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Interinstitutional support and deinstitutionalization of social services for individuals with disabilities as a context for inclusive education

Abstract

The article shows two seemingly contradictory trends in the organization of social services for people with disabilities: strengthening and improving the functioning of institutions that provide support through interinstitutional cooperation and deinstitutionalization of these services, considered a priority in the social policy. However, they do not have to be treated as mutually exclusive. The aim of the article is to familiarize educators with the concept and assumptions of the deinstitutionalization process – which is poorly recognized in the educational environment, and the complementary (and, contrary to appearances, not contradictory) processes of (neo)institutionalization and reinstitutionalization. Although deinstitutionalization does not directly concern the educational sector, it is considered both a goal and a means of contemporary social policies, shaping the realities of community support for students with disabilities as well as for schools implementing inclusive education. The article presents innovative solutions that combine in cooperation institutions and formal and informal support (Support Circles / School in Support Circles, 3D Cooperation, Intersectoral Support Model).

Keywords: social support, inclusion, cooperation, deinstitutionalization, normalization.

Introduction

The inspiration to write this article was the nationwide project "Intersectoral Support Model" (*pol.* Model Wsparcia Międzysektorowego – MWM), coordinated by the University of Silesia (https://mwm.us.edu.pl/), which develops new solutions for providing social support to children and youth at risk of developmental issues, as well as their families. The project seems crucial for the further development of inclusive education in Poland for many reasons, but primarily for its practical application of the principle that inclusive education cannot be considered without a vision of a broader, inclusive society. This is understood as a direction of transition through inclusive education towards a more inclusive society (NCSE, 2024), but also as the utilization of social inclusive mechanisms and institutions to support schools in meeting the diverse needs of students. In practice, *"a school is not a 'lonely island' on the local map of institutions and its problems - e.g. attempts to meet the challenges related to inclusive education - should and can be solved based on support obtained from local resources"* (Jachimczak and Podgórska-Jachnik, 2023, p.75). The MWM project aimed, among other things, to better utilize the potential of aid institutions operating within various government departments and sectors by creating conditions for their functional connections, i.e., interinstitutional cooperation to support children with diverse developmental and educational needs and their families.

In recent years, there have been attempts to join forces in supporting people at risk of social exclusion, including: people with disabilities, which is expressed, among others, in the popularity of concepts such as "support networks", "support circles", or more broadly: "supportive environment". This brings closer the functional connections of special pedagogy with social pedagogy, which has long been dealing with the relationship between the individual and the environment and its impact on human development. What is also appreciated - following the Polish pioneer of this topic, Helena Radlińska - is the possibility of pedagogically shaping this environment so that it serves people best, in accordance with the adopted values and educational concepts (Witkowski, 2014). Aiming to better shape this environment, taking into account the needs of people and groups at risk of social exclusion, educators and representatives of other professions that offer psychosocial support strive to use the best mechanisms and practices of professionalization and institutionalization of support. However, they encounter a certain trend that seems to be directed in the opposite direction: the idea and process of deinstitutionalization, concerning, among others, the method of providing support to people with disabilities. Moreover, deinstitutionalization is considered a priority in contemporary social policies, and even a certain mechanism of real pressure, which results, for example, in the inability to finance projects strengthening institutions when the programs are intended to develop

non-institutional alternatives (e.g. developing community care services instead of co-financing nursing homes). This apparent - according to the author - clash creates space for reflection also on the theoretical and practical aspects of in-clusive practices.

Combining the Efforts and Activities of Aid Institutions and (New) Institutionalism

The search for model solutions in the field of interdepartmental, intersectoral and interinstitutional activities is also visible as a trend in social policy in recent years. The formal basis for such solutions lies in the implementation of depart-mental guidelines and obligations arising from the applicable laws. However, the context of this trend is much broader, as it is an increasingly desirable response to the so-called phenomenon of siloing in addressing social problems, which leads to the disorganization of support and inefficient use of existing resources.

