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SOCIAL INNOVATIONS IN WARSAW, POLAND

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INTRODUCTION – LOCAL BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

Innovation is defined in many ways by social scientists, people connected with business or technology. Shortly speaking, it is a way to improve the systems that already exist, making them better, faster and cheaper (Iuri, Kuhn, 1998). What means “better, faster, cheaper” depends on the area of interest. In our case it is social policy in local communities, including discussed and implemented innovations, which are expected to meet needs of different segments of local communities. The innovations have different meaning depending on specific social, economic, cultural and political context.

Putnam stresses they are two fundamental points which have to be taken into consideration in studying how institutions and members of communities can collaborate to meet their goals:

1. Institutions shape politics. The rules and standard operating procedures that make up institutions leave their imprint on political outcomes by structuring political behavior.... Institutions influence outcomes because they shape actor’s identities, power and strategies.
2. Institutions are shaped by history. Whatever other factors may affect their form, institutions have inertia and ‘robustness’” (Putnam, 1993: 8-9).

He also points out the role of features of social capital in the process of collaborations of governments, other actors (e.g. TSOs) and individual members of local communities. Social capital is defined as trust, norms and networks shaped over time (Putnam, 1993: 170; Sherraden, M.S., B. Slosar, and M. Sherraden, 2002). Social capital can influence types of innovations proposed by different actors and their chances to be accepted and implemented.

Warsaw is the capital and largest city of Poland. It is situated in central Poland, in Mazowieckie province on the bank of the Vistula river. It is the biggest city in Poland, with a population of approx. 1,7 million (2010), and the Warsaw metropolitan area at approximately 2,6 million inhabitants. The area of the city covers 517 km², while the city’s agglomeration covers 6100 km². Warsaw is the 9th largest city in the European Union by population. The population density is 3,3 thousand people per km². Warsaw is one of the largest sub-regions of Poland with regard to potential and economic development.

The social problems of modern Warsaw are strongly associated with its past. 75% of the city’s infrastructure was destroyed at the end of World War II. The number of inhabitants dropped dramatically as a result of the war. Reconstruction of the city took place in the new, communist system. The new authorities decided to rebuild the city quickly. The act on expropriation, liquidation of private property of urban areas and the buildings that survived the war (on the basis of the so-called “Bierut’s Decree”) meant, in fact, that they were taken over by the state and managed in accordance with the new political, social and economic plans. New urban solutions often lacked any associations with the previous urban design. New residential buildings were constructed by the state and settled according to various schemes: the users often paid nothing or little.

After the political transformation, in 1989, an attempt was made to reconstitute property in the city, which was aimed at returning real estate property to the pre-war owners or their heirs, as well as at privatization of new buildings. This resulted in numerous problems, which are now influencing the situation of the city inhabitants and the perspectives for future development of public and private infrastructure. These factors led to the emergence of a particularly vulnerable group of inhabitants of Warsaw - those living in tenement houses belonging to the municipal housing resources, which are currently being

returned to the prewar owners of these buildings. In fact, the inhabitants are conflicted with the tenement house owners, since the city, which illegally took over private property during communist times, is not a party to any disputes or conflicts that arise.

The differences that exist in public discourse, as well as discrepancies between perceived needs and significance of problems encountered by different vulnerable groups, between their members and the municipal authorities, result in a certain degree of chaos in implementation of the social policy in the city and a situation, in which the inhabitants become animators of innovation. For instance, problems with the institutional infrastructure (e.g. related to childcare) in Warsaw, particularly in the new parts of the city, constructed in the recent years, encourage the inhabitants to develop civic initiatives in order to make the authorities engaged in new investments and make sure that they will be available to those who need them. A similar situation can be observed in the case of people living in houses being returned to their previous owners, when the tenants organize themselves to exert impact on the municipal authorities in order to cause amendment of legal regulations and make sure their interests are protected. Therefore, new solutions are often initiated by the inhabitants, who express their needs and point to ways that could satisfy them. Later on, these serve as a basis for the establishment of partnerships between citizens, TSOs and the municipal or district authorities. Sometimes, the scenario of innovation is different. The city shows initiative and searches for partners among the entities and organizations, mentioned above.

2. SOCIAL INNOVATIONS IN WARSAW

2.1. Childcare: Mama Foundation

The childcare area is important in Warsaw due to the recent demographic trends. As a result of demographic changes, the number of children at kindergarten age has increased, while the number of those older than grammar school students has been low; the number of the elderly has increased as well. In addition, migration between districts can be observed. In some districts (Mokotów, Żoliborz and Wola), the population is decreasing (as a result of the inhabitants moving outside the city, leaving apartments of low quality standard), while in the suburbs: Białołęka, Ursus, Wawer, Wesoła, Ursynów or Wilanów, the population is growing. Warsaw and its surrounding area are an attractive region to settle - the migration factors will be increasingly important in determination of the demand for education services in the capital city. The number of children at kindergarten age is growing constantly. The subsequent years will be those of a baby boom - it is estimated that in year 2013, there will be 40 thousand children at kindergarten age. In Warsaw, kindergarten education at private and public kindergartens and kindergarten departments at elementary school is provided for about 90%, which is a very high rate in Poland (the national average is 37%, which is the lowest indicator of popularization of kindergarten education in the EU member states).

On the other hand, at present, the public debate in Warsaw and in Poland often mentions the „social disadvantages” of employment of women and of cultural changes, which are based on a shift from a collectivist to an individualized culture, in which individuals prefer to satisfy their own needs and not to perform their traditional family duties. Conservative participants of the debate stress that women fail to meet their traditionally defined obligations, and the emerging partnership family model is a way of elimination of differences between the genders, leading to a crisis of masculinity. At the same time, research shows that, within Polish society, the accepted family model has been changing as well. The number of supporters of the model, in which the woman is to take care of home and children, and the man is to provide maintenance, has been decreasing (85% respondents in 1992, 79% - in 1995, 74% - in 1997, 74% - in 1999, 69% - in 2002).

