

EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL PLANS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THOSE IN CHARGE OF CARE AND EDUCATIONAL CENTRES AND FAMILY-RUN CHILDREN'S HOME (ON THE EXAMPLE OF BIAŁA PODLASKA POWIAT)

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Abstract. *Research for the purposes of this publication was carried out in Biała Podlaska powiat, which is part of Lublin province. Its implementation was planned within the framework of the project "Education, levelling developmental and educational deficits of children under the care of family-run children's homes, also the care and educational institutions (on the example of Biała Podlaska powiat)". The diagnostic survey method and the study of individual cases were applied. The survey was based on the author's questionnaire designed for the charges of care and educational institutions and family-run children's homes as well as the interview questionnaire with the educators of family and institutional institutions. In turn, the study of individual cases involved the use of an observation sheet and interviews with coordinators of the examined care and educational centres, directors of family-run children's houses. The subject of the article are educational and professional plans of the beneficiaries of institutional and family facilities. Attention was paid to the currently implemented level of education and future educational and occupational plans of these children. The aim of the research was to determine how the educational and professional plans of the charges of various forms of foster care are shaped and what are they conditioned by?*

Among the indicators determining the implementation of educational and occupational aspirations of the examined subjects were environmental factors, i.e. location of the facility or the family-run children's home; personal: willingness and motivation to learn, time spent on homework and learning, age and sex of children under their care, their siblings; in addition, the type of facility in which the examined person is staying, received support and help from educators.

Keywords: *educational and career aspirations, care and educational institution, educational and career plans, family-run children's home.*

Introduction

Education is taking more and more place in everyday life of an everyman as it conditions further functioning and is a way to get educational background, which in turn conditions the professional chances, social and cultural activities one undertakes. Educational background is tightly related to the level of vocational and educational aspirations. Those, according to Bożena Kołaczek's

studies are conditioned by family factors such as: an educational background and profession of parents, a financial status of family, a place of living (Kołaczek 2004: p. 12). Moreover, Kołaczek's studies reveal that educational aspirations of inhabitants of a city are much higher than aspirations of people living in the countryside (Kołaczek, 2004: p. 27). Teresa Wilk, however, adds that alongside with individual abilities the external factors condition educational aspirations as well i.e. an access to education or to extra classes (Wilk, 2003). There are some barriers in completing plans or educational aspirations i.e. territorial barrier connected with the location of the educational institution (Kowalak, 2002) and others i.e. poor health condition, disability, reluctance to learning, lack of time for learning and others (Kołaczek, 2004: p. 95). What is more, it should be highlighted that important are not only activities and classes offered by educational institutions, but also any other extra ways of educating and developing skills i.e. extra classes, private lessons, courses, trainings, an access to which, according to Alicja Zawistowska, is limited in the countryside and because of that country people take advantage of those activities rarely (Zawistowska, 2012). Mirosław Szymański, however, sees correlation between both one's plans and educational aspirations and social inequalities in the field of education (Szymański, 2010).

The subject of the article are plans as well as educational and vocational aspirations of the charges of family-run children houses and educational care centers. The focus was on a level of education being currently realized as well as on a future educational and vocational plans of the charges. The significant factor that has to be taken into consideration is that the studies are not conducted among teenagers living with their biological parents but with foster ones. This can also affect the level of aspirations and vocational and educational plans.

The aim of the studies is to find what educational and vocational plans charges of various foster care have and what conditions these plans. Among the factors affecting completing these plans and aspirations were mentioned: on the one hand, environmental factors i.e. a location of the educational institution and family home of a child, personal willingness and motivation to learning, time devoted to doing homework and learning, the age and sex, having or not having siblings, on the other hand, there are institutional factors i.e. kind of the educational institution where the surveyed person resides, a support and help taken from a tutor.

