communities.

One of the ways to build a community with strong bonds and a process through which disabled people joint the community is "Complete Life Planning". It is a process of supporting individual vision of who the individual would like to be and what he would like to do in the local community¹.

Like Kiernan says: "*It is an optimistic fact, that in many cases where the procedure of Complete Life Planning was used to plan support, the focus was on the interests and dreams of the disabled person not on his disability and limits, showing at the same time that this evolution is possible*"²

This process shows the power of simple, natural, spontaneous care, which is possible, when one person gives some time and energy to take part in that other person's life.

Complete Life Planning:

- focuses on having control by the person
- emphasize individual choices, talents, dreams (not needs / limits)
- involves family and friends to take parts in planning and in further steps
- concentrates on immediate changes in the lifestyle
- doesn't replace traditional rehabilitation
- is a process and a result at the same time

An answer to a number of problems seen on the level of district and regional governments was implementation in 2003 by law regulations the communities of disabled people to take part in social dialogue by obligation to create regional and district public comities for disabled people. This allows handicapped people to have betters tools and influence the policy executed by local governments.

¹ Juros A., „Całościowe Planowanie Życia jako metoda przekraczania trudnych sytuacji przez osoby z niepełnosprawnością.” W: A.Juros, W.Otrębski (red.). Integracja osób niepełnosprawnych w społeczności lokalnej, 1995r., str.133-*159.

² „Liderzy środowiska lokalnego wobec osób niepełnosprawnych”, Lubuskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Zielona Góra, 2001r.

2. THE ROLE OF NON PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN WORK ELICITATION

Actions taken by non public organizations addressed to disabled people result in better social security and increase of the number of people using immaterial support. The work of non public organizations, comities and foundations is more and more important in realization of those goals. Comities of disabled people and similar institutions play a major role by offering support, which is focused on helping handicapped people. This help mainly concentrates on:

- healthcare
- rehabilitation
- social welfare
- education

Non public organizations which function in disabled people's milieu in most cases direct their support to groups defined by the type of dysfunction.

It should be strongly emphasized that non public organizations initiated and jointly created one, uniformed organization of disabled people, which started in 2003 in Warsaw under the name of Polish Forum of Disabled People. It's mission is to join the efforts of comminutes and institutions to create conditions of equal chances of disabled people, equal part in social life and a fight with any aspects of discrimination of handicapped people.

There are many different institutions working for disabled people, including:

- The Office of Plenipotentiary of Disabled Issues
- Public Fundation for Disabled Rehabilitation
- Polish Association for Blinds
- Polish Association for Deaf
- Polish Sport Association for Disabled "Start"
- Association for Intellectually Disabled
- Polish Society for Fight with Disability
- Polish Organization of Employers for Disabled People
- National Commitee of Disabled People
- Association of sheltered work and many more

The State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled People set up under the Act from 9th May 1991 on employment and vocational rehabilitation of people with disabilities. The Fund has legal personality and is one of the state intentional funds. The current basis of action of the SFRDP is the Act from 27th August 1997 on vocational and social rehabilitation revised by law from 24th July 1999 on the amendment of some laws defining the powers of public administration bodies in relation to the State Political System Reform.

The fund authorities constitute of the Supervisory Board and the Executive Board. The President of the Supervisory Board is the Government Agent for Disabled People. The Minister of Labour and Social Policy appoints and dismisses members of the Board at the request of his Agent. The Fund owns 16 country branches.

The financial resources available for SFRDP since 1st January 1999 are derived primarily from obligatory, monthly payments from working places employing at least 25 workers, where employment rate of people with disabilities is lower than 6%.³

The fund's financial resources are mainly appropriated for:

- 1) Creation and adaptation of existing working places for people with disabilities;
- 2) Organization of trainings and retrainings for people with disabilities;
- 3) Funding of the tasks arising from government and self-government programmes for disabled people;
- 4) Programmes of social, vocational and therapeutical rehabilitation approved by the Supervisory Board;
- 5) Funding of the costs of organization and work of the Occupational Therapy Workshops;
- 6) Funding of the rehabilitation sessions, sport, culture, tourism and recreation of people with disabilities, supply with orthopaedic equipment and auxiliary measures;
- 7) Elaboration and dissemination of training and information materials;
- 8) Funding of construction, expansion and modernization of objects for rehabilitation;
- 9) Funding of removal of architectural, urban and transport barriers in transportation;
- 10) Loaning for disabled people for business start-up;

Various activities taken by non-governmental organizations and local authorities received support from the SFRDP Fund. Initiated in 2003 the European Year of People with Disabilities which continues year after year is organized in a series of programs and competitions for people with disabilities such as 'Żyjmy dłużej' and 'Otwarte drzwi'.

³ 'Polish Government information on activities aiming at implementing the provisions of the Charter of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Warsaw, 4th July 2003.

The aim of those competitions was to attract attention of society to the problems of disabled people and promote the initiative of those with disabilities which are realized by local government units and non-governmental organizations that cooperate with them. The Honorary Committee for the Celebration of the European Year of People with Disabilities with the aim of promoting the idea of people with disabilities has already taken over patronage of 60 undertakings realized by non-governmental organizations, local government units and other institutions.

Among them there were promotional shares presenting for instance possibilities to actively spend free time and exploit own potential. There were competitions such as nationwide contest for 'bank accessible' which promotes access to banks among disabled people and also conferences related to problems of disabled EU citizens, learning opportunities for them, raising the level of their professional qualifications, publications for example bulletins informing about disabled people's rights, events promoting the positive image of people with disabilities and increasing public awareness of the possibilities of fight against discriminatory practices and various sport, art and integrating events.

Functional limitations which are obvious for disabled people constitute an essential barrier often impossible to overcome. That is why any action aimed at lifting these restrictions including those actions leading to provide disabled people with appropriate equipment, technical assistance and specific services and also enable them to make use of their privileges and generally available goods and services, constitute a key to solving many problems, which disabled people face in their daily existence. In majority those problems result of unsatisfactorily good functioning of the Health Services and concern all patients, including those with any disability, however more activity of district self-governments in realization of this activity done with the support of the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled People is necessary.

Another form of social welfare is a possibility for disabled people to participate in occupational therapy workshops. In 2002 creation and operation of the occupational therapy workshops was for the most part funded from resources of the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled People and their participants were mainly people with a considerable degree of disability and in the case of patients with mental disorders or mental impairments with a moderate degree of disability. Regardless of systematic improvement in a situation of disabled people according to statistics only 13% of people with disabilities are professionally active. Lack of employment more often effects that social group.

In our society there are deeply rooted stereotypes related to disability. The majority of society consider disabled people as being in minority and inactive in life, because they are not often seen in schools, offices, public institutions, cinemas and shops. Such thinking of our society causes many information, psychological and architectural barriers. Those barriers limit professional and daily activity of disabled people, which leads to isolation in a society and is a discrimination act. That is why it is necessary to counteract that by informing and educating our society about the problems of people with disabilities. An important thing is to directly reach out disabled people. Those people are very often left alone without adequate knowledge of their rights and obligations.

In conclusion, the majority of non-governmental organizations receive ongoing support. Perhaps grant structure for non-governmental organization should undertake considerable changes. Perhaps in stead of financial assistance from organizations which deal with representation of disabled people it would be better to devolve greater capital outside to organizations which actually wield direct guardianship over disabled people.

REFERENCES

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