

Jarosław Charchuła SJ
ORCID: 0000-0002-8470-7374
Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow, Poland

Report of the International Scientific Conference “Synergy of Educational Environments: Social Contexts of Education”, Krakow, November 8, 2017

On 8 November 2017 in Krakow, the International Scientific Conference entitled “Synergy of Educational Environments: Social Contexts of Education” was held. The organizers were: Ministry of Science and Higher Education and Pedagogical Faculty of the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow. The co-organizers were, inter alia: Šiauliai University (Lithuania), LUMSA University (Italy), University of Tiraspol (Moldova), University of Pecz (Hungary), St. Clement of Ohrid University of Sofia (Bulgaria), Trakia University (Bulgaria), Pedagogical University of Freiburg (Germany), Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic), University of Rēzekne (Latvia), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia).

The meeting was covered by the following patronages: Council of the City of Krakow, as well as, His Magnificence Rector of the Jesuit University Ignatianum. The Scientific Committee was chaired by Joanna M. Łukasik and Krzysztof Biel SJ, the Dean of the Faculty of Education of the above-mentioned university. Moreover, the scientific committee included also: Remigijus Bubnys (Šiauliai University, Lithuania), Folco Cimagalli (LUMSA University, Italy), Valentin Constantinov (University of Tiraspol, Moldova), Maria Diacon (University of Tiraspol, Moldova), Andreas Héjj (University of Pecz, Hungary), Ewa Kobyłecka (University of Zielona Góra, Poland), Bozhidara Kriviradeva (St. Clement of Ohrid University of Sofia, Bulgaria), Elena Lavrentsova (University

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of Trakia, Bulgaria), Teresa Zubrzycka-Maciąg (The Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland), Jarosław Michalski (The Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, Poland), Anna Murawska (University of Szczecin, Poland), Inetta Nowosad (University of Zielona Góra, Poland), Andrea Óhidy (Pedagogical University of Freiburg, Germany), Jiří Prokop (Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic), Anna Szafrńska (University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland), Valentina Sharlanova (Trakia University, Bulgaria), Mirosław J. Szymański (The Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, Poland), Svetlana Ušča (University of Rēzekne, Latvia), Darja Zaviršek (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia). The Program and Organization Committee was chaired by Jarosław Charchuła SJ.

Intensive technological progress, transformations in the economic sphere, development of new media and other globalization processes significantly affect the life of modern man. As a result, new expectations, hopes, but also anxieties arise nowadays. The dynamics of life in the modern world and changing social trends exert cultural, economic and social pressures. Adaptation requirements are increasing, which in turn creates new educational needs. Dealing with the fast pace of life and changes requires both the individual and the social system to activate new cognitive resources and learning processes. Finding yourself in new realities requires you to have individual competences and skills.

The educational environment is a space with a complex system of developmental stimuli of the nature of intentional and spontaneous interactions that cause a permanent change in the behavior of individuals and influence the formation of specific attitudes, views and knowledge, which contributes to the development of a mature personality prepared to take on many social roles. The effectiveness of those processes depends undoubtedly on the level of integration of activities of various social environments, which should be based on a constant exchange of views, ideas and arguments. At present, it is necessary to effectively integrate educational activities on many levels of social life, mainly due to the prevalence of the occurrence of risk and destructive interactions in it. Hence, there is a need for scientific reflection and discussion, of all the interested people, on issues that give an opportunity for a real synergy of educational environments, taking into account the challenges and conditions of the current social context.

The synergy of educational and social activities is a challenge for the present day. Focusing knowledge, strengthening and intensifying the effects of various activities, not only improves the activity, but above all gives individuals the sense of subjectivity and sense of coexistence within the community. Therefore, the synergy is a specific interaction that multiplies the interactions of various factors. It is an indirect phenomenon between “being” and “action”, combining multiplicity and diversity into one coherent whole. Creating new initiatives, mutually reinforcing the effects, supplementing and improving the methods of work, inspiring each other, allow for approaching the issues in a broader context.

