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The origins and development of occupational therapy workshops in Poland

Początki i rozwój warsztatów terapii zajęciowej w Polsce

Summary

The paper presents the process of creation and development of occupational therapy workshops in Poland, as well as their role in the rehabilitation of people with disabilities - participants of occupational therapy.

The first occupational therapy workshops were established in Poland in 1992. Occupational therapy workshop is an organizational and financial outpost, creating for people with disabilities who are unable to work the possibility of social and vocational rehabilitation of gaining or regaining the skills necessary for employment. The main goal of occupational therapy is to enable the participants to fully participate in normal life.

After 2006 there has been a marked decline in the number of start-up workshops, which is associated with a reduction in funding of their activities from PFRON's budgetary means to 90% of the cost.

The potential of the workshop in Poland would be used better if there were more vocational development and training centre. The vocational and social rehabilitation of people with disabilities has been statutory supported for twenty. But there was no proposed system for graduates of occupational therapy workshops, which means that only a very small number of them start their careers. But surely the participation in the activities of occupational therapy workshops has a positive influence on the participants, giving them a chance for a place in the society and, therefore, the role of workshops in the rehabilitation treatment in Poland cannot be overestimated.

Key words: occupational therapy workshops, disability, vocational and social rehabilitation, occupational therapy.

Streszczenie

Celem pracy jest przedstawienie procesu powstawania i rozwoju warsztatów terapii zajęciowej w Polsce, jak również ich roli w procesie rewalidacji osób niepełnosprawnych – uczestników terapii zajęciowej.

Pierwsze warsztaty terapii zajęciowej utworzono w Polsce w 1992 roku. Warsztat terapii zajęciowej oznacza wyodrębnioną organizacyjnie i finansowo placówkę, stwarzającą osobom niepełnosprawnym niezdolnym do podjęcia pracy możliwość rehabilitacji społecznej i zawodowej w zakresie pozyskania lub przywrócenia

umiejętności niezbędnych do podjęcia zatrudnienia. Głównym celem terapii zajęciowej jest umożliwienie uczestnikom pełnego udziału w normalnym życiu.

Po 2006 roku nastąpił wyraźny spadek liczby nowo powstałych warsztatów, co jest związane ze zmniejszeniem dofinansowania ich działalności ze środków PFRON do 90% kosztów.

Potencjał warsztatów, byłby lepiej wykorzystany gdyby w Polsce powstało więcej zakładów aktywności zawodowej. Przez dwadzieścia lat ustawowego wspierania rehabilitacji zawodowej i społecznej osób niepełnosprawnych nie doszło do wypracowania systemowej propozycji dla absolwentów warsztatów terapii zajęciowej, co powoduje, że tylko ich znikoma liczba podejmuje rocznie pracę zawodową. Jednak z pewnością uczestnictwo w zajęciach warsztatów terapii zajęciowej pozytywnie wpływa na uczestników, daje im szansę na należne miejsce w społeczeństwie i dlatego roli warsztatów terapii w systemie rehabilitacji w Polsce nie sposób przecenić.

Słowa kluczowe: warsztat terapii zajęciowej, niepełnosprawność, rehabilitacja zawodowa i społeczna, terapia zajęciowa.

Introduction

The Pope John Paul II has repeatedly stressed that it was “persons in any way impaired are particularly entitled to our respect, appreciation and love, and that the physical or mental health does not add or subtract anything from a person, what is more, the suffering can give it special rights against us” (Szostkiewicz 1991, p.100). The right to rehabilitation is certainly one of those special rights.

For years, the number of persons with disabilities in the world is increasing. This trend is also observed in Poland. This multitude of people with disabilities confront the societies with a task to adapt to their specific needs. Adaptation is the duty of every society, and the very important element is the rehabilitation of the disabled.

The paper presents the process of creation and development of occupational therapy workshops in Poland, as well as their role in the rehabilitation of people with disabilities - participants of occupational therapy.

The principle of full participation and equality of persons with disabilities in society can be realized only in the broad sense of rehabilitation. In the light of the Act of 27 August 1997 on the vocational and social rehabilitation of disabled persons (Journal of Laws of 2011, No. 127, item. 721, with further amendments) a rehabilitation of the disabled person is defined by a set of activities such as organizational, medical, psychological, technical, training, educational and social. They are necessary to achieve, with the active participation of disabled the highest possible level of functioning, life quality and social inclusion.

