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## Do we really want to include disabled people in society?

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# Z PROBLEMATYKI SPOŁECZNO-PEDAGOGICZNEJ

SEMINARE  
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## DO WE REALLY WANT TO INCLUDE DISABLED PEOPLE IN SOCIETY?

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with raising questions, about what we think and feel about disabled people and consequently how we treat people who have additional needs or disabilities. I would suggest how we feel about disabled people determines how we behave towards them. Many countries have introduced the concept of inclusive education and have laws which are designed to prevent discrimination against people who have additional needs and disabilities. In the UK these include the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) from 1995<sup>1</sup> now replaced by the Equality Act (2010)<sup>2</sup>. The DDA made it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in relation to employment, the provision of goods and services, education and transport. Additionally the Act defined duties placed on service providers requiring „reasonable adjustments” to be made when providing access to goods, facilities, services and premises. The core concepts in this Act centred around „less favourable treatment” and the failure to make a „reasonable adjustment” and take an „active approach that requires employers, schools and service providers to take steps to remove barriers from participation by disabled people”<sup>3</sup>.

In addition there is a duty to promote positive images of disabled people and to combat stereotypes. These concepts have now been incorporated in the Equality Act 2010. As you will appreciate what constitutes a „reasonable adjustment” and „less favourable treatment” still causes great debate. These concepts have been incorporated into the Equality Act 2010 which makes it illegal for

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<sup>1</sup> See the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents>>, (accessed: 21.08.2012).

<sup>2</sup> See the Equality Act (2010), <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>>, (accessed: 12.08.2012).

<sup>3</sup> G. Hills, *The Equality Act for Educational Professionals: A simple guide to disability inclusion in schools*, Routledge, Abingdon 2012, p. 2–3.

educational institutions to discriminate against disabled people for reasons related to their disability. Under the Act educational institutions are required to make „reasonable adjustments” to allow all people regardless of disability to take part in all the institution’s activities. The concept of „less favourable” treatment means that in all cases comparisons need to be made with how non-disabled people would be treated in the same situation.

These concepts about how the disability discrimination legislation applies to educational organisations can be illustrated by the following example taken from Hills: „A pupil with Tourette’s Syndrome is admitted to a (mainstream) school. The school wants the pupil to have all their lessons in a separate room in case they distract other children with their involuntary noises and body movements (which is an intrinsic part of their disability). The school also claims that the inclusion of the pupil is causing significant disadvantage for the provision of efficient education for other children”<sup>4</sup>. The question here is would this less favourable treatment be related to the child’s disability? Hills suggests the answer would be „yes” because the reasons provided for segregation, are an intrinsic part of the disability. In suggesting that other children’s education may be affected this is based on assumptions about the child’s and the other pupil’s reactions. This is likely to be unlawful discrimination as there is no substantial reason for suggesting this could happen. She says: „The treatment that the child was to receive has to be compared with the treatment that other pupils would receive who did not make involuntary noises and body movements. This child would be isolated from the curriculum and from their peers in a way that others would not. So, for a reason that relates to their disability, this child is being treated less favourably than another child to whom that reason does not apply”<sup>5</sup>.

There are many policy documents and academic papers which promote the ideas of inclusive education and which also examine the barriers to inclusion in education such as: The Index for Inclusion<sup>6</sup>; Examining pre-service teachers’ attitudes towards children with autism in the USA<sup>7</sup>; Investigating the attitudes of head teachers of Cypriot primary schools towards inclusion<sup>8</sup>; Student teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about inclusion and inclusive practice<sup>9</sup>; Student

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<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> T. Booth, M. Ainscow, *The Index for Inclusion. Developing and learning for participation in schools*, Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, Bristol 2002, p. 1–102.

<sup>7</sup> See M. Park, M. Chitiyo, Y. S. Choi, *Examining pre-service teachers’ attitudes towards children with autism in the USA*, *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 10(2010)2, p. 107–114.

<sup>8</sup> See K. Hadjikakou, M. Mnasonos, *Investigating the attitudes of head teachers of Cypriot primary schools towards inclusion*, *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 12(2012)2, p. 66–81.

<sup>9</sup> See N. Beacham, M. Rouse, *Student teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about inclusion and inclusive practice*, *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 12(2012)1, p. 3–11.

Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Variables affecting teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Bangladesh<sup>10</sup>; Conceptions of inclusion and inclusive education: a critical examination of the perspectives and practices of teachers in Poland<sup>11</sup>; Factors related to teachers' attitudes towards the inclusive education of students with severe intellectual disabilities in Riyadh, Saudi, Arabia<sup>12</sup>; and „My colleagues wear blinkers ... . If they were trained, they would understand better. Reflections on teacher education on inclusion in Cyprus”<sup>13</sup>.

Many disability organisations in the UK currently stress the definitions of inclusion in their publicity. For example, The Council for Disabled Children (CDC) state: „We believe disabled children and young people should enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other children; All disabled children communicate and have a right to have their views heard; The views of disabled children and young people and their families are vital to the development of an inclusive society. All disabled children and young people should be fully included in every aspect of society”<sup>14</sup>. So what does this tell us? Why is it necessary to make these statements? I would suggest we are being told that there are still problems about everyone accepting and understanding the concept of inclusion. Although we might claim to be an inclusive society there are still great obstacles and barriers preventing us achieving full inclusion. So I ask the following questions in this paper:

- Do we really want to include disabled people in our schools, colleges/societies?
- What is an inclusive society?
- Do we really include disabled people as equal members of our society?
- Do we really feel they can add to the richness of our schools/universities?

A good indication of how a society views disability and disability issues is to look at what and how the media report it<sup>15</sup>. The mass media are powerful. So,

<sup>10</sup> See M. Ahmmed, U. Sharma, J. Deppeler, *Variables affecting teachers' Attitudes towards inclusive education in Bangladesh*, Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs 12(2012)3, p. 132–140.

<sup>11</sup> See A. Starczewska, A. Hodgkinson, G. Adams, *Conceptions of inclusion and inclusive education: a critical examination of the perspectives and practices of teachers in Poland*, Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs 12(2012)3, p.162–169.

