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NONFORMAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS FROM INCLUSIVE PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

Participation in nonformal education positively influences individual's health and is dependent on individual and environmental factors. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, ICF: CY) in particular emphasises the social meaning of participation of pupils with special needs. The effective participation of pupils with special needs in inclusive setting is complicated by barriers of organisations and actors of nonformal education that is consequently reflected in the quality of social interactions among pupils. Pupils of special schools are in a specific situation, because nonformal inclusive education is for them the primary source of social interactions with non-disabled peers in an institutionalised setting. The aim of the study is to reflect on the social aspects of participation of pupils with special needs in the conditions of nonformal inclusive education on the basis of the available research studies, more specifically the social position of a child with special needs and the nature of mutual social interactions among participants.

Key words: inclusion, nonformal education, social acceptance, social interactions, children with special needs

Kształcenie pozaformalne dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami z perspektywy edukacji integracyjnej
Streszczenie
Uczestnictwo w edukacji nieformalnej pozytywnie wpływa na zdrowie jednostki i jest uzależnione od czynników indywidualnych oraz środowiskowych. Międzynarodowa Klasyfikacja Funkcjonowania, Niepełnosprawności i Zdrowia zwraca uwagę na szczególne znaczenie uczestnictwa w edukacji nieformalnej uczniów o specjalnych potrzebach. Ich efektywny udział w inkluzyjnym otoczeniu jest komplikowany przez bariery organizacyjne i podmiotowe edukacji nieformalnej, co w konsekwencji przekłada się na jakość interakcji społecznych między uczniami. Uczniowie szkół specjalnych znajdują się w szczególnej sytuacji, ponieważ edukacja nieformalna jest dla nich pierwotnym źródłem interakcji społecznych z pełnosprawnymi rówieśnikami w zinstytucjonalizowanym otoczeniu. Celem artykułu jest refleksja nad społecznymi aspektami uczestnictwa uczniów o specjalnych potrzebach w warunkach nieformalnej edukacji inkluzyjnej na podstawie dostępnych badań, w szczególności nad pozycją dziecka o specjalnych potrzebach i charakterem wzajemnych interakcji społecznych między uczestnikami edukacji nieformalnej.
Słowa kluczowe: integracja, edukacja nieformalna, akceptacja społeczna, interakcje społeczne, dzieci ze specjalnymi potrzebami

Introduction

Over a decade after the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is considered a success, that on the European scale more than half of pupils with special needs are being educated in an inclusive setting: according to the latest data of the European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education[1], within ISCED 1 it concerns an average of 63.62% pupils with special needs and within ISCED 2 it concerns 57% of pupils with special needs.[2] Even if a small percentage of pupils with special needs do not cope with the education at mainstream schools and return to special schools[3] – what in itself does not attests a unilateral failure (of the child); inclusion in school setting is an everyday reality for the present generation of non-disabled pupils. Nonformal education is not, contrary to formal education, monitored with respect to inclusion, which results in no available data on the participation of pupils with special needs in leisure activities in school and extra-curricular setting. This fact can be viewed from two perspectives: on the one hand it can be a manifestation of inclusion, that the administration does not distinguish the possible special needs of a participating child, on the other hand it can be a manifestation of the lacking interest from institutions in implementation of inclusive principles in nonformal education, that is an infringement of rights of children with special needs. The Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities demands the access to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities and access to

[1] *European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education: 2016 Dataset Cross-Country Report*, eds. J. Ramberg, A. Lénárt, A. Watkins, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense 2018.

[2] The average of the Visegrad group is slightly lower: ISCED 1 – 57%, ISCED 2 – 54%, *ibidem.*

[3] It concerns 2.37% of pupils with SEN within ISCED 1 and 2.07% of pupils with SEN within ISCED 2, *ibidem.*

services of their providers for persons with disabilities. The absence of monitoring of the participation of the pupils with special needs in nonformal education therefore from this perspective negatively influences the implementation of this right in practice.