The concept of institution itself is multifaceted and defined in various ways in law, political science, economics, anthropology and sociology. The most gen-eral dictionary definition is *"an organization established on the basis of some regulations to conduct specific activities"* (*Wielki Słownik Języka Polskiego*, s.a.), which indicates the formal and legal nature of the institution. Institutions that provide support and assistance to people with disabilities covered by this article are usually established to solve certain precisely defined matters, e.g. those re-lated only to health, economic, legal, educational, vocational rehabilitation, em-ployment problems, and problems with support in daily activities, everyday life, in educational difficulties, in preventing violence, etc. This list can be extended further, and in practice it means that people with disabilities and their families often find themselves in so-called multi-problem situations that are complex and unique in their complexity. It is rarely possible to receive help in such situations from a single place (one institution), and the scale of needs in this regard is very large, often with social expectations exceeding the capacity to meet them.

Combining efforts and activities of aid institutions is a manifestation of ra-tionalization of the use of social resources in the field of social support. Cooper-ation of aid institutions in response to real problems of the environment and unmet needs of people and groups falls within the research area of the so-called new institutionalism (Bodnieks, 2020) - especially in terms of the rational choice theory (issues of interdependence and effective cooperation - Immergut, 1998) and sociological institutionalism (analysis of the impact of institutions on indi-vidual causal entities - Hall and Taylor, 1996). New institutionalism is an area of interdisciplinary social studies (mainly with the participation of researchers in political science, economics, organizational behaviour and sociology), with dif-

ferent theoretical inspirations and different methodologies, but with a common denominator: interest in the role of institutions in social, economic and political processes (Pieliński, 2013). The inevitable interpenetration of these processes results in increased interest in managerial institutional logic also in the area of education and social welfare, in creating space for social inclusion.

A broad definition of institutional logics defines "socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and principles by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality" (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008: p. 101). According to the authors, the perspective of institutional logics allows for conducting research into the changes, complexity and variability of institutional practices. But it seems that the opposite is also true: the perspective of broadly understood social change allows us to search for new patterns of institutional logics (action models) for the implementation of new ideas, concepts, social policies (various forms of macro pressure). The implementation of the idea of social inclusion seeks such logics and the possibility of improving the existing institutions and their cooperative practices, and neo-institutionalism may be a source of inspiration in this regard.

New social concepts, new ideas - including inclusive education and the broader inclusion movement in society - also require new institutions: new mechanisms for achieving goals and effectively meeting the needs of the community; new organizations based on new institutional logics. This requires going beyond what is commonly associated with the institution as a public establishment. The above definition of an institution is so ambiguous that it may indicate institutions that may have different sources of legitimacy, power and identity; their size and degree of formalization vary; various bases of norms, strategies, internal organization; various mechanisms of economic control and reinforcement, etc. (Powell and Bromley, 2015). Thornton, Ocasio and Lounsbury (2012) mention in this context six social meta-institutions that are completely different in nature. These are: the market, the corporation (enterprise), jobs (professions), the state (with its offices), family and religions (religious organizations). Referring to this set is essential for understanding how various entities can be considered institutions. In the context of further considerations on deinstitutionalization, particular attention is given to the family (nuclear family, including marriage) as legally sanctioned forms of institutions. Additionally, it seems that this need not be an exhaustive list. Each social sector is characterized by a distinct, specific logic that shapes its material practices and organizational forms, which crystallize into various institutional forms (Powell and Bromley, 2015). Some of these may eventually reach the level of metainstitutions (e.g., non-governmental organizations).

Therefore, if we treat institutions very broadly, as specific management structures, their emergence - including completely new models and categories of institutions - is a manifestation of the community's responsiveness to its own needs in a changing world, which is aptly reflected in the words of Marek Krajewski:

> Institutionalization is the addition of importance and burden on actions that might otherwise not survive. Institutionalization is therefore a social decision to let a phenomenon live, enables it to be embedded in the world, and allows it to maintain its continuity and duration. In this way, mutual reinforcement occurs: society adds meaning to the phenomenon through its institutionalization, and the strengthened phenomenon begins to have an even greater impact on society, becoming a point of reference, an azimuth when making choices, a context for the questions asked, and finally - a model (Krajewski, 2020, pp. 5-6).

