



## People with Disabilities in a Double Exclusion Situation in Selected South African Countries<sup>1</sup>

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Education plays an important role in South African countries with respect to the emergence of double exclusion that affects people with disabilities living there.

Factors like race, gender, social origin or disability contribute to social inequalities, whereas their intensity depends on the dominant ideology or state policy (e.g. apartheid in South Africa). People with disabilities who experience social exclusion caused by their social origin as African natives simultaneously undergo exclusion resulting from their disability. In this context, apart from (the exclusion rooted in) the “heritage” of apartheid, one can also find other very meaningful factors including folk beliefs, healers and shamans. Hence, in line with local folk beliefs, disability in specific areas of the country is perceived and understood as a punishment or a charm that was cast, which eventually makes families ashamed of their disabled children or relatives, force them to hide them for fear of ostracism, violence, ritual mutilation or death.

**KEY WORDS:** people with disabilities, double exclusion, South African countries, apartheid, education, shaman

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<sup>1</sup> The article relies on literature analysis, observations and talks conducted during a study trip between 2 and 23 September 2016 organised by the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) to South African countries (Republic of South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana): “Climate and Plant Zone Pattern in Southern Africa: Natural and Socio-Economic Effects.”

## Introduction

Education plays an important role<sup>2</sup> in South African countries with respect to the emergence of double exclusion that affects people with disabilities living there.

It goes without doubt that factors like race, gender, social origin or disability contribute to social inequalities, whereas their intensity depends on the dominant ideology or state policy.

In this context, the apartheid ideology which had persisted for a number of years (1948-1994) in the Republic of South Africa (as well as in Namibia, where it was, however, not so intense) with respect to the native inhabitants is a clear example of social practice in the area of creation of social inequalities. It is interesting to note that in the case of apartheid, the minority group (white people) constituted the discriminating group, which used the educational system instrumentally, aiming for implementation of its' policy with respect to underprivileged groups.

In such situation, education starts playing an oppressive role, which is aimed at ensuring durability and stability of the current social system<sup>3</sup>. Schools recreate the social structure<sup>4</sup> and solidify the

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<sup>2</sup> Africa is a continent of various countries, nations and cultures. Speaking of Africa or South African countries like a uniform construct and treating them as a whole is erroneous, even though a lot of elements of social functioning exist on similar principles (more about it: cf. J. Belzyt 2016). On account of great diversity and lack of reliable information pertaining to the situation and functioning of people with disabilities in Africa, the author will refer to the examples from the Republic of South Africa. Such decision results from the observations made and talks conducted during a study trip and information available in literature on the subject.

<sup>3</sup> D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska D., Społeczne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy, "Studia Edukacyjne", 21/2012 and cf. *inter alia* K. Przysocki, Edukacja dla demokracji. Strategie zmian a kompetencje obywatelskie, Toruń-Poznań 1999; B. Śliwerski, Współczesna myśl pedagogiczna. Znaczenia, klasyfikacje, badania, Kraków 2009; T. Szkudlarek, Pedagogika krytyczna, [in:] Pedagogika. Podręcznik akademicki 1, ed. Z. Kwieciński, B. Śliwerski, Warszawa 2004; H. Giroux, Teoria krytyczna i racjonalność w edukacji obywatelskiej, [in:] Spory o edukację. Dylematy i kontrowersje we współczesnych pedagogiach, ed. Z. Kwieciński, L. Witkowski, Warsaw 1993.

“legality” of cultural practice, at the same time exerting “symbolic violence” with respect to the underprivileged groups (making them even more “illegal”)<sup>5</sup>. The objective of such activities is, most often, acculturation, i.e. inclusion of underprivileged groups “in the current of own culture and rationality”<sup>6</sup>, which obviously does not entail granting them equal rights.

According to D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska (quoting T. Gmerek), there may be several strategies (reflected in the process of education), which are used by the dominant groups with respect to marginalised groups. The most common strategy is assimilationism, i.e. striving for inclusion of children from underprivileged group in the current and values of the dominant group<sup>7</sup>. Another activity that is undertaken by the dominant group with respect to the minority groups is marginalisation<sup>8</sup>, i.e. “assigning specific social groups with the second category status”<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> More information about this issue can be found in theories focused on conflict, e.g. theory of cultural reproduction of P. Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron, or economic theory of S. Bowles and H. Gintis (Hejwosz-Gromkowska D., *Společne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy*, “*Studia Edukacyjne*”, 21/2012).