According to the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health[4], participation in nonformal education positively influences the health condition of an individual and depends on individual and environmental factors, i.e. to what extent an individual can participate in activities and undertake different types of activities and to what extent the setting allows it. An adapted version of the ICF for children and youth[5] emphasises social significance of participation: The ability to be engaged and interact socially develops in the young child's close relations with others in its immediate environment. Children and adolescents with disabilities perceive participation as an opportunity to boost self-esteem, self-assurance; to establishing friendships – to belong to a group, to experience an interaction with other people; to take part activities and self-determination, i.e. to be able to influence the situation, to have an opportunity and ability to choose and be given choices, to decide and to organize.[6] The pillars of participation are friendships/relationships, interactions/contacts, perception and acceptance by peers. According to empirical findings, participation in nonformal education reflects in the improved life quality and physical wellbeing, a higher level of social skills, social acceptance and social interactions in pupils with special needs.[7] Effective participation of pupils with special needs in inclusive setting is complicated by persisting barriers by organizers and partakers of nonformal education that is subsequently reflected in the quality of social interactions among pupils. Pupils of special schools find themselves in a specific situation, because the nonformal education is their primary source of social interactions with non-disabled peers in an institutionalised setting. On the basis of the available research findings, the aim of this study is to reflect on the social aspect of participation of the pupils with special needs in the conditions of nonformal inclusive education, more specifically on the role of a child with special needs and the nature of the mutual social interactions among the participants.

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[4] *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: ICF*, World Health Organization, 2001, https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42407 [accessed: 25.03.2020].

[5] *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: Children and Youth Version: ICF-CY*, World Health Organization, 2007, https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/43737 [accessed: 25.03.2020].

[6] L. Eriksson, M. Granlund, *Conceptiions of Participation in Students with Disabilities and Persons in Their Close Environment*, "Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities" 2004, Vol. 16, pp. 229–245.

[7] Cf. P. Coyne, A. Fullerton, *Supporting Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Recreation*, Urbana 2014; R. McConkey, S. Dowling, D. Hassan, S. Menke, *Promoting Social Inclusion Through Unified Sports for Youth with Intellectual Disabilities: A Five-Nation Study*, pp. 1–13. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2788.2012.01587.x.; K. Shikako-Thomas, N. Dahan-Oliel, M. Shevell, M. Law, R. Birnbaum, P. Rosenbaum, C. Poulin, A. Majnemer, *Play and be Happy? Leisure Participation and Quality of Life in School-Aged Children with Cerebral Palsy*, "International Journal of Pediatrics" 2012: 387280. doi: 10.1155/2012/387280.

The current state of the participation of the pupils with special needs in nonformal inclusive education

Quantifiable level of the participation of pupils with special needs in nonformal inclusive education is influenced by several individual and environmental factors, which are usually evaluated through comparative lens in relation to non-disabled peers. The prevalent research findings confirm that pupils with special needs generally undertake fewer leisure activities and with lower frequency than their non-disabled peers, irrespective of the country of their origin.[8] This fact is highlighted equally by older and newer research studies, what on the one hand can reflect the real state of inclusion in society, but on the other hand it can raise questions regarding the relevance of the comparative approach in researching the participation of pupils with special needs in the conditions of nonformal education. Diversity in leisure activities of pupils with special needs is to a large extent influenced by the possibilities of their realization. For instance, the pupils with visual impairment and physical disabilities undertake fewer sport or physically oriented activities than pupils with auditory impairment, mental impairment or chronic medical disability[9]; pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder incline to individual activities of primarily passive nature[10]; pupils with combined disabilities undertake fewer activities and less frequently in comparison to pupils with a certain type of disability[11], comparably pupils with lower level of disability undertake more activities and more frequently in comparison to their peers with high level of disability. The particularity in the participation of pupils with special needs in nonformal education and leisure activities is caused by number of factors caused

