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## **Viliam Gaňo Importance in Special Needs Education**

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This contribution is focuses on the life and work of Villiam Gaňo as the doyen of special education in the territory of Slovakia. His contribution to the special pedagogy is considerable. Precisely for this reason we wish to express our admiration and point out his message through teaching and publishing site. For this post it is characterized by unusual structure. Each period represents the life of this genius. Entire article acts as a comprehensive resume, which highlights the importance and terminology of special education and rich educational and publishing activities of an informed expert. We consider necessary point out the different terminology differences, as this great man was a pioneer in this very area. In one section, we describe the school system, which was created based on the needs of students with disabilities and to follow-up legislation. For actual development of special education was very important also the education of teachers, as the education of students with disabilities is very specific and therefore it devote one single part of the contribution. Viliam Gaňo was not only a theoretician but also a specialist in practical work, so we give a picture of his rich publishing and full teaching. We select those of his work that most approached us: The Defective children, Education of Defective Children, Small Doctrine Education Deaf-mute, Slovak Deaf-mute Youth. For the purpose of this work we drew up a brief search from these. We also point out what or who inspired him while writing these works. In conclusion, we pay his memories, memories of his loved ones.

### *Introduction*

Motivational factors that influenced us in choosing this contribution was several. The first and most important of them is that we work with children with disabilities and we are aware that this work is not all work as such, but it is a mission that requires the whole person. Special education teacher must sacrifice himself and must have the most positive properties.

Despite the fact that we live in a highly developed society, very often people with disabilities are viewed with regret and lot of people do not know their needs. We should not selected them on the fringes of society,

or even regret them. It is necessary to create conditions them to be full, integral part of our society.

The last factor that influenced us in choosing this contribution was the fact that such a prominent figure as Villiam Gaňo undoubtedly was, is and always will be, deserves that we pay homage to him and pointed out his full life, rewarding work and, last but not least, the sadness in the hearts of the people who adored him.

The focus of this paper is the life and work of Villiam Gaňo as the doyen of special education, in Slovakia and Hungary. His contribution to the special needs education is considerable. Precisely for this reason we wish to express their admiration and point out his message through teaching and publishing site.

### *Villiam Gaňo personality in the context of the historical development of special education*

The birthplace of Villiam Gaňo, the doyen of special education, was a village Trnava near Laborec in Michalovce district. This village has a rich history, as well as at and that is the birthplace of such famous personalities such as William Gaňo undoubtedly was. He was born on May 25, 1893, late 19th century (Mátej, 1977). Little Viliam started attend elementary school in his native homeland in 1899, when he was six years old. In his native language - Slovak language was taught as religion and pupils in the lowest grades get explain in the Slovak language only that what they did not understand in Hungarian. Gaňo was very linguistically gifted and so he did not make the foreign language major problems. In 1902 he managed to pass the entrance exam and goes to study in the municipal school in Humenné. During his studies he perfected in Hungarian and also gained a second prescribed language, which was German. Temporary accommodation at his studies in Humenne gave him Czech family, the Karelava (Kramár, 1993).

In 1908 Gaňo started 4-year study at the Teachers' college in Blatný Potok, where he graduated in 1912. He was fascinated by the work with children, and in choosing the teaching profession he was significantly affected mostly by his mothers view and the fact that she came from a family of teachers. His grandfather and brother Stephen, who like to pass long conversations, were also teachers. The disability interfered Viliam from an early age. His father educate illiterate gardener who was a deaf-mute and for 40 years he employs him on the count property.

Viliam often helped his father at work, and there became friends with him. She possesses the same feelings as to their siblings and his disability does not condemn anyone in the family. Thanks to him already at an early age Viliam learned to coexist with persons with disabilities (Kramár, 1993). All these factors influence to Gaňo as motivating factors for which he decided to dedicate his life to working with children with disabilities and decided to pursue a career special education teacher.

## *The first beginnings*

Care and understanding of the diverse needs of people with disabilities are not always at the level as at present. Through special education began with the identification of disability, respectively defects and began treating to people with defects differently. There started to establish an various institutions and special schools in order to select the most appropriate approaches to these people.

During the study in Blatný potok, today's Sárospatak, students in several subjects acquainted with knowledge from special education and learning disabled people. In the years 1650-1654 in Sarospatak worked founder of modern pedagogy Jan Amos Comenius. Precisely for this reason there was a very strong influence of the cult Comenius. At school, there was creating the Comenius reading club whose members were also Gaňo himself. In this club, the students readed Comenius works, acquainted with his teachings and right here Gaňo mastered so many views on education and training of disabled people (Kramár, 1993).