These processes were accompanied by substantial changes in life aspirations. Women want to work not only to get a return of their expenditures for education. More often, they perceive the opportunity to attain self-fulfillment through work. In year 2012, 46% men and 56% women disagreed with the opinion that house work could be as satisfactory for a woman as professional work. At the same time, 32% men and 41% women rejected the opinion that small children suffer, when their mothers work (unpublished data, see WP2 and WP3 reports). In this situation, the female inhabitants of Warsaw are experiencing pressure of two opposing forces -the conservative discourse, putting emphasis on the significance of mother's care, while at the same time, they are expected to work, and, in many cases, they also want to develop their careers. Thus, opinions of some politicians and the Catholic church, formulated in the public discourse, are not consistent with opinions of the majority of the society and with changes in social roles of women and men in Poland, visible particularly well in large cities, such as Warsaw. Outside the feminist circles, there are only rare voices stating that lack of professional activity of women and their contribution to household work do not have to be defined in accordance with the traditional category of a „housewife”, subordinated to her husband and children.

2.1.1. Short Description

MaMa Foundation is an NGO established in June 2006 in Warsaw. It works for mothers' rights in Poland by organizing: social campaigns, such as "O Mamma Mia! I cannot drive my pram in here!") - a campaign for adapting public space for prams and wheelchairs; campaigns for employees' rights, such as "Horror stories", which lists examples of dismissing mothers from their jobs; online help and workshops for women-refugees and many more. Since October 2006, MaMa, together with Muranów cinema, has been organizing "Baby at the cinema" thanks to which parents can watch films while their children play with baby sitters. At the moment this project is being transferred to other cities in Poland. The Foundation also runs a Mothers' Time Bank, encouraging to share the time and exchange support e.g. in childcare. Since 2007 the Foundation supports local moms' clubs by providing workshops for mothers, local leaders and representatives of local authorities. One of such local moms' clubs is located in the Targówek district, which is one of the most deprived areas in Warsaw. The activities of this club are financed by local authorities of the district and the public library of Targówek. MaMa Foundation promotes also the economic values of women's housework.

2.1.2. Conceptions of ways of addressing users

Activities of MaMa Foundation are based on the concept that mothers with small children are citizens with full rights as everybody else and should not be excluded from participation in the local public life due to cultural stereotypes (e.g. that mothers with small children should spend time mostly at home and its closest surroundings) or architectonic barriers (e.g. regarding the lack of public space for prams and places for changing diapers and breastfeeding). The ideas and projects of MaMa Foundation are linked to such concepts as: social economy and social cooperatives, grass-root solidarity and mutual help, feminism. It was established by mothers of small children.

The crucial ways of addressing the Foundation's beneficiaries include: social campaigns, campaigns for employees' rights, workshops and trainings, legal, psychological and civil advice, artistic and educational projects for parents with children, publishing and research activities. For instance, since 2010, the Foundation has been implementing the project „Warsaw Housewives' Club” (Koło Gospodyń Miejskich). In cooperation with a group of experts (such as sociologists dealing with gender studies), the organization has formulated

recommendations for the Polish Parliament on the economic value of work performed by women within the framework of fulfillment of their household duties:

We show and we calculate it precisely that housework performed by women, most often, in 95% in Poland, is quantifiable and it is possible to calculate its precise value in money. At present, this is a salary of about PLN 2800 - including the tasks that are performed on behalf of the family. So, this has a market value. We are introducing a new way of thinking about this. It is not all about paying women for doing housework, but about actually seeing this work, being able to notice it. To show that this is a part of economy, because this money, although virtual, is earned thanks to the tasks that the woman performs (WP5.Care1).

„Warsaw Housewives’ Club” also includes workshops for women, who are not professionally working. These are aimed at increasing awareness of women in terms of partnership-based division of tasks at home and providing the participants with specific tools that will help them in negotiations with their husband or partner:

... the female inhabitants of Warsaw attend our workshops, there have been five editions conducted so far, and the interest is really great. Perhaps it’s because we invite psychologists and mediators to teach women how to make their partners clean up their socks, which, I think, is innovative. In fact, we are not afraid of the very trivial subjects, we provide the tools - very specific ones. These are not just the meetings to complain about how bad it is, but to learn certain things as well (WP5.Care1).

Also, we found the foundation’s project „Moms’ Cooperative - The social project on preventing women’s exclusion from labor market and society” especially interesting. The main aim of the project is to support women, who are threatened with social exclusion, in terms of education, integration into the society and their future chances in the labor market. It includes both vocational and psychological trainings in order to strengthen the overall potential of its recipients. The project is addressed to about 10 young and lone mothers from Warsaw, who gave a birth to their child before being 18 years old and are long-term unemployed (since more than 2 years, usually because of childcare obligations). Also, the issues of possible domestic violence and conflicts with the law are taken into account. The specific activities within the project “Mom’s cooperative” included 4 types of educational workshops on social economy, social cooperatives, self-employment, marketing and promotion, folk art and psychological motivations. Currently, 12 young and lone mothers from Warsaw set up the cooperative, which creates, promotes and distributes regional and local handmade products inspired by folk art (toys, jewelry, accessories, such as bags, cases for cell phones and iphones, souvenirs for tourists, and office accessories - cases for laptops, covers for agendas, business cards holders, etc.). In the frame of the project, the design, creation and quality of products is supervised by experts from The State Ethnographical Museum in Warsaw. The members of the cooperative were chosen on the basis of their artistic skills and creativity. The idea of the project “Moms’ cooperative” emerged from the cooperation between MaMa Foundation with two other partners: The Orbis Hotel Group and the Accor Foundation. The social cooperative of young and lone unemployed mothers from Warsaw is claimed to be the first initiative of this kind in Poland.

2.1.3. Internal organization and modes of working

As mentioned before, all the people who currently work for MaMa Foundation are women and mothers, so they personally experienced various problems related to motherhood in

Warsaw. Its chair is Sylwia Chutnik, a feminist, writer and certified guide to Warsaw, who published several books well perceived by both readers and critics (“Pocket calendar of women”, “Little girl”, “Women’s Warsaw”). MaMa Foundation currently employs 2 people (temporarily, within the projects) and on regular basis cooperates with 10 volunteers: “... we have a constant division of the structure, of course, this activity is also task-based, for specific projects, but we do our best to act on the basis of competences - each of us has a specific scope of duties and work. Of course, within the framework of this, there are specific activities” (WP5.Care1). It is also supported by various experts, e.g. lawyers, psychologists, trainers, scientists and artists, who take part in its activities when needed.