Institutionalization is, therefore, primarily *"the social consolidation of a value, a fact, a custom important for the survival and development of a given community"* (Słownik Języka Polskiego, 1997-2024). Institutionalization is, therefore, primarily "the social consolidation of a value, a fact, a custom important for the survival and development of a given community" (Dictionary of the Polish Language, 1997-2024). This process progresses, according to Olsen, in three dimensions: 1) through increasing clarity and agreement on rules of conduct; 2) through a strengthening consensus in describing, explaining, and justifying emerging principles; 3) through an increasing number of shared concepts of what is considered a resource in various environments and who should have access to and control over them (Olsen, 2010, p. 127). Institutionalization is a rational and socially important process, which cannot be forgotten when considering the opposite process – namely, deinstitutionalization.

Deinstitutionalization and normalization

On the other hand, deinstitutionalization is an idea that sets the direction for the development of social services, implemented in the contemporary social policies of European Union countries (Šiška and Beadle-Brown, 2020), including in Poland. Deinstitutionalization is considered the third Great Change in contemporary social policy—following decentralization and partial demonopolization (Grewiński, Lizut, and Rabiej, 2024). However, many questions and misunderstandings have arisen around this concept, as it is commonly interpreted literally as a mandate to eliminate institutions, or at least as a process that negatively values institutionalization.

The prefix "*de-*" merely indicates an opposite – in this case, it points to two opposing processes: institutionalization vs. deinstitutionalization. Neither is di-

rectly evaluated semantically as better or worse. However, describing deinstitutionalization as a desirable direction in social policy development evaluates it positively, simultaneously attributing a negative value to the opposing process: institutionalization, and consequently, to institutions themselves. In reality, there is nothing inherently wrong with institutions (which does not mean that bad institutions cannot exist). Institutions should be viewed as products of collective wisdom, instruments for creating a certain social order, regulations, predictability, and the potential for efficient collective action. The current and developing concept of institutionalism in social sciences also attests to the fundamental importance of institutions for the functioning of societies (Krakowiak-Drzewiecka, 2017).

The idea of deinstitutionalization is embedded in humanistic values and the premises of human rights, especially those regarding equality and quality of life. It results from the belief that a person's family and immediate environment should be the place to live and satisfy most of their needs. And although institutions – which are a common and natural element of the organization of society in the understanding of modern man - were created to respond more efficiently and effectively to the needs of groups and individuals, an excess of institutions (excessive institutionalization of life) can also pose a certain threat to their functioning.

According to the assumptions of the polish national *Strategy for the development of social services (2022, p. 9)*, deinstitutionalization means

> the development of community services in the place of residence so that they provide the most friendly and optimal conditions for meeting the needs of people in need of support, including: people with disabilities, but also older people, families and children and young people in foster care, people with mental health problems and in the crisis of homelessness.

Moreover, the *Strategy* itself, citing European Union guidelines, recommends avoiding the use of the term deinstitutionalization wherever possible, precisely in order to avoid misunderstandings: the goal of deinstitutionalization is not to close facilities, establishments or other institutions, but to rationally create alternatives to them. This also includes changes in the relationships between institutions.

It is worth emphasizing here that from the point of view of pedagogy, including special education, the guidelines mentioned make room for a completely different term, leading to similar effects of bringing support closer to the natural environment of people with disabilities, without using the word deinstitutionalization. For a special educator, a much more important theoretical and practical framework is the concept of normalization, promoting the exit of weaker social groups (including people with disabilities) from multi-person care and rehabilitation institutions (including "special" institutions established intentionally for

the rehabilitation of these people, such as occupational therapy workshops, sheltered workshops, etc.). Normalization is about enabling people with disabilities to live outside institutions, in the community; it is about supporting their independence and autonomy to the greatest extent possible (Krause, 2010; Żółkowska, 2011).