Promoting the assumptions of joint work, inspiring people to make efforts “for the benefit of” others, adds value to modern social life, while encouraging individuals to become more involved in the process of environmental stimulation. In this context, the main objective of the conference was to initiate a plane of analysis and description of changes that take place in the educational process as a result of currently observed social changes and globalization processes to indicate on that basis the needs and challenges that are faced by the environments involved in the educational process. The organizers’ goal was encouraging reflection on the key elements of the changing social context and their effects on the whole of educational processes. Important features of the widely defined process of synergy of educational environments, which are particularly important today, include: diversity and complementarity, cooperativeness and creativity, as well as, respect and trust, good and effective management. The experiences and observations of conference participants, their initiatives, are examples of good practices in the field of synergy between different educational environments. Therefore, the meeting was a chance to present both theoretical contexts and the pedagogical implications of the synergy of educational activities. It was a practical look at the environmental dimension of the individual’s participation in social life.

The issue met with great interest, as evidenced by the number of speeches. Over one hundred people participated in the debates, from thirty different scientific centers (18 national and 12 foreign ones). Moreover, there were also representatives of various educational and social institutions from Poland and abroad. The deliberations were

divided into two plenary sessions, the topics of which focused on the synergy of educational activities in the educational, social and cultural areas.. In the plenary session, the discussion was moderated by: Norbert G. Pięka (The Pedagogical University of Krakow, Poland), Joanna Łukasik (The Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow, Poland), who after introductory lectures (of the, *inter alia*, the following lecturers: Andreas Héjj [University of Pecz, Hungary], Ewa Kobyłecka [University of Zielona Góra, Poland], Arianna Kitzinger [University of Sopron, Hungary], Gerard Kilroy [Jagiellonian University, Poland]) led a discussion on identity issues, the world of values, and dilemmas related to intercultural education. The second plenary session was moderated by: Ewa Kobyłecka and Joanna Łukasik. The lectures in this session were delivered by the following professors: Norbert G. Pięka, Lidia Kataryńczuk-Mania (University of Zielona Góra, Poland), Anna Maria Rizzo (The University of Salento, Italy). The subsequent debate allowed to present examples of good practices, on the one hand it complemented social diagnoses, on the other it showed the path of cooperation, the effects of which contribute to the revitalization of individual groups and environments. The cross-sectoral debate has allowed the identification of new, key directions and areas of social and educational activities.

The conference participants had the opportunity to present papers and research messages during the four thematic sections:

Section 1: The essence of synergy of educational environments, i.e., the values and standards of cooperation, ideas, goals and effects. The role and place of individual social institutions in the educational process (moderator: Jarosław Charchuła SJ).

Section 2: Expectations of individual subjects of social life related to the educational process. Challenges, opportunities and threats (moderator: Joanna Łukasik).

Section 3: Theoretical and research models of synergy of educational environments: cooperation, partnership and dialogue (moderator: Markus Lipowicz).

Section 4: Practical models of synergy of educational environments: implementations, good practices, reality and ideals; social conditions of joint activities (moderator: Bogdan Stańkowski SDB).

During the conference, a poster session was planned, constituting an alternative form for the participants, and its coordinator

was Magdalena Urlińska. The participants of the session had the opportunity to share, via a graphic form, their experiences and scientific and research interests, present various initiatives and socio-educational activities of scientific and research centers and organizations for the synergy of educational activities of social groups and local communities. The submitted graphic presentations (22 posters) covered different spaces, places, time, people and areas of social activities. Their problems were related to, e.g., broadly understood education, space of activities of educational institutions and school experiences, co-existence of social groups and environments involved in the educational process.

The conference turned out to be a fruitful scientific undertaking enabling its participants to share their experience and knowledge, as well as to establish new contacts and scientific cooperation.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE:

Dr Jarosław Charchuła SJ
Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow, Poland
jaroslaw.charchula@ignatianum.edu.pl