It was assumed that educational aspirations relate to the level of education that an individual desires to achieve in the future (Szczepska-Pustkowska, 2003: p. 198); they are also treated as life goals that an individual aspires to in order to make a life meaningful (Dyrda, 2009: p. 25); what is more, they are an element of a life plan of an individual (Dyrda, 2009: p. 181); they fulfill the educational needs, which is a crucial condition if a youngster undertakes any activity

(Janowski, 1977: p. 12). Educational choices of parents and children are regarded as a way to achieve a life success. (Odrowąż –Coates & Stańczak, 2013: p. 82).

Educational aspirations, however, should be interpreted as a certain profession, functions within it, a place of working, a position held and the characteristics of a job that are concentrated on getting a specific profession in the future (Szczepska-Pustkowska, 2003: p. 199).

The expectations and perception of one's life in the long-term run that a youngster has are, according to Urszula Tyluś, one of the measure of the vocational and educational aspirations (Tyluś, 2010). Opinions, expectations and preferred values concerning different goods and offers of the reality accompany educational and vocational aspirations (Tyluś, 2010: p. 97).

Aspirations constitute a factor determining behavioral patterns youngsters have as well as they affect decision-making process related to life goals. Life goals, in turn, encompass career goals by stimulating an individual to undertake activities that make those plans come true. It is worth highlighting, as M. Tyszkowa mentions, that perspectives and life aspirations play more and more significant role not earlier than at the age of 13-14, under this age it happens rarely that a child can plan a future (Tyszkowa, 1990).

Furthermore, children residing in a foster care can encounter numerous obstacles connected with developing their individual aspirations and interests that result from an earlier educational negligence, changes of a place of living and numerous emotional problems etc.

Researched territory and researched sample

Researches for this publication were conducted in the educational care centers and in family-run children houses in Bialski district that is located in the eastern part of Poland. Conducting the researches was planned within the project *Education, balancing educational and developmental deficiencies of the charges of family-run children's houses and educational centers (the example of Bialski district)* realized by Department of Pedagogy at Higher State School in Biała Podlaska. In Bialski district currently function three educational centers. *Placówka Opiekuńczo - Wychowawcza in Komarno (Educational Care Center in Komarno)* established in 1997 which is a socializing institution offering 30 places. The institution ensures 24/7 care and upbringing to children completely or partially uncared-for by their parents when a foster care wasn't found. The institution employs 14 tutors. Currently there are residing 25 charges in it.

The next institution is *Placówka Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcza in Szachy (Educational Care Center in Szachy)*. It has functioned since 2003. Separate housing resembles its residents a family house. The institution is addressed to

children over the age of 10. It offers 14 places. It employs 5 tutors. These days there are residing 10 charges.

The last researched institution is *Placówka Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcza in Janów Podlaski (Educational Care Center in Janów Podlaski)*. It was set up in 2010. It was redeveloped from the former border guards building. The building was adopted to the ruling residential standards for 12 wards. There are 5 tutors working with children. In the place there are currently residing 10 charges.

To compare, other part of the studies was done in two family-run children's houses in Bohukały and in *Family-run Children's House in Neple (Rodzinny Dom Dziecka in Neple)*. Both villages are parts of Terespol commune. In bialski district there is one more family-run educational care center in Żabka in Międzyrzec Podlaski commune. Unfortunately, despite the undertaken attempts, the institution disapproved the idea of conducting studies there. Each of the above mentioned institutions takes care of 8 charges.

The researches conducted in the third quarter of 2017 were qualitative and quantitative. In the beginning a survey was carried out among 25 charges of educational care centers who were aged 11-20 and among 10 charges of family-run children's houses aged the same. The applied researching method was a survey including both open and closed questions.

Moreover, 10 questionnaires were made among the selected tutors of the three educational care institutions and among 6 people governing the family-run children's houses. Interviewed people were both men and women.

Additionally, within individual case studies, observation sheets were completed and the acquired information was complemented with the interviews with coordinators of educational care centers in Szachy and Janów Podlaski and with the director of the Family-run Children's House in Neple. The observation was participatory and hidden and its aim was to learn the situation of the researched institutions and the relationships between the charges and tutors, which enriched the acquired researches.