An important form of activity supporting the process of social and vocational rehabilitation in Poland, is the participation of people with disabilities in occupational therapy workshops. The Occupational Therapy Workshops its roots date back to the early 90s. The legal basis for their creation gave Act of 9 May 1991 “on employment and vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities” (Journal of Laws of 1991 No. 46, item. 201), and later the Ordination of Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 8 September 1992 on the creation, operation and financing of occupational therapy workshops (Journal of Laws of 1992, No. 71, item. 357).

The first occupational therapy workshop was established in Poland in 1992. In the early years the objective of these institutions was rehabilitation aimed at overall development of each participant, improvement of personal resourcefulness, psycho-social functioning and social adaptation (social inclusion). Therapy workshops functioned as a form of social rehabilitation. The source of funding was National Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled.

Discussion

The intention of the legislature was to organize occupational therapy workshops by sheltered work facility, which was meant to provide comprehensive rehabilitation through the close relationship of social rehabilitation of the disabled with an economic operator. The selection of participants for the workshops were made taking into account the abilities and negotiations in the rehabilitation process for regaining the ability to work. Despite the statutory requirement, only part of the sheltered work facility established occupational therapy workshops, but it started to grow much interest in this form of social rehabilitation of other actors, especially non - governmental.

Despite the fact that foundations of the system of rehabilitation in 1991 was assumed that the main initiators of the creation of therapy workshops would be sheltered work facility the 2008 structure units of the workshop was as follows:

- non-governmental organization - 65.3%
- local government (municipality, district) - 10.4%
- establishment of a social assistance - 7.6%
- religious organization - 6.3%
- sheltered work facility - 5.2%
- educational institution - 1.3%
- the employer open labor market - 0.9%
- health care facility - 0.4%
- another entity - 1.3% (Analiza ..., 2009).

The principles and objectives of the workshop began to undergo a significant change. According to the Ordination of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 30 September 2002 (Journal of Laws No. 167, item 2002 position 1376) occupational therapy workshop were to carry out tasks not only in the field of social rehabilitation and employment but aimed at the overall development and improvement of people with disabilities, including the increased workshop orientation for preparation of participants for work. Currently, the detailed rules for the operation of occupational therapy workshops are contained in the Act of 27 August 1997, “the vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, as amended (Journal of Laws of 2011, Nr.127,) and by the Ordination of the Minister of economy, Labour and Social Policy of 25 March 2004 on “Occupational Therapy Workshops” (Journal of Laws of 2004. No. 63). Occupational therapy workshop is organisationally and financially separate facility causing the disabled and unable to work the possibility of social and vocational rehabilitation for raising or restoring skills necessary for employment. (Ar.10a.paragraph 1 of the Act of August 27, 1997 “for vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of persons

with disabilities, as amended Acts. Laws of 2011, Nr.127). The workshops are day care centres, the duration of activities in the workshop is not longer than 7 hours per day and 35 hours a week. The activity of the workshop is non-profit. The income derived from the sale of products resulting from the work done by the participants during the course is allocated to cover the expenses related to their social integration. The workshops implement projects aimed at personal resourcefulness, stimulate the activity in a group and the ability to shape social roles. (Sobczyk, Sobótka 2011 p.46).

According to the article 10 section 3 of the mentioned above Act, treatment is carried out on the basis of an individual rehabilitation program, which defines;

- 1) form of rehabilitation
- 2) the scope of rehabilitation
- 3) the method and extent of learning ability to perform activities of daily living and personal resourcefulness as well as mental and physical fitness, and basic and specialized skills that enable participation in vocational training or work
- 4) cooperation with the family or carers
- 5) the planned effects of rehabilitation
- 6) the responsible for the implementation of the rehabilitation program.

The program committee consisting of workshop manager and experts ensure the correctness of rehabilitation process and implementation of the objectives of therapeutic workshop (Article 10 paragraph 4 of the mentioned Act).