<sup>12</sup> See T. A. Alquraini, *Factors related to teachers' attitudes towards the inclusive education of students with severe intellectual disabilities in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*, Journal of Research In Special Educational Needs 12(2012)3, p. 170–182.

<sup>13</sup> S. Symeonidou, H. Phtiaka, *My colleagues wear blinkers... If they were trained, they would understand better. Reflections on teacher education on inclusion in Cyprus*, Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs 2012, DOI: 10.1111/j.1471–3802.2012.01234.x.

<sup>14</sup> *Council for Disabled Children Publicity Leaflet*, Council for Disabled Children, London 2010, <<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/who-we-are/our-vision-and-values>>, (accessed: 19.02.2013).

<sup>15</sup> See L. Wood, *Media representation of disabled people: A critical analysis*, 2012, <<http://www.disabilityplanet.co.uk/critical-analysis.html>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013); B. Haller, *News coverage of disability issues: A final report for the Center for an Accessible Society*, Center for an

does the media encourage an inclusive society? The following questions should be asked:

- How are disabled people/ disability issues reported?
- What sort of issues are reported?
- Why are they reported?
- What is newsworthy?

Haller, Ralph and Zaks in a study to determine how the US news report the disability, autism, point out that the „news media is a major source of information about the society in which we live and much research has confirmed the place of news media as agents in the social construction of reality and in the creation of a societal worldview”<sup>16</sup>. They argue, that the reporting of disability issues in general has tended to follow the medical model of disability and common themes reported. These include the reporting of:

- medical and other controversies,
- causes,
- cures,
- symptoms and associated behaviours<sup>17</sup>.

Disabled people are not often asked to speak for themselves they are usually „talked about”. They are not in control of disability related coverage as they are rarely used as sources in news stories. Those that are, are usually seen in local rather than national news stories<sup>18</sup>.

Wood emphasises that the media as an industry is critical in disseminating information to the world and suggests that the „influence the media holds over society [...] has contributed to the discrimination of disabled people” in the following areas<sup>19</sup>:

1. By using the medical model of disability, impairments have been reinforced and thus the focus is on the disability. Disabled people are defined by their impairment.
2. The media relies on stereotypes many of which they have created. This portrays disabled people in a negative and powerless manner.
3. The role of media influences; political agendas, the intended audience and current societal trends. „Reality” is created by a small group of people who

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Accessible Society, San Diego 1999, (Part of Grant No. H133A980045 from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research); B. Haller, S. Ralph, *Profitability, Diversity, and Disability Images in Advertising in the United States and Great Britain*, Disability Studies Quarterly 21(2001)2, <<http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/276/301>>, (accessed: 19.02.2013).

<sup>16</sup> B. Haller, S. Ralph, Z. Zaks, *Confronting obstacles to inclusion: How the US news media report disability*, in: *Confronting obstacles to inclusion: International responses to developing inclusive education*, ed. R. Rose, Routledge, Abingdon 2010, p. 9–30.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>18</sup> See B. Haller, *News coverage of disability issues ...*

<sup>19</sup> See L. Wood, *Media Representation of ...*

make the decisions about what to report and how to report issues. „Editors, producers, programmers and budget controllers are swayed by their own opinions of disability and what they believe will bring in audiences”, hence the use of stereotypes.

4. The use of negative terminology; language and images about disability and
5. The lack of disabled people employed in the media and the effect of media on disabled people.

This view is supported by Haller, Ralph and Zaks who argue that „the attitudes perpetuated in the news media act as barriers towards the inclusion of disabled people in mainstream society”<sup>20</sup>. They analysed stories about autism from four major US newspapers to see how the news media are creating „reality” about the disability — autism. Four main themes were identified in their research:

1. Autism is about conflict, controversy and tragedy, for example, with parents who think vaccines ruined their children on one side and scientists who say that is not true on the other;
2. Language used about autism misinterprets it and/or stigmatises it, i.e. it is linked to other disabilities such as intellectual disabilities (which is often not the case), or a sense of hopelessness for families;
3. Autism causes bizarre behaviour. Many stories, whatever their main reason for being newsworthy contain a description of bizarre behaviour.
4. How people with autism function in society. This was not a particularly prevalent news frame but there were a few stories about how people with autism engaged with society<sup>21</sup>.

They found that „the majority of stories examined about autism, whatever the topic being covered, have a section which gives examples of bizarre behaviour, usually to introduce the story. Thus, the story focuses the reader’s attention on the negative characteristics of children with autism. The news frame links to the medical model of disability which is concerned with what is wrong with them, what are the causes, who can society blame and the media’s obsession with finding a cure”<sup>22</sup>. The bizarre behaviour is covered in the following story: „One story which has as part of its title »separating fact from fear as the courts and Hollywood wade in« begins with a description of a young boy with autism. You wonder what he thinks. The little boy who flaps his arms and bangs his head. Who bristles at the touch of wool, and covers his ears when balloons go »pop«!. The boy who doesn’t respond to his name and will never say, »I love you«. Despite the positive title, the usual topics are covered such as, the increasing numbers of

<sup>20</sup> B. Haller, S. Ralph, Z. Zaks, *Confronting Obstacles to Inclusion ...*, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 14–22.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 9.

children in the US with autism, the refuelled controversy about the relation of autism to vaccines, the causes and finding a cure”<sup>23</sup>.

In reporting autism, the news frames which ignore, devalue or misrepresent disability issues thus perpetuate the beliefs of the dominant able bodied culture which disability studies scholars call „abelism”<sup>24</sup>. This narrative frame presents people with autism as disadvantaged or having a worthless status<sup>25</sup> and who depend on the state or society for social and economic support. This is considered to be a gift and not a right.