It has to be emphasized that, even when an initiative is directed only to adults, MaMa Foundation allows the participation of children or provides free childcare during a workshop, training or meeting. The basic modes of working of MaMa Foundation are described as follows:

- The Foundation cooperates on regular basis with local authorities in Warsaw’s districts in order to broaden mother and child-friendly public spaces.
- The members of its board, employees and experts participate in public debates and meetings and express in media their opinions on mothers’ situation in private and professional life.

Usually, the Foundation tries to spread its message on different levels of the society at the same time, like in the case of the project “Warsaw Housewives’ Club”: “The initiative is, in fact, aimed at several social groups. The women - this is the workshop part, the society as a whole - some of the social campaigns and the recommendations, aimed at politicians representing all options in the Parliament and the local authorities, not only politicians, but also officers of specific departments or offices” (WP5.Care1).

MaMa Foundation cooperates with such organizations and partners as Association for Legal Intervention, ideologically diversified women’s organizations, The Institute of Public Affairs (think-tank research organization), the Warsaw Municipal Office, local authorities at the level of Warsaw’s districts, local politicians, the Warsaw Labor Office. Also, it participates in several third sector coalitions: The 8th of March Women’s Agreement, The 11th of November Agreement and The Coalition for Equal Opportunities. However, it has to be stressed, that MaMa Foundation cooperates not only with structures of liberal or left wing orientations: “We cooperate with various institutions; in many cases, these differ from us ideologically and politically, for instance, there are various Catholic organizations that deal with family issues. We look for coalitions whenever it seems that we can share an objective with anyone” (WP5.Care1).

MaMa Foundation’s crucial projects are financed by: The Accor Foundation (private sector), The Warsaw Labor Office (public sector), Trust for Civil Society for CEE (public charity incorporated under the laws of the United States of America), European Social Fund (public sector, MaMa Foundation takes part in the projects coordinated by the Warsaw local authorities). Apart from that, MaMa Foundation has a status of Public Benefit Organization. According to the Polish law on public good activity and volunteering, such organizations are allowed to receive 1% of income tax from individuals, so they are tax deductible organizations. To receive such status, an organization has to be a non-governmental organization (political parties and trade unions do not qualify), involved in specific activities related to public good as described by the law, and be sufficiently transparent in its activities, governance and finances.

2.1.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

It seems that MaMa Foundation and its activities affected the local public discourse on mothers with small children as a group of particular needs and problems, especially regarding the participation in public places and city space. The Foundation contributed significantly to growing awareness of the importance of mother and child-friendly architecture and local public infrastructure related to culture and leisure. These issues were not seriously discussed before as mothers with small children were associated mostly with private sphere and childcare facilities. MaMa Foundation stresses also the important issue of work and care reconciliation by emphasizing that motherhood doesn't have to be an obstacle to woman's personal or/and professional development. Apart from that, it offers solutions in terms of employment and childcare, which are alternative to those provided by public institutions. In the case of "Moms' cooperative", the project addresses specific subgroup within long-term unemployed women - young single mothers - by using innovative means based on the concepts of social economy.

As for alternate ideas on childcare, MaMa Foundation challenges the common beliefs that women on maternal leaves usually spend time with their children at home. If they are not at home, mothers actually don't have much choice where to go with a small child, except for local shop, playground or relatives. The social isolation of young mothers results in the sense of loneliness and depression. Regarding these problems, MaMa Foundation leads several "Local Moms' Clubs" in different parts of Warsaw, where mothers can come with their children, meet, exchange experiences and take part in workshops and trainings, which are offered by the Club. In this context, the activities of MaMa Foundation go beyond the common public debates on childcare, which are concentrated on fees and places available in nurseries and kindergartens in Warsaw.

Also, it should be noted that the activities of MaMa foundation are perceived with interest by organizations and institutions of other cities of Poland: "Numerous similar organizations emerge, and we often share our experience, and some projects are implemented in other cities, for instance, the project „To the movies with your child”, but also the exhibition „Art of mothers”, well, things that can be shifted to other cities without us going there” (WP5.Care1). The project „Warsaw Housewives' Club” is being implemented in Berlin, and a female representative of the Ukrainian Parliament has also displayed some interest in it.

2.3. Immigrants: The Foundation for Development Beyond Borders

Warsaw, as the capital city and a metropolitan area, is a city, in which many foreigners stay, live, work and study. Warsaw and Mazowieckie Province are the main areas of concentration of immigrants in Poland, assembling more than 30% of all foreigners, who have been issued a residence permit in our country. Their number has been growing every year, and after Poland's accession to the European Union, the dynamics of this phenomenon increased. Only the social and political transformation of year 1989 influenced the possibility of reevaluation of ethnic assessment and discovery or searching for the ethnic identity of individual minorities. The multicultural character of Warsaw is now very different from that of the prewar period - it has been strengthened by arrival of new ethnic groups - the Vietnamese, the Chinese, Africans - and inflow of people from beyond the eastern borders. At present, there are about 5,6 thousand foreigners registered as permanent residents of the capital city (mostly the Vietnamese, Russians and Ukrainians). As for other forms of residence of foreigners in the city, we can speak of tens of thousands - it is estimated that there is about 150 thousand foreigners living in Warsaw right now, constituting 9% of the entire population of the city. Foreigners living in Warsaw include Russians, the Vietnamese, Africans, Hindus, the Chinese, Ukrainians, Americans and citizens of many member states of the European Union. Some come to Warsaw for a short time, for business purposes, others study at universities or search for a job. Recently, some of them could be met around the main bazaars of Warsaw and in market halls. Some

of them find jobs in construction, gardening, various services. On the other hand, they are teachers, academic lecturers, doctors, artists. They are also the employees of many foreign companies, having their branches in Warsaw (see WP3 city report). At the same time, immigrants living in Warsaw, who are EU citizens or highly qualified specialists are a minority. Most foreigners in Warsaw, that is citizens of third countries, who are not refugees, who have not been granted complementary protection or permanent residence permit, are not offered any social support by the state. Such immigrants are one of the most vulnerable groups in the city, especially in terms of labor market and housing.

