

WB2 Policies Analysis – Polish country report

Michal Bron Jr
Södertörn University College
Huddinge, Sweden

Note: Polish policy regarding adult education for democratic citizenship (EDC) is still to be formulated. Based on an extensive study of various documents, coupled with strong public utterances from leading politicians, one can only conclude that in Poland there exists no coherent EDC policy. While there is a growing number of official documents stating the importance of strengthening civil society, educational provisions for adults that would directly address issues of EDC are still to be designed and implemented.

Introduction

In current political debates (public discourse) we can find a whole range of differing notions on the subject of EDC, from its acceptance to its rejection. On the one extreme side of the spectrum, we find those who absolutely reject the idea of the civil society – mostly advocated by the *Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc* (PiS)¹ and its coalition partner, *Liga Polskich Rodzin* (LPR)² since the 2005³ elections. In contrast, there are attempts at treating civil society as an ideal example of national order. The second notion is highly popular among politicians of the *Platforma Obywatelska* (PO)⁴ and *Lewica i Demokraci* (LiD)⁵. Because of such opposite notions in the government, creation of a politically coherent strategy of education is rather difficult to achieve.

According to the categories stated in the WorkBlock guidelines, the present state can be considered as follows: Poland does not have a national policy of EDC, such an education exists, but is very decentralized and based on a few formal acts and rules. EDC is therefore decentralized, chaotic and rather incoherent.

Policy makers

Legislation

According to Poland's Constitution of April 2, 1997, the government is compelled to base its ruling on a dialog with citizens. The following is stated in the Constitution:

Hereby establish this Constitution of the Republic of Poland as the basic law for the State, based on respect for freedom and justice, cooperation between the public powers, social dialogue as well as on the principle of subsidiarity in the strengthening the powers of citizens and their communities (Constitution... 1997).

¹ Law and Justice – www.pis.org.pl; no information in English is provided.

² League of Polish Families – www.lpr.org.pl; no information in English is provided.

³ The second coalition partner of PiS is a populist party called Samoobrona (Self Defence). It is the only one of three governing parties which has some information in English on its homepage (www.samoobrona.org.pl).

⁴ Civi Platform – www.platforma.org.pl/index.php/en.

⁵ Is a coalition of parties; formed in the post-communist era, *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* (SLD – Democratic Left Alliance; www.sld.org.pl/index.php?pid=175), and three other smaller parties of liberal and socio-democratic character (*Demokraci.pl*, *Socjaldemokracja Polska* – SDPL, *Unia Pracy* – UP).

Thus, cooperation between state administration and non-governmental organizations can be seen as an important element of the mandatory constitutional order. In practice, collaboration takes various forms such as:

- exchanging information on future activities in order to synchronize those which are found to be relevant to each other,
- financial cooperation, i.e. sub-contracting or co-financing in the implementation of projects,
- creating working groups focused on selected topics, that consist of NGO representatives as well as state administration.

The single most important legal act regulating non-governmental organizations' work, including their engagement or lack thereof in the field of adult EDC is the aforementioned *Act of Law of April 24, 2003, on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work*. In it, a hope has been expressed, that it will lay the ground for a more coherent state policy towards EDC. To some extent this has happened. The rules of conduct of state authorities *vis à vis* non-governmental organizations have been established (www.bip.gov.pl). In an official document prepared by one of the ministries, serious attempts at dealing coherently and benevolently with civil society organizations have been made (Ministerstwo Polityki Społecznej 2005).

Political parties

The important background of all processes connected to EDC in Poland is constantly being debated, particularly civil society's values and their meaning. When Poland entered the European Union in May 2004, and even previous to that, during the process of integration, one of the most important discussions centred on the importance of the promotion of civil society.

Since Poland's 2005 governmental⁶ and presidential⁷ elections, a new vision for the country and its functions has been of principal debate. The Polish political scene in that debate is divided. There is a gulf between pro- and anti-European parties. The ruling coalition, or at least most of its members, represents Poland's popular vision of a rather centralized system. Oddly enough, the pro-European parties are, as previously mentioned, the post-communist SLD, as well as the PO, and small parties gathered under the LiD umbrella. A slightly Euro-sceptical party is the *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* (PSL)⁸, which seems to have more recently become increasingly pro-European. Samoobrona, a governmental coalition partner, is rather Euro-sceptical, although by its populist nature, it may shift its position rather abruptly.