In a report commissioned by Inclusion London, the Glasgow Media Group analysed the way in which the media were reporting disability and how this impacted on the public’s attitude towards disabled people. Media coverage was compared and contrasted in five papers in 2010/11 with a similar period in 2004/5. There were some significant differences mainly due to the policies towards incapacity benefits of the UK Coalition Government. The researchers found an increase in the reporting of disability in the print media but there was an „increased politicalisation” the coverage<sup>26</sup>. The main increase in stories focused on fraud and disability benefit. Benefit fraud was the most popular theme mentioned when members of the research focus groups were asked to describe a typical story about disability. An increase in the number of articles reporting the „claimed burden disabled people are alleged to have placed on the economy — with some articles even blaming the recession itself on incapacity benefit claims”<sup>27</sup> were written. Briant, Watson, and Philo found that the benefit fraud stories were impacting on people’s perceptions and views of disability related benefits, with all focus group members claiming that levels of fraud were much higher than in reality. These claims they justified by references to newspaper articles they had read. The articles contained a significant increase in the use of pejorative language to describe disabled people. Scrounger, cheat, skiver and the suggestion that living on incapacity benefit had become what was called a „lifestyle choice”. These changes the authors of the report say „reinforced the idea of disabled claimants as »undeserving«”<sup>28</sup>. There was a reduction in the proportion of articles which describe disabled people in sympathetic and deserving terms. „Real life” stories,

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> R. Martin, *Fiona Pilkington inquest: How ableism can lead to suicide*, (1st October, 2009), <<http://globalcomment.com/2009/fiona-pilkington-inquest-how-ableism-can-lead-to-suicide/>>, (accessed: 21.08.2012); F. K. Campbell, *Refusing able(ness): A preliminary conversation about abelism*, M/C Journal 11(2008)3, (accessed: 19.01.2009).

<sup>25</sup> J. E. Weeber, *What could I know of racism?*, Journal of Counselling and Development 77(1999)1, p. 20–24.

<sup>26</sup> See E. Briant, N. Watson, G. Philo, *Bad news for Disabled: People: How the newspapers are reporting disability*, Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research and Glasgow Media Unit, University of Glasgow, Glasgow 2011, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

which refer to disabled people getting on with their lives are also reduced as are stories and people with „mental ill health conditions and other »hidden« impairments were more likely to be presented as »undeserving«”<sup>29</sup>. Articles which were rare included; those which explore the political and socio economic context of disability and which explore the impact that the Coalition Government’s cuts will have on disabled people. A decrease in the reference to discrimination against disabled people or other contextualising issues was reported. The report found that disabled people felt threatened by the way that disability issues were being reported<sup>30</sup>.

Walker reports that six of the UK’s biggest disability groups have claimed that the „Government’s focus on alleged fraud and over claiming to justify cuts in disability benefits has caused an increase in resentment and abuse directed at disabled people”<sup>31</sup>. He reports that the groups have suggested that the Governments’ „fairness for taxpayers” has „fostered the notion that disabled people are a separate group who don’t contribute”. This would support the increased number of disability hate crimes reported. Disabled people experience more violence and hostility than other groups<sup>32</sup>. Disability hate crime is definitely on the agenda. This is defined by Quarmby, 2008 as „an extreme articulation of the prejudice and discrimination faced on a day to day basis” and given the name „disablism” which SCOPE (a charity concerned with disability) defines as „discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviour arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to others”<sup>33</sup>.

Prejudice against disabled people, Quarmby says is „rooted in the view that disabled people are inferior; in some cases less than human” and this can lead to them being abused, harassed, attacked, humiliated and even killed since their lives „are considered less valuable than other people’s lives”<sup>34</sup>. There are many examples of instances of disability hate crime. For example: „In August 2007 Brent Martin, a young man with learning disabilities, was viciously attacked and murdered for a £5 bet. Before his death, his three attackers partially stripped him, chased him through the streets and sustained him to an attack in four different

<sup>29</sup> E. Briant, N. Watson, G. Philo, *Bad news for Disabled ...*, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4–5.

<sup>31</sup> P. Walker, *Benefit cuts are fuelling abuse of disabled people, say charities*, Guardian, 05. 02. 2012, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/feb/05/benefit-cuts-fuelling-abuse-disabled-people>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

<sup>32</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Promoting the Safety and Security of Disabled People*, April 2009, <[http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/publications/promoting\\_safety\\_security\\_er.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/publications/promoting_safety_security_er.pdf)>, (accessed: 09.08.2012).

<sup>33</sup> *Getting away with murder: Disabled people’s experience of hate crime in the UK*, eds. K. Quarmby, R. Scott, Scope, London 2008, p. 4, <[http://www.scope.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdfs/Campaigns\\_policy/Scope\\_Hate\\_Crime\\_Report.pdf](http://www.scope.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdfs/Campaigns_policy/Scope_Hate_Crime_Report.pdf)>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4.

locations”<sup>35</sup>. Scope has produced a hate crime dossier in which few people were charged with DHC and many go unreported. Disability Now, (ongoing blog). Stephen Otter, who was responsible for equity, diversity and human rights for the Association of Chief Police Officers said that the police took the issue of hate crime seriously but went on to say: „When you’re a police officer on the front line, you’re dealing with people in the severest of need and sometimes what can be overlooked is their learning disability or a mental illness, because they’re sometimes hidden behind all sorts of factors”<sup>36</sup>. What does this mean for an inclusive society? Another case of failure of the police to recognise a disability Hate crime is the story concerning Fiona Pilkington and her disabled daughter, Francesca. This did receive some press coverage in the UK. Fiona killed herself and her daughter (who had learning disabilities) after years of abuse in October, 2007. The local police recorded the complaints from Mrs Pilkington as „anti social behaviour” and not as a disability hate crime even though the abuse targeted Francesca’s disability<sup>37</sup>. Despite over 33 complaints to the local police, Fiona was ignored and in desperation killed herself and her daughter by setting the car they were in on fire. Police officers failed to recognise a severe case of disability hate crime<sup>38</sup>.