2.2.1. Short description

The Foundation for Development Beyond Borders was established in 2006 by the group of Poles and Belarusians, who had recently graduated from the university. The main goal was to develop the cooperation between activists from Poland and Belarus, but shortly the organization changed its focus and set up activities to support the immigrants in Warsaw, especially from the Eastern Europe (Ukraine and Belarus). This change of interests was forced by the growing demand on the side of immigrants and the own experiences of the founders of this organization. The role of the Foundation is broadly described as follows:

From the East and from the West, we had seen the same border, which is why we decided to establish Foundation for Development Beyond Borders. The Foundation works to bring closer nations, societies and states of Eastern and Central Europe through sharing knowledge and raising awareness about common cultural background and common interests. The Foundation works to impact activity and participation of immigrants, which helps to foster bonds between nations and societies of the home country and the receiving country. Another important goal of the Foundation is to develop mutual contacts, as well as regional and international cooperation among the entities that also work to solve social, economic, cultural and legal issues. We aim to raise the professional level of authorities who are responsible for implementing active social policies and specialists who work for public or social services. It is also the Foundation's goal to promote the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe and the region as a whole.¹

2.2.2. Conceptions and ways of addressing users

The Foundation for Development Beyond Borders has been established by a group of Poles and immigrants from Belarus. The activities currently implemented by the organization are often strictly related to personal experiences of migrants - founders of this organization:

And there was this time, we were finishing university, starting our new careers, and this was something new for all of us, a new field. Abut, as some of us had experienced it very personally what Schengen was, and the difficulties experienced by foreigners, entering, for instance the labor market... there are many things that are related to existence of such people, who come over. It is like, well, it's because we all had to experience it and transform it somehow. On our own (WP5.Migrants1).

Now, the Foundation implements two main projects: „Migration and Integration in Practice” and “Multidimensional challenges: researching the potential of integration of

¹ <http://www.frog.org.pl/en/about-the-foundation/goals.html>

immigrants in Poland”. Both of them co-financed by the European Fund for Integration of Third Country Citizens and the state budget.

The aim of the first project is to run the advising center for immigrants, who arrive to Warsaw. The advising focuses on the issues of legalizing the stay and work in Poland, which implies constant monitoring of the legislation concerning immigrants. The immigrants may contact the office, make phone calls and visit. Most often, they need legal advice in terms of interpretation of legislation that concerns legalization of stay, mixed marriages, functioning of the labor market and relations between employees and employers, as well as searching for apartments in Warsaw. They are very often interested in getting assistance in translation of documents and legislative acts, as a great majority of these are only available in Polish:

This are in fact, starting with, it's anything, including legal matters. The problem usually is, you have access to information as such. You come here and you don't speak Polish. And the legislation, even though there is this act on Polish language, it is not applied in practice. And we are dealing with a situation, in which, these people come and they have to comply with specific legislation and they have no idea how. And there are many problems in this regard, because there are many people, who do the translations. We are not licensed to render legal services, this is consulting (WP5.Migrants1).

Apart from individual advice, the Foundation also organizes trainings for immigrants and workshops on functioning of the labor market, healthcare and the social insurance system in Poland. Another service of great importance is Polish language classes. The classes of Polish language cover all levels, from beginners to advanced. Subsidized by the EU, the classes are addressed primarily to people who come from countries outside the European Union and have lived in Poland for less than 5 years. Thanks to the subsidy, the price of the course is only about 75 EUR for three months. Recently, the Foundation has added English language courses to the scope of its services. This is aimed at strengthening the future position of immigrants on the labor market in Poland. Also, Foundation offers unique workshops of creative writing for the immigrants, who know Polish well, but would like to develop their literary skills. Another part of the project is to encourage migrants and their employers to describe their experiences on the Polish job market as part of a yearly competition. Apart from that, the most recent news about how immigrants function in the context of Polish legislation is presented on a bi-weekly radio program produced in cooperation with the Polish Radio Abroad. Also part of the project, the Discussion Club seeks to initiate debate about problems experienced by migrants and the ways to solve them. The Club creates a more casual atmosphere for a conversation about issues of importance to immigrants. The recipients of these activities are mostly immigrants - citizens of third countries, who do not have the permanent residence permit in Poland or their status has not been regulated. Thus, these are foreigners not entitled to any support from the state of Poland. At the same time, their countries of origin vary greatly:

... a great majority are citizens of Ukraine, that's for sure. Then we have a broad selection of members of the former USSR republics, including Belarus, Russia, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan. These are statistically significant groups. Then we have Africa, Asia, there is the community of China, Vietnam - there have been several people, although statistically, they are a bit more numerous in Warsaw. There are many clients from India, Turkey, Nepal, Bangladesh... There is an increasing group from Latin America. We have clients from Canada and the States and New Zealand, and Japan, and Australia (WP5.Migrants1).

It should also be underlined here that the project discussed is a continuation of earlier activity of the Foundation for Development Beyond Borders - the „Welcome Center in Warsaw” project, which has become a model example of support on behalf of immigrants and thus became a basis for functioning of this organization. Project of the Welcome Center, which was managed in cooperation between the Foundation for Development Beyond Borders, the Foundation for Social Diversity and the Foundation „Our Choice”, was aimed at creating a stable advising center for immigrants living in Warsaw. Starting in April of 2009, a team of specialists speaking Russian, Ukrainian, French and English offered free services to foreigners, including legal, job and psychological advising. Moreover, as part of the project, the team continued to offer advice services addressing specific needs of certain groups of immigrants - for example to the parishioners of the Greek-Catholic Church at Miodowa Street or salesmen in Wolka Kosowska. The key element of the advising activities was the issues related to obtaining work and residence permit, but also functioning in the Polish society and knowing Polish norms or customs.