The debate is on fundamental social issues. Another relevant characteristic relates to the fact that Euro-sceptical parties are mainly proponents of a centralized way of governing, and consequently are not willing to allocate any part of their political power to NGOs. Politicians of governing parties used to explain this rationale by focussing on the risks associated with decentralization and possible corruption. What is not discussed however is their visible mistrust of society and its citizens. One example of such a tendency came when an LPR politician publicly criticized the idea of civil society, brashly stating that his party is an opponent of that idea.⁹ The other leading party of a governing coalition, the PiS, is more cautious with respect to its public declarations. Nevertheless, from the PiS' perspective, its topics of debates and statements, one can still

⁶ September 25, 2005

⁷ November 23, 2005

⁸ Polish Peasants Party – www.psl.org.pl.

⁹ This very statement was pronounced in a TV programme sometime in Autumn 2006. More on politicians' attitudes towards civil society in Piotrowski (2006).

draw the conclusion that the party is against any sort of self-organization by citizens and that it is not willing to share its control over all social processes with citizens' associations. Samoobrona, the coalition's third party, usually does not take part in that discussion and has no particular opinion on the issue.

Slightly Euro-sceptical parties as well as pro-European ones have a different vision of Poland. It is a vision of a decentralized country of active citizens – citizens confident of their own rights and involved in Polish societal life. Elements of EDC are visible in statements and advertising campaigns of such parties as PO, Democrats or SLD. PSL seems to still be looking for its own approach to that issue and the proper approach to the debate, although it is rather close to the vision of a Polish civil society. In debates and discussions conducted by parties of opposition, one of the dominant issues is the pro-European attitude, as they make constant references to the idea of civil society. These parties have already stimulated various initiatives, focussing directly on its citizens.

It seems that the European Commission and Parliament's growing interest in adult education and EDC impacts raising awareness among the Polish political classes. Not the least because several E-U plans are obligatory to implement or require some reactions from member-states' governments. The national policy seems not to have any impact on the European situation in the field of education and in the formation of civil society. On the contrary, Poland, in this case, is rather a passive beneficiary.

Government

At the governmental level, especially, after Poland's accession to the European Union, standards of policy-making are similar to other E-U member-states. The country's social and economic development goals, as well as methods in achieving them are defined in the National Development Plan. Specially formulated "sectoral operational programmes" (SOP) are aimed at implementation. The SOP Human Resources Development is one of such programmes in Poland; another one is the SOP Civil Society. Main objectives and a vision have been drafted in the governmental document entitled *Strategy in Support of Civil Society*.

The major policy maker and an important agent in strengthening civil society is the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.¹⁰ Within the Ministry there are three departments that deal with issues relevant for EDC, namely the Department of Public Benefit, the Department of Social Dialogue and Partnership (i.a. monitoring social conflicts and respect for collective labour laws) as well as the Department of Women, Family and Counteracting Discrimination.

The Department of Public Benefit, while preparing the "civil society" part of the *National Development Plan*, organized a public hearing to which a number of NGO leaders were invited. The focus of this meeting was on elaborating and formulating answers to the following questions:

1. Who do we want to be, as citizens? – our social, legal and economic awareness, our attitudes, our activities and forms of activities;
2. In what community do we want to live? – kind of social ties, social order, relations between various public bodies;
3. NGOs' scope in the structure of the State – conditions for the development of the third sector;
4. What do we think about good governance? – transparency, open and participatory form of governance, subsidiarity;
5. Do we need a social economy? – consideration of social aspects of the

¹⁰ <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/index.php?lang=2>

economy as a complementary to market mechanism - sphere of citizens' activity (Department of Public Benefit 2005).

With no educational actions undertaken, no courses nor other provisions, adults, as it is expected, should acquire necessary civic knowledge and skills by attending various meetings and partaking in a variety of events. Work carried out by the Ministry and most relevant for EDC (or rather, issues related to civil society) are the following policy statements (documents), practical solutions and actions:

- *Strategy of Support for the Civil Society* (see below for more),
- Sectoral Operational Programme Human Capital (see below for more),
- Sectoral Operational Programme Civil Society (see below for more),
- Citizens' Initiatives Fund (see below for more),
- Governmental cooperation with NGOs,
- Dissemination of information.