Nicky Clarke, a Disability Rights Campaigner maintains that abuse starts by bullying with verbal abuse and always needs to be challenged<sup>39</sup>. Disability bullying is a common problem. Research by Mencap found that eight of out ten disabled children were bullied<sup>40</sup>. With the advances in technology, the uses of social media such as Face book, and the wide availability of mobile phones, an introduction of cyber bullying has been seen<sup>41</sup>. In a BBC news report on 20th June 2011, David Cameron the British Prime Minister has been widely reported for his comments about Tourette’s syndrome. He said, „that sitting opposite Ed Balls, the shadow chancellor, during prime minister’s questions is »like having

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<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> BBC, 20th June, 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/uk-13836337>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

<sup>37</sup> Disability Now (ongoing blog), *The hate crime dossier-disability now*, <<http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/>>, (accessed: 03.08.2012).

<sup>38</sup> J. Bingham, *Fiona Pilkington tragedy: coroner attacks failings of ‘indifferent’ council*, 13 Jan 2010, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/6974967/Fiona-Pilkington-tragedy-coroner-attacks-failings-of-indifferent-council.html>>, (accessed: 20.08.2012).

<sup>39</sup> Joe Public Blog, *Disability hate crime begins with verbal abuse*, Posted by Nicky Clarke on 13 September 2009, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/joepublic/2011/sep/13/gemma-hayter-disability-hate-crime-abuse>>, (accessed: 26.08.2012).

<sup>40</sup> A. Lipsett, *Eight of out 10 disabled children bullied, report finds*. *Education Guardian*, 18 June 2007, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2007/jun/18/schools.children>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

<sup>41</sup> See Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Promoting the Safety and Security...*

someone with Tourette's sitting opposite you»<sup>42</sup>. In her article in the Guardian Jess Thom asks, "What do you mean David? Is there something wrong with having someone with Tourette's sitting opposite you? Are you drawing on the old stereotype that anyone with Tourette's is incoherent and swears a lot? Or perhaps you mean that if Balls had Tourette's what he had to say would be irrelevant?"<sup>43</sup>. Cameron issued an apology where he said the remark was „off the cuff"<sup>44</sup>. Surely a man in Mr. Cameron's position should be more aware of his comments and the effect it has on disabled people in general. Disability hate crimes often go unreported<sup>44</sup> and they increased in the UK by more than one fifth<sup>45</sup>.

The record increase is being blamed on the Coalition Government's 'anti-scrouter' rhetoric<sup>46</sup>. In her book „Scapegoat, Why are we failing disabled people?" Quarmby expresses alarm at the levels of benefit scrounger abuse directed towards disabled people and points out that there are historic parallels<sup>47</sup>. She says „If you have a group that is blamed for economic downturn terrible things can happen to them"<sup>48</sup>. She points to a long history of disabled people being victimised because of peoples' prejudices towards them. In ancient Greece and Sparta „babies born with congenital deformities were often regarded as signs that their parents had displeased the gods"<sup>49</sup> and children with physical disabilities were killed by exposure. Some children „with deformities were sometimes perceived to represent the anger of the gods, and murdering such babies was a sacrifice intended to mollify the gods"<sup>50</sup>. In the UK in the early 1900s Mrs Hume Pinsent and Mary Dendy were significant figures in campaigns on the question of the

<sup>42</sup> J. Thom, *Cameron's Tourette's 'joke' sums up his party's attitude to disabled people. Using a disability to insult Ed Balls is cheap, but don't apologize to people like me with Tourette's — stop your assault on the NHS*, Guardian, 9 January 2012, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jan/09/david-cameron-tourettes-ed-balls>>, (accessed: 08.08.2012).

<sup>43</sup> BBC, *Cameron 'sorry' for Tourette's jibe*, 8 January 2012, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16458524>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

<sup>44</sup> M. Miller, *These devastating hate crimes must be stopped. In a civilised society no one should have to suffer bullying because of a disability*, The Independent, 12 September 2012, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/maria-miller-these-devastating-hate-crimes-must-be-stopped-2353163.html>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

<sup>45</sup> W. Johnson, *Disability hate crimes up by a fifth*, The Independent, 8 September 2011, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/disability-hate-crimes-up-a-fifth-2351317.html>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

<sup>46</sup> B. Riley-Smith, *Hate crimes against disabled people soar to a record level. Anti-scrouter rhetoric blamed for doubling of offences since 2008 financial crisis*, The Independent, 19 June 2012, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/hate-crimes-against-disabled-people-soar-to-a-record-level-7858841.html>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

<sup>47</sup> See K. Quarmby, *Scapegoat. Why we are failing disabled people*, Portobello Books, London 2011.

<sup>48</sup> B. Riley-Smith, *Hate crimes ...*.

<sup>49</sup> D. L. Braddock, S. L. Parish, *An institutional history of disability*, in: *Handbook of disability studies*, eds. G. L. Albrecht, K. D. Seelman, M. Bury, Sage, London 2001, p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem.

care and control of the „feeble minded”. Both women were heavily involved in the Eugenics movement. Dendy, was the founder of the Sandlebridge boarding schools and Colony for the Feeble-minded in 1902, which formed the „prototype for later segregated institutions”<sup>51</sup>. She believed that, „such children required lifelong care to protect both the feeble minded from society and society from the feeble minded”<sup>52</sup>. Pinsent stated in her private papers that “we want to prevent the birth of such people, and the continuous segregation of the mentally defective is the chief means of doing so”<sup>53</sup>. This promoted the idea of sterilisation for disabled people so they could not reproduce<sup>54</sup>, a practice not completely unknown today<sup>55</sup>. The Nazis took up the theme of bad heredity and mental deficiency and the costly burden to the state of caring for disabled people and those with mental ill health issues. A lot of us can remember what happened to people with learning disabilities and ‘mental illness’ in Hitler’s Germany when they were described as having ‘an existence without life’ and therefore it would be a kindness to relieve them of their heavy burdens and terminate their lives<sup>56</sup>. This is a good example of how disabled people have been devalued, stigmatised and shown to be not valued in the past while the world looked away. We must not let it happen again. As Quarmby points out our society is poisoned „by discrimination and violence against disabled people, and the fear and contempt in which so many hold them. We have to drain this poison from our society. This means being clear-headed and confronting our own prejudices about disabled people, for it is all of us who must make the change, not just some of us”<sup>57</sup>.