At the turn of the 19th and 20th century in Hungary begins establish an therapeutic education as a science and begin to open up new approaches and opportunities in the care of persons with disabilities. *"Charity institutons changed to educational, set the single professional supervision in the education of the disabled, addressing the schooling of disabled youth, carried out the first research with disabled children, arose scientific literature was made the professional journals and manuals - began to develop a theoretical base of therapeutic education"* (Kramár, 1993:10).

After obtaining a Diploma in Teaching in Sarospatak Villiam goes on years of teaching practise in Romania Ineu and to the State Orthopedagogy Educational Institut Jenó Boros in Budapest (Kramár, 1993). He has to take part that practice if he wants to be able to enroll in college.

In 1913 he managed to enroll in the University therapeutic education in Budapest. Just by this study he gets into contact with special educational-spiritual current leads by Pal Ranschburg, who significantly influence research in the field of special education in Hungary He was one of the founders of the Hungarian therapeutic educational theory in the early 20th century. We also deemed him as one of the founders of Hungarian higher education of therapeutic teachers (Kramár, 1993).

This study took two years and was designed for candidates who have teaching capability for folk, middle class or middle schools. It differentiates the theoretical and practical part. In the first year students get theoretical experience, in the second year received practical experience in one of the institutes. This schol Viliam passed in 1915 and actually acquired a teaching diploma and qualifications necessary for the education of children and youth with disabilities. This institute was the

predecessor of today's College of Education Special Education Teachers (Szabó, 1993).

The most progressive towards education, pedocentrism, he learns while working at the Institute for nervous children in Budapest, where his work is carried out under the actively leftist-oriented, highly trained, József Vertes. At the core of this concept, resp. direction is to focus on an individual approach to the child and his well-being. Since 1917 Gaňo begins to operate at Pestalozzi house, where it becomes co-worker and even student of Elemér Kalmar, who was both judge and tabular founder Pestalozzi Institute. Thanks to him was in 1915 established an Institute of Criminal education. The Constitution contains a psychological laboratory, library and museum. Here Gaňo acquaints with criminal individuals and with children who have defects of character. These children and their education, he devoted himself in his works, trying to find ways to correct them. In 1918 he temporarily works at National special school in Budapest.

He was involved in the integration of the blind, because he worked in the institute for the blind in Budapest and co-worked with the central institute for the employment of the blind. Due to the fact that in that institution he got a lot of valuable experience might later work with Šoltés in dealing with problematic issues related to education and training the visually impaired. He take practice even when working at the Department of Child Protection Commissioner for Justice for three months from the beginning of May 1919 to the end of July 1919 (Kramár, 1993).

When it came to the fall of the Republic of Hungary, there began a persecution of its followers. It is reason why Gaňo retracted and coming to Slovakia. In this period are not found further mention of his whereabouts and activities. When he arrived in Slovakia for entering a new Czechoslovak Republic and the completely new conditions. He begins to work as a teacher in 1921 at the Institute of Deaf-mutes in Komárno, where the Hungarian was language of instruction. Children had many problems with instruction in that language, but the hardest hit were just students who have a disability (Borešová, 1993).

Already during the first year of activity he seeks to innovate and propose establish a daily home due to lack of education in foster families. The foster families defective children spend more time than in school. However, foster parents neglected them and saw only profits. That his proposal was not successful and it has not been implemented due to lack of funds. Successful has been by him designed and developed individual sheet of pupil for observation methodology, which has been in the Constitution urgently implemented.

Gaňo never been stingy to give away his theoretical knowledge and practical experience. It shows by the publication of the article in 1923 called "Elements of systematic observation deaf -mutes" in the journal Youth Care. Followed by a year in the Revue for education and training deaf -mutes is published his contribution entitled "Experimental investigation of perception and memory of deaf mutes." Youth Care

magazine brings readers the article "Protecting the children of war" (Gaňo, 1943).

In 1927 Gaňo got a job offer to become director of the Institute for the deaf-mute after the death of former director Felix Hlobil. This job Gaňo took so 1 July 1927. Gaňo with his young family goes to Dubnica nad Váhom, where he works for 13 years. The institute be established in Dubnica manor house, since its very beginning, since 1921 didn't satisfying the requirements of deaf mutes. Gaňo was never indifferant to deaf mutes destiny also because his heart was close to deaf-mute gardener who got under the patronage of his father. Very personally he experience than insensitive and inhumane government access to these persons (Kramár, 1993).