At the same time, launching of advisory services at the Foundation office in central Warsaw was preceded by opening of several consultation and advisory units in those locations, in which most immigrants could be encountered. This was sort of a strategy of “reaching out to immigrants”, establishing contacts with them in places well familiar and known to them:

... we started to get duty-hours, sort of, like inspections. The Stadium of the Decade was a facility like that, there was also Wólka Kosowska, where we got this mobile advisory outlet. We would walk around and talk to people, asking about their problems. This was sort of an opportunity to go out, to look at how people respond to these things... and then there was the issue of establishing the consulting outlets in the Orthodox church at Miodowa Street, in the Orthodox church at Wileńska Street. There were duty hours there, quite often, and later on we also tried with the ethnic eateries (WP5.Migrants1).

The second of the current projects of the Foundation for Development Beyond Borders is focused on research. The main goal of this project is to deepen the knowledge about the integration of foreigners living in Poland by researching and analyzing the current conditions of this process and editing a final report, which will serve as a compilation of knowledge about the problems and needs of migrants used by key actors who influence the integration of foreigners living in Poland. The innovative part of this research is that it treats integration of foreigners as a process in a complex, inter-disciplinary manner, includes the pre-emigration phase, the conditions in the country of origin and an analysis of the attitudes in the receiving society. This research was conducted on a group of migrants from former Soviet countries who, according to the official statistics, are the largest group of foreigners living in Poland.

Moreover, the Foundation for Development Beyond Borders is engaged in lobbying at the local and state administration level, it issues opinions on the changes introduced and postulated in the Polish legislation on foreigners. The Foundation has also been actively engaged in lobbying on behalf of abolition in 2012 and it conducted social campaigns to propagate abolition among the illegal immigrants in Poland.

2.2.3. Internal organization and modes of working

The Foundation office is located in downtown Warsaw. The organization rents the premises with office space, the consultation outlet and a room used for Polish and English language classes and the discussion club meetings. There are no full time employees - at present, 19 persons are engaged in projects on the basis of temporary contracts. The Foundation also

takes advantage of services of several volunteers, who offer translation services and can accompany the immigrants e.g. during visits at various public offices or at healthcare institutions. At the beginning, the activities of the Foundation were not very formalized. Strong demand for consulting and advisory services for foreigners emerged in 2008, when Poland was included in the Schengen zone. This complicated the procedures of travel and legalization of stay of foreigners - citizens of third countries, who, at the same time, started to come to Poland due to its increasing attractiveness both as a transit country and as a final destination: "... at first, these consultations were different, not formalized. It was like this: somebody called somebody else and then you looked for someone, who had the experience, and it went like this - it was very much help-oriented" (WP5.Migrants1).

At present, the Foundation for Development Beyond Borders operates on the basis of projects mainly. The projects of the organization (the current and the completed ones) are financed mainly by the European Fund for Integration of Citizens of Third Countries, funds of the budget of the capital city of Warsaw and of other NGOs: Polish-American Foundation for Freedom, Stefan Batory Foundation. Moreover, the sponsors include e.g. the Institute for Public Affairs and the „Microsoft” company. The organization also takes advantage of support offered by various entities offering material help: The Second Hand Bank, the Office for Protection of Competition and Consumers, the Polish Association of Legal Education and the Forum on Behalf of Social Diversity. The Foundation for Development Beyond Borders cooperates with other organizations and institutions acting on behalf of immigrants in Warsaw, such as the „Our Choice” Association for Ukrainians and the Warsaw parish of the Greek Catholic Church.

2.2.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

In a situation, in which state social assistance is granted only to selected categories of foreigners, that is, persons with Polish citizenship, refugees and persons granted subsidiary protection, as well as immigrants, who have been granted a permanent residence permit in Poland, the operation of the Foundation fills a significant gap. This is aimed at those foreigners, who cannot count on state assistance, at the same time being the most numerous group of immigrants in Warsaw and in Poland. Immigrants coming to Poland, including those, who are culturally close to us, feel confused, when they are forced to face the Polish legal system. They need help in getting through the jungle of legal provisions; at the same time, they need to be directed to the appropriate offices or institutions and told how to deal with specific matters. In particular, this is due to the fact that immigrants from third countries often come from small towns or villages, of a much smaller local scale. In the opinion of one of the beneficiaries of the Foundation, an immigrant from Ukraine, this is the only place in Warsaw, where assistance of this kind can be obtained:

Mainly, they come from Ukraine or Belarus. Regardless of the country, they need information. Legal information, it's difficult to do anything, when you are unable to speak the language, when you need information on normal jobs, apartments, and simply information from the lawyers, how to deal with the papers, what to do, simply, there can be many things, when you don't get paid, or you need a doctor... the "Welcome Center" is the only place in Warsaw. Many people, who come here, are from small villages, there are people here, who don't know the Internet. Well, not everyone has a laptop. (WP5.Migrants2)

Activity of the Foundation is also well known at the level of state institutions and diplomatic services of countries of origin of the immigrants living in Warsaw. As it turns out, representatives of structures of this kind are also not always able to solve problems pertaining to foreigners: "There are (also) people, who do not report themselves, but they

are reported by others, or people in hospitals. We get a phone call from the consulate: „our citizen has fell off a scaffolding, what are we supposed to do” (WP5.Migrants1).

It is important that the abode of the Foundation for Development Beyond Borders, the discussion club, organized there in addition to Polish classes and the social meetings play a very significant role of the space for establishing communication and exchanging experience with immigrants from different countries, staying in Warsaw. Such places as the Greek Catholic church or a restaurant managed by representatives of a specific ethnic group usually unite foreigners from specific countries. Lack of such space has been “noticed” only recently by employees of the City Hall, who, in year 2011, in consultation with more than ten TSOs working with immigrants, launched the Warsaw Multicultural Center. It is difficult to forecast to what extent it will play a role in integration, since, due to lack of funds in the city budget, the Center does not have a permanent location.

