



## Cooperation Between Local Government and Non- Governmental Organizations as a Platform for The Development of Social Dialogue

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<p>2021 Research Leap/Inovatus Services Ltd. All rights reserved.</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> 10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.62.3002 <b>URL:</b> <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.62.3002">http://dx.doi.org/10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.62.3002</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ABSTRACT</b></p> <p>The independence of territorial self-governments in the process of implementing the tasks imposed on them does not mean that they have to implement them independently. Achieving the assumed goals of action often requires skillful cooperation with other entities, including non-governmental organizations. Local government is the closest partner of non-governmental organizations, not only through action in the local community, but above all through a community of purpose, which is to meet the needs of residents. NGOs represent the local community. The basis for the functioning of the state is social dialogue. The guarantee of successful cooperation between partners is cooperation based, on the one hand, on the awareness of local governments of jointly diagnosing and solving local problems, and on the other – on the awareness of non-governmental organizations to jointly implement their goals. It should be emphasized that territorial self-government – fulfilling statutory tasks and non- governmental organizations (voluntary associations of people devoting their time and energy to achieve social goals) are two different types of entities. Dialogue and cooperation between them should aim to integrate and mobilize entities to improve the quality of life in small homelands. The main goal of the article is therefore to draw attention to the importance of cooperation between territorial self-governments and non-governmental organizations in order to achieve positive results. It emphasizes the principles on which such cooperation should be based. The areas of this cooperation were indicated, giving examples of practices. The work mainly uses the desk research method in the form of literature analysis, reports and exploitation of online resources, as well as case analysis.</p>
<p><i>Keywords:</i> Cooperation, Local government, Management, Non-governmental organizations, Social dialogue</p>	

### 1. Introduction

Cooperation of local government administration with external bodies, including non- governmental organizations, should be based on the creation of information instruments, dialogue with citizens and establishing partner relations with the surrounding entities. The foundation of good cooperation is a properly developed information policy focused on particular groups of stakeholders with whom such cooperation is required. In modern local government administration, information policy is a management instrument which enables the implementation of designated public tasks and strategic goals (Jastrzębska 2010). Local self-government units, especially in the sphere of official contacts with recipients should (Kowalczyk 2011) provide reliable information. An important mission is to broaden the recipients' knowledge about reality, so as to reduce their uncertainty about the state of their surroundings. Thanks to good communication- or a well-run information policy- one can build the right relationship in both social and economic life. A very important element is to create mutual trust and establish

cooperation in co-deciding about the use of resources. A partnership founded by an appropriate system of values creates and tightens the ties between individuals in the region, positively impacting the efficiency of individuals' operations. The essence of the partnership is to cooperate in establishing common goals and in effective and efficient implementation. Dialogue and cooperation between local government and non-governmental institutions should aim to integrate and motivate those entities to improve the quality of life in the respective region. The main purpose of this article is to highlight the importance of cooperation between self-government authorities and non-governmental organizations in order to achieve common goals for the benefit of all parties involved. Social dialogue and partnership must be based on easy access to information and its efficient circulation. In the article, the authors used the analysis of literature, reports and the use of online resources and the results of interviews with local government representatives.

## 2. Essence and Principles of Cooperation Between Self-Government and Non-Governmental Organizations

Partnership in the region should be considered a specific determinant of development (see: Marciszewska, Studzieniecki, Wanagos 2017). However, to be effective it must result from the good will of each partner. Creating a partner relationship is a dynamic and inter-dependent process. M. Saunders indicates that the partnership's success requires: frequent communication, both formal and informal; cooperative attitude of the parties; trust between the parties; honest information; multidisciplinary involvement (Black, Akintoye, Fitzgerald 2000). It also requires imagination and empathy. Within the local environment, there are non-governmental organizations that share many features with local government; it should be emphasized, however, that territorial self-government and non-governmental organizations are two different entities (Iwankiewicz-Rak 2011; Rados 1996). Municipalities, poviats and voivodships perform their respective statutory tasks for which they have resources (funds, human capital), while non-governmental organizations are voluntary associations of people who devote their time, know-how and energy to achieving important (social) goals. They implement priority objectives for particular social groups, not for the general public. Units of territorial self-government, while making decisions about conducting a dialogue, are aimed at proper identification of needs and expectations in the sphere of public objectives, and subsequently their correct implementation by directing resources to local issues. As for NGOs, the decision to cooperate is based on different motivations, as this sector is very divergent. The essence of successful cooperation between partners is cooperation based, on one hand, on the local authorities' awareness and willingness to jointly diagnose and solve local problems, and on the other – on the NGO's awareness and willingness to jointly implement the set objectives. The development of a common information policy and basis for dialogue should be to build a culture of cooperation between local government and non-governmental organizations. The specificity of territorial self-government, where the residents participate not only directly but also through the activities of non-governmental organizations in the socio-economic life, indicates that relations between partners should be based on particular principles (Model 2019; Poradnik 2019) including: sovereignty, subsidiarity, partnership, efficiency, openness and fair competition. In principle, sovereignty emphasizes that cooperating partners remain independent in mutual relations, respect the competences of the other party, among others in achieving set goals. This rule ensures mutual constructive exchange of views and its own representation and strengthening of its structures in order to increase the potential for effective action. According to the principle of subsidiarity, the exercise of public authority should rest in the hands of the institutions closest to citizens, therefore the tasks and competences, as well as financial resources, are first and foremost available to municipalities. The main assumption of this rule is the appropriate distribution of tasks among particular levels

