

Press release on the social capital of Podlaskie Voivodeship in the context of the operation of the non-profit sector

Two thirds of the inhabitants of the region of Podlasie (66%) to not belong to any civic organization, and the region of Podlasie, there is a fairly strong bonding social capital.

At the request of the Voivodship Labour Office in Białystok, as part of the Observatory of Social Policy in Podlaskie, co-financed by the European Social Fund within the framework of the Human Capital Operational Programme 2007-2013, the IPC Research Institute from Wrocław has conducted **a study on social capital of Podlaskie Voivodeship in the context of the operation of the non-profit sector**. The study was carried out between April and June 2013. The main purpose of the study was, among others, to identify the development of the non-profit sector's background in Podlaskie Voivodeship and in Poland by describing the individual manifestations of the social capital, in the context of the strategy of the Podlaskie Voivodeship development, as well as the relationship between the formation of social capital and the development of non-profit organizations in local environments, with particular reference to historical factors that shape identity.

"As part of the project, various research techniques have been applied, e.g. legacy data analysis, large-scale quantitative research with various groups of respondents, qualitative research in the form of individual in-depth interviews focused on group interviews with representatives from non-profit organizations", says Jarosław Sawicki, Research Director at IPC Research Institute.

"In the quantitative research, implemented using quantitative techniques, direct interviews based on questionnaires, we have surveyed four hundred representatives of non-governmental organizations. Residents, both adults and slightly younger ones, have been surveyed using CATI and CAWI techniques, i.e. by telephone and online, respectively", adds Artur Kotliński, Managing Director at IPC Research Institute.

The surveyed representatives of Podlaskie's NGOs emphasized that the decision to take up work in non-governmental organizations was determined mainly by altruistic reasons: the desire to help others and the change of the surrounding reality, as well as willingness to do something good. The respondents confirmed that the functioning of non-governmental organizations is needed – such is the opinion of the vast majority of the survey participants. This need is recognized both locally, regionally, within the voivodeship, as well as across the country. The main problems in terms of cooperation between the non-profit sector and public sector concern financial issues (low subsidies, insufficient financial support, etc.) and excessive bureaucracy. In the case of cooperation with the

private sector problems include, on the one hand, financial issues and difficulties in finding a sponsor and, on the other hand, problems related to unwillingness and lack of involvement of businesses and entrepreneurs in aiding non-governmental organizations.

The study also found that cooperation between local governments and NGOs in many cases it is difficult or not at all, especially in small towns.

Among the potential courses of actions, related to the development of social capital, the representatives of non-governmental organizations have considered the promotion of socio-economic dialogue as the most important; social participation and impact on the lives of citizens came second, followed by social communication and exploitation of cultural and creative potential and development of infrastructure for culture, tourism and sport.

Two thirds of the inhabitants of the region of Podlasie (66%) do not belong to any civic organization. One in ten respondents declare union membership (11%) or a religious organization (10%). Only one in eight residents of Podlaskie ever used the offer of non-governmental organizations, more than three quarters (77%) said they did not have such experiences.

The results show that participation in the work of NGOs is relatively low (only 17.1% of respondents said they participate in the work of NGOs). In addition, mostly restricted to participation in rebounding WOŚP (35.1%). Such low and incidental participation in the activities of NGOs may result in a relatively low development of social capital in the future.

“The survey has indicated that in Podlasie there is a fairly strong binding social capital, i.e. the capital concerns relations between the members of the same social group, not related to the network between individuals belonging to different communities. Work is needed to make the social capital in Podlaskie Voivodeship develop even more intensively”, concludes Aneta Wiśniewska, Head of Observatory of Social Policy in Podlaskie.