During his time in Dubnica he is also engaged in the development of care for people with intellectual disabilities. He was present at the birth of the auxiliary school in Trenčín and participated in the establishment of the Provincial Association for the care of diminished mental capacity in Slovakia, which was established by a significant help university professor, MUDr. Karol Herfort and Joseph Zeman, whose contribution to the Slovak special needs education we have already outlined in the first chapter. The association was established January 12, 1932 in Žilina and its headquarter was in Trenčín. Gaňo became the first chairman of the Association and its secretary was Vladimír Predmerský. In the history of special education he had a very important role. *"The first work program of the Association had 3 main points:*

- *organize courses about education of weak-minded children,*
- *set up a library about abnormal youth,*
- *take care of the education of stupid children"* (Gaňo, 1961:15).

Gaňo had to struggle with many problems of Institute. He suggested that the institute was transferred to more suitable premises in order to more fully enforcement of disabled. The Institute were so unfavorable hygienic, health, social and educational circumstances, it did not provide people with disabilities only the basic conditions for survival. This crisis of Institute Gaňo also describes in his book "Twenty-five years Dubnica Institute for deaf mutes." It was thin publication issued at his own expense in 1930 in České Budějovice. He held in it complete explanation of the number of classes, children and unsuitable conditions. As quantity of deafmutes raise radical, it forced him access to a comprehensive solution caring for these people (Haskrechtová, 1993). Since many of these inmates suffering from malnutrition, he was involved in organizing and initiating milk events in this institution. He formulate realistic proposals for external and boarding care of their establishment, organization and financing options.

September 1, 1933 was of the Dubnica management positions as director of the Institute moved to the institution in Kremnica. He worked here the longest of his practice. Thanks to the fault of the previous director, Štefan Sobolovský, this institute was one of the most progressive in that period. He had to deal with a lack of accommodation facilities for

inmates. On his initiative, in 1934 it started the construction of a new dorm building, which has received a gift from the town of Kremnica in the form of land, whose area was 2.5 hectares. The new building was handed over for use on 28 October, 1936.

He was instrumental in the establishment of a dormitory for students who did not live near the school, resp. Institute. Dormitory consists of eight units. Each consisted of two bedrooms, one day room, washrooms, slippers room, needed ancillary rooms and rooms for women educators, which led this unit with 30-35 students. Dormitory was also a common dining room, for that time modern furnished kitchen, laundry room, hospital ward and around the building's garden and playground.

Number of teachers in the years 1935-1937 consolidated. Many of them have passed the professional exam for which they are preparing themselves director of the Institute. Although he was at such a high position, Gaňo never considered teachers as inferior and wanted to give them as much of his experience. During this period, came to the Institutin vocational teacher of deaf mutes, Gejza Reipich, who was for young teacher a great help.

In 1945 he became part of the legislative department in the Ministry of Education and Culture, where he participated in the preparation of the Education Act of the school uniform, which formulated provisions concerning the rights of special education (Schmidtová, 1997).

He worked on the reform department, led by prof. Gustáv Pavlovič. Since the Gaňo very much aware of the great responsibility to society and to the disabled, tried to gradually put into nation-wide practice the principles of special education.

In 1947 it was just he who established the Pedagogical Clinic in Bratislava, which was subsequently renamed in 1948 to Defektology counseling. Within this institution was carried out screening and speech therapy care (Horňák et al., 2002). Because of this work Gaňo leaves the Commission of Education because he assumes that he will carry out his mission in life. Its establishment was he said: "*It was an important act, since special education yet had no scientific institute or university department, which would follow its development*" (Borešová, 2009:22).

Along with Gabriel Rehuš he was a father - that is the founder and subsequently the editor of journal Special schools, which began publication in 1957. This periodical was merged in 1959 with the Czech magazine called Youth requiring special care and after creating of a new national magazine Questions of defektology . Gaňo was leading Slovak section in this periodical and a member of the editorial board in Prague. The inaugural issue of this magazine, specifically in the article "Saying goodbye and welcoming" he expressed his survived to the beginnings, development and transformations of these periodicals.

In 1960, exactly on the Teachers day he received the highest pedagogical appreciation from the President - the Medal of Jan Amos Comenius for outstanding work in the field of defektology.

## *Special Education in publications Viliam Gaňo*

Viliam Gaňo publications formation is very important, not only because of its quantity but especially quality benefits. It is through its greatly contributed to the formation of the theoretical foundations of special education and inspired leading figures in the art not only in Slovakia. We chose a work that influenced the direction of special education (Gaňo, 1962).

At a time when Viliam Gaňo began to study special needs education in Budapest, speech therapy in Slovakia do not even exist. In the neighboring Czech Republic it has already been implemented since 1860 Prague courses for wrong speakers. In Hungary, even as early as 1891, there was speech therapy institute. Credit for raising speech therapy in Slovakia belongs to Gaňo (Lechta, 1993).

