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## **THE ROLE OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN TEACHER EDUCATION – CASE STUDY**

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### **ROLA ORGANIZACJI *NON PROFIT* W KSZTAŁCENIU NAUCZYCIELI**

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**Summary:** The idea of life-long education and self-improvement relates also to educating the “perpetrators” of education, namely teachers. The European Union is a witness to a discussion about teachers’ competences and qualifications. The European Commission has suggested common European principles referring to the profession of teacher and education models. The Polish teacher education system is fully compatible with the requirements of the European educational policy. However, in the opinion of teachers it does not solve all the problems and does not completely fulfill their educational needs. For this reason, non-profit organizations have addressed teacher’s expectations and fulfilled a gap created in the teacher education system. How have they managed? This paper will deal with this question. It presents a non-profit organization from Lower Silesia that, in the years 2009-2014, completed five projects with a total value of PLN 2,464,136.79, for the benefit of 1321 teachers working in the area of Lower Silesia Province. The presented article supplements the deficiencies in scientific literature which is characterized by the lack of complex scientific publications focused on the assessment of the suitability of teacher education by non-profit organizations in light of both Polish and European requirements.

**Keywords:** teacher education, vocational training, non-profit organisations, subsidies, European projects.

**Streszczenie:** Idea ustawicznego kształcenia i samodoskonalenia dotyczy również kształcenia „sprawców” edukacji, czyli nauczycieli. W Unii Europejskiej trwa dyskusja nad ich kompetencjami i kwalifikacjami. Komisja Europejska zaproponowała wspólne europejskie zasady odnoszące się do zawodu nauczyciela oraz modele kształcenia. Polski system kształcenia nauczycieli w całości wpisuje się w wymogi europejskiej polityki edukacyjnej. W opinii nauczycieli nie rozwiązuje on jednak wszystkich problemów i nie odpowiada w pełni ich potrzebom edukacyjnym. Dlatego organizacje *non profit* wyszły naprzeciw oczekiwaniom nauczycieli i wypełniły powstałą lukę w ich systemowym kształceniu. Czy im się to udało? O tym jest niniejszy artykuł. Przedstawia on organizację non profit z Dolnego Śląska, która w latach 2009-2014 zrealizowała 5 projektów o łącznej wartości 2 464 136,79 zł na rzecz 1321 nauczycieli pracujących na terenie województwa dolnośląskiego. Prezentowany artykuł uzupełnia niedostatki w piśmiennictwie naukowym, w którym brakuje kompleksowych opra-

cowań naukowych ukierunkowanych na ocenę przydatności kształcenia nauczycieli przez organizacje *non profit* w świetle wymogów zarówno polskich, jak i europejskich.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kształcenie nauczycieli, doskonalenie zawodowe, organizacje *non profit*, dotacje, projekty europejskie.

*Education is the most effective way of development,  
succeeding and fulfillment*

Sylvia Rimm

## 1. Introduction

The subject literature emphasises that the definitions of non-profit organisations highlight both their similarities and differences. This results from the dependence of the development of these entities upon social, economic and political conditions, as well as upon social attitudes, civic organisation and the sense of altruism. It allows for examining the role and importance of non-profit organisations in the modern economy from two points of view, i.e. a provider of social services and a representative of the interests of specific social groups [Iwankiewicz-Rak 2011, p. 31]. This determines the main functions of these organisations, such as organising and providing social services, creating innovation in social activities, advocating or leading to the introduction of social changes, developing activities regarding the creation of social leadership, building democracy and social integration. The indicated functions result in the greater efficiency of the provision of public goods by non-profit organisations than in the case of business or public entities. This results from non-profit organisations being more familiar with the social needs [Morris 2000, p. 4; Fric 1999, p. 2]. On the other hand, P.J. DiMagio and H.K. Anheier emphasise that the degree of performance of the functions assigned to the concerned organisations results mainly from the circumstances of the establishment of these entities in a given society, as well as from the relations between these entities and entities from other sectors [see: Leś 2004, p. 246].

The main goal of the paper is to assess the educational activities of non-profit organizations in the system of additional teacher education and professional training.

To achieve the goal, the following research goals were determined:

1. Description and assessment of teacher education in Poland as part of the systemic solutions.

2. Characteristics of non-profit organizations from Lower Silesia.

3. Assessment of the suitability of teacher education by non-profit organizations – a case study of a non-governmental organization from Lower Silesia.

For the complete execution of scientific operations, the quality methods were applied – drawing logical conclusions on the basis of real information (analysis of secondary statistical data and case study). A case study is not supposed to build

knowledge about a unit case, but to collect material to formulate generalising conclusions. It is authorised to generalise conclusions, as the entity described in the case study is typical and representative for non-profit organizations, and the whole of the research and reasoning is based on the rich material collected by these research techniques: interviews/surveys, observations, analysis of documents.