The program committee not less frequently than once every three years make a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of individual rehabilitation programs among participants, providing indications for the possible extension of the participation in the workshop, taking jobs or directing to appropriate support centre. The program committee of workshop individually qualify the participants considering their interests and abilities to determine the conduct with each participant. The therapy is conducted using appropriate methods of work, forms of activities and ways of their implementation in accordance with the main principles of working with people with disabilities.

A wide range of methods and techniques of occupational therapy can help you reach all of the participants, allowing them to express themselves, develop individual interests and talents, and also by reducing dependence on others, acknowledge their own usefulness. The basis of efficacy is primarily regularity of sessions, active participation of all participants and their subjective treatment (Kott 2002). Occupational therapy is a comprehensive intervention that focuses on enabling the beneficiaries (clients) to achieve a satisfactory level of functioning (Rogers 2005).

One of the form of rehabilitation is the occupational therapy – healing with work, performance, creativity. The main goal of occupational therapy is to enable participants to participate fully in normal life. The starting point is - the assumption that dealing with something meaningful improves mental and physical condition of a human, which is easier for them to return “to the society”. The aim of occupational therapy is to help achieve the maximum level of functional independence, higher levels of self-esteem through the development of skills, which level was reduced as a result of illness, accident or disability. (Perrin 2005). An important part of rehabilitation training workshop is the implementation of economical training, aimed at spending money, performing simple

math, counting the change, planning, purchasing products or items needed so they can make their own choices and manage means of payment. The participants may receive funding intended for the training in the amount not exceeding 20% of the minimum wage. The psychotherapy classes and physical rehabilitation, as well as activities in the field of culture, tourism and leisure are crucial in the whole process of rehabilitation.

The workshop participants may be legally persons with significant or moderate disability and they have to own a certificate of disability: an indication for occupational therapy.

The analysis of the activities of occupational therapy workshops conducted in 2008 shows that the main type of dysfunction occurring among participants were mental retardation, almost one-fifth are mental illnesses and the third in turn is musculoskeletal disorder (Fig. 1).

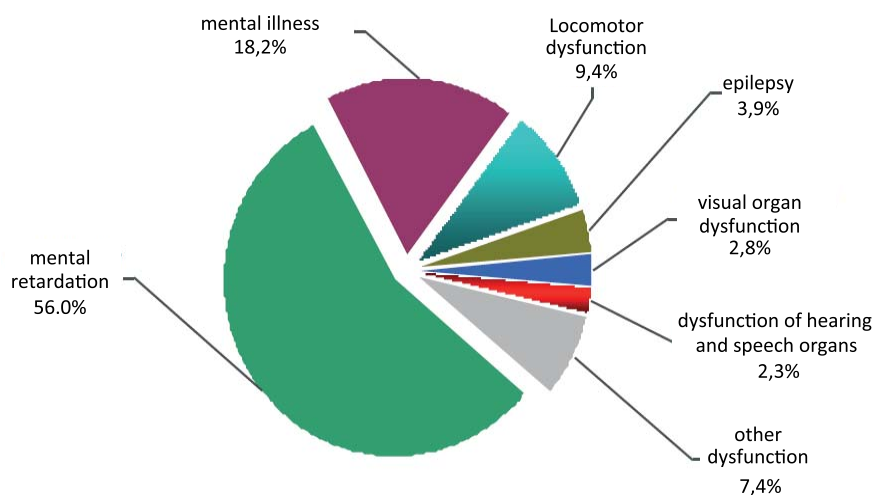
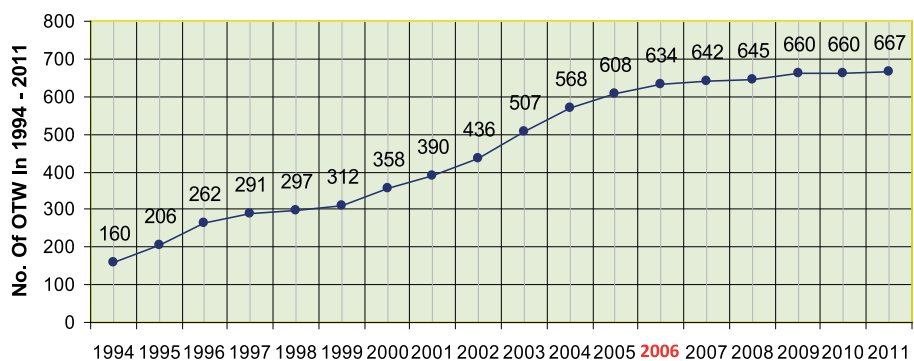