Plans and educational aspirations of the charges of different forms of foster care according to the researches

Analysis encompassed currently realized level of education, further educational and professional plans connected with the interests, passions and talents of the charges. It was taken into account, however, that any educational decisions taken by the charges of foster care are actually affected by various constraints i.e. individual abilities, numerous acts of educational negligence, lack of motivation, lack of support from a biological family, location of the institutions, limited access to extra activities or to activities that develop charges' interests.

First, it was checked what current level of education is realized by the charges of both family-run children’s houses and educational care centers. Data is presented in table 1.

Table 1 **Currently realized level of education**

Type of school	Educational Care Center		Family-run children’s House	
	No.of people	Percent	No.of people	Percent
Primary school	5	20%	3	30%
Middle school	7	28%	2	20%
Vocational school	10	40%	0	0
Technical school	2	8%	1	10%
Secondary school	1	4%	4	40%
Total	25	100%	10	100%

Data show that most of the surveyed people represent the oldest age group i.e. teenagers learning in upper-secondary schools (vocational school, technical school and secondary school). Among the charges of educational care centers prevail people who learn in vocational schools and in family-run children’s houses there are teenagers learning in secondary schools. The charges of educational care centers much more often decide on vocational schools that offer them a specific profession and relatively quick chance to get independent and to perform a job.

What needs to be stressed is that in both types of institutions charges are provided with all necessary course books and educational facilities, there is an access to different forms of educational help, home learning is ensured, there is a support with homework, but the location of the institutions in the rural area hinders an access to extra activities, compensatory activities and the ones that develop charges’ interests and passions.

Further educational aims of the charges are tightly connected with the chosen direction of further education. See table 2.

Table 2 **Further educational and vocational aims that charges of foster care have**

Further plans	Educational Care Centers		Family-run children’s Houses	
	No.of people	Percent	No.of people	Percent
Working and extramural studies	2	8%	0	0
Continuing of education	5	20%	8	80%
Taking on a job	9	36%	3	30%
Going abroad	8	32%	0	0
No idea	4	16%	2	20%

Note: the results of the studies cannot be summed up because more than one answer was possible. The percentage was calculated for 25 charges of the educational care centers and for 10 charges of family-run children’s houses

Much more often the charges of a family-run children's houses plan further learning after finishing the educational stage they are currently at. The situation concerns 80 % of the researched charges of family-run children's houses.

The charges of educational care centers, however, continue education rarely. Joanna Przygoda from Warsaw University reports statements reflecting unwillingness to continue education i.e. *insufficient abilities, a lack of zeal for learning, a willingness to earn money as quickly as possible and to make a living independently* (Przygoda, 1998: p. 201).

Every fifth charge of the foster care does not know what to do in the future. As an example, the statement of a thirteen-year old charge of educational care center: *I do not have plans for future, I do not want to learn, I see no point in it, I do not need it, in the future probably I will work illegally on the construction site* or a statement of a seventeen-year old secondary school girl: *I do not know what I want to do in my life yet, I have not considered it yet.*

Terrifying is the fact that over 30 % of the charges of educational care centers do not see their future in Poland and soon after finishing education and becoming independent they plan to go abroad.

In the table 3 there is data informing about significant people in charges' lives, people who the charges the most often turn to in order to discuss their future plans.

Table 3 **People whom wards talk about their future plans**

Talks concerning future	Educational care centers				Family-run children's houses			
	girls		boys		girls		boys	
	No.of people	Percent	No.of people	Percent	No.of people	Percent	No.of people	Percent
With nobody	6	46,16%	6	49,98%	0	0	0	0
With tutors/ care providers	6	46,16%	4	33,32%	6	60%	2	20%
With sibling	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10%
With parents	0	0	1	8,33%	0	0	0	0
With friends	1	7,69%	0	0	1	10%	1	10%
With a trainee/ volunteer	1	7,69%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other eg. a boss, a school tutor	0	0	1	8,33%	0	0	1	10%

Note: the results of the studies cannot be summed up because more than one answer was possible, the percentage is calculated 25 charges of educational care centers (12 boys,13 girls) and for 10 charges of family-run children's houses.