## 2. Teacher education system in Poland

Life-long education and self-improvement is the leading idea of contemporary education. This idea refers particularly to teachers, the main providers of educational processes. In the case of the teaching profession, the assumption of full preparation for the profession and, at the same time full professional qualifications, is in conflict with the essence of a teacher's work. The competences it requires are constantly changing and require adjustments. This is due to specificity of teaching, namely its non-standard and communication-centered character. A teacher is subject to recurrent imperatives of communication rationality, referring to ethics and logic of dialogue [Kwaśnica 1995, p. 32]. In addition, this profession should be compatible with the socio-economic reality. The European Union, due to its fundamental freedoms, especially the freedom of movement, has also started a discussion on teachers' competences and qualifications. It has also introduced so-called key competences. They should take into account the potential benefits for the whole of society and respond to the needs of the whole community, regardless of gender, race, social position, origin, culture and language. In 2005, on the basis of the Lisbon Strategy, a description of the competences required from a European teacher was prepared. The competences were divided into those related to the process of learning (teaching) and shaping the attitudes of pupils. Apart from competences, the European Commission also suggested common European principles referring to the teaching profession. The most important ones include the requirement of higher education and the placement of the profession in the context of life-long learning [Sielatycki 2008, pp. 18-19].

In Poland, systemic teacher education is carried out in two systems: higher education (higher pedagogical schools, universities, non-state schools, technical schools, academies and other universities) and the education system (teachers and language colleges) [*Organizacja systemu edukacji...* 2010, p. 185].

The professional training of teachers in Poland is not mandatory, but it is necessary from the point of view of professional promotion. The reform of the education system has also introduced the steps of teachers' professional promotion to encourage and oblige them to permanent development and the improvement of their qualifications<sup>1</sup>. The competences necessary to obtain particular stages of professional development

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<sup>1</sup> The system of professional promotion of teachers has been implemented from 6 April 2000, i.e. from the effective date of the Act of 18 February 2000 amending the Act on the Teacher's Charter and amending some other acts (Journal of Laws of 2000, No. 19, item 239 as amended).

have also been determined as closely as possible. Professional training is conducted in two aspects, as additional education and professional training. Additional education includes forms that give a teacher the opportunity to attain higher education or additional qualifications. Professional training includes forms that make it possible to enrich teachers' methodology of work within the already held qualifications. The additional education of teachers is provided by higher schools and colleges, through the evening, extramural and stationary system. On the other hand, the professional training of teachers is provided by universities offering postgraduate studies or teachers colleges offering courses. Professional training is, however, the domain of teacher professional training institutions [Report on Education 2013... 2014, p. 189]. Financing for professional training and additional education, in accordance with the Teacher's Charter, rests with the leading bodies that channel for that purpose 1% of the planned annual funds for teachers' remuneration.

The research presented in the subject literature (see [Federowicz et al. 2013]) call into question the real role of professional promotion as a system that stimulates development and that enables teachers to improve competences in line with their needs and the needs of the schools employing them. Thus teachers attempt to develop regardless of the promotion system, and the improving actions taken within this system are only some of many elements comprising their professional development in this profession. Many teachers raise their competences. However, the usefulness of the used forms of improvement is not satisfactory. The non-adjustment and limited flexibility of the offered forms to the needs of schools/teachers, errors in financing, and insufficient support from schools can be noticed. They result in problems with reconciling improvement with professional responsibilities [Raport o stanie edukacji 2013, 2014, p. 206].

The created gap in the teacher education system was successfully filled by non-profit organisations. In the period 2009-2014 non-profit organizations implemented 119 training-advisory projects covered by EU financing and focused on the education for teachers. The conducted analysis suggests that the main reason for the preparation of projects focused on this group as the main stakeholders was the knowledge of their needs and access to EU funds.

### **3. Non-profit organizations as entities of the teacher's additional education and professional training in Lower Silesia**

The authors carried out research on a much larger group of non-profit organisations providing educational services for teachers in Poland, including the Lower Silesian region. Based on this research, they concluded that the descriptions and assessments of the design activities of these organisations in the area of educational services for teachers are largely similar. Therefore, for this case study the authors selected an organisation from Lower Silesia which implemented the largest number of projects in this field. Thus, even though the study covers one organisation, its scope of

activities allows for making generalisations about the suitability and assessment of educational activities of non-profit organisations in the system of supplementary education and professional training of teachers.

Post-1989 Poland witnessed the development of the self-organization of the society. Around 17.5 thousand associations and foundations were registered: they initiated shaping the so-called 3rd (social) sector [*The condition...* 2016, pp. 22-25]. The incorporation of non-governmental organizations into the implementation of social tasks of the state constitutes an important goal of the social policy and contributes to the creation of civil society.

Non-profit organizations under the Human Capital Operational Program, Priority IX (Development of education and competences in regions), action 9.4 (Highly qualified staff of the education system) accounted for 11.63% of the external project initiators that implement projects targeted at teachers. They implemented projects with a total value of subsidies of EUR 13,158,339.35, which accounted for 13.39% of the financial allocation from the European Social Fund for action 9.4<sup>2</sup>.

The highest value of EU funds was obtained by non-profit organizations