Fig. 1 The main type of dysfunction of participants occupational therapy workshops

Expenses, operations and costs resulting from an increase in the number of participants, are co-funded by National Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled (PFRON) and by the local government or other sources, which means solidarity in bearing the costs of development and operation of a workshop by PFRON and local governments. The procedure for the transfer of funds to the workshop stems from the ordinance of Council of Ministers of 13 May 2003 based on the algorithm of PFRON transfer to provincial and district governments (Journal of Laws No. 88, item. 808, as amended.). In accordance with Art. 68c. Act of August 27, 1997 for social and vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, as amended, the maximum grant from the PFRON operating expenses in 2006 amounted to - 100% of these costs, in 2007 - 95%, in 2008 and beyond the maximum grant from the Rehabilitation Fund, set at 90% of these

costs. Changes in the funding resulted, inter alia, the decentralization of tasks of public administration and local government willingness to engage in financing activities of the workshop, however, led to a significant reduction in the growth rate of the number of workshops in Poland after 2006.



Dynamics of changes in the number of OTW In 1994 - 2011

Fig. 2 Number of OTW between 1994 and 2011

(Source: based on PFRON data)

Presented in Fig. 2 and Tab. 1, the dynamics of changes in the number of workshops, shows a clear decline in growth after 2006, which was the last year in which PFRON 100% financed the activities of these institutions. In March 2013, according to data contained in the database of occupational therapy workshops, created under the project “Support Centre for Social Economy” carried out by the Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives - Economic, have been 685 workshops. It can be assumed that in the coming years with the current legal environment, the falling trend of increase in the number of newly created workshop will be maintained.

Tab. 1 Number of OTW between 1994 and 2011

L. p.	YEAR	Workshops	
		No.	increase in %
1.	1994	160	0,0
2.	1995	206	28,8
3.	1996	262	27,2
4.	1997	291	11,1
5.	1998	297	2,1
6.	1999	312	5,1
7.	2000	358	14,7
8.	2001	390	8,9
9.	2002	436	11,8
10.	2003	507	16,3
11.	2004	568	12,0
12.	2005	608	7,0
13.	2006	634	4,2
14.	2007	642	1,1
15.	2008	645	0,5
16.	2009	660	2,3
17.	2010	660	0,0
18.	2011	667	1,1

Sources:

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2. Audit Report on the Occupational Therapy Workshops. Comparative analysis of research conducted in 2003 and 2005 PFRON, Warsaw 2008
3. The analysis of occupational therapy workshops in 2008, the INDICATOR Marketing Research, Warsaw 2009.

Today, occupational rehabilitation system in Poland consists of four different roles, but mutually complementary elements:

- occupational therapy workshops (OTW),
- work inclusion institution (ZAZ),
- sheltered work facility (ZPCh),
- employer's open market operation (ORP).

The idea of complementarity of the system lies in the fact that each of its components should fulfil a different role in the rehabilitation process, and at the same time should be followed by "flow" of people with disabilities in the position of people at risk of social exclusion through different parts of the system, ie, OTW, ZAZ, ZPCh, until open labor market and full society integration (Majewski et al. 2007). At the core of this system is rehabilitation of people with disabilities, aiming to raise by them or restore them with the skills necessary for employment.

Occupational therapy workshops represent the type of social economy in which economic activity occurs, but it is rather marginal and is just one of the tools of rehabilitation of participants, the work for them has to be only one of the proposed forms of therapy. Certainly for people with disabilities the most important thing is the ability to take up paid work, but therapy workshops have no effect on a plan for its participants, the entity determines the potential hiring. Work inclusion institutions that had been the hope of finding work by graduates of occupational therapy workshops, but in practice did not meet expectations in due to the very low amount thereof, in late 2011, they operated only at no. of 65. This is because the creation and maintenance of ZAZ generates considerable costs, inadequate for the number of jobs, which in turn causes little interest in local development of these institutions. Unfortunately, over for 20 years of legal support professional and social rehabilitation of people with disabilities, we have not worked out the system proposed “sequel” to the participants of occupational therapy, which means that only the small number (less than 2%) take the job (Sobczyk, Sobótka 2011).