<sup>5</sup> D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska D., *společne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy*, “*Studia Edukacyjne*”, 21/2012 and cf. T. Szkudlarek *Pedagogika krytyczna*, [in:] *Pedagogika. Podręcznik akademicki 1*, ed. Z. Kwieciński, B. Śliwerski, Warsaw 2004.

<sup>6</sup> T. Gmerek, *Edukacja i nierówności społeczne. Studium porównawcze na przykładzie Anglii, Hiszpanii i Rosji*, Kraków 2011, p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska, *společne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy*, “*Studia Edukacyjne*”, 21/2012, T. Gmerek, *Edukacja i nierówności społeczne. Studium porównawcze na przykładzie Anglii, Hiszpanii i Rosji*, Kraków 2011, 2011, p. 50.

<sup>8</sup> The apartheid ideology encompassed the strategy of marginalisation, which was particularly painful for black people. Even though with the fall of apartheid, all discriminatory practice has been forbidden in the official policy, yet marginalised groups still exist. Furthermore, schools still apply assimilationism strategies with respect to the black people, cf. L. Chisholm, M. Sujee, *Tracking racial desegregation in South African Schools*, *Journal of Education*, No. 40/2006, p. 142 quoted from: D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska, *společne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy*, “*Studia Edukacyjne*”, 21/2012.

<sup>9</sup> D. Heater, *A history of education for citizenship*, London-New York 2004, p. 199.

## Educational and<sup>10</sup> Social Consequences of Apartheid

After the party of Nelson Mandela (the African National Congress) won the elections in 1994, the new authorities started to introduce numerous reforms of education relying on the assumption that when the education is the source of oppression (which was experienced by the native population during apartheid), it may also be the source of emancipation. The main objective of the performed reforms was levelling the educational opportunities of native residents by increasing the schooling and literacy index<sup>11</sup>.

The level of literacy, as indicated by the OECD report, grew from 14.6% in 1991 to 89% in 2004<sup>12</sup>. Such a sudden increase in the number of people who can read and write could confirm the efficiency of educational reforms introduced in the Republic of South Africa. Nevertheless, both the authors of the OECD report and L. Chisholm draw attention to the efficiency of education, which remains on a low level<sup>13</sup>. This is also confirmed by data from Namibia, where 90% of children attend schools, but only half of them can read and only half graduate<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> The system of education in the Republic of South Africa maintains and reproduces social inequalities, which result from many ages of divisions into the privileged group, consisting of descendants of white colonisers and the dominated group, which includes the native black people. The beginnings of racial segregation date back to the colonisation of the south of Africa, cf. D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska, społeczne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy, "Studia Edukacyjne", 21/2012.

<sup>11</sup> L. Chisholm, The quality of primary education in south Africa, UNESCO 2004, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001466/146636e.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> R.O. Mabokela Voices of conflict. Desegregating South African Universities, Routledge-Falmer, New York-London 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska, Społeczne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy, "Studia Edukacyjne", 21/2012, quoted from: L. Chisholm, The quality of primary education in south Africa, UNESCO 2004, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001466/146636e.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> J. Belzyt, Społeczne uwarunkowania sytuacji edukacyjnej osób niepełnosprawnych w krajach Afryki Południowej – wybrane aspekty, "Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy Pedagogiki Specjalnej", 24/2016.

The causes of low level of education may be searched for in several areas.

First of all, there are significant differences in the quality of teaching between urban and rural areas. Cities are inhabited by more affluent people who are better educated (most frequently, these are white people); as a result of racial conflicts, they leave city centres and move to rich districts located on the outskirts. Poorer people with lower education, who are most often representatives of ethnic and/ or racial minorities, remain in city centres. "In this manner, racial segregation relies on residential segregation. In consequence, instead of segregation, (de)segregation takes place. Racial/ ethnic minorities reside in the same districts and attend the same schools which - as noted by researchers of the issue - offer worse quality of teaching"<sup>15</sup>.

According to the studies, the majority of Africans attend schools in small towns and villages<sup>16</sup>. What is more, the studies also indicate that "in poorer parts of the country, i.e. in places where the percentage of black people is higher, schools hire badly educated teachers or even teachers who do not have relevant diplomas which, in turn, influences the results of teaching"<sup>17</sup>.