[8] G. Bedell, W. Coster, M. Law, K. Liljenquist, Y.C. Kao, R. Teplicky, D. Anaby, M.A. Khetani, *Community Participation, Supports and Barriers of School-age Children with and without Disabilities*, "Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation" 2013, Vol. 94 (2), pp. 315–323. doi: 10.1016/j.apmr.2012.09.024; S. Kaljača, B. Dučić, M. Cvijetic, *Participation of Children and Youth with Neurodevelopmental Disorders in After-School Activities*, "Disability and Rehabilitation" 2019, Vol. 41 (17), pp. 2036–2048; G. King, T. Petrenchik, M. Law, P. Hurley, *The Enjoyment of Formal and Informal Recreation and Leisure Activities: A Comparison of Shool-Aged Children with and without Physical Disabilities*, "International Journal of Disability, Development and Education" 2009, Vol. 56 (2), pp. 109–130; A. Solish, A. Perry, P. Minnes, *Participation of Children with and without Disabilities in Social, Leisure and Recreational Activities*, "Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities" 2009, Vol. 23, Issue 3, pp. 226–236.

[9] P. Longmuir, O. Bar-Or, *Factors Influencing the Physical Activity Levels of Youths with Physical and Sensory Disabilities*, "Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly" 2000, Vol. 17, Issue 1, pp. 40–53. doi: 10.1123/apaq.17.1.40; E.A. Jaarsma, P.U. Dijkstra, J.H. Geertzen, R. Dekker, *Barriers to and Facilitators of Sports Participation for People with Physical Disabilities*, "Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & in Sports" 2014, Vol. 24 (6), pp. 871–881. doi: 10.1111/sms.12218.

[10] P. Coyne, A. Fullerton, *op. cit.*

[11] A. Taheri, A. Perry, P. Minnes, *Examining the Social Participation of Children and Adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorders in Relation to Peers*, "Journal of Intellectual Disability Research" 2016, Vol. 60 (5), pp. 435–443. doi: 10.1111/jir.12289.

by an individual, family and environment that Gillian King et al. elaborated on in a conceptual model.[12] For instance, the children's factors are:

a) children's own views of their competence;
b) their physical, cognitive, and communicative function;
c) their emotional, behavioral, and social function; and;
d) their activity preferences.

The family factors are:

a) the absence of financial and time constraints caused by having a child with a disability;
b) a better family socio-economic situation;
c) a supportive home setting, and;
d) a strong family interest in recreational activities.

Comparably the research by Robert Palisano et al. revealed that leisure participation by youth with disability is influenced by multiple youth and family characteristics.[13] Evaluation of research findings should therefore not primarily stem from the comparison with non-disabled population, but the level of disability, disorder, or support the individual requires.

Leisure activities are undertaken in regular setting to a larger extent by pupils with lower level of disabilities, disorders that attend mainstream schools, where they spontaneously engage also in organized groups of interest. Longitudinal research studies confirmed that inclusive education has raised the possibilities of participation in leisure activities in extra-curricular setting in comparison to segregated education, while individuals with special needs educated at mainstream schools also have a wider social network after completion of secondary education in comparison to graduates of special schools.[14] On the other hand, parents of pupils with special needs, irrespective of the setting of their child' education, unanimously agree, that these pupils attend school clubs, leisure organizations and meet their class mates also out of school to a lower degree than their non-disabled peers.[15] Pupils with intermediate and higher level of disabilities, disorders or with combined disability undertake more activities in specialised or segregated setting with respect to social interactions with their non-disabled

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[12] G. King, M. Law, S. King, P. Rosenbaum, M. Kertoy, N. Yong, *A Conceptual Model of the Factors Affecting the Recreation and Leisure Participation of Children with Disabilities*, "Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics" 2003, Vol. 23, Issue 1, pp. 63–90.