2.3. Housing: Team for Solving Social Problems in the Field of Housing

As it was already mentioned, after the political transformation, in 1989, an attempt was made to restitute property in the city, which was aimed at returning real estate property to the pre-war owners or their successors, as well as at privatization of new buildings. This resulted in numerous problems, which are now influencing the situation of the city inhabitants. These factors led to emergence of a particularly vulnerable group of inhabitants of Warsaw - those living in tenement houses belonging to the municipal housing resources, which are currently being returned to the prewar owners of these buildings.

2.3.1. Short description

The largest (and perhaps the only one) innovation in the housing policy of the city are the undergoing negotiations between the representatives of the city and the tenant and squatter organizations, concerning appointment of the Team for Solving Social Problems in the field of Housing, Re-privatization, Homelessness and Social Exclusion. A project of this kind has been filed at the city council by tenant organizations 2 years ago; however, there was no response. In the opinion of the tenant organization, this proves that the city authorities were never really interested in tenants and their problems and they did not treat them seriously. This may also be proven by the fact that in year 2010, the Municipal Office initiated the “Warsaw Housing Meetings”, which were to serve as a space for discussion on housing problems and solutions to these; in the end, the city was only willing to present its point of view and it failed to take into account the opinions or objections of the tenant organization representatives or to refer to the problems reported by them. As a result, all tenant organizations decided not to participate in the meetings, which were then suspended as there was no one willing to attend.

Within the framework of changes in the housing policy of the city, in April 2012, the Team for Solving of Social Problems in Housing, Re-privatization and Counteracting Homelessness and Social Exclusion was established in the capital city of Warsaw, with representatives of the city and social groups and NGOs. The Team is aimed at proposing new initiatives and providing advisory services. Although the fact that it has been established has been received positively by all parties to the process, our interlocutors have pointed out that the mere creation of the Team does not mean that it truly has a say in creation of the policy.

2.3.2. Conceptions and ways of addressing users

The aim of the Team is to serve as an advisor to the city authorities in the field of the housing policy. The Team is to represent all of the parties concerned, that is, the city

authorities, the Real Estate Management and representatives of tenants and of private building owners. Moreover, during the meeting, discourse was initiated on the most significant social problems and the possible solutions, which can be continued during the subsequent meetings. The issues of vacant buildings were discussed, as well as the compensation agreements, reprivatization, informing tenants of the current reprivatization processes, concerning the apartments inhabited, art. 678 of the Civil Code.

2.3.3. Internal organization and modes of working

The Team organization is based on series of meetings aimed at building dialogue between the parties concerned by the housing policy. All parties have given expressed their willingness to continue the dialogue. So far, it has been attended by:

- Vice President of the Capital City of Warsaw,
- Representative of the Social Communication Center,
- Representative of the Warsaw Tenants Associations,
- Representative of the Tenant Defense Committee,
- Representatives of squatter groups (Syrena, Przychodnia),
- Representative of the Office for Social Justice (NGO supporting tenants).
-

2.3.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

The Team has been established in response to the negative consequences of return of the tenement houses in Warsaw to their former owners and their legal successors. Tenants, having no legal protection, are being removed under the pressure of rent charges being raised without any limitations, sometimes by threat or menace. The former owners and their successors, on the other hand, complain about the unclear criteria for return of the real estate property and the long-term proceedings. Their claims block the city investment projects. On the other hand, specialized law offices and firms, which buy out the rights and claims to real estate property, have been operating with striking efficiency - regaining of tenement houses has become a very profitable business. This situation results in very negative consequences for the tenants, as well as the city, as it damages the urban tissue and threatens the public interest.²

The Team deals with housing management, including the municipal housing resources of the capital city of Warsaw, which also includes social building (TBS), reprivatization and its social effects, counteracting social exclusion due to loss of apartment, management of vacant buildings in the capital city of Warsaw and building and developing new forms of dialogue between the local communities in the city of Warsaw and the authorities of the city.

2.4. Employment: Project “Become your own Boss in Poland”

One of the problems that Warsaw faces in terms of labor market policies is the insufficient use of the young people potential, and a high risk of unemployment among them. About 50 to 60 thousand people, encounter problems of this kind in Warsaw. The employment services of Warsaw, coordinated by the Labour Office of the Capital City of Warsaw, implement a number of standard activities (similar to those in other parts of the country), as well as special initiatives to improve the situation on the local labor market. The standard activities include job agency, vocational consulting, trainings for the unemployed, cooperation with employers, organization of trainings, practices and intervention works, subsidies for workplaces or funds for initiation of business activity.

² <http://hoza27a.pl/content/warszawski-okragly-stol-mieszkaniowy-w-3-godziny>

However, thanks to the available European funds some new projects are implemented, which allows for more innovative approach. One of them addresses directly the issue of young people going abroad to work and often hesitating is they should come back to Poland, in fear of unemployment.

2.4.1. Short description

The Project „Become your own boss in Poland” is the only social project in Poland aimed directly at emigrants, who have decided to get back to the country in order to register their own businesses in the capital city. According to the Director of the Office for European Funds of the capital city of Warsaw, which implements the project: “This is the only project of this kind in Poland, encouraging emigrants to return to the country and establish their own business. Thanks to support from European funds, we are able to help these people in making important life decisions and at the same time support the labor market in Warsaw.” In order to apply, it is necessary to get a good business concept and fill out the forms available on the Web page of the project. It is also necessary to file copies of two documents, confirming one’s stay abroad.

The project “Become your own boss in Poland” is implemented together by the Municipal Office of the Capital City of Warsaw and the College of Finances and Management in Warsaw. It receives additional financing from the European Funds, within the framework of the Operational Programme Human Capital, Action 6.2 „Promotion of entrepreneurship and self-employment”. The value of the project is PLN 1 780 441, and its implementation will end in April 2012. The participants, who receive funds for development of their businesses within the framework of the project, are obliged to maintain business activity from the date of its commencement for at least 12 months.