Another aspect which influences differences in the level of education are fees incurred by parents on education. Educational reforms of 1994 in the Republic of South Africa introduced the possibility of collecting fees for education; at the same time, a reservation was made that parents' approval was necessary. Thus, a situation has emerged which is conducive to sustaining and aggravating social inequalities on account of the fact that poorer families cannot

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<sup>15</sup> D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska, Społeczne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy, "Studia Edukacyjne", 21/2012 quoted from: E. B. Fiske, H.F. Ladd H.F., Elusive equity. Education reform in post-apartheid South Africa, Washington DC 2004.

<sup>16</sup> L. Chisholm, M. Sujee, Tracking racial desegregation in South African Schools, Journal of Education, 40/2006, p. 142, 154.

<sup>17</sup> L. Chisholm, The quality of primary education in south Africa, UNESCO 2004, p. 6, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001466/146636e.pdf>

insist that the schools keep the fees on lowest possible level, yet more affluent families (supported by the local community) push for increase in fees<sup>18</sup>. In line with the binding law, schools do not have a right to refuse access to education to children who cannot pay the tuition fee; however, the researchers point out to the fact that school councils, nevertheless make such decisions<sup>19</sup>. For the parents, the motivation for higher fees is the possibility of hiring a teacher with higher qualifications, which translates to a better level of education for their children and, in a “natural” way, leads to the reduction in the number of children in classes<sup>20</sup>: children of parents who cannot afford to pay the agreed fee have to look for a different school.

Unfortunately, such schools may be located at a distance of even several dozen kilometres from the child’s place of residence, which is related to the hardships of travelling there on a daily basis. The situation is additionally complicated by the fact that in rural areas, children face the necessity of performing work: the effort related to work is such excessive burden for them that they have no strength, time or conditions to learn<sup>21</sup>. It is estimated that in the scale of the world, 250 million children below fifteen years of age are forced to earn their living. The most difficult situation in this respect is in Africa, where 41% of working children are aged between 5 and 14<sup>22</sup>. In some regions of Africa, some of children’s obligations include work for the benefit of the teacher; most often, this is work on the teacher’s field. The situation results from the fact that parents cannot afford to pay the teacher’s salary and the consequence is that

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<sup>18</sup> According to the OECD report (2008), majority of schools collect tuition fees around ZAR 100.00 (approx. PLN 29.00 or USD 7.7), yet for poor families these costs are still too high.

<sup>19</sup> E. B. Fiske, H. F. Ladd, *Elusive equity. Education reform in post-apartheid South Africa*, Washington DC, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Reviews of national policies for education. South Africa, OECD 2008.

<sup>21</sup> A. Trześniewska, *Jak wygląda edukacja w Afryce*, 2010. [http://www.edulandia.pl/edukacja/1,101856,7593250,jak\\_wyglada\\_edukacja\\_w\\_afryce\\_html](http://www.edulandia.pl/edukacja/1,101856,7593250,jak_wyglada_edukacja_w_afryce_html) (12.03.2016).

<sup>22</sup> [pomocafryce.org/edukacja](http://pomocafryce.org/edukacja) (12.03.2016).

pupils wander “several kilometres to school, not [only-JIB] with a school bag and books, but also a hoe”<sup>23</sup>.

Sending a child to school that collects low fees is not only related to the above-mentioned distance of the facility from the place of residence, but also translates to the quality of teaching (hiring a teacher with low qualifications on account of offering low salary), deficiencies in school and class equipment<sup>24</sup>, as well as high number of children in the class. This is a problem with great significance for the provision of education as situations occur where the number of pupils per one teacher may range, depending on data, from 55 to 110 persons<sup>25</sup>.

Another cause to which D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska pays attention to, whilst referring to the OECD report, is the “economic and cultural aspect.” Thus, over 200,000 children aged 7-15 (i.e. children covered by compulsory education) do not attend school. The causes of this phenomenon include, predominantly, the costs of education, but also perception of education as “unnecessary and not interesting (...). Black communities do not have the culture of education, because parents who did not attend school during apartheid, do not see the sense of sending their children there”<sup>26</sup>.

The above-listed factors are the causes of persevering social inequalities and promotion of people from privileged groups. In practice, the theory of cultural reproduction (P. Bourdieu) and economic reproduction (S. Bowles, H. Gintis) is confirmed. It may be noticed that in spite of a ban confirmed by legal provisions, the practice of

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<sup>23</sup> pomocafryce.org/edukacja (12.03.2016).