[13] R.J. Palisano, M. Orlin, L. Chiarello, D. Oeffinger, M. Polansky, J. Maggs, G. Gorton, A. Bagley, C. Tylkowski, L. Vogel, M. Abel, R. Stevenson, *Determinants of Intensity of Participation in Leisure and Recreational Activities by Youth with Cerebral Palsy*, "Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation" 2011, Vol. 92 (9), pp. 1468–1476. doi: 10.1016/j.apmr.2011.04.007.

[14] *Evidence of the Link Between Inclusive Education and Social Inclusion: A Review of the Literature*, ed. S. Symeonidou, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense 2018.

[15] G. Bedell, W. Coster, M. Law, K. Liljenquist, Y.C. Kao, R. Teplicky, D. Anaby, M.A. Khetani, *op. cit.*; W. Coster, M. Law, G. Bedell, J. Liljenquist, Y.C. Kao, M. Khetani, R. Teplicky, *School Participation, Supports and Barriers of Students with and without Disability*, "Child: Care, Health and Development" 2013, Vol. 39 (4), pp. 535–543. doi: 10.1111/cch.12046.

peers. The availability and the lack of barriers of activities, the absence of negative attitudes that often occur in non-disabled participants as well as staff in mainstream setting are the primary reasons. At the same time, attitudinal barriers are considered the greatest obstacle of nonformal inclusive education by the participants with special needs and their parents, other barriers between an individual and setting are considered as less significant.[16]

Some parents backed away from nonformal inclusive education due to negative experiences from mainstream setting, e.g. Eva Hiu-Lun Tsai, Lena Fung state that parents of children with intellectual disability retreated from inclusive activities after the refusal by the personnel or non-disabled participants who presented negative attitudes and the lack of understanding of the people with intellectual disability as the main cause.[17] Hidden negative attitudes are clearly demonstrated in unstructured and non-organized activities, course of which is not intervened by pedagogues and in which the pupils with special needs are the most isolated according to research findings.[18] Structured activities, in which the pupils are compelled to mutually communicate and cooperate at the level of dyad or small group, appear to be more beneficial for mutual interactions[19], participation in which is regarded positively by pupils with special needs.[20] Some programs of inclusive education aim to support nonformal social interactions among pupils; the examples of this practice can be found in special schools setting that already created conditions for nonformal encounters of pupils with and without disabilities in the family of an intact peer.[21] Besides the attitudes, that are rightly considered the key conditions for success of inclusive education as such[22], participation of pupils with special needs are complicated by other factors, that according to some findings influence perceived barriers to a larger extent than disability-related barriers.[23] The inadequate facilities, lack

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[16] D. Anaby, C. Hand, L. Bradley, B. DiRezze, M. Forhan, A. DiGiacomo, M. Law, *The Effect of the Environment of Participation of Children and Youth Disabilities:A Scoping Review*, "Disability and Rehabilitation" 2013, Vol. 35, No. 19, pp. 1589–1598. doi: 10.3109/09638288.2012.748840.

[17] E.H. Tsai, L. Fung, *Parent's Experiences and Decisions on Inclusive Sport Participation of Their Children with Intellectual Disabilities*, "Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly" 2009, Vol. 26 (2), pp. 151–171.

[18] G. Bedell, W. Coster, M. Law, K. Liljenquist, Y.C. Kao, R. Teplicky, D. Anaby, M.A. Khetani, *op. cit.*

[19] P. Coyne, A. Fullerton, *op. cit.*

[20] G. Bedell, W. Coster, M. Law, K. Liljenquist, Y.C. Kao, R. Teplicky, D. Anaby, M.A. Khetani, *op. cit.*

[21] L. Sávič, *Podstatné problémy výchovnej práce v internáte pre sluchovo postihnuté deti*, "Efeta" 1991, special edition, pp. 91–93.

[22] Cf. I. Šuhajdová, *Ľudský faktor, kľúčová podmienka inklúzie?*, Trnava 2018.