In the Polish government it is the Ministry of Regional Development (www.mrr.gov.pl) that is responsible of the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development (see below for more).¹¹

Oddly, much less significant policy-making in the field of EDC focussing on adults is provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (www.men.gov.pl/menis_en). All public and non-public schools are under the control of that Ministry and they have to implement formally approved standards of education. However, at the moment, that Ministry is not an active player in the field of EDC. Regarding EDC, education is mainly connected to the subject of the so-called “Knowledge of the Society,” which is taught in secondary schools. A separate subject solely devoted to EDC does not exist.

NGOs

It should be noted that in the field of EDC in Poland, NGO financed by other non-governmental bodies, independent foundations or associations, as well as by governmental agencies, play a main role. The Polish legislative definition of NGO exists since 2003. According to the bill of *Public Benefit and Volunteer Work*:

Non governmental organizations are corporations or other units, formed on the basics of policies and formal acts, not being units of the sector of public finances, which activity is non profit (including associations and foundations)(*Act of Law of April 24th 2003*).

According to such a broad definition, the following corporate bodies are recognized as non-governmental organizations: trade unions, employers' organizations, chambers of commerce and trade, volunteer fire brigades, as well as other non-corporate entities, such as Polish schools' parents associations.

Governmental initiatives

State provisions

On the national level, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has published an official document, *The Strategy of Support for the Development of the Civil Society for Years 2007–2013*, which regulates all activities connected to that subject. Governmental bodies mainly finance local activities, or programmes on EDC are co-financed and implemented by NGOs or other institutions. What is most important is that the programmes, and not the institutions, are being supported (*Ustawa o pomocy społecznej 2004*).

¹¹ In Polish this document is entitled: *Human Capital*.

Main objectives, forms, as well as financial conditions of state policy have been included in the above-mentioned document, *The Strategy of Support of Civil Society Development for Years 2007–2013*. The Department of Public Benefit (*Departament Pozytku Publicznego*¹²) monitors the implementation of policy objectives and is also responsible that rules are followed. Affiliated to this Department is the Public Benefit Works Council, the advisory body.

The Department formulated its strategy based on two surveys co-financed by the Ministry as well as two other studies. The first survey was carried out by a specialized research unit within the NGO Klon/Jawor, examining the third sector's development in Poland, up to 2004 (Klon/Jawor 2005). The second survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and aimed at monitoring how the *Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act*, issued in April 2003, had been implemented (Monitoring 2004). Articles by P. Glinski (2005) on civil society conditions in Poland and a report summarizing public debates on the issue (Fraczak, Rogaczewska & Wygnanski 2005) were two studies the Ministry used in developing policy.

According to governmental 'strategic' documents and its Operational Programme Civil Society, there are four basic functions to be observed:

- an educational function – understood as an action that shapes citizens' awareness and civic attitudes;
- an integration function – understood as an action that forms partner relationships among actors creating the *Strategy* and working to achieve its goals;
- a mobilization function – understood as a set of essential issues and practical instruments aimed at inspiring citizens, state administration and various actors towards building up and maintaining civil society;
- a programme function – understood as a direct impact on defining and implementing Operational Programme Civil Society and other relevant operational programmes (Ministerstwo Polityki Społecznej 2005).

The State's administration supports NGOs through the *Fundusz Inicjatyw Obywatelskich* (Citizens' Initiatives Fund – CIF).

With participation of the NGO sector, CIF has been created in order to enhance and support the development of citizens' initiatives. It has been planned that CIF will administer the sum of 30 million PLN allocated for each year of its functioning. CIF's main goal is to financially support citizens' initiatives, where an important part is played by NGOs. It also assists NGOs in their bidding for European Commission grants.

The best example of government strategy formulated in order to help build and maintain civil society is already mentioned in Citizens' Initiatives Fund. Nevertheless, experiences from the first editions of tenders to the CIF (2005-2007) are rather complex. On one hand, the bureaucratic procedures met several complaints. Yet on the other hand, it is clear that the grants are very welcomed. It stimulated and strengthened citizens' initiatives and helped several NGOs to clearly formulate their goals and conditions of work.