<sup>24</sup> According to the data of Pomoc Afryce, 70% of school classes operating in rural areas do not have the basic equipment (desks, benches, chairs, bookshelves, blackboards) (quoted from: pomocafryce.org/edukacja).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. J. Belzyt, Społeczne uwarunkowania sytuacji edukacyjnej osób niepełnosprawnych w krajach Afryki Południowej – wybrane aspekty, “Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy Pedagogiki Specjalnej”, 24/2016, A. Trzeźniewska, Jak wygląda edukacja w Afryce, 2010 [http://www.edulandia.pl/edukacja/1,101856,7593250,jak\\_wyglada\\_edukacja\\_w\\_afryce\\_.html](http://www.edulandia.pl/edukacja/1,101856,7593250,jak_wyglada_edukacja_w_afryce_.html) (12.03.2016).

<sup>26</sup> D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska, Społeczne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy, “Studia Edukacyjne”, 21/2012, p. 51.

social marginalisation is still present, though covert<sup>27</sup>. As noted by D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska, “the structure of the educational system in South Africa promotes privileged individuals, offering access to better education, and, in consequence, the possibility of social promotion. (...) Large part of the society still does not have any formal education, and is, therefore, excluded from the labour market. Educated people (...) stand better chances of finding adequate work and, which is related to it, possibility of advancement on the social ladder. (...) Education of parents influences the educational fate of children. Parents’ earnings are also important: the more affluent a family, the better chances children have to finish school and acquire qualifications”<sup>28</sup>.

### **Situation of People with Disabilities in Africa: Double Exclusion Paradox**

It is estimated that 60-80 millions of Africans are people with disabilities, which is approx. 10% of the entire population of the continent<sup>29</sup>, yet in the poorest regions, this index reaches 20% and is continually growing. Disability in Africa is caused most frequently by malnourishment<sup>30</sup> and diseases, violence, development defects, natural catastrophes, accidents and armed conflicts<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska, Społeczne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy, “*Studia Edukacyjne*”, 21/2012, p. 51.

<sup>28</sup> D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska, Społeczne funkcje szkolnictwa wyższego w RPA i konstruowanie różnicy, “*Studia Edukacyjne*”, 21/2012, p. 51.

<sup>29</sup> The index is similar to the index in some European countries, including Poland (12.5% data of the Central Statistical Office of 2012).

<sup>30</sup> There is a relation between malnourishment and disability. The human body, in order to function correctly, needs nutrients delivered with food. Thus, malnourishment causes a series of health problems, sometimes very serious ones: in children, vitamin A deficiency may cause diseases related to sight damage and even lead to blindness, B1 vitamin deficiency causes polyneuropathy, B3 vitamin deficiency – mental disorders, B6 vitamin deficiency – epilepsy; in pregnant women, a proper level of folic acid prevents a child’s neurological diseases, and vitamin D13

People with disabilities, who are excluded on account of being native residents of Africa, are also excluded on account of their disability.

Here, it is possible to indicate a paradox consisting in the fact that exclusion (perceived as the most severe) is inflicted by local communities and closest people who are also subject to (or were subject to) stratification on account of affiliation to the non-privileged group due to skin colour. The concept of group-centrism, the concept of stereotypisation or the concept of a scapegoat, indicated by S. Kowalik<sup>32</sup> may be provided as attempts to clarify the situation of discrimination against the people with disabilities by a group.

The situation whose sources date back to the “heritage” of apartheid, is coupled with folk beliefs, very important for the residents of Africa, which are directly related to healers and shamans.

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and calcium prevent premature birth, which carries the risk of very serious foetus damage, including cerebral palsy. Even though it may seem that nutrition and malnourishment are not strictly related, yet the above data prove the contrary. In Africa, many families live for less than USD 1.00 per day. Few children know the meaning of the word breakfast, because the only meal eaten during the day is the evening meal. Some schools conduct nutrition programmes, but children with disabilities have more limited access to help of this type as they do not attend schools ([dzieciafryki.org](http://dzieciafryki.org)).