according to the nature and effectiveness of their implementation (Gołębiowska and Zientarski 2016). This principle attempts to answer the question of the scope of independence and self-sufficiency of citizens, social groups, smaller and larger communities in various spheres of the functioning of the state (Dolnicki 2009). The local government performs public tasks to meet the needs of its residents. The local government should allow citizens to solve their problems, that is, delegate tasks to non-governmental organizations, if they are able to perform these tasks according to an established and accepted standard, and support the implementation of civic initiatives. On the other hand, non-governmental organizations should undertake only tasks which they are able to perform for the benefit of the local community, support informal citizen initiatives and act to empower residents in solving their issues and assuring independent functioning in the community. In the management of territorial self-government (public affairs), the principle of openness of information processes should also be respected. In the information policy of local self-government bodies, in particular in respecting the right of residents to obtain information, which decisions about their community were made, how and how self-governmental funds are managed. Public character of territorial self-government requires various forms of citizen involvement in decision-making processes and building a system of actual social control. Authorities should strive to obtain public support for policy and possible changes. Information should be made available in different forms (accessibility, appropriate formats), be adequate in terms of content (meeting the needs of the recipient related to the decision, high level of clarity). It must be timely, credible, and present matters in accordance with reality. It should also be able to be cross-checked, completed, deepened and extended. The principle of fair competition assumes that all properly prepared entities may compete for the possibility of performing public tasks. You can find the most effective implementer of public tasks. Local government units must suppress monopolistic tendencies and conflicts of interest related to combining public and social functions. It is the duty of non-governmental organizations to combine their interests with the interests of the community and the authorities. Together, they should develop non-discriminatory, clear criteria for each co-operation partner within all sectors. The principle of effectiveness requires local governments and non-governmental organizations to constantly raise the potential for efficient implementation of public tasks, so that they are implemented based on the principles of economy (economically), creating maximum value for specific expenditure while respecting public resources. It is important to draw attention to the good quality and practicality (usefulness) of the proposed solutions for the implementation of a specific goal. The last of the principles quoted – the partnership principle – assumes the cooperation of sovereign partners for the purposes that are crucial for the development of the local community and the well-being of its citizens. Both sides undertake efforts to convince them that by combining resources and competences they shall achieve better results. The partnership assumes that all

parties cooperate with each other, based on the principles of participation, co-decision and co-responsibility.

### 3. Forms of Cooperation Between Self-Government and Ngo's

The number of non-governmental organizations as well as their role in the local government administration is growing all over the world. However, this does not always translate into their activity and the way they cooperate with public administration in a globalization era (Ebrahim 2003; Broniewska 2013; Adamiak, Czupich, Ignasiak-Szulc 2013). One of the symptoms of decentralization of public management is supporting the so-called third sector and involvement of public authorities in the functioning of voluntary social organizations (Alcock 2012). Such actions are to facilitate the strengthening of civil society, the essence of which is often highlighted today (Pollard and Court 2008). Decentralization of public management is also associated with the transfer of many tasks to non-governmental organizations. It is very important to develop standards for cooperation between public administration and the non-governmental sector (Bogacz-Wojtanowska, 2011; Rymcza, Frączak, Skrzypiec, Wejzman, 2007). In Europe, two models of cooperation between public administration and non-governmental organizations in the area of public benefits (social benefit) are used most commonly: the German and the English model (see: Rymcza, Frączak, Skrzypiec, Wejzman 2007). The first is characterized, first of all, by two features: full implementation of the state subsidiarity principle, utilised in the legal system as a principle of social entities priority in the provision of social services through public funds, and the corporate character of public administration- and NGOs; this is reflected in building, within the third sector, structures compatible with public administration structures which are able to negotiate terms of cooperation at any level of the administrative division of the state. The English model, on the other hand, is characterized by a greater openness to competition between healthcare providers and a greater role of market (or quasi-market) mechanisms in the system of commissioning public tasks. In Great Britain, there is talk of the state's cooperation with the "independent sector", there are no special preferences for non-governmental organizations, and the principles of intersectoral cooperation are determined to a large extent by public-private partnership rather than public-social partnership. In both models, the standardization of cooperation serves to professionalize the third sector. Non-governmental organizations in Germany are becoming similar to public institutions; they take over their standards and organizational culture. The English model makes non-governmental organizations similar to commercial companies (corporations). In both models, you can see attempts to introduce elements of the competitive model. The Polish model of cooperation of local government administration with non-governmental organizations includes elements of both these competing models. The competition procedure for commissioning public tasks assumes the principle of relative priority of non-