Recruitment lasted from September 27th until October 29th, 2010, and participation in the project was free of charge. 31 participants took advantage of training and consulting during the first stage; out of these, 23 received additional financing for the best business ideas and they continued to participate in the 2nd stage of the project, including the training and consulting programme. In September 2011, authors of the best business plans were congratulated personally by the Commissioner of the European Union for Employment, Social Affairs and Integration, Mr. László Andor. The cost of financing of this project was almost PLN 1.8 million, and it is designated mainly for establishment and functioning of new, innovative companies, owned by Polish re-emigrants in Warsaw.³

2.4.2. Conceptions and ways of addressing users

Apart from non-returnable financial support of up to PLN 40 thousand for establishment and running of own company, participants of the project “Become your own boss in Poland” were granted An additional facility in the amount of PLN 1126 per month, payable for six months after the commencement of their business activity. Earlier, they went through professional trainings, workshops and individual consulting, getting ready to start business activity. After establishing their company, they could take advantage of consulting for the first year of operation.

The project participants were of age, not active professionally (not working and not registered at the labor office as unemployed), who have returned from economic emigration, residents of Mazowieckie Province and willing to open their own business in Warsaw. The offer was directed, in the first place, towards emigrants above 45 years of

³ <http://www.zostanszefem.vizja.pl/pl>

age, returning or entering the labor market for the first time after giving birth to and raising a child, and those emigrants, who have lost their jobs otherwise than through their own fault.

2.4.3. Internal organization and modes of working

The project was implemented together by the Office for the Capital City of Warsaw and the College of Finances and Management in Warsaw. The office was responsible for the formal and financial aspects of the project and recruitment, while the College took care of implementation or ordering of training or consulting tasks.

2.4.4. Interaction with the local welfare system

The main objective of the project „Become your own boss in Poland” was to get the project participants ready to start their own business activity by raising the level and updating the knowledge and professional skills necessary to launch and operate their firms. The project is an innovative support tool for persons, who, unable to find a good job in Poland, had emigrated due to economic reasons. The project offered a chance to encourage some of such people to return, and, on the other hand, to provide them with work opportunities upon such return.

The project objectives were implemented by a training and consulting programme on administrative and legal aspects of establishing and maintaining business operation, workshops to shape interpersonal skills and individual consulting. Thus, the support for each of the 23 participants was very much individualized and it resulted in establishment of 23 firms rendering services of a very diversified nature, fitting well within the context of the local market.

CONCLUSIONS

They are following factors which influence local welfare policy in Warsaw: (1) historical heritage of the War World II and legal decisions made during 1944-1990 (period of so called socialist rules); (2) present conflicts between governing liberal party Civic Platform and parties being in opposition: populist Law and Justice, leftist Democratic Left Alliance being present in the city council; (3) conflicts between local government of Warsaw and groups of citizens interested in solving some particular problems in some ways; (4) citizens' initiatives to help people being in special needs (e.g. young mothers, immigrants) (grass roots initiatives); (5) external financial support given by the European Union.

(1) Historical heritage of the War World II and legal decisions made during 1944-1990 (period of so called socialist rules).

One of the major important factors influencing the housing policy in Warsaw is the “Bierut Decree” and its long-lasting effects. To efficiently rebuild Warsaw in the aftermath of the war, the authorities issued a legal act, which allowed for the ownership of the land within the city's administrative limits of 1939 to be taken over by the municipality, with ownership of the buildings to remain in the hands of their existing owners. The Bierut Decree was issued in 1945 and has remained in effect continuing to constitute the basis for determining former owners' rights. As the result of the political changes after 1989, former owners have gained opportunities of getting their properties back or receiving compensation from the city. City as well as state budget has to guarantee the funds to compensate property owners' according to the current value of the building. This means that the big part of city budget is spent on compensations, adding to existing deficit. It is also necessary to be aware that Polish cities are characterized by very high density of

housing (third from the bottom in Europe; only before Bulgaria and Romania, Eurostat 2012).

The effects of Bierut Decree are also visible in case of communal housing belonging to the city, because around one fourth of the city housing resources are located in the buildings that may be subject to reprivatization. Reprivatization process also creates tensions between tenants and private tenement house owners. Reprivatization of buildings with communal housing generates the biggest conflicts, because some private owners, after regaining their property try to exchange low rent paying clients of welfare system for income generating ones.

In this situation in Warsaw, two organizations were established that deal with protection of tenant rights - the Committee for Protection of Tenants and the Warsaw Tenant Association (WSL). Both emerged as a result of protests of tenement house inhabitants, in which the owners raised the rent charges. The organizations do not have any financial support of any institution. We may assume that the length of their existence is determined by results of their activities.

The other side of the conflict is represented by the Polish Union of Property Owners, which argues that the authorities of Warsaw are blocking the return of real estate property taken away from the owners on the basis of Bierut's Decree. Despite their efforts, tenants' associations are the weaker side of the conflict and were not yet able to gain a satisfactory solution. Their actions can be considered as part of process of building participatory democracy on the local level in Poland. One of the effects of their protests on the housing policy of the city, was that in April 2012, the Team for Solving of Social Problems in Housing, Reprivatization and Counteracting Homelessness and Social Exclusion was established in the capital city of Warsaw, with representatives of the city and social groups and TSOs. The Team is aimed at proposing new initiatives in housing and providing advisory services to the local government.

(2) Present conflicts between governing liberal party (Civic Platform) and parties being in opposition: populist Law and Justice, leftist Democratic Left Alliance being present in the city council.

The conflict has purely political character. As analyses show in some cases the parties finally reach agreement like in the case of perception and solving problem of care on children. The city council is of the opinion that the childcare problems in Warsaw can be solved by (1) building new public kindergartens; (2) entrusting childcare services to private entities; (3) childcare implemented by public-private partnerships. However, since 2007, only six new public kindergartens have been established in Warsaw. A cheaper and more flexible solution is to "buy out" non-public nursery and kindergarten places, which the parents can use in the same way (in terms of recruitment and charges) as the public facilities. Such solution has been applied in the district of Bemowo. Another concept is to implement public-private partnerships.

(3) Conflicts between local government of Warsaw and groups of citizens interested in solving some particular problems in some ways.