Special educators themselves also notice the limitations of current normalization practices, treating this concept more as a maintained direction of change than a fully crystallized model of action. Teresa Żółkowska points to many dimensions of normalization: normalization of the course, style and conditions of life, normalization through adapted professional tasks (making work work, and not rehabilitation), and finally normalization of life in the community, i.e. actual and full inclusion. Unfortunately, it is in this last area that the author sees barriers to participation that are difficult to overcome, contributing to the creation of subcultures, i.e. what can be called "glass walls" separating people with disabilities from the rest of society. Żółkowska (2011, p. 88) calls normalization an "unfinished theory of practice" for this reason. This does not devalue the idea of normalization itself, but constitutes a challenge for further exploration, also taking into account new trends in social theory and inclusive practices. Deinstitutionalization can be considered as such, in its dimension of bringing support closer to the living environment – or rather building it or even extracting it from the living environment. It is impossible to practice support for people with disabilities today without delving into the assumptions of deinstitutionalization, both in theoretical (logic of social change) and practical aspect (knowledge of the assumptions of the national *Strategy for the Development of Social Services* and the resulting regional policies, such as the *Regional Plan of development of social services and deinstitutionalization for the Łódź Voivodeship for 2023–2025*).

In this respect, normalization and deinstitutionalization remain convergent, with the additional advantage of normalization as a concept built on positive logic (direction: towards). However, at the semantic level, deinstitutionalization contains this negative logic (direction: from), which may lead to the already mentioned false conclusions about the need to liquidate aid and support institutions.

On the other hand, a whole spectrum of negative effects of excessive institutionalization can also be demonstrated: from mental discomfort of people and their loss in the world of institutions - through formal and legal barriers to access to the services they offer (bureaucratization, exclusion, alienation) – to excessive and even full control of people subordinated to institutions, they become the living environment, i.e. the so-called total institutions can take over every sphere of a person's life, which has a devastating impact on their sense of autonomy and overall mental well-being (Goffman, 2011).

The totality of institutions can be an unintended side effect of an institution's activity in organizing the lives of individuals, such as in the case of the need to provide long-term, around-the-clock care. However, there can also be institutions established as intentional tools of control and power (Foucault, 2020). We assume positive intentions behind the establishment of care and rehabilitation institutions, but the threat (tendency?) of their totalization is also an argument for distinguishing between good institutions (those that adequately meet the needs of individuals and communities) and bad ones (those that fail to meet these needs properly and/or cause additional harm, disproportionately high compared to the benefits received by the beneficiaries).

Deinstitutionalization, reinstitutionalization and neoinstitutionalization - in search of model cooperative solutions to support people with disabilities and their families

How to transform support institutions for people with disabilities into the "good" ones? Those that will function in accordance with the mission of inclusion? Marek Kwiek rightly points out that changes of or in the institution should be looked at by combining three processes: institutionalization, deinstitutionalization and reinstitutionalization.

> Kwiek understands the process of deinstitutionalization differently from the previously defined concept of community-based services, which makes sense in the context of social services but not necessarily in relation to other institutions. The author considers deinstitutionalization (Oliver, 1992, by: Kwiek, 2015, pp. 46-47) as a process of disintegration, erosion, abandonment, and, in extreme cases, delegitimization of the legitimacy of the established and institutionalized organizational practice. Therefore, for him it is actually the opposite process to the process of institutionalization.

This last process is for him „transformation from one order into another, constituted on different normative and organizational principles" (Olsen, 2010, p. 128, by Kwiek, 2015, p. 47) and this transformation concerns those areas / processes that may lead to the weakening and disappearance of the institution, the loss of the ability to implement its mission and tasks. We can therefore say that reinstitutionalization is a certain improving or repairing element - a transformation within a changing institution.

However, transferring the concept of reinstitutionalization to the area of earlier considerations on the development of social services, this concept can be treated in three ways: 1) as an internal change of an institution that follows the designated directions of social policy (e.g. reducing the size of nursing homes, personalizing support plans, increasing the autonomy of people using the facility), 2) external change (e.g. opening of facilities to the environment,

new forms of cooperation with other institutions, co-production of services, sharing of resources, new models of cooperation and coordination of activities, creation of networks of cooperation and support), 3) emergence of new institutions (may coincide with the neo-institutionalization process). It is most difficult to talk about internal change at a high level of generality, because it always concerns the transformation of a specific facility in a specific social context, in a diagnosed area of its imperfections. The two remaining forms will be discussed based on national diagnostic research and examples of two model cooperative projects (including the Intersectoral Support Model mentioned at the beginning).