The resolution of the Council of Ministers, passed on August 11, 2004 defined the Citizens' Initiatives Fund as:

[A] grant program addressing non-for-profit organizations, formed for the purpose of initiating and strengthening civic initiatives, in cooperation with NGOs. It is complementary to the already functioning solutions and practice in this area.

¹² <http://www.pozytek.gov.pl/index.php?document=532>.

The program stems from the idea of strengthening the civic sector which is being implemented by the government with the help of legal, informational, infrastructural, financial and institutional instruments.¹³

This statement can hardly be seen as more than a very politically correct flow of words. The main goal of the CIF is providing financial support to civic initiatives aiming at:

- Supporting activities initiated by NGOs in the area of public tasks as defined in article 4 of the Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act of Law.
- Supporting cooperation between NGO and public sectors ...
- Promoting good practice, model solutions ... and shaping the democratic social order.¹⁴

Non-governmental organizations and church organizational units are eligible to apply for CIF funds through open grant competitions.

The Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development's main objective, formulated and implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development, is: the development of an open, knowledge-based society through provision of conditions facilitating human resources development by gaining education, undergoing training and performing work¹⁵

Successful implementation of this SOP will improve competitiveness of an "economy based on knowledge and entrepreneurship."

Three priorities direct work on SOP Human Resources Development: (a) active labour market and professional and social inclusion policy, (b) development of a knowledge-based society, and (c) technical assistance. For the purpose of the EDC-LLL project, this document turned out to be irrelevant. Even in priority (b) there is no mentioning on civic education for adults.

Section 1.6.3 of this document focuses on cooperation between state administration and NGOs as well as problems that were encountered. The authors correctly noticed a limited number of work/tasks to be commissioned/recommended within "disseminating and protecting human rights and civic freedoms and concerning actions strengthening democracy" (*Program Operacyjny Kapital Ludzki*, 2006:46). Further in this document, in a section entitled "Threats," it is stated that one of the dangers for democracy faced by State administration is the "deficiency of knowledge among citizens on [the] beneficial role of non-governmental organizations" (*Program Operacyjny Kapital Ludzki*, 2006:75).

However, the above observation did not have practical consequences. SOP Human Resources Development finances several projects that work on implementing the programme's main goals. However, the list of projects granted in the last few years shows that no initiative aimed at EDC was accepted (or even submitted) (*Program Operacyjny Kapital Ludzki*, 2006).

As previously mentioned, the Ministry of Education plays a rather insignificant role in the field of EDC. After the appointment of the Fundamentalist Catholic Party's (LPR) leader as Minister of Education, a primary school subject called *wychowanie obywatelskie* (civic education) has been re-named to *wychowanie patriotyczne i*

¹³ Retrieved Jan. 12, 2007 from <http://www.pozytek.gov.pl/The,Civil,Society,Operational,Program,605.html&main>

¹⁴ Retrieved Jan. 12, 2007 from <http://www.pozytek.gov.pl/The,Civil,Society,Operational,Program,605.html&main>

¹⁵ Retrieved Feb. 20, 2007 from: <http://www.fundusze-strukturalne.gov.pl/English/European+Social+Fund/>

obywatelskie (patriotic and civic education) and been given a new syllabus.

Although educational provisions for adults and implementation of lifelong learning solutions are responsibilities that fall under the Ministry of Education, in practice, virtually nothing is done insofar as EDC for adults is concerned. This observation can be corroborated by documents and official statements presented by the Ministry itself.

Information submitted to the EURYDICE database by the Polish government for years 2004-2005 is among other data concerning continuing education. The following is reported in section 7.2. entitled, "Ongoing Debates:"

Activities undertaken in the field of continuing education ... are as follows: improving access to secondary education, promotion of equal access to education and improvement in quality of education. Activities ... are also compatible with the Lisbon Strategy and the Copenhagen Declaration.¹⁶

This is clearly lip-service to the E-U using catchwords rather than a summary of "ongoing debates."