The third partner of the conflict are grassroots organizations like association of the parents of small children, who established the „Voice of the Parents” Association demanding lowering fees in kindergartens and crèches in Warsaw. The action gained support of the opposition parties in City Council and was successful and led to withdrawing the most problematic regulations. In the debate considering age in which children should start school education another association is active. The Association “Ombudsman for Parents’ Rights” was created ad hoc by group of parents advocating the maintaining of age 7 instead of 6, which recently was proposed by national government as a starting age for

primary education. Later on, the leaders of Association created also the Foundation for Parents' Rights. The Association "Voice of the Parents" is active mainly in Warsaw, while the other one is present in various cities around Poland (e.g. leading social campaigns) with their headquarters in Warsaw. The organizations do not get financial support of any kind; only some political one as in the case described earlier. The public opinion is divided on the issue. Both associations are typical protest organizations, which more or less successfully try to influence decisions of national or local government concerning allocation of financial resources or changing the education system.

(4) Citizens' initiatives to help people with special needs (e.g. young mothers, immigrants) (grassroots initiatives).

In the area of childcare, we have to point out the creation of MaMa Foundation, also a grassroots initiative, as the ones mentioned earlier. However, its goal is not to influence a situation through protest, but fill some type of vacuum in welfare policy. Its activity is addressed to young mothers both working and not. In the case of later ones, Foundation tries to activate them by creation of social enterprises /cooperatives, which are giving them opportunities to make some money and to create a psychological effect: readiness to work instead of staying home. MaMa Foundation was able to get some modest financial support from local government and through it access to financial support of the European Social Fund. The foundation also received a high support and visibility in local and national media. There are attempts to set up similar activities in other Polish cities. We may assume that the existence of the foundation has rather good perspective to maintain their activities in longer period of time.

Another example is related to situation of immigrants. Immigrants as a group are recipients of activities undertaken by the City Hall and its subordinate institutions. The Office for Education of the Capital City of Warsaw implements projects in the field of integration of immigrant's children in Polish schools, often cooperating with TSOs that work with immigrants. However, according to the law regulations, only some distinguished groups of immigrants have a right to social assistance: refugees, persons subject to complementary protection, immigrants with Polish citizenship and the foreigners, who have the permanent residence permit. The city authorities help the immigrants to solve housing problems, although to a very limited extent. Support of labor offices gains very little interest of immigrants (see reports WP3). A special categories of immigrants - refugees and foreigners, who have been granted complementary protection, are the only groups authorized to systemic integration support in Poland, which includes financial support, Polish language classes and counseling on the labour market. The remaining, most numerous groups of foreigners in Warsaw may only count on TSOs, supporting them within the framework of their projects. As for the immigrants' needs of learning Polish, this demand is met by TSOs, offering courses free of charge or much cheaper than commercial entities, adapted to the level of advancement of the participants. Such courses are organized by the Foundation for Development Beyond Borders, the Polish Humanitarian Action and the „Fu Shenfu" Immigrant Center. Apart from learning the language, the courses offered by TSOs provide immigrants with opportunities to build relations with others. Many courses include not only regular classes, but also discussion meetings, watching movies together etc. At the same time, TSOs are beginning to add English language to their offer. In the case of the Foundation for Development Beyond Borders, Polish and English language classes are a part of overall support offered to immigrants in Warsaw: from legal assistance and support in dealing with any individual matters to trainings on the functioning of the Polish labor market, healthcare, the social insurance system etc.

It is necessary to underline that TSO activities to help immigrants have to large extent grassroots character. The interesting example is the initiative of a group of lawyers who

found that the existing welfare system working through national and local agencies do not provide help needed by deprived groups, including refugees and other immigrants, especially in terms of dealing specifically with legal issues and law regulations. Therefore, they started at the beginning to advice and help informally and later transformed into TSO (Association for Legal Intervention) getting some financial support from the city government. This initiative was highly welcomed by immigrants.

(5) External financial support given by the European Union.

European Funds are one of the major drivers of both infrastructural and social development in Poland nowadays. Active labor market policies as well as life long learning activities are one of the important areas supported by European Social Fund. Therefore, it's not surprising that the financial support given by the European Union, especially in the frame of the ESF and The European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals is the important factor in the context of sustainability of discussed local initiatives. For example, in case of mentioned TSOs helping immigrants, applying for EU funds is crucial for their projects, as they receive irregular and partial support from the city. Resources of the European Fund for Integration of Citizens of Third Countries allowed for intensification of activities aimed at integration. Due to lack of a clear integration policy in Poland and existing restrictions on social assistance available for immigrants, the Fund actually replaced the state activity in this regard. Similarly, the support for social cooperatives like the one established by MaMa Foundation, is possible thanks to the projects realized by Labor Office and based on ESF money. However, there is a risk, that the initiatives based mostly on these funds may lose sustainability in future programming periods when the European Commission introduces some changes in the structure of the EU funds. On the other hand, in Warsaw, the EU money support the great majority of the activities against unemployment implemented by local welfare institutions (such as The Labour Office), TSOs and private entities, which usually offer trainings and courses for various categories of unemployed. The consumption of EU funds is enormous in this field, but it's difficult to define and evaluate the real effectiveness and utility of such services. Similarly, the support for social cooperatives like the one established by MaMa Foundation, is possible thanks to the projects realized by Labor Office and based on ESF money.

Concluding, we observe building participatory democracy in Warsaw, creation of third sector organizations often based on individual initiative. This phenomena are characteristic for Poland because of significant low trust to government and its agencies (WVS 2012 unpublished) and historically proven experience, that citizens are the most successful if take their problems in their own hands. Simultaneously we have to point out that the sensitivity to social problems and the described activities are conducive to social cohesion. The last decade shows that the governmental agencies responsible for social policy are increasingly understanding (with a support of European Commission) that it is a way to identify important problems in the city and way to meet needs of different social groups. At the same time, protest groups and organizations, which play a significant role in shaping local welfare policy, constitute the important new "partner" also present in social life of cities of stable democracies (Kopmans 2010; Rucht 2010). Like in many other countries, commercialization of services take place, which may polarize the local communities, dividing it according to income and type of social networks which different groups have at their disposal.

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