## 2. IMAGES OF DISABLED PEOPLE. ARE THEY INCLUSIVE OR PATRONISING?

Images are powerful. It is often said that pictures speak louder than words. As the famous social documentary photographer, Lewis Hines said „if I could tell a story in words, I wouldn’t have to lug a camera around”<sup>58</sup>. Consequently, when we use images of disabled people, particularly in our advertising, university

<sup>51</sup> P. McDonagh, *Idiocy: A cultural history*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool 2008, p. 321.

<sup>52</sup> J. Goodman, *Reflections on researching an archive of disability: Sandlebridge 1902–1935*, Educational Review 55(2003)1, p. 47.

<sup>53</sup> L. Westwood, *Care in the community of the mentally disordered: The case of the guardianship society 1900–1939*, Social History of Medicine 20(2007)1, p. 65.

<sup>54</sup> S. Ralph, R. Rose, *One hundred years on: have things changed for children with special educational needs and disabilities?*, Unpublished paper, 2012.

<sup>55</sup> A. Ratzka, *Eradication of ‘deviants’: The dark side of the Swedish Model*, 1997, <<http://www.independentliving.org/docs5/Sterilization.html>>, (accessed: 10.12.2012).

<sup>56</sup> Channel 4 TV, *Nazi film C4 documentary. Selling murder*.

<sup>57</sup> K. Quarmby, *Scapegoat. Why ...*, p. 328.

<sup>58</sup> C. Wang, M. A. Burris, *Photovoice: Concept, Methodology and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment*, Health Education and Behavior 24(1997)3, p. 372.

prospectuses and teaching and learning materials what messages are we giving? Are they the messages we want to convey? Ralph and Boxall examined UK University Undergraduate prospectuses. They asked the following questions: How are universities dealing with disability in their promotional materials? What do UK universities provide in their general promotional materials about disability related topics? What materials are provided by the disability support services? What type of disability images are used? Ralph and Boxall suggest that the messages conveyed by undergraduate publicity serve to shape the future student (and subsequently staff) population of universities, and that by actively failing to recruit students from minority groups, universities will miss out on a rich and diverse learning environment 139 universities were written to and of the 87 prospectuses received only 39 of them contained images of disabled people<sup>59</sup>. Many of the images were inclusive where disabled people are portrayed as playing an inclusive part in university life. For example, a student is shown doing his own supermarket shopping; a student who is blind is shown in academic dress graduating and sharing the celebration with his guide dog; a wheelchair user is using computer clusters, another is photographed being part of a lecture and another wheelchair user is shown studying in his student accommodation. This research was designed to look at the prospectuses just as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995<sup>60</sup> was due to be implemented when you would have expected awareness of disabled students and disability issues to be at its highest. Universities obviously wish to attract as many students as possible, have equal opportunities policies and are aware of most diversity issues. The prospectuses contained a wide variety of photographs which covered diversity issues such as ethnicity as can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1. Diversity in images in general university materials (undergrad. prospectuses)**

Student	Number	Approx percentage
White	87	100
Black	84	97
Asian	84	97
S. E. Asian	82	94
Disabled	34	39

Source: S. Ralph, K. Boxall, *Visible Images of Disabled Students: an analysis of UK University publicity materials*, Journal of Teaching in Higher Education 10(2005)3, p. 371–387.

<sup>59</sup> S. Ralph, K. Boxall, *Visible images of disabled students: An analysis of UK university publicity materials*, Journal of Teaching in Higher Education 10(2005)3, p. 371–387.

<sup>60</sup> Disability Discrimination Act 1995, <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents>>, (accessed: 01.02.2013).

However, once again we see disability at the bottom of the diversity table. More importantly many of the photographs of disabled students appeared not in the general body of the prospectus but in a separate and segregated section. This did not happen with other „minority” groups like international students. Photographs of them appeared in both specialist sections such as „information for overseas students” and the general body of the publication showing the students taking part in the various university programmes offered. What does this indicate about universities’ attitudes towards disabled students? Are they really welcome? Do they really want an inclusive community? Do your university prospectuses welcome all students? Do schools’ prospectuses, learning and teaching materials include photographs and experiences of disabled people? In an inclusive society, where disabled people were thought of as equal members of the society, this is what we would expect? It is not only in educational advertising that disabled people are often missing. Rarely do you see disabled people in commercial mainstream advertising and yet the numbers of disabled people in the UK are increasing (10.4 Million over the age of 16)<sup>61</sup>. This represents a huge disabled consumer market. Clearly there are a large number of people with a substantial disposable income and yet they rarely feature in mainstream advertising. Why not? Many other underrepresented groups in British society feature more prominently in advertising. Why is it despite their numbers disabled people are not seen as inclusive members of society? Sadly many of the images we see of disabled people are not very inclusive. For example, many of the charity images are concerned more with raising money than with inclusivity.

One of the earliest disability charity images was a sketch of a group of „cripples” entitled „an Industrial Lesson for Cripples”<sup>62</sup>. In the advertisement in Figure 1., a group of women are seen sewing and doing wool craft and wool craft activities. The women are all looking downwards, with sombre expressions. There is an almost logo style image of a barrel of crutches, where a woman using a crutch is selecting a second one. This dominates the foreground of another wise traditional workshop scene so we are in no doubt that the women pictured are „cripples”. In the 1880s disability charities gave a high priority to the need to keep ‘cripples’ and other disabled people gainfully employed<sup>63</sup>. In Victorian times in order to be the recipients of charity, the „cripples” had to demonstrate their capacity and willingness for hard work and awareness of their status or lack of it. In order to receive they had to be seen to be giving something back. Charity had to be earned

<sup>61</sup> Papworth Trust, *Disability in the United Kingdom*, 2011, <[http://www.papworth.org.uk/downloads/factsandfigures\\_disabilityintheuk\\_july2011\\_110721132605.pdf](http://www.papworth.org.uk/downloads/factsandfigures_disabilityintheuk_july2011_110721132605.pdf)>, (accessed: 21.08.2012).