[23] M. Badia, B.M. Orgaz, M.A. Verdugo, A.M. Ullán, M.M. Martínez, *Personal Factors and Perceived Barriers to Participation in Leisure Activities for Young and Adults with Developmental Disabilities*, "Research in Developmental Disabilities" 2011, Vol. 32 (6), pp. 2055–2063. doi: 10.1016/j.ridd.2011.08.007. Research findings in this area are inconsistent. Jeffrey Martin presents the review of research studies according to which the respondents with disabilities find disability-related barriers dominant. The same conclusion was formulated also by Eva Jaarsma et al., who analysed 27 research studies focused at barriers and facilitators

of accessible programmes, lack of transport, staff capacity, and cost are identified as the most frequent barriers.[24]

The role models in family and friendly relations also influence the selection of activities in nonformal inclusive education similarly as in the non-disabled population. According to the findings of Nalan R. Ayvazoglu, Oh Hyun-Kyoung, Francis M. Kozub[25], pupils with special needs to a larger extent engage in sports activities when their parents or siblings engage in them. In the research of Palmisano et al.[26], the strongest predictor of the participation intensity was besides the physical ability of children with cerebral palsy family activity orientation. Friends from the school setting play a similar role, because they are often a decisive element in the selection of interest activity.[27] If a pupil attends a special school, a greater part of leisure activities therefore undertakes with friends in segregated setting, especially if it concerns a boarding school. The variety of activities is influenced by the family income, the completeness versus incompleteness of family and education of parents. In the research of Mary Law et al.[28], children of low-income parents with low level of education and from incomplete families displayed a smaller variety of activities than children with special needs from complete, well situated families.

Social position of a child with special needs in nonformal inclusive education

The success rate of inclusive education is reliably expressed by the social position of a child with special needs, which is beyond a direct impact of a pedagogue and even more rigorously reflects the authentic attitudes of a group of non-dis-

of participation in sports activities by individuals with physical disabilities. One of the causes of contradictory findings can be the differences in methodology or in the formulation of individual questions and their evaluation. Also, individuals with disabilities themselves can evaluate barriers differently depending on the type and level of disability and the orientation of activity. For instance, individuals with low level of disability can perceive more barriers at setting than the individuals with high level of disability or combined disability, who, in contrast, assign them to disability to a higher degree. Another cause can be differences in the perception of barriers by parents and children with disability that leads to discrepancy of findings in their mutual comparation. J.J. Martin, *Benefits and Barriers to Physical Activity for Individuals with Disabilities: a Social-Relational Model of Disability Perspective*, "Disability and Rehabilitation" 2013, Vol. 35 (24), pp. 2030–2037. doi: 10.3109/09638288.2013.802377; E.A. Jaarsma, P.U. Dijkstra, J.H. Geertzen, R. Dekker, *op. cit.*

[24] M. Barr, N. Shields, *Identifying the Barriers and Facilitators to Participation in Physical Activity for Children with Down Syndrome*, "Journal of Intellectual Disability Research" 2011, Vol. 55 (11), pp. 1020–1033. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2788.2011.01425.x; E.A. Jaarsma, P.U. Dijkstra, J.H. Geertzen, R. Dekker, *op. cit.*

[25] N.R. Ayvazoglu, Oh Hyun-Kyoung, F.M. Kozub, *Explaining Physical Activity in Children with Visual Impairments: A Family Systems Approach*, "Exceptional Children" 2006, Vol. 72, No. 2, pp. 235–248.

[26] R.J. Palisano, M. Orlin, L. Chiarello, D. Oeffinger, M. Polansky, J. Maggs, G. Gorton, A. Bagley, C. Tylkowski, L. Vogel, M. Abel, R. Stevenson, *op. cit.*

[27] Národní institut dětí a mládeže, MŠMTaŠ ČR., *Klíčové faktory ovlyvňující inkluzi dětí a mládeže se specifickými vzdělávacími potřebami do zájmového a neformálního vzdělávaní*, Praha 2009.