governmental organizations (in relation to commercial entities that cannot submit bids, but not to public entities), while introducing elements of competition within the third sector. In Poland, the Law on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work has imposed on local governments the obligation to create an annual program of cooperation with non-governmental organizations, which should ultimately translate into a fuller fulfilment of the various needs of local residents (Programy 2019). Self-government gives the local community the right to decide on the quality of life in a given administrative area, the right to take actions to stimulate the development of its own region and to more efficiently meet the diverse needs of its inhabitants (Przybyszewski, Atamańczuk 2011). The cooperation of local government administration with NGOs can take various forms – both financial and non-financial. One of such forms of cooperation is the above-mentioned fact of transferring some of the tasks directly to the citizens. Commissioning public tasks and own tasks, partnership agreements, agreements for the implementation of a local initiative, and implementation of joint projects are financial forms of cooperation. The support is given in the form of grants on the terms set out in the Act, after the competition procedure has been carried out on the initiative of a public administration authority or at the request of a non-governmental organization. The subsidy may be dedicated strictly to the implementation of particular tasks, it may not be a subject-based subsidy or be intended for the business activity of the organization. An example of the implementation of a joint project, within the financial form of assistance, are various types of projects proposed by the Human Capital Operational Program. It is worth noting that one can also encounter the situation (especially in less developed countries), when NGOs replace typical (especially in Western regions) state functions. They build schools and hospitals, provide drinking water, introduce new methods of farming, etc. (Koch 2009)

In spite of the fact that many organizations are only local in scope, they can create advantageous conditions and play an important role in the area of education, social activation, counteracting all kinds of discrimination, as well as professional activation. A doubtless advantage of NGOs is a less formalized organizational structure and its wider access to the group of potential recipients. On the basis of interviews with local government representatives and own observations, it is noted that in many communes the most calls for cooperation between self-government and NGOs concern social issues, mainly support for the elderly and people at risk of poverty, for the disabled, for families at risk of domestic violence and helpless in solving basic care problems as well as educational issues and help in solving alcohol addiction problems. Many joint activities are also in the field of culture and art, including supporting local artists or promoting local culture. Non-financial forms of intersectoral cooperation include, most importantly, information, exchange of information, consultation of normative acts, creation of joint advisory and initiative teams, joint projects regarding events, trainings, professional development etc.

Mutual exchange of information is vital, which means that not only the administration has an obligation to provide information to non-governmental organizations: the flow of information should also work the other way around. The subject of mutual information by NGOs and administration can be, for example: issues related to the announcement of competitions / results of contests, current training and meetings, adoption of final resolutions and decisions of administrative authorities, ongoing activities of the organization, etc. The local government authorities are obliged to consult with the NGO community all the legal acts whose scope concerns the sphere of statutory activity of these organizations. The purpose of consultations is to make better, more thought-out decisions and develop more satisfying outcomes. One of the ways to form a more systematic cooperation is to create teams (of an advisory and initiative character), consisting of representatives of local government and non-governmental organizations together. On the basis of interviews with local government representatives, as far as non-financial forms are concerned, local governments usually participate in the preparation of trainings, conferences, a forum for exchanging experiences in order to improve the efficiency of the organization. Self-governments also share premises and technical means for open meetings and events. Cooperation also concerns the exchange of information on the planned directions of activity and cooperation by creating joint task forces (with an advisory and initiative character). With various forms of cooperation between non-governmental organizations and local government, one should also be aware of obstacles, including economic, legislative, administrative or social barriers (Ziółkowska, Gronkiewicz, 2012). In addition, both sectors are required to comply with the specific cooperation rules mentioned in the previous section. Representatives of the local government frequently pointed out certain claims of some organizations; among others low degree of integration, not always transparent and "clean" competition in access to public funds characterized by thinking only in terms of the interest of their own organization, low level of involvement in group initiatives, inability to present their achievements and work for the benefit of the local community. The cooperation system, nonetheless, certainly strengthens, assures and increases the effectiveness of the adopted social solutions.

#### 4. Conclusion

Local government units and non-governmental organizations have an important common goal, which is, namely, to meet the needs of the local community. Actions undertaken by both sectors are complementary on many levels which facilitates their implementation more efficiently and more effectively. This cooperation must be based on mutual trust and understanding of each other's' needs. Each time the decision to initiate such cooperation (and its scope) should consider the analysis of the needs and expectations of local communities, so as to maximize their satisfaction.

Non-governmental organizations, thanks to their functioning, can (and should) generate additional added value apart from creating civil society. They are to be partners in the creation and implementation of development strategies and local ventures, and provide a channel for local government communication with the local community. Therefore, the involvement of public authorities should support the activity and creativity of citizens who form the institutions belonging to this sector. Non-governmental organizations, fulfilling tasks falling within the competence of public administration, should consider local government their natural ally and look for support there. Unfortunately, the most common form of help that is expected from the local government is financial subsidies or assistance in obtaining funds from diverse sources. They also see cooperation in the organization and service of events for, or commissioned by, the self-government. Local government authorities are supposed to support external organizations, not to replace and finance them. It is worth emphasizing that it is necessary to allow the local community and local authorities to engage non-governmental organizations in solving local problems. However, it is necessary to educate those involved in the dialogue between the local government and non-governmental organizations in a given area.

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