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## **REPORTS**

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## **The 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference as part of a series of Na Tak conventions held in Poznan entitled: “Care, Therapy, Education – Subjectivity of People with Multiple Disabilities” Poznan, 29th November 2019**

The 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference as part of a series of Na Tak conventions held in Poznan and entitled “Care, Therapy, Education – Subjectivity of People with Multiple Disabilities” under the honorary patronage of the Mayor of the City of Poznan and the State Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled on 29<sup>th</sup> November at the Faculty of Educational Studies of the Adam Mickiewicz University. The University of Poznan was a co-organizer of the event. The Na Tak Association from Poznan, which since 1989 has been supporting people with disabilities and their families in the city of Poznan, was the main initiator and organizer of the conference.

The grand opening of the conference was attended by the University staff – Full Professor Agnieszka Cybal-Michalska, PhD – Dean of the Faculty of Educational Studies of the Adam Mickiewicz University and Professor of the Adam Mickiewicz University Danuta Kopec, PhD – Head of the Special Education Department of the Adam Mickiewicz University, as well as by other guests: President of the Board of the Na Tak Association – Ewa Kowanska and President of the Board of the Harpo company – Jaroslaw Urbanski, Master of Engineering who welcomed the guests, wishing them inspirational conference, focused both on professional experience and scientific knowledge.

The conference was also visited by exhibitors who in the main hall presented technological solutions to facilitate the functioning of people with disabilities. Harpo (Poland) and Pretorian Technologies (United Kingdom) support blind and visually impaired people with difficulties in communi-

cation, people with intellectual disabilities who require support in reading and those with other disabilities by providing them with equipment that makes them more independent.

Akson (Poland) has submitted an offer of medical equipment directed to the youngest patients. AssisTech (Poland) supports people suffering from brain damage. The company's products allow people with brain damage to communicate with others. Founders of the company worked on a scientific prototype of the C-Eye system (cybereye). The C-Eye system, which allows to track movements of the eyeballs in people with brain damage, enables the disabled to communicate with others and makes rehabilitation more effective. BNC DISTRIBUTION (the Netherlands) presented the Clevey brand. It is a group of products including keyboards designed to develop typing skills for people with motor deficits, those with visual impairment and dyslexia. HUMANWARE presented devices intended for the visually impaired. The last company - Inclusive Technology (United Kingdom) demonstrated devices for people with special educational needs, as well as for those with various types of disabilities, showing, for example, alternative devices to use a computer.

The entire conference was translated into the Polish sign language, the speeches delivered in German and English were translated into Polish by the translators present in the assembly hall.

The conference was also attended by people with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, who thanked speakers and helped moderate discussions. There were also volunteers who supported the disabled when necessary.

An introductory lecture was given by Professor of the Adam Mickiewicz University Danuta Kopec, PhD, special educator. The lecture was divided into five parts. In the first part, the speaker introduced concepts and definitions used in social sciences to refer to persons with severe intellectual and multiple disabilities. The second part concerned the specifics of working with a person with severe intellectual and multiple disabilities in the context of care, therapy and education. In the next part, the Professor discussed research problems she encounters in her work with people suffering from severe intellectual and multiple disabilities. The fourth part of the lecture presented the analysis of special education of people with severe intellectual and multiple disabilities in the context of critical studies on disability. In the last part, the Professor expressed her final reflections on the issues raised previously.

Then, the lecture was given by Prof. Wolfgang Lamers, PhD (Germany), special educator. The Professor presented the latest research project that is being carried out at the Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences of the Humboldt University of Berlin. The project participants are also employees of the *Heidelberg University* of Education and people working for the institutions helping persons with intellectual disabilities in which the project is being implemented. The goal of the project is to provide people working on a daily basis with adults with severe intellectual disability methodological and didactic support, methods of supporting and seeking work for people with disabilities. The Professor emphasized that the lack of appropriate qualifications of the staff who work with people with severe intellectual disability is the main factor responsible for non-adjustment of the forms of support for people with severe intellectual disability, hence the idea of this project.