A nationwide diagnosis of the deinstitutionalization of social services shows that, both globally and regionally, we are not yet fully ready for deinstitutionalization (Grewiński et al., 2024). In the most important findings concerning the deinstitutionalization of services for people with disabilities (this is only one of the six areas in the report), it is noted that one in three people with disabilities (33%) currently residing in institutions could (already now) live outside them, leading a relatively independent life. However, the obstacles are: little widespread knowledge about deinstitutionalization; low readiness of local governments for this process of change; lack of coordination of services for people with disabilities, low intersectoral character (lack of developed model solutions for such cooperation), ineffective use of the potential of institutions (although it is emphasized that they still have unused support resources), lack of change leaders in institutions and local government units (Grewiński et al., 2024, p. 22 et al.).

The report contains a number of detailed results, analyses, observations, conclusions and recommendations, which should become a direct basis for designing future social services, including for people with disabilities (in the author's opinion: a must-read for educators - especially special educators, social workers, local government employees, including people with disabilities themselves). The most complete picture of the current state of affairs in this regard is provided by this description:

> Services for people with disabilities (…) resemble a thicket in which it is difficult to find paths leading to independence. Support recipients and their families expect services in the community (often emphasizing the need for independence and dignified treatment), and institutions have the potential to provide them. The biggest challenge seems to be combining services into packages and long-term planning and coordination of support. Deinstitutionalization creates a unique opportunity to redefine the method and scope of institution operation, as well as to release the potential of the community (empowerment) (Grewiński et al., 2024, p. 230).

The above quote shows that deinstitutionalization becomes a strategic framework to be filled by new, alternative forms of institutional (co-)operation and - although it sounds like an oxymoron - also by a certain type of institutionalization. The authors call this neoinstitutional practices and define them as "the

actions of practitioners, professionals in social welfare, whose activities in the community imitate the practices used in institutions" (Grewiński et al., 2024, p. 367). The word "imitate" can be interpreted so that for the authors, the institutionalization of activities does not immediately transform the environment into an institution, but introduces institutional logic into its activities, which allows for better use of its resources and better and more effective organization of support. They are also aware (supported by research results) that they cannot and do not have to give up the existing resources of the institution (and the institutions themselves), but they should be rationally transformed to better fulfil their mission. And this is in line with the spirit of deinstitutionalization. Therefore, reinstitutionalization, as a partial process, is also included in the broadly understood trend of deinstitutionalization, or at least it is not inconsistent with it. It is rather complementary, perhaps temporary, but this will be determined primarily by the development of a valuable and attractive alternative. The reinstitutionalization process was recognized in the report as

> the process of transforming large, closed institutions into smaller institutions that are more open to community activities, including those combining various forms of activities; or a situation in which, after initial deinstitutionalization, support recipients find themselves in institutional forms of support again because the deinstitutionalization process did not ensure the durability of support or was not carried out properly (support in the community was insufficient or inadequate (Grewiński et al., 2024, p. 367).

An example of new solutions (neo-institutionalization) may be a model activity in the form of creating "support circles", which are an excellent example of services shifted towards the community (deinstitutionalized vide: Jordan at all, 2024). A solution that was included in the national *Strategy for People with Disabilities 2021-2030* and the national *Strategy for the Development of Social Services* as a promoted example of deinstitutionalized activities. At the same time, Support Circles imitate organizational logic. Support Circles is

> an activity aimed at creating personal networks of interpersonal relationships for people with intellectual disabilities in their immediate living environment and an example of activities supporting the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and their "safe future" (Żyta 2022).

They are undoubtedly an exemplary form of activating the immediate environment of people with disabilities, but also incorporating the potential of local aid institutions (reinstitutionalization as part of the transformation in the cooperation model). The principle of the model is to combine elements of informal and formal support, which also requires preparation of institutions in the area of the latter. For inclusive education, the School Model in Support Circles (s.a.) is undoubtedly the most important, as an innovative solution for all schools in Poland.