As other Ministries are also responsible for education, various 'strategic' documents were generated. One of them was *Strategy for Development of Continuing Education for years 2004-2007*. The following are its goals:

- Creation of sectoral programmes making possible the acquisition and improvement of vocational qualifications demanded by the labour market;
- Creation of a network for continuing education and upgrading of the existing sites, including e-learning;
- Dissemination of programmes for adults upgrading basic competencies (command of foreign languages, ICT) improving graduates' chances on the labour market;
- Creation of support to continuing education by central and local authorities as well as social partners (Ministerstwo Polityki Społecznej 2005).

Parallel to this Strategy document, the Ministry of Education also prepared the Sectoral Operational Programme Knowledge and Competencies for years 2007-2013. Its focus was mainly on the development of adults' competencies in foreign languages, ICT and entrepreneurship.

Unlike school education, continuing education - as seen by the Polish Ministry of Education - is not a proper forum for discussing and implementing education for democratic citizenship.

New legislation

In 2005, the possibility of deducting 1 per cent of total income tax and using it to the advantage of public benefit organizations was introduced. The so-called "1 per cent programme" aims to help such organizations in preparing and executing a campaign for gaining 1 per cent of income tax. The list of organizations can be found in each tax office. Each organization that wants to be placed on that list has to fulfil several criteria.¹⁷

A newly established Institute of Non-governmental Initiatives assists NGOs by, among other things, organizing training for NGOs' staff and volunteers and preparing syllabi and information leaflets on how to conduct fund-raising campaigns.

¹⁶ Retrieved Feb. 27, 2007 from

<http://194.78.211.243/Eurybase/Application/frameset.asp?country=PL&language=EN>.

¹⁷ <http://www.pozYTEK.gov.pl/Ustawa,o,dzialalnosci,pozytku,publicznego,i,o,wolontariacie,405.html>

State administration *vis-à-vis* civil society

At the national level, a closer cooperation between state administration and NGO representatives still requires improvement. It is a similar situation in lower levels of state administrations and in smaller towns. However, in several voivodships and municipalities, collaboration often functions well (Gumkowska, Herbst & Wygnanski 2005). Both parties work together not only on applying for and granting funds for various projects, but also discuss and decide upon locally formulated policies. In nearly 90 per cent of cities, a well functioning cooperation between state administration and NGOs has been established. In the case of villages and smaller towns, this share amounts to 60 per cent (Klon/Jawor 2005).

Cooperation with state administration is vital to the whole third sector. In 2003, national as well as local governments were the major source of funds for NGOs. They supplied approximately 30 per cent of all grants received by NGOs. It is worth noting that the situation does not differ much from that of the one in old E-U member-states. In countries such as Germany, France, Italy or the UK, this share reaches 40 per cent of funds received by NGOs (USAID 2005).

Significant differentiation also appears according to differences in the levels of economic and social development of particular regions of the country. Findings of a survey carried out during 2002–2005 by the Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives (*Fundacja Inicjatyw Społeczno-Ekonomicznych* – www.fise.org.pl) show that among seven macro regions in Poland, cooperation is clearly the best in the southwest macro region (Silesia and Lower Silesia), while weakest in the central part of Poland (SURDAR 2005).

The above-mentioned *Act of Law of April 24th 2003 on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work*, regulates the work of various non-governmental organizations. Its importance lies especially in a fact that it defined strict rules according to which funds would be allocated by national and local authorities. It also made it compulsory for authorities to include representatives of the third sector in the designing criteria as well as in the decision-making processes. What is more, the law stipulates that not only NGOs working in the public benefit sector but also all registered non-governmental organizations are eligible to apply for public funds. Its 4th article provides a 24-points list of spheres of activities that state offices and agencies are obliged to assist, facilitate and fund (among others):

- 3) sustaining national traditions, cherishing "polishness" and developing national, cultural and civic identities;
- 4) work for ethnic minorities;
- 8) dissemination and protection of women's rights and work for equal rights between men and women;
- 17) dissemination of knowledge and skills relevant for defence of the country;
- 18) dissemination and protection of human rights and civic freedoms and work supporting development and sustainability of democracy;
- 21) dissemination and protection of consumers' rights;
- 22) work towards European integration and establishing contacts and cooperation between nations;
- 23) organization and support of voluntarism.

