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## Introduction

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Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

## Introduction

Twenty years ago, Jacques Delors wrote a report entitled “Learning. The Treasure Within”, which indicates clearly that every man has a fundamental right to education and that it is a universal and timeless value. This claim can be argued to serve as a basic paradigm determining modern thinking about education as well as involvement in its popularisation. With a sense of responsibility for future generations, entities responsible for education, among other things, strive to safeguard networks of schools, which are to guarantee free and unrestricted, and even at least in principle, equal access to education. Moreover, they make an effort to create new and better curricula, to improve the quality of educational activities aimed at children and adults, as well as offer support for social initiatives related to these activities. These aspects of the contemporary, educational reality are, to a large extent, a far cry from the issues we dealt with two centuries ago. Therefore one of significant research subjects undertaken by pedagogues and historians is the concept of the education of the society on the Polish territory in the period of Partitions and when Poland was regaining its independence. Teaching and educating – children, young people as well as adults – was, at that time, mainly connected with the activities of numerous institutions, associations, educational achievements and establishments. Their creation and diverse activity were often adequate attempts to meet the identified, specific needs of local communities. These attempts were conditioned by their founders’ values, ideological deductions as well as programme assumptions and goals set by theoreticians and practitioners of teaching and education. The efficiency and effectiveness of these attempts were reflected in the existence of a particular institution, its permanence and continuity of conveying knowledge, experiences, attitudes as well as models of behaviour.

The articles included in the current issue of the Quarterly “*Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana*” refer to the institutionalised manifestations of concern for education, which were established on the Polish territory at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The authors, who represent 10 of the national academic institutions, have emphasised, among other things, an essential role of the educational family environment and its educational functions at that particular time. They have also provided the readers with a complex presentation of interesting, rich and effective educational activities of regional and countrywide institutions. Moreover, while presenting detailed analyses of the functioning the chosen educational institutions and while undertaking the issue of accessibility and applications of research sources in the study on educational institutions, the authors help to prevent these from being forgotten and popularise the attempts and achievements of particular institutions in the scientific literature. In the long run, they make a more complete and thorough presentation of the phenomenon of education in the period of bondage and of the newly regained independence. We do hope that our publication will not only be an opportunity to get to know the most recent research results and will provide an insight into the work of the researcher of the educational past, but it will also serve as an inspiration for creative consideration of contemporary educational activities.

Moreover, the presented texts allow to observe an essential quality of the educational reality at the turn of the centuries. A dynamic development of child-care centres, schools, boarding schools, as well as organisations and associations aiming mainly to teach and educate their students was feasible only owing to initiatives and commitment of their founders – people who felt responsible for future generations. These were the generations obliged to creative activity for the sake of local communities, their nation and the future, independent state. It is worth indicating that it was the arduous, everyday work of these particular people that contributed to the educational success of institutions they founded. All in all, it is only by exploring the history of these institutions that it is possible to get to know the individual history of particular people and even whole communities. More significantly by doing so, we are more likely to understand the past also the educational past.

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