> School in Circles of Support is an institution that brings out the talents and strengths of students, cooperates in partnership with parents and is involved and connected with the local community. The main assumption is student-centered planning and work on the resources and potentials of: the student, family, school and local community (…). It is extremely important to develop a model of community support for children and young people that will provide a basis for full participation in the life of the community in the future (https://kregiwsparcia.pl/szkola-w-kregach-2/).

Finally, here are the two announced models of nationwide cooperative projects aimed at increasing the potential and effectiveness of existing institutions through the co-production of services and resource sharing. These projects have similar goals, a partially overlapping group of beneficiaries (children and youth in early development support and inclusive education, as well as their families), and comparable, though different, methods of operation. They were implemented by two different government departments with the same intention of developing systemic solutions. Examples of these are:

— 3D Cooperation project - a model of multisectoral cooperation to support individuals and families, initiated by the Social Policy Department (Models of Cooperations, 2021)
— Intersectoral Support Model (https://mwm.us.edu.pl/).

The most important elements of both projects / models are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
Comparison of the assumptions of interinstitutional cooperation projects in the field of supporting children and families in local communities.

Main assumptions of the cooperation project and model	Project	
	3D Cooperation	**Intersectoral Support Model**
Project initiator / principal	Social Welfare Department: Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy	Education Department: Ministry of Education
Implementation period	2017–2021	2022–2024
Implementers – authors of the cooperation model	Three macro-regional teams of experts from Regional Centres for Social Policy for developing a model for three types of communes: rural, urban-rural and urban (over 20,000 inhabitants)	Consortium of five universities coordinated by the University of Silesia, with the participation of supporting experts (developing a model for poviats and supporting poviats in its implementation)
Institutions implementing / testing the model	Social welfare organizational units from 151 communes and poviats in 15 voivodeships	Local government units of 36 poviats from all over Poland (14 voivodeships) in which Specialized Support Centres for Inclusive Education were established

Table 1.
Comparison of the assumptions… (cont.)

Main assumptions of the cooperation project and model	Project	
	3D Cooperation	Intersectoral Support Model
Project goal	Better use of local support resources and effective co-creation (co-production) of social services for individuals and families (including multi-problem families, including those with children with special developmental or educational needs)	Increasing the quality and effectiveness of coordinated, intersectoral support provided to children, students and their families and the environment in which they function at the local (poviat) level.
The main assumption of the basis of cooperation	Building local support networks	
	Creating frameworks and tools for cooperation for individuals and families in three dimensions (3D): 1) between institutions from different departments (interdepartmental cooperation), 2) between entities from various sectors, including the NGO sector (intersectoral cooperation), 3) at various levels of local government organization: commune, poviat, voivodeship	Effective use of local support resources and improving the quality of locally provided intersectoral assistance for children, students and families based on the functional assessment methodology using the ICF classification
Who receives support?	Individuals and families, including the so-called multi-problem ones, including with children with disabilities / special developmental or educational needs	Children (early development support), students (with diverse educational needs) and their families and the environment in which they live (including a kindergarten or school offering inclusive education)
Strategic pillar of cooperation (entity ensuring cooperation)	- Partner Cooperation Team - Voivodeship Cooperation Team	- Poviat Resource Coordination Centre
Operational pillar of cooperation (case support coordination)	- Task Cooperation Teams	- Coordinating Institution (selected unit of the education system, e.g. psychological and pedagogical counselling centre, or social welfare system, e.g. Poviat Family Assistance Centre) - Specialist Support Teams
Material pillar of cooperation (resources)	Local services baskets	Local resource maps
Project website	https://3d.rops-kato-wice.pl/model-kooperacje-3d/	https://mwm.us.edu.pl/

Source: own research based on own materials and project websites: https://3d.rops-kato-wice.pl/model-kooperacje-3d/ and https://mwm.us.edu.pl/.

Both presented projects are an example of introducing institutional logic into the cooperation model but retain the idea of deinstitutionalization. In each of these models there is a place for a school implementing inclusive education, so it is worth getting acquainted with the detailed solutions since they may constitute practical guidelines for organizing support in specific cases of children (in the work of the Coordinating Institutions in poviats in the Intersectoral Support Model, among others, were also used experiences and tools from the 3D Cooperation Model).