<sup>62</sup> G. Bartley, *The schools for the People*, Bell and Daldy, London 1871, p. 451.

<sup>63</sup> *Herbert Fry's Royal Guide to the London Charities*, ed. J. Lane, Chatto and Windus, London 1887.

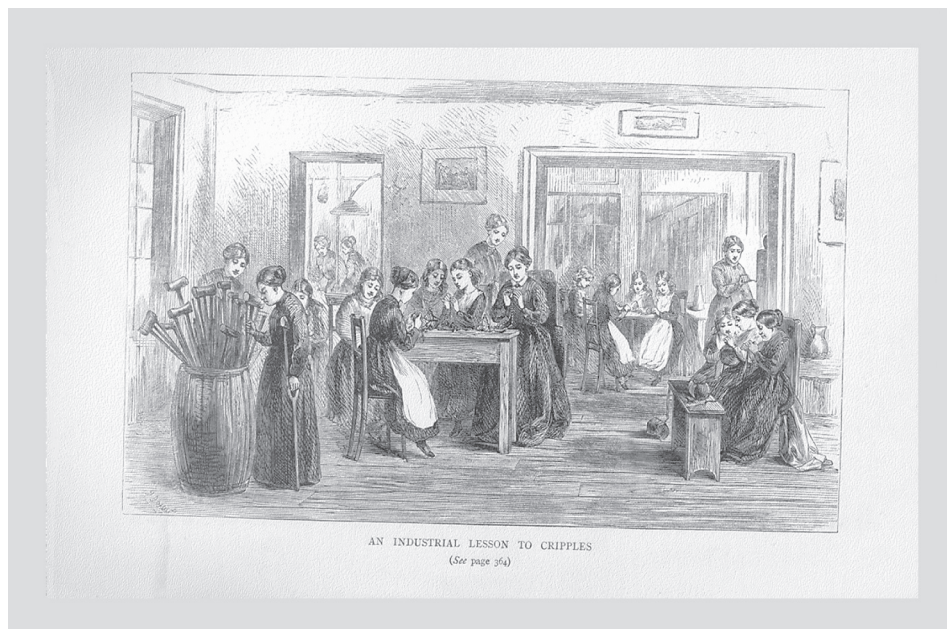


Figure 1. Taken from G. Bartley, *The schools for the People*, Bell and Daldy, London 1871.

and disabled people should be self supporting and not be burdens on the state<sup>64</sup>. These ideas are a little reminiscent of the current situation with the media coverage of disability scroungers covered earlier in this paper. More recent images from charities tend to show the continuing dependency on money with people shown with a charity collection tin and often images of people who are blind with the obligatory white stick in evidence, being helped. Rarely do we see inclusive images such as a disabled person getting on with their lives doing ordinary activities like shopping, working and enjoying the company of other people. If Britain is an inclusive society why are images like these largely absent? „Special” is a magazine published by a national organisation which provides an enormous amount of useful information for UK teachers. But what does the title suggest? „Special”? „Separate”? „Segregated”? The front cover of each issue contains a photograph of a child who presumably has a „Special Educational Need or disability”. All the children photographed are shown on their own, always smiling and not taking part in an activity. What are the messages conveyed in the photographs? I would suggest the messages are that disabled people: are segregated; do not have any friends as they are always photographed alone; do not or cannot

<sup>64</sup> C. Lees, S. Ralph, *Charitable provision for blind people and deaf people in late nineteenth century London*, *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 4(2004)3, p. 148–160.

take part in any activity; are always happy as they are pictured smiling and are all „nice” looking. Rarely do you see a photograph of, for example, a person with bad teeth, a scarred face or „dribbling”. How much more important it is to provide positive messages about what disabled people can achieve. Images where children are shown taking part in activities with other people, enjoying good social relationships with groups of people in the community and by just generally being ‘real children’ would give a truer and less patronising view of children who have additional needs.

### 3. ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES IN THE COMMUNITY

All of us need to use a toilet several times each day so in an inclusive society with Anti Disability Discrimination and Equality Laws you would expect accessible toilets to be available everywhere in the UK. This is not the situation. There are many, I would suggest, which show a „tokenistic” attitude towards this. A toilet labelled with the sign of a wheelchair user to indicate an accessible toilet does not always mean that the toilet is accessible. Often these are not large enough for a wheelchair user to enter the toilet room and place the wheelchair next to the toilet so that they can slide across to the toilet. Sometimes the wheelchair access is blocked by a waste bin. Many toilets are too small which means that the door has to stay open to public view whilst the person is actually using the toilet thus denying the person, independence, privacy and dignity. In a private club I recently saw an accessible toilet which was too small for a wheelchair user to use and a notice on the door saying „Please note the sanitary bin is located in the ladies toilet”. This would mean that disabled women who needed to use the sanitary bin would have to move to yet another toilet which was even more inaccessible thus adding to the indignity of the situation. In addition, accessible toilets are often used as store rooms. Perhaps this is not intentional discrimination but it certainly shows a lack of understanding about the needs of many disabled people and about the real meaning of inclusivity in society. So, when will we construct toilets which can be used by all people? There have been considerable improvements in providing accessible transport for disabled people in the UK. However, Baroness Tanni Grey Thompson (who has eleven Paralympic gold medals) said „it was not unusual to be left stranded on trains despite warning operators in advance that she would need assistance from staff”<sup>65</sup>. She said she was forced to crawl off a train. Thompson is spearheading a campaign A2B for all, to ensure public transport does not discriminate against disabled people. Research by the campaign found „that disabled passengers are being prevented from using public

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<sup>65</sup> N. Collins, *Tanni Grey Thompson: I was forced to crawl off train*, Daily Telegraph, 26 March 2012, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9165540/Tanni-Grey-Thompson-I-was-forced-to-crawl-off-train.html>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

transport due to discrimination by staff including being refused access, ignored while on board and verbally abused”<sup>66</sup>. 77% of people surveyed claimed they had been prevented from getting on or off a vehicle and 49% said the vehicle, usually a bus, had not stopped to let them on board. In one of Manchester’s main railway stations, Oxford Road, the railway station used for the universities, there is no lift to the five platforms, only stairs to change platforms. In addition there are few services at this station. For example, no induction loops, accessible telephone or taxis etc. What does this suggest? Disabled people do not wish to use the railway station? No students who are disabled travel to the universities by train, or is it that we have not really thought through the needs of disabled people? Is this an inclusive transport system where we encourage all people to be as independent as possible?