<sup>31</sup> Southern part of Africa belongs to regions of the world that have the wealthiest mineral resources; in many cases, these are rare and valuable ores (gold, diamonds, platinum), which are sometimes controlled by criminal groups (violence and conflicts related to the use of arms) or exploited via “handicraft” methods (so-called bootleg mining), which exposes people to accidents, durable health damage and poisoning (chronic poisoning, e.g. with mercury, is one of the greatest health threats, significantly impacting the DALY index) used to determine the general condition of the society’s health, J. Badera, *Gospodarka surowcami mineralnymi w Afryce Południowej – wybrane aspekty ekonomiczne, społeczne i środowiskowe* in: Dłużniewski M., Tsermegas I. (ed.), *Środowisko przyrodnicze i społeczno-kulturowe strefy suchej i półsuchej (wbrane przykłady z Afryki Południowej)*, Warsaw 2016, p. 485).

<sup>32</sup> S. Kowalik, *Psychospołeczne podstawy rehabilitacji osób niepełnosprawnych*. Katowice 1999.

On account of the practice of “magic” and great influence over the local communities, they were not accepted by the first colonisers and this situation has not changed during the apartheid. Nevertheless, healers and shamans have never left villages, but started to operate secretly, which changed after the fall of apartheid – traditional beliefs flourished once again.

The popularity of “services” of healers and shamans results both from the previously discussed limited access to education and its’ low level, especially in rural areas, as well as absence of a free access to doctors. Even though “the Republic of South Africa has the best health service in southern Africa, excellently operating and well-equipped hospitals (...), this medicine is available to a small group of people only. Others cannot afford it [JIB]. (...) People who live in rural areas usually do not have a chance to reach large cities where hospitals are located. Apart from it, one doctor serves 18,000 residents, whereas one healer has approx. 200-500 people under his/her care”<sup>33</sup>.

Folk beliefs and the position of shamans in rural areas (inhabited by 60% of the society<sup>34</sup>) are very strong. In relation to this, disability, depending on the part of the country and local beliefs, is perceived as a punishment or a charm that was cast; therefore, the families are ashamed of their children or relatives with disabilities, hide them for fear of ostracism<sup>35</sup>, but also violence, ritual mutilation

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<sup>33</sup> A. Chmielewska, *Tradycyjna medycyna ludów Afryki Południowej*, in: Dłużniewski M., Tsermegas I. (ed.), *Środowisko przyrodnicze i społeczno-kulturowe strefy suchej i półsuchej (wbrane przykłady z Afryki Południowej)*, Warsaw 2016 p. 527.

<sup>34</sup> M. Sekułowicz, P.E. Kaniok, A. Sekułowicz, *Wybrane formy kształcenia, Rehabilitacji i wsparcia dzieci z niepełnosprawnością i ich rodzin w republice Namibii*, “Forum oświatowe”, 1(48)/2013, downloaded from: <http://forumoswiatowe.pl/index.php/Czasopismo/article/view/31> (12.03.2016).

<sup>35</sup> More about it in: M. Sekułowicz, P.E. Kaniok, A. Sekułowicz, *Wybrane formy kształcenia, Rehabilitacji i wsparcia dzieci z niepełnosprawnością i ich rodzin w republice Namibii*, “Forum oświatowe”, 1(48)/2013, downloaded from: <http://forumoswiatowe.pl/index.php/Czasopismo/article/view/31> (12.03.2016) quoted from: Haihambo and Lightfoot, 2010: „One of the factors that may play a significant role

or death – in Southern Africa, there is *Muti*, known as the “dark secret of South Africa.” *Muti* means a magical mixture which includes not only herbs, minerals and parts of animal organs, but also parts of human body. It is meant to ensure welfare, health, power, wisdom, happiness and many other privileges<sup>36</sup>. “Donors” of human body parts are very often people with disabilities; people suffering from albinism are particularly threatened with attacks of groups providing shamans with ingredients for *Muti*.

Suffering from disabilities in Africa is, without doubt, a huge challenge.