[28] M. Law, G. King, S. King, M. Kertoy, P. Hurley, P. Rosenbaum, N. Young, S. Hanna, *Patterns of Participation in Recreational and Leisure Activities Among Children with Complex Physical Disabilities*, "Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology" 2006, Vol. 48 (5), pp. 337–342.

abled peers towards an individual with special needs and towards the inclusion itself. While in the process of formal education the social position of a pupil is based on school success, in the conditions of nonformal education the noncognitive qualities and individual's personality profile come forward.[29] If a pupil with special needs has deficits in communicative skills and sociability, as is not able to compensate them in a given interest activity, it gets into a disadvantaged social position. The prevalent research findings confirm that this generally concerns pupils with mental disability, with Autism Spectrum Disorder and combined, multiple disabilities. For instance, in the research of Mary Devine the participants with the Down syndrome expressed, that they are passively tolerated by the intact participants and perceived as concurrently "similar" and "different", participants with high level of disability were considered overlooked and devaluated.[30] In another research 35% of participants with disability negatively assessed their position, 41% of participants labelled it as indifferent and only 24% as acceptable, or good. From the perspective of non-disabled participants, the social position of participants with disabilities was negatively evaluated by 37% of respondents, 52% labelled it as indifferent and only 11% as acceptable.[31] The social position of participants, primarily with mental disability, is comparably evaluated by the staff of nonformal education facilities, according to whom they are isolated or passively tolerated without friendly relations with non-disabled participants.[32] Nevertheless, participants with special needs are aware, that if they are not accepted, they are also not included.[33] Heavily sensually impaired pupils, primarily auditorily, who prefer barrier-free form of participation, i.e. communication in sign language, in specialized setting, are also in disadvantaged position due to the perceived isolation and difficult perception of events in mainstream facilities.[34]

Social position of pupils with special needs, in the conditions of nonformal inclusive education is also the reflection of social interactions among pupils and the approach of the pedagogue towards the organization of activities. In the setting with the shared values in foreground, the abilities and possibilities of an individual are accented, the stereotypes come to background and equality is the key principle, the participants are accepted. Pedagogue's role is setting the example of proinclusive behaviour, providing assistance in inevitable cases and encouraging the participants in autonomy, which is assisted by adaptation equipment.

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[29] G. King, M. Law, S. King, P. Rosenbaum, M. Kertoy, N. Yong, *op. cit.*

[30] M. Devine, *Being a "Doer" Instead of "Viewer". The Role of Inclusive Leisure Contexts in Determining Social Acceptance for People with Disabilities*, "Journal of Leisure Research" 2004, Vol. 36 (2), pp. 137–159.

[31] M. Devine, J. Dattilo, *Social Acceptance and Leisure Lifestyles of People with Disabilities*, "Therapeutic Recreation Journal" 2001, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 306–322.

[32] Národní institut dětí a mládeže, MŠMTaŠ ČR, *op. cit.*

[33] N. Spencer-Cavaliere, J.E. Watkinson, *Inclusion Understood from the Perspectives of Children with Disability*, "Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly" 2010, Vol. 27 (4), pp. 275–293.

[34] Národní institut dětí a mládeže, MŠMTaŠ ČR, *op. cit.*

Accentuating differences, distinctions, on the contrary leads to refusal of participants with special needs and is expressed by unsuitable behaviour and negative attitudes of non-disabled participants. Excessive "protection" by the pedagogue has similar effect on the social position of participants as direct refusal.[35] From the praxeological perspective, it is important that the theory of inclusive pedagogy with precisely formulated success conditions for inclusive education[36], are thoroughly implemented in practice.

Research studies from short-time events of nonformal inclusive education, for instance summer camps, outdoor adventure workshops, etc.[37] confirm, that a pupil with special needs achieves good social position if a group of non-disabled peers is "attuned" to inclusion and is encouraged to it, i.e. non-disabled participants are familiar with the inclusive principles and the specifics of participants with special needs, know how to communicate and cooperate with them, or to provide the inevitable assistance in play, self-servicing activities, etc. Identical findings were formulated in researches investigating the attitudes of non-disabled participants towards the peers with special needs in inclusive oriented summer camps.