#### 4. EMPLOYMENT

In a campaign called, „ready willing and disabled” (2003) daone and scott highlighted the plight of disabled people who wished to obtain employment. the front cover of the report shows a wheelchair user who lists all her many qualifications, job applications and interviews. but despite her good qualifications she has no job. why not? she could clearly do a job but has not been given the chance. is the reason for this rooted in discrimination and in our attitudes towards disabled people and what we think they can and cannot do? perhaps we should ask ourselves the following questions: who would you employ or admit as a student to one of your courses? when you interview a candidate for your course or a job what goes through your mind? what questions do you ask? what can this person add to the course? does this person have the necessary qualifications to successfully complete the course? do you ask the same questions when you interview a non-disabled person? do you see the potential difficulties attached to having a disabled person employed or enrolled as a student?

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<sup>66</sup> Ibidem.



Figure 2. Sue. Source: property of Sue Ralph

This is Sue. She is well qualified. Would you employ her? Many people say they would not employ her, or if they did she would have to be in a role where she could not generally be seen. Surely the only questions we need to ask are „can this person do the course?“ or „is this the best person for the job?“ Sue was in some instances the best person for the job but remained unemployed. However, the employment statistics for the UK suggest this is not the case.

The Labour Force Survey<sup>67</sup>, stated there were 6.7 million disabled people of working age in the UK (18% of the population) but only 50% compared to 80% of the non-disabled population were in employment. The Shaw Trust, a charity which supports disabled people in finding employment sums up the situation<sup>68</sup>. „Often society can disable people more than a health condition or disability, with attitudes and assumptions preventing people from reaching their work-related goals. Employment statistics show the imbalance between disabled and non-disabled people in employment. We believe everyone should have the right to work. That’s why we’re committed to supporting disabled and disadvantaged people into employment and to live more independent lives“. In order to promote the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in the UK a DVD entitled „Talk“ was produced by the Disability Rights Commission (UK)<sup>69</sup>. This portrays a society in which disabled

<sup>67</sup> Employers Forum on Disability, *Disability in the UK*, <<http://www.efd.org.uk/media-centre/facts-and-figures/disability-in-uk>>, (accessed: 08.06.2012).

<sup>68</sup> Shaw Trust, <[http://www.shaw-tust.org.uk/disability\\_and\\_employment\\_sta](http://www.shaw-tust.org.uk/disability_and_employment_sta)>, (accessed: 03.08.2012).

<sup>69</sup> *Talk*, 9 September 2009, <<http://designabilities.wordpress.com/2009/09/01/clip-by-the-disability-rights-commission-uk/>>, (accessed: 15.08.2012).

people lead a full and active life and non-disabled people are the pitied minority. A famous UK actor plays a business executive, Robert, who gradually faces up to his negative preconceptions of disability. He applies for a job and in the DVD is shown trying to reach the interview and then the interview itself. In the DVD, many of the stereotypes which apply to disabled people are turned round to apply to the non-disabled majority. In relationship to employment they include:

1. People trying to help you but who quickly become frustrated and give up when you do not immediately understand what it is they need.
2. Lack of accessible transport and the consequences of this. In the DVD the buses and taxis are for disabled people only. The nondisabled person has to walk and as a consequence is disadvantaged and in this case gets very wet as it is raining hard.
3. Access is often limited for disabled people and they have to ask for assistance and sometimes even arrange for this in advance. For example, many train companies ask for advance warning so that they can be available to supply a ramp for access to trains. Robert is shown having to ring for access to the lift to enter the building where his interview is to take place.
4. The „You are very brave” stereotype is apparent when the lift attendant who is disabled stares at Robert’s non-disabled body and tells him how brave he is presumably to go out on his own and to apply for a job.
5. The receptionist who has a disability stares at Robert in disbelief that he is actually coming for an interview. She hands him some instructions which are in Braille which he can’t read. When Robert says he can’t read it she replies in a disinterested manner „You’re welcome”, and carries on reading her magazine. She is not prepared to take the time to help him understand the instructions thereby disadvantaging him in the interview process.
6. The interviewers all of whom are disabled look at each other when Robert enters the room. Robert looks shocked when he realizes the panel is blind asks „What is going on”? Another man whispers, „He is able bodied”.
7. The chair, in a very patronizing manner, says, „Take as much time as you like. How good of you to come”. She repeats it. The panel look uncomfortably at each other. There is an embarrassed silence.
8. After the interview the lift man says „I used to have a friend once who had all his limbs. It was great”. This confirms the stereotypical response so often heard of „I don’t discriminate”, „I have a friend who is disabled”.
9. Robert talks on telephone to a girl he is to meet later that night. He says, „No I didn’t get it. It is as if they weren’t even listening to me”. How often are disabled people not really heard?
10. Robert tries to get on a bus that lowers a wheelchair ramp. Two wheelchair users are waiting for the same bus. One of them says to Robert, „Sorry mate wheelchairs only”. „What”? Robert says. „Sorry I don’t make the rules” he

replies and both wheelchairs users get on the bus, shake their heads and laugh. Robert walks away and gets even wetter. The video continues to look at a number of other stereotypes covering issues such as social life and sexual relationships.

## 5. OLYMPIC GAMES

As London has just hosted the 2012 Olympics games I wanted to reflect on the press coverage of the Paralympics 4 years earlier in Beijing, China. Williams in an article entitled „China Paralympics Hide Dark Side” revealed that the child, Lin Miaoke mimed „Ode to the Motherland” replacing Yang Peiyi who actually sang it<sup>70</sup>. At the opening ceremony of the Olympics which would be seen by millions of viewers around the world. Yang’s face was deemed „not suitable” for the Olympics opening ceremony<sup>71</sup>. Chen Qigang the Musical Designer said he wanted to portray an image to the world of perfection and flawlessness and he believed it was fair to both children to do this<sup>72</sup>.