(*Act of Law of April 24th 2003*).

Only two years have passed since the law was enacted. In order to examine how this

regulation has been implemented, several surveys were conducted. Authors of the study on the cooperation between employment agencies and NGOs noticed deficiencies in cooperation. The main reason behind this shortfall lies in the fact that often the law was ignored or counteracted. Further, local clerks are often the ones interpreting regulations of the act, concerning job promotion and job market institutions and cooperation with NGOs. This makes the cooperation even more difficult. As a result, despite regulations concerning cooperation, their real range is dependent on individual civil servants' decisions.

Another report (Gumkowska, Herbst & Wygnanski 2005) analyses the amount and quality of cooperation between NGOs and public administration. Survey results show improvement of public administration opinion on the quality of this cooperation. $\frac{3}{4}$ of administrative bodies agreed on advantages of mutual cooperation. The most common form of this cooperation resides in the exchange of information and the financing of NGO activities by public administration. Financial cooperation also gives space for infringements and dangers, both created by public administration and by NGOs. Results show that NGOs' concerns resided mostly in their relations with public administration and in the establishment of clear, binding, and commonly known rules of granting of public funds, including the need for invariable deadlines of applying, transparent rules of assessing and clear conditions for putting projects into operation (Gumkowska, Herbst & Wygnanski 2005).

It is important to underline the fact that state policy is to allocate grants to particular programmes or actions and not organizations themselves. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy defines the criteria of receiving grants. Civil servants evaluate each project based on their coherence with their objectives and guidelines. The Ministry is currently working on a report, examining the number of projects which have been financed in the years 2006-2007. However, the information will have a general character, so there will be no data on the number of adult EDC projects.

Local governments

According to the territorial structure of Poland, government representatives in the regions are voivodes, who are in charge of local governments and of seventeen voivodships. The structure of local governments is equal to the national government's structure, so we can observe the same departments there: Education and Social Policy. These are responsible for implementing government policies. To some extent they also have room to implement local legislation and policies.

In each voivodship there are also regionally elected local self-governments. Furthermore, these assemblies are divided into departments and commissions, which in turn, deal with social policies and education. Naturally, they implement policies and strategies formed by the majority of representatives of each assembly, thus not necessarily in concord with local state agencies.

Also on the level of local self-government of each town/city and municipality/county, there are departments that are responsible for implementing governmental strategies as well as local projects.

On the local government's level, and in each voivodeship, there exists a government's Commissioner for equal rights of men and women, who implements governmental policy. His/Her responsibilities also consist of educational activities, including EDC, although very seldom directed to adults. However, after the last parliamentary election (2005) and following personnel changes, this position is rather badly appreciated. Many MPs from the present government as well as other government

members view it as a post-communist heritage from the former SLD government. It is possible that there will be some changes in that post – even the name of the office might change.

In most local voivodship assemblies, counties and municipalities locally formulated *Strategies of Support of the Development of Civil Society for the Years 2007-2013*. However, the quality of these documents and the feasibility of implementation vary from one region to another. In some voivodships or cities, NGOs found a receiving and listening partner in state agencies as well as in local assemblies.

Three examples of policies implemented and run by local governments will be presented below.

October 26, 2006, the Warsaw Town Hall enacted a bill regulating cooperation between Warsaw City and NGOs working in town. Among others, their objective were:

(1) creation of local civil society and support of local communities through (among others):

- enhancing the sense of belonging to the city's community;
- promoting pro-social and civic attitudes;
- creating conditions for increased social activity of the inhabitants.

(3) Strengthening the position of organizations and providing equal chances in the realization of public assignments through support and the provision of financial grants towards the realization of assignments (Rada Miasta Stolecznego Warszawy 2006).

The local assembly of Dolny Śląsk Voivodship stipulated on December 16, 2005, an act regulating cooperation between the assembly and NGOs working in the territory of Dolny Slask. Fourteen spheres in which local policies were to be implemented were distinguished. The last of them dealt with facilitating and assisting social activeness and cooperation between the business sector, non-governmental organizations and the media. In particular, distribution of support was granted to (among others):

- activities promoting voluntarism and assisting NGOs in fulfilling requirements of the law;
- initiatives aiming at building up coalitions of existing NGOs;
- actions promoting charity in the business sector;
- educational and training offers addressed to state agencies, NGOs and businesses (Sejmik Wojewodztwa Dolnoslaskiego 2005).