Based on the available research findings it can be concluded, that participants with special needs are in better social position if they are in multiple day permanent contact with non-disabled peers, for instant in summer camps, that result in more spontaneous interactions, participants have the opportunity to share immediate joint experience and more opportunities to getting to know each other in comparison to regular participation in interest groups. For instance, in the research of Gary Siperstein et al.[38] the pupils with and without mental disability were equally accepted, while each non-disabled participant of the residential event stated at the end, that they made friend with at least one participant with special needs.[39] According to some findings, pupils with special needs find participation in nonformal inclusive education successful, if the friendships establish between them and their non-disabled peers. On the contrary, if they feel lonely, there is no inclusion in their opinion.[40] Application of these findings in school practice, for example in a form of adaptation residential workshops would, from our perspective, help social acceptance of pupils with special needs by non-disabled peers and facilitate the course of joint social interactions.

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[35] M. Devine, *op. cit*.

[36] *Inkluzivní pedagogika*, ed. V. Lechta, Praha 2016; *Key Components of Inclusive Education*, eds. V. Lechta, N. Bizová, Berlin 2019.

[37] E.g. P. Hutchinson, T. Mecke, E.K. Sharpe, *Partners in Inclusion at a Residential Summer Camp. A Case Study*, "Therapeutic Recreation Journal" 2008, Vol. 42, No. 3, pp. 179–196.

[38] G.N. Siperstein, G.C. Glick, R.C. Parker, *Social Inclusion of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in a Recrealtional Setting*, "Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities" 2009, Vol. 47 (2), pp. 97–107. doi: 10.1352/1934-9556-47.2.97.

[39] There were 67 participants in the event, 27 of them with mental disability.

[40] N. Spencer-Cavaliere, J.E. Watkinson, *op. cit*.

Social interactions of a child with special needs in nonformal inclusive education

Nonformal education creates space for formation of social competences, that allow pupils enter satisfactory social relations based on mutual and balanced interactions as well as satisfaction of their individual needs, reaching communicative goals and correct interpretation of experience from interactions at the level of group and dyad.[41] The available research findings indicate that the social situation of a child with special needs in nonformal inclusive education is not always favourable and there are different types of social interactions among pupils in mainstream setting.[42] The research of social interactions of pupils with special needs attending a mainstream school club or interest group in Slovakia presents comparable findings.[43] Social interactions were evaluated on the basis of observation and interview with pedagogues. The observations focused on:

a) participation of a partaker with special needs in social interactions (responsivity, initiative);
b) a comparison of social interaction of the partaker with special needs with interaction among non-disabled partakers;
c) the role of a pedagogue in social interactions among partakers with and without special needs.

From the qualitative analysis of collected data three categories of social interactions were derived:

a) accepting;
b) ignoring;
c) ambivalent.

The participants of accepting interactions primarily occurred in close proximity or had physical contact, e.g. held hands, led dialogue, in nonverbal sphere they kept eye contact and expressed joy from communication. This type of interaction was clearly demonstrated by amicable bonds. The ignoring interactions were expressed by mutual and unilateral refusal that was evident primarily during spontaneous activities, course of which was not intervened by the pedagogue. It concerned situations, when pupils with special needs and their non-disabled peers could spontaneously enter joint interactions, but they did not take this opportunity. Ambivalent interactions were characteristic with directivity, reluctance and the lack of interest in communication or listening to a participant with special

[41] K.H. Rubin, W.M. Bukowski, J.G. Parker, *Peer Interactions, Relationships, and Groups*, [in:] *Handbook of Child Psychology*, Vol. 3: *Social, Emotional and Personality Development*, vol. ed. N. Eisenberg, eds-in-chief W. Damon, R.M. Lerner, 6th ed., New York 2006, pp. 571–645.