The best example is the quite common, especially in villages, practice consisting in exclusion of children with disabilities from schools<sup>37</sup> and the society. Taking into account the fact that over 60%

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in the society’s approach to people with disabilities and their families includes, among others, folk beliefs. In such beliefs, it is possible to find direct references to disability as such, as well as its’ causes. Among most frequently encountered beliefs in the majority of tribes of sub-Saharan Africa pertaining to the causes of a child’s disability, it is possible to list the conviction that before becoming pregnant, the mother had sexual intercourse with more than one partner. It also happens that the local community sees the cause of disability in the fact that the family, wishing to save on expenses related to visits to quacks, which are aimed at ensuring success during the child’s birth, did not proceed in line with their guidelines. On the other hand, in case twins of the same sex are born, there is a dominant conviction that one of them should be killed in order to save the rest of the family members from death or other misfortune. Sometimes, a child’s disability in the family may also be associated with the effects of a charm cast on the family by a jealous rival of the husband or a penalty for the family’s absence from church or a charm cast on the child in the mother’s womb. Especially severe consequences of Namibian folk beliefs affect newly-born albinos, who are killed to avoid a curse. A family affected by disability is frequently abandoned by the father, who justifies it by the fact that “there are no cases of disability in his family.”

<sup>36</sup> A. Chmielewska, *Tradycyjna medycyna ludów Afryki Południowej*, [in:] Dłużniewski M., Tsermegas I. (ed.), *Środowisko przyrodnicze i społeczno-kulturowe strefy suchej i półsuchej (wbrane przykłady z Afryki Południowej)*, Warsaw 2016, p. 527.

<sup>37</sup> Only 5-10% of children with disabilities attend schools, cf. J. Belzyt, *Spoleczne uwarunkowania sytuacji edukacyjnej osób niepełnosprawnych w krajach Afryki*

of the population of Namibia lives in rural areas, any manifestations of discrimination of people with disabilities may stir justified anxiety.

Therefore, as many researchers indicate<sup>38</sup>, it is very important to educate the society with respect to accepting the “different” as good and valuable. In relation to the strong position of healers and shamans and their significance for the local communities, it is vital to educate this group too: since 2000, WHO has been conducting a project of training sessions aimed at “integrating the knowledge of healers with the progress of science”<sup>39</sup>. Particular emphasis should also be put on the education of women due to the fact that, as indicated by the studies<sup>40</sup>, the mother’s education (already on the primary level) increases, even up to 50%, the chances of children to survive thanks to the knowledge and awareness related to the significance of malnourishment, development defects and diseases related to it.

## Conclusion

Problems faced by people with disabilities in Africa in comparison to other countries, e.g. in Europe, acquire a completely different dimension. People with disabilities have to fight in order to live.

“Very often, the first barrier to participation in the life of a local community is own family of a person with disabilities. In many regions of Africa, disability is considered a punishment inflicted by god and a cause for shame. Children with disabilities are hidden in cottages

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Południowej – wybrane aspekty, “Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy Pedagogiki Specjalnej”, 24/2016.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. M. Sekułowicz (2013), A. Chmielewska (2016), D. Hejwosz-Gromkowska (2012).

<sup>39</sup> A. Chmielewska, Tradycyjna medycyna ludów Afryki Południowej, [in:] Dłużniewski M., Tsermegas I. (ed.), Środowisko przyrodnicze i społeczno-kulturowe strefy suchej i półsuchej (wbrane przykłady z Afryki Południowej), Warsaw 2016, p. 527.

<sup>40</sup> Studies quoted by website DzieciAfryki.com, www.pomocafryce.org

and removed from the sight of neighbours” (dzieciafryki.com). Even if disability is accepted by the family, subsequent barriers emerge immediately, e.g. lack of acceptance in the local environment.

Examples of barriers limiting independence and compromising the quality of life of people with disabilities inhabiting Africa may be listed without end: barriers in access to education, lack of social awareness and social acceptance, threats to health and life resulting from traditional beliefs, architectural and transport barriers, lack of access to doctors and rehabilitation (which, in multiple cases, could restore fitness and enable independent life), lack of efficient social facilities for people with disabilities, or lack of non-governmental organisations assisting people with disabilities<sup>41</sup> and educating them.

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<sup>41</sup> More about it, cf. J. Belzyt, *Společne uwarunkowania sytuacji edukacyjnej osób niepełnosprawnych w krajach Afryki Południowej – wybrane aspekty*, “Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy Pedagogiki Specjalnej”, 24/2016, M. Sekułowicz, P.E. Kaniok, A. Sekułowicz, *Wybrane formy kształcenia, Rehabilitacji i wsparcia dzieci z niepełnosprawnością i ich rodzin w republice Namibii*, “Forum oświatowe”, 1(48)/2013, downloaded from: <http://forumoswiatowe.pl/index.php/Czasopismo/article/view/31> (12.03.2016).

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