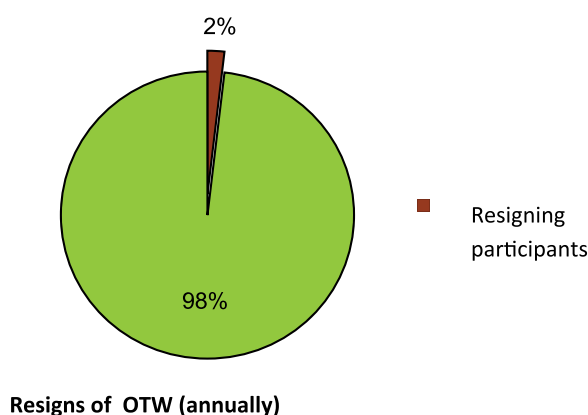


Fig. 3 The participants annually completing occupational therapy workshop – undertaking employment

Taking the index of number of workshop participants who undertook paid work, as a criterion for assessing the effectiveness of the rehabilitation process in the workshops, which often happens is biased, because this form of mobilization of people with disabilities is not provided with adequate legal instruments that would facilitate finding employment for people with disabilities, after a period of revalidation workshops. To increase efficiency in the field of occupational rehabilitation, you can refer to good practice in this area in the European Union.

An alternative to the low number of occupational therapy workshops created in Poland, may be increasing number of social cooperatives. The social cooperative combines the features of cooperative work and non-governmental charitable organization. It operates a two-fold:

- social - through vocational and social reintegration of its members,
- economical - by conducting business on the basis of joint work, the activities are subject to a non profit.

This attribute, which consists of combining the social and economical function causes that social cooperative becomes legally very attractive entity, from the point of view of social and vocational rehabilitation of people with disabilities, which on a large scale should be used in the process (Sobczyk, Sobótka 2011).

It also remains to be hoped that social cooperatives are an alternative to work inclusion institutions and in the future will become another important link in the process of hiring people with disabilities, graduate occupational therapy workshops, you should rely on their development. It would be desirable occurrence if the social cooperatives, became the place of implementation of the next phase of rehabilitation participants associated with the adoption of their employment.

We have had 20 years of creating and operating work of therapy workshops, centres to support the rehabilitation process in Poland. Workshops adjusting therapy and education targeted at people with disabilities, according to their individual needs, meet the law's people, to all-round development. The participation of people with disabilities in classes workshops for them is an important form of activity, increasing their sense of self-worth and usefulness, they can find their place in life and their rightful place in society.

"Nothing twice will happen," as Wislawa Szymborska wrote, and the past 20 years is yet history, we can still believe that next years will be fruitful and not without hope, for occupational therapy workshops, educational places yet so deeply rooted in the system of social rehabilitation and employment in Poland.

Results

1. Assumptions of social policy for people with disabilities in Poland, moving towards a comprehensive approach, taking into account their needs, physical, mental, social, inclusive.
2. Occupational therapy workshops by realizing the tasks related to social and vocational rehabilitation aimed at overall development and improvement of the efficiency necessary for the disabled person to an independent, autonomous and active life, have become an important link in the system of rehabilitation in Poland.
3. The potential of the workshop, it would be better used if the creation of a larger number of work inclusion institutions have increase.
4. Lack of system solutions on the proposal for graduates of therapy workshops allowing them to take up employment after a period of rehabilitation in workshops, makes only a small number of them find their place in a very difficult job market.
5. Workshops adjusting therapy and education targeted at people with disabilities, according to their individual needs, meet the law of the persons to comprehensive development.
6. Therapy workshops for the past twenty years of functioning in the area of rehabilitation of the disabled, have gained immense potential operators effectively in the social integration of people with disabilities.
7. Participation in the activities of occupational therapy workshops has a positive impact on participants, meet the need for acceptance, increase their self-esteem and utilities, rehabilitation and develop their interest in the creative possibilities it gives them a chance to achieve rightful place in society.
8. In the future social cooperatives are likely to become the next important link in the process of hiring graduates of occupational therapy workshops.

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