Technical term speech therapy in 1924 already used Rudolf Kratochvíl. Gaňo decided for a synonym of the term and that "speech defects". In 1948 logopedie defines as "*language education, or in a broader sense, the doctrine of speech defects*" (Vaňhara, 1993:24). In conclusion of publication Education of defective children Gaňo creating a glossary of technical terms. One of them is the speech therapist who are defined as "*the doctrine of language problems, the speech education and communicating fault at all*" (Gaňo, 1965:255). The understanding of its definition is difficult to see that the basic tasks and objectives of speech therapy include not only the correction of erroneous speech, as well as prevention effect against speech carries that are created based through bad speech patterns. So it is also a prophylaxis to voice and speech disorder (Vaňhara, 1993).

Gaňo divided mute children to alalics and afatics. For alalics is characterized by birth undeveloped speech. Despite the fact that these children already have been, for example, 4-8 years are noncommittal. If it is shown that such children do not suffer from deafness, hearing loss, or menatl disorder and still do not speak in that case, you can diagnose alalics, that is childs mute, while maintaining the functions of hearing and normal intellect.

For afatics is typical the loss of already acquired speech habits. This means that talking child stops to talk. We can differentiate between motor aphasia, sensory aphasia and finally agitated aphasia (Gaňo, 1964).

His most famous work is just "Education of Defective children" which was fully utilized for special education students as a teaching literature (Borešová, 1993). This work was published in Slovak, Czech and in Hungarian. Alone Gaňo at the beginning of this book states that in 1916, when he in the Budapest newspapers published the paper "Folk School and therapeutic pedagogy", he never imagined that this small contribution of almost 50 years of special-operation has grown to a 230 page book (Szabó, 1993). It contains 15 chapters, which are re-labeled with roman numerals and defektology glossary, which gives a more detailed

specification of individual special pedagogical concepts. In 1962 comes the second edition.

## *Memories of Viliam Gaňo*

The field of special education very unexpectedly passed away in 1966, when in the middle of his vigorous and fruitful work died at age 73 years (Kramár, 1993). For Slovak and Czech academic special education community, it was a huge loss, which many felt to be fatal. Last farewell to this important person was held three days after his death, 27. 7. 1966 in the auditorium of the University of J. A. Comenius. Last farewell to raise the very touching and heartfelt speeches of his colleagues, students and closest friends from among special educators. They were buried him in the cemetery in Warbler valley where the very last "goodbye" delivered his closest collaborator and friend doc. dr. Vladimír Predmerský.

Viliam Gaňo person, a human, as well as a scientific contribution to this day reminds broad expertise, but also the general public. For his contribution are proud also residents of his native village. It's nice that in such a small village such as the Trnava near Laborec came such a large and world-renowned man. In this picturesque village in 2009 was renewed activity of the local department of Slovak Association. As a fundamental mission, the Department determined that the recovery is Gaňo's Tarnava festival. A specific feature of this action is that the recitation of poetry and prose will feature children who are disabled. Thanks to this still points to the undeniable talent of them. During the fifth year of the Gan Tarnave first visited by children from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Through this action we want to remind important native, who enriched the Slovak special needs education and raised it to an international level. In this village it is erected in his honor and a memorial that recalls not only native, but also the message of William Gaňa visitors.

In Trnava near Laborec is also accessible Gaňo's memorial room. Many written materials and photographs contributed mainly Viliam's daughter and his student Dr. Baláž, President of the Union of deaf. This room was inaugurated on 15 09th, 2011.

In Slovakia, specifically in Banská Bystrica is the first vocational school, which is named after the doyen of special education. The school since 1987 give for handicapped young people opportunities for further education. It follows and develops Gaňo's message by combining education and practical skills in each trade. Despite the fact that we do not live in a socialist society, where everyone is a source of labor, thanks to the work each person becoming economically self-sufficient and able to meet their material needs alone. On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the vocational school he was awarded a certificate granting the honorary title "Technical College of Viliam Gaňo."

This school is not the only educational institution, which is named after this specialist. Other schools that can boast that bears his name is

"Elementary schools for hearing impaired of Viliam Gaňo in Kremnica". It is situated in Kremnica, where there is also the former provincial association for deaf mutes. It is no coincidence, it is this school which is the successor of the Association.

Unbelievable admiration for him is believed that although the practice and work with disabled youth fully employed him, he found time for publication large number of articles and monographs to his thoughts handed over to future generations. To give away his thoughts has never been stingy. He also studies and organized a number of lectures where students always managed to take and which spawned often heated debates and rewarding. It is these lectures and the students motivated him and to encourage continuous publication.

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