October 9, 2006, the programme of cooperation between the Mazowsze Voivodship and NGOs for 2007 had been enacted by the local assembly. It focused on the following issues (among others):

- (1) facilitating the creation of civil society in the region and assisting local communities;
- (2) creating proper conditions to enhance social activity of the voivodship's populace.

The document expresses a trust that a more significant role of NGOs in public life will (a) lead to meeting citizens' needs more effectively, (b) secure social order, (c) facilitate the absorbance of new ideas, (d) increase cooperation in achieving mutual goals and (e) be beneficial for the activity of local administration (Samorząd Wojewodztwa Mazowieckiego 2006).

In the Polish case, no explicit policies focusing on EDC for adults could be found. Educational provisions for adults initiated by state authorities are almost entirely focused on problems of labour market and (un)employment, raising vocational competences, and the like. When discussing the issue of civil society, the main focus is on facilitating

collaboration between the State and its agencies and organizations of the third sector.

The Third Sector

Although this definition does not formally apply to churches and religious organizations or local governmental associations, in practice they are included. According to data from the end of April 2004, the whole sector is comprised of more than 109,000 organizations. The most numerous are: associations (approximately 45,000), trade unions (17,000), religious organizations (mostly Catholic – 15,000), volunteer fire brigades (14,000) and other various foundations (7,000). NGO activities vary across sectors. The largest number of NGOs work in the field of “sport, tourism, recreation and hobby,” “culture and arts,” “education,” as well as in “social services and social care” (Klon/Jawor 2005).

Two aspects need to be underlined here. Firstly, the number of NGOs (rather, the percentage of Polish people taking part in NGO activities) has been rather constant for the last few years. This observation is based on a 2004 survey conducted by the CBOS – the Centre of the Research of the Public Opinion. Only one in four adults maintains they spend some free time involved social services. However, the same research shows that approximately 2 million Poles are engaged in volunteer services. Secondly, the State’s commitment is negatively distinct from the situation in other E-U countries. This can be explained by the short tradition of free active citizens’ participation in Poland.

The functioning of NGOs is an important element of citizens’ activeness and the question of the quality and cooperation with public administration is extremely essential. Regarding the structure and the situation connected with the development of civil society and adult education, it seems that the most important role is played by NGOs, especially the ones which are well developed, with great intellectual and logistical background. Many of them are actively working on the creation of the civil society in Poland. They are influential lobbyists for active civil society as well as important implementers of policy decisions. NGOs are extremely skilled and well informed in the subject, that is why they have no problems in receiving E-U grants.

Other important institutions are local governments, which usually cooperate with NGOs in the field of citizens’ education and are not so much influenced by the centralistic impact of the national government. The least likely to become an active actor in policy implementation is the national government itself. It is dependant on coalition partners and on political games and compromises, therefore not stable in any kind of activity. However, it is naturally a very important player in formal policy-making and in better conditions, could become more active and essential.

The third sector is also composed of various foundations created by business organisations to support civil society. These foundations are developing some programmes on EDC and know-how assistance to civil society. Among many are such initiatives as:

- J&S Pro Bono Poloniae Foundation (<http://www.jsprobono.pl>) which “supports ideas and proposals designed to support the development of culture and to combat all forms of social pathology, including intolerance and discrimination.” Among various initiatives the Foundation finances an action called *Aktywna Wiosna* (Active Spring). It focuses on promoting small local voluntary organizations working on animating local communities and helping group leaders;
- The Leopold Kronenberg Foundation (<http://www.citibank.pl/poland/homepage/english/3498.htm>). Accordingly, “The Foundation’s mission is to provide assistance for programmes promoting the public good in the

fields of education, culture and arts, health care and social welfare.” It also co-ordinates an employee volunteer program run by the mother organization, namely the Citibank Handlowy.