## 6. SO WHAT ABOUT LONDON 2012?

The Media Awareness Network work in Canada in 2009 raised concerns about media representation of disability. Commenting on the TV coverage of the Paralympic games it claimed that most of the stories „[...] are almost invariably presented in news coverage as triumph over adversity stories” despite the International Paralympic Committees’ efforts to „emphasise the participants’ athletic ability rather than the disability”<sup>73</sup>. The Olympic officials have placed great emphasis on the quality of both Olympics and Paralympics. Yet in some of the reports leading up to the games words and phrases such as „inspiring”, „superhuman”, and „overcome great difficulties” were being used. Disabled people were still being described by their disability rather than their sport. For example, Claire couldn’t just be a hill walker, she had to be a „wheelchair hill walker”. The fascination with the disability remains with individual disabilities and categories of disability still being highlighted. The courage stereotype is alive and well as

<sup>70</sup> H. Williams, *China Paralympics Hide Dark Side*, 27 February 2009, <<http://news.sky.com/story/666973/china-paralympics-hide-dark-side>>, (accessed: 02.08.2012).

<sup>71</sup> T. Branigan, *Olympics: Child singer revealed as fake*, Guardian, 12 August 2008, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2008/aug/12/olympics2008.china1>>, (accessed: 11.01.2013).

<sup>72</sup> H. Williams, *China Paralympics ...*

<sup>73</sup> Media Awareness Network, Canada, *Concerns about Media Representation of Disability*, 2009, <<http://www.media-awareness.ca/eng/issues/stereotyping/persons-with-disabilities>>, (accessed: 19.01.2009).

Attewell's comment demonstrates, „as we follow the torch to enjoy courage and inspiration”<sup>74</sup>.

Great emphasis was being placed on describing the disability rather than the skills. Famous people were being used as ambassadors. Internationally known, footballer, David Beckham, was the ambassador for Sainsbury's (a large super-market chain) who were a major paralympics sponsor. They had large posters, billboard and television advertisements proclaiming „here's to extraordinary” and „meet the Superhumans”. Was this the „supercrip” stereotype emerging yet again? What changes? To be fair, this years games received a much larger amount of media coverage than previous games and there were many calls for disabled people to be seen for their skills and achievements and not their disabilities. The media has also opened up some important debates, on inclusivity, rights, terminology and attitudes. We can but hope the publicity will lead to people rethinking their attitudes and behaviour towards disabled people and to a more inclusive society. This we will only know when the analysis of the media coverage of the games is analysed and evaluated.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion I return to my original question. Do we really want to include disabled people in our schools, colleges and society in general? I have briefly looked at a number of areas where I do not believe there is inclusivity to try to answer the question. There is one common feature in all of these discussions — that of discrimination and our attitudes towards disabled people. The main barrier to full inclusion of disabled people in our society is our attitudes towards them and as educators we need to examine our thoughts and feelings and behaviour towards disabled people. What messages are we giving to disabled people? Are our institutions disability friendly? Do we really accept that disabled people can add richness and quality to society? Until we do we will never achieve real inclusion. As educators we are powerful. We have influence. If we are to achieve full inclusion of disabled people in all aspects of our society we must think about our attitudes, feelings, and behaviours towards disabled people and encourage our students to do the same. I would like to end my paper by asking you to look at a video clip from a top UK TV show, „Britain's Got Talent” and carefully look at the reactions of the judges, the two presenters and the audience. The video shows the initial audition of Susan Boyle, now an International singing star. She has a learning disability and was bullied at school because of this. How would you have reacted if somebody like Susan had walked into your lecture or school? Would you have behaved in the same way as the TV audience, the presenters

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<sup>74</sup> F. Attewell, *Follow the torch to enjoy 'courage and inspiration'*, Metro, 29 August 2012, p. 5.

and the judges? The video can be found at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) — „Susan Boyle, Audition”<sup>75</sup>.

## DO WE REALLY WANT TO INCLUDE DISABLED PEOPLE IN SOCIETY?

### Summary

In this paper a number of issues are explored to answer the question: “Do we really want to include disabled people in our schools, colleges and societies?” Many questions are raised and such issues are discussed as legislation, media representations of disability, disability hate crime, images of disabled people, employment of disabled people, transport and other facilities, and the Olympics. Reference is made to two DVDs.

**Keywords:** inclusion, barriers, legislation, images, disabilities, disability hate crime

## CZY NAPRAWDĘ CHCEMY, ABY OSOBY Z NIEPEŁNOSPRAWNOŚCIĄ BYŁY CZĘŚCIĄ SPOŁECZEŃSTWA?

### Abstrakt

W niniejszym artykule podjęto próbę odpowiedzi na pytanie: czy naprawdę chcemy, aby osoby z niepełnosprawnością były częścią społeczeństwa? W trakcie rozważań próbowano również odpowiedzieć na szereg innych pytań i kwestii, takich jak ustawodawstwo dotyczące osób niepełnosprawnych, transport tychże osób, przystosowanie do ich potrzeb miejsc użyteczności publicznej, a także kwestia ruchu olimpijskiego. W artykule omówiono także dwa filmy DVD, których treści są bezpośrednio związane z omawianym tematem.

**Nota o Autorze:** prof. Sue Ralph jest emerytowanym profesorem w Uniwersytecie w Manchesterze. Aktualnie profesor w Uniwersytecie Northampton. Redaktor naczelna czasopisma naukowego *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*. Jej zainteresowania naukowe są skupione wokół zagadnienia stresu w pracy nauczycieli, edukacji specjalnej, zarządzania w oświacie oraz wokół mass mediów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** inkluzja, bariery, legislacja, wyobrażenia, niepełnosprawność, przestępstwa na tle nienawiści do osób z niepełnosprawnością

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<sup>75</sup> You Tube, Susan Boyle, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRiJNS8Oz6E>>, (accessed: 02.01.2013).