[42] M. Devine, *op. cit.*; *eadem*, M. O'Brien, *The Mixed Bag of Inclusion: An Examination of an Inclusive Camp Using Contact Theory*, "Therapeutic Recreation Journal" 2007, Vol. 41 (3), pp. 201–222; S. Sutherland, S. Stroot, *Brad's Story: Exploration of an Inclusive Adventure Education Experience*, "Therapeutic Recreation Journal" 2009, Vol. 43, No. 3, pp. 27–39.

[43] N. Bizová, *Neformálni inkluzivní edukace*, [in:] *Inkluzivní pedagogika*, *op. cit.*, pp. 158–170.

needs. The participants with special needs entered social interactions more often in guided activities than in the spontaneous ones. If the pedagogue worked with the whole group, social interactions of participants with special needs were responsive in character; there was only a rare personal initiative. The behaviour of pedagogues did not exclude the participants with special needs, the pedagogues treated them equally as other participants, and they provided assistance or support in inevitable cases.[44]

Social interactions of participants with special needs are often evaluated relatively positively in research studies. However, individual participants – pedagogues and partakers with special needs often evaluate them differently: while the participants focus on the course of social interactions during activities, pedagogues, coaches etc., often take into consideration their overlap into formal space, i.e. whether the participants meet also outside the organized setting. Roy McConkey et al. evaluated the contribution of the international project Unified Sport with participants with mental disability, their non-disabled peers and coaches from five European countries (Germany, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Ukraine).[45] In their research they clarified social interactions in the context of four key topics:

a) personal development;
b) inclusive and amicable bonds;
c) positive perception of persons with mental disabilities;
d) building the local community.

The project was unique because it connected pupils from special and mainstream schools (92% of participants with disabilities attended special school). The qualitative analysis of an interview with 40 respondents from each country revealed, that the participation in the project, its publicity, contributed to the improvement of social status of participants with disabilities in school and community, led to the improvement of interpersonal and intrapersonal competences, e.g. communicative skills, self-confidence, self-esteem, influenced their non-disabled peers and parents to promoting ideas of inclusion and further cooperation or support of inclusion at the local level.[46]

Devine and Mary O'Brien state, that individuals with physical disabilities are accepted by peers more than individuals with behavioural disorders or mental disabilities.[47] In a way, this fact is confirmed also by the research of Sue Sutherland and Sandra Stroot[48], who analysed social interactions of participants during a 3-day adventure leisure program. The 13-years old participant with high functioning autism entered social interactions unwillingly, avoided peer contacts,

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[44] *Ibidem*.

[45] R. McConkey, S. Dowling, D. Hassan, S. Menke, *op. cit*.

[46] *Ibidem.*

[47] M. Devine, M. O'Brien, *op. cit*.

[48] S. Sutherland, S. Stroot, *op. cit*.

searched for presence of instructors he had known from past. Change in his behaviour and contact initiation appeared after joint activities, during which he was appraised by peers and had opportunity to participate in joint problem solving. Despite the overall positive evaluation of the interactions by all participants, the boy with the special needs did not transfer this experience on peers outside the adventure group.[49]

Conclusion

Participation in nonformal inclusive education in the current state of implementation of inclusive principles into practice can be simultaneously a contribution and a risk for the pupils with special needs. Research findings point at the direct connection between the social position of a child and the approach of a facility to implementation of the inclusive idea. Peripheral social position is not a failure of the child but of all participating actors including the environmental conditions, if they are not adapted to the needs of the individual with special needs, or a group. The acceptance of difference stemming from the nature of disability remains an acute problem. Negative attitudes to individuals with special needs are not expressed openly but by a passive tolerance of their presence. If social setting simultaneously neither refuses nor accepts an individual, i.e. has an indifferent attitude, it devaluates the contribution of participation. One of the possibilities to remove this state is the application of structured activities, in which the participants with and without special needs depend on joint cooperation and communication and the resulting mutual acceptance.

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[49] *Ibidem.*

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