Next, there was a discussion summarizing all the lectures, followed by a break. After the break, Monika Karwacka and Agnieszka Gorka presented the Forum for People with Multiple Disabilities and a guide to good practices: "Adults with severe multiple disabilities - needs, rights and opportunities". The speakers demonstrated the project aimed at revising the disability certification system, at clarifying the status of a person with coupled disability and at determining the access to appropriate forms of support. The textbook entitled "Adults with severe multiple disabilities - needs, rights and opportunities" presents professional experience of specialists of various fields. The textbook has been written to fill gaps in the professional literature on support in the functioning of adults with more severe and severe intellectual disability coupled with other disorders and disabilities. The textbook is addressed to educators, psychologists, occupational therapists, medical carers, physiotherapists, students and parents.

Professor Matthias Zündel, PhD (Germany) - Professor of the Health Management and Care, a member of the advisory board of the International Association of Basal Stimulation, devoted his lecture to the concept of basal stimulation in care. The speaker introduced basic assumptions of the concept and its importance in nursing, with reference to fundamental human rights and the examples of concept application in various areas. Next, the Professor presented the ways in which caregivers use basal stimulation in their daily work and discussed the progress of works and challenges of implementing the method in practice.

Then, there was a discussion followed by presentation of solutions for people with multiple disabilities. The presentation was made by Anna

Cygan from Harpo, pointing out the latest technical aids for people with multiple disabilities, and Dave Gilbert from Pretorian Technologies, presenting comprehensive, language-independent AAC devices in action.

After a longer break, Michal Kosiedowski – Head of the Future Internet Services Department from the Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Centre, introduced the Insension project: Intelligent System supporting personalized interaction of people with severe complex intellectual disability with digital services. The goal of the project is to develop a system identifying non-symbolic behaviours in people with severe multiple intellectual disabilities. These behaviours, recognized as decisions or intentions, are transferred to supporting applications (messengers, music players). The “smart room” option will also be available in the solution where the IT system will recognize the needs of the user currently staying in the room.

Maciej Baraniewicz, special educator, psychologist, currently working with students suffering from severe multiple disabilities in the Special Education School Complex No. 11 in Krakow. The speaker addressed standards of care in education and therapy of people with severe multiple disabilities. At the end of the lecture, he emphasized that care should enable cognitive, emotional and social development, as well as prevent deterioration of the quality of life, illustrating his statements with educational activities carried out in his workplace.

Grzegorz Bilinski, PhD, academic lecturer, physiotherapist, president and co-founder of the Opole Association for Rehabilitation and a member of the international MWBA Basale Stimulation group. The speaker stressed the importance of the ICE classification in the context of thinking about disability from a therapeutic point of view. This international classification, as Dr. Bilinski mentioned at the beginning, describes limitations, but also possibilities for people with disabilities without ready-made procedures, which is an opportunity to exchange experience between specialists in many fields in order to improve the patient's efficiency.

The last lecture was given by Katarzyna Klimek-Markowicz, special educator and clinical psychologist, founder of the Zakatek Social Elementary School for children and youth with severe multiple disabilities, a member of the Polish Association of Solution-Focused Therapy. The speaker presented her original model to build collaboration with parents using the Solution-Focused Approach. The speaker stressed that in this model, from the beginning of the interaction, a specialist is to consciously influence people he/she works with. The educator pointed to the key aspect in education and therapy i.e. self-development. The speaker particu-

larly referred to the relationship with people involved in the educational and therapeutic process. She believes that the cooperation with patient's family allows to prevent conflicts. The speaker also emphasized the need to motivate parents of children with multiple disabilities to cooperate with specialists in the educational and therapeutic process.

Then, there was a summary and discussion followed by closing of the conference made by Justyna Tyrakowska from the Na Tak Association. She thanked all the people gathered for participation in the conference and invited them to the scientific conference next year. The speaker also emphasised the fact that there are still many areas in the field of education, therapy and care of people with multiple intellectual disabilities that require changes in order to allow the disabled fully participate in social life.