The most important NGOs active at the national level and all over the country in the field connected to adults EDC are Klon/Jawor (<http://www.klon.org.pl>), *Siec Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych* SPLOT,¹⁸ *Stowarzyszenie Szkoła liderow*¹⁹, Stefan Batory Foundation (<http://www.batory.org.pl/english/index.htm>), Helsinki Foundation (<http://www.hfhrpol.waw.pl/en/>), Polish-American Freedom Foundation (<http://www.pafw.pl/strona.php?setlanguage=2>), and *Centrum Aktywnosci Lokalnej* (CAL).²⁰ The position of some well-known NGOs, such as the Helsinki Foundation or the Batory Foundation, is so strong and appreciated, that they are nearly always consultants to Ministries (government) in the issues of formation of strategies or projects related to civil society.²¹

According to hitherto gathered data, on the territory of Poland there are neither QUANGOs nor GONGOs. Even if they exist, they are an invisible minority, therefore their role in EDC is for now unimportant.

Although the Catholic Church often refers to the civic idea of democratic society, no formal activities are being implemented in that field. The only exception being initiatives targeted at primary and secondary school pupils.

One of the very essential players in the process of the development of Polish civil society has surely been the Trade Union "Solidarnosc." Although the historical impact of "Solidarnosc" in the development of civil society is well known, no current formal documents have been found on that issue. However, in union leaders' statements and in the general context of Solidarity's activities, it seems obvious that in the near future they will become one of the most important actors in that field. The main reason for that assumption is a coherence of rights of employees with the values and programme of civil society.

Discussion

It is thought that consensus between public opinion and parliamentary opposition concerning EU influenced policy is slowly being reached. Documents published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which regulates strategy and rules of activity, is a step in this direction. The problem is its practical implementation, which requires often civil servants' goodwill. Quite a strong segment of NGOs are dynamic and elastic enough to adjust to requirements put forward in these kinds of documents. At risk is an unfair assessment of submitted projects.

Officially there is no problem of cultural diversity in Poland. Nevertheless, there are some organizations working on EDC for new citizens and immigrants. With a predicted increase of immigration to Poland this sector of education is expected to grow in significance and scope.

Despite the fact that almost 20 years have passed since the communist regime fell, a legacy of the past is still a burden. Polish political classes view opponents as enemies. In such a political culture, civil servants tend to politicise many spheres of social and

¹⁸ The Network of Information and Support for Non-Governmental Organizations SPLOT [knit, link, interlace, intertwine] – www.splot.ngo.pl.

¹⁹ School of Leaders Foundation – <http://www.szkoła-liderow.pl>

²⁰ Local Activity Centre – www.cal.ngo.pl.

²¹ For general information on NGOs in Poland see: <http://ngos.pl/>

economic life. A clearly demonstrated lack of concern of ruling coalition on issues of adult EDC contributes to worsening the whole situation. Excessive desires for controlling everything and assessing projects from ideological positions may become an obstacle for implementing already agreed upon policies.

It seems that at the national level, EDC policy is rather "lip-service," provided in response to E-U policy, by means of the European Commission's policy statements and vocabulary. At local levels, though depending on the region, EDC policy might actually be implemented due to a good collaboration between local politicians and strong NGOs.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy officials asserts that the above-mentioned document, *The Strategy of Support for the Development of the Civil Society for years 2007-2013* is based on research and evaluations done by this Ministry. No information on gathered data, applied methodology or credibility of research is available.

The Polish Statistic Office (GUS) doesn't have any official data devoted only to EDC.

A survey of E-U-granted projects within the Grundtvig scheme for years 2000-2004 did not bring any new facts or figures.

Education for democratic citizenship through adult education as a subject of state policy remains on the periphery of interest for the State, because educational provisions for adults concentrate mostly on labour market needs.

Conclusion

Practically, there is no coherent state policy directly addressing issues of EDC for adults in Poland. There have been no public debates on that subject and no specific policies have been introduced. An analysis of documents and legislative acts in Poland shows that there is no special strategy or attention paid to adult education for civil society. Official documents and public debates when discussing EDC explicitly mention school youth as a target group. Documents prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, intrinsically, are generally dealing with adults. As such, implicit references to education activities connected to civil society, NGOs and volunteer work might qualify as EDC policy towards adults.

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