

UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Well-being (UNESCO Chair no 666)

(brief information)

The UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair was established in October 2004, under the agreement concluded between UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris and the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education (the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw).

Initially, the Chair bore the name "UNESCO/ Janusz Korczak Chair in Social Pedagogy" and carried out activities within the field of social education. The name of the Chair was changed to: UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Well-being. The new name better shows the nature of the research and activities conducted by the Chair. The patron of the Chair is Janusz Korczak, one of the central characters in emancipatory education directed at the rights and well-being of children, not only in Poland and Europe but also globally.

All of the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair's activities are aligned with UNESCO's priorities in relation to humanities and social sciences and place the issue of research, didactic and organisational activities in an interdisciplinary dimension. The Chair undertakes actions which respond to the challenges present in the modern world and defined by Sustainable Development Goals. The themes and topics of organised events include: education, cultural diversity, human rights (especially children's and youth's rights), intercultural dialogue and intercultural education, as well as modern psychological, pedagogical and sociological challenges.

The primary objective of the Chair is to maintain and strengthen academic links in the field of interdisciplinary studies on child development and well-being. The UNESCO Chair conducts research programs, participates in conferences, seminars, debates, study visits and since 2006 has organised International Summer Schools.

The aims of educational, organisational and research activities of the Chair encompass two main fields of science: psychology and educational sciences. Furthermore, they are directed at a broadly defined social development and well-being of the child in multicultural societies. By definition, the problems of the child's development and well-being, and thereby man's and his environment, transgress disciplines and require from researchers to reach beyond fragmentary study perspectives.

The purpose of the Chair is to organise and integrate ongoing studies, both in Poland and internationally, that encourage better understanding of the conditions and psychosocial mechanisms of the child's social development and well-being.

The Chair works towards improving the quality of child-centered education (one of the basic postulates of Korczak's pedagogy) and facilitating the realisation of children's rights in the complex contemporary world.

Another purpose of the Chair is to develop more effective international cooperation in the aforementioned areas of activity, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, and to develop training programmes and curricula for psychologist, educators, teachers, etc. to help them implement contemporary knowledge and take creative approaches to their work with children.

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