Conclusion

Poland is still looking for solutions that improve support for people with disabilities, combining the assumptions of inclusion (normalization) and deinstitutionalization. In terms of building a support system for people with disabilities, two trends have emerged: expansion of interinstitutional cooperation and deinstitutionalization. The latter tendency is largely consistent with the concept of normalization developed in special education. In light of the European Union's guidelines on limiting the challenging and often misunderstood concept of "deinstitutionalization," it is worth promoting the use of the term "normalization", but after including the developed assumptions of the process of deinstitutionalization of social services into this discourse. In fact, this is already happening - the concept of deinstitutionalization has already emerged in the field of special education. Both terms should strengthen inclusive education conceptually and in terms of real support for schools.

Strengthening institutional cooperation, including support institutions, may seem contradictory to the idea of deinstitutionalization, making institutions appear outdated. However, this is only an apparent contradiction since institutions still hold valuable resources for supporting people with disabilities and their families. Creating partnerships and inter-institutional networks arises from the pragmatics of resource management, allowing for the optimization of access to social service resources. Deinstitutionalization of social services is a value that determines the direction of changes in social policy. It represents both an idea (concept), as well as a process and a legal and organizational framework for changes (strategic and planning documents being created).

The most important conclusions resulting from the analyzes performed:
— New institutionalism combines the processes of (neo)institutionalization, deinstitutionalization and reinstitutionalization as different dimensions of change.
— Deinstitutionalization does not mean the end of support institutions for individuals with disabilities.

— We are not yet ready for an effective, complete, and stereotype-free dein-stitutionalization in the area of support for people with disabilities and their families. There is neither a need nor a possibility for the complete elimination of such institutions, although their role should diminish as alternatives (such as Support Circles, Schools in Support Circles, and the model solutions from the presented projects) are developed.

— Bringing services closer to the living environment is also possible by changing the institutions themselves, including: through the normalization and personalization of the living conditions of people with disabilities and the opening of institutions to the community (interinstitutional cooperation, including intersectoral).

— Intersectoralism (interinstitutionalism) does not have to be inconsistent with deinstitutionalization.

— The allocation of European Union funds does not favour institutions, as it inherently aims to develop alternative forms. This does not mean that institutions are "inherently bad" – the desired direction of change signals the need for their transformation.

— It is necessary to take into account both trends presented - joint cooperation between institutions and deinstitutionalization (bringing services closer to the environment) - in establishing partnerships by schools and in building a support network for students in inclusive education. School is not an isolated institution but is part of the entire system of social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Work on improving and implementing new solutions is ongoing, but the experience already gained can serve schools and inclusive education now.

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Wsparcie międzyinstytucjonalne a deinstytucjonalizacja usług społecznych dla osób z niepełnosprawnościami jako kontekst edukacji włączającej

Streszczenie

Artykuł ukazuje dwa pozornie sprzeczne trendy w organizacji usług społecznych dla osób z niepełnosprawnościami: wzmacnianie i doskonalenie funkcjonowania instytucji udzielających wsparcia poprzez współpracę międzyinstytucjonalną oraz deinstytucjonalizację tych usług, uznawaną za priorytet w polityce społecznej. Nie muszą być one jednak traktowane jako wykluczające się. Celem artykułu jest przybliżenie pedagogom pojęcia i założeń procesu deinstytucjonalizacji – słabo rozpoznawalnego w środowisku oświatowym, oraz dopełniających go (i wbrew pozorom niesprzecznych) procesów (neo)instytucjonalizacji i reinstytucjonalizacji. Deinstytucjonalizacja nie dotyczy bezpośrednio tego resortu, ale uznawana za cel i środek współczesnych polityk społecznych, kształtuje realia wsparcia środowiskowego dla uczniów z niepełnosprawnością, jak też dla szkoły realizującej edukację włączającą. Przedstawiono innowacyjne rozwiązania łączące w kooperacji instytucje, oraz wsparcie formalne z nieformalnym (Kręgi Wsparcia / Szkoła w Kręgach Wsparcia. Kooperacje 3D, Model Wsparcia Międzysektorowego).

Słowa kluczowe: wsparcie społeczne, inkluzja, współpraca, deinstytucjonalizacja, normalizacja.