The key difference between an educational care centers and family-run children's houses is that in family-run children's houses there are no charges who would not talk to anybody about their future, while in educational care centers this group accounts for nearly 50 %.

The most often the youth ask for a piece of advice or a hint their care providers and tutors. Girls address tutors with their concerns much more often than boys. Boys prefer to ask for advice their friends, siblings and other adults eg. school tutor or a boss in the place of work. According to A. Łuczyński and his studies on family-run children's houses, the people whom the charges address when having a problem are either care providers or friends and schoolmates (Łuczyński, 2008: p. 181).

Future professional plans of the charges were analyzed. See data in table 4 below.

Table 4 Professional plans of charges of the foster care

Future plans	Educational care centers		Family-run children's houses	
	No.of people	Percent of the researched people	No.of people	Percent of the researched people
Physical worker	8	32%	1	10%
Cleaner	4	16%	0	0
Teacher/pedagogue	3	12%	5	50%
Shop assistant	4	16%	0	0
Policeman	1	4%	0	0
IT specialist	1	4%	1	10%
Farmer	1	4%	0	0
Beautician	0	0	1	10%
No clear plans	3	12%	2	20%
Total	25	100%	10	100%

According to M. Tyszkowa (Tyszkowa, 1990) charges aged under 13 do not have specific career plans and now they are thinking about finishing current school. Older charges, however, declare various career interests. In a family-run children's houses prevail people who want to graduate from university and who see their future in a school or other educational institutions (50 % of the charges). In educational care centers, however, prevail jobs based on physical work (eg. a mechanic, a driver, a construction worker, a cleaner). These account for 60 % of the surveyed people.

K. Buchta believes that the choice of an upper secondary school made by the teenagers of villages and small towns is dictated by the following: an access to schools, their location in the nearest surrounding and by possibilities and costs of

commuting (Buchta, 2009: p. 83). The researches of M. Ruszkowska from 2011 and from 2014 conducted in bialski district revealed that in foster families the educational aspirations are conditioned by the place of living, in family-run children's houses a sex of a child determines a choice of school (in a case of male, a place of living as well), in educational care centers it is a character of institution that shapes the level of educational aspirations of the teenagers (Ruszkowska, 2016). J. Przygoda points in his researches a primacy of family-run foster care over educational centers when it comes to future, too (Przygoda, 1998).

The present findings of the researches confirm a primacy of family-run foster care over educational centers. The charges of family-run children's houses more often continue education on studies, more of them speak about their educational and vocational plans, too. By contrast, the charges of educational centers want to get a profession quicker, to earn on living and, unfortunately, large number of them do not connect their future with Poland.

Conclusions

1. The kind of institution determines the level of educational aspirations and the choice of future profession. That is why in a family-run children's houses people finish studies more often while in educational care centers people decide on vocational schools.
2. A sex affects the educational aspirations as girls are more willing to continue education.
3. The age of a child relates to having or not having future career plans. Teenagers aged under 14 very rarely determine their plans.
4. The location of the institutions in the rural area hinders an access to the activities that develop interests of the teenagers.
5. In case of family-run children's houses and educational care centers personal factors eg. a lack of motivation to learning, getting reluctant quickly, a fear of failure and a lack of faith in one's talents, occur very often and only the right attitude of the tutors and care providers can change them.

Summary

Perspectives presented within this study and the results of empirical researches do not max out the whole problematic aspects of aspirations and educational and vocational plans of the charges of a foster care. The field of study requires further studies and analysis. Presented findings offer some hints on how to work with the charges of both educational care centers and family-run children's houses. It is important to initiate among the charges speaking about their educational and vocational plans as well as to make them aware how important education and qualification in one's life is. Moreover,

it is necessary to take care of the right motivation to learning of a child. When it is possible, an access to activities that develop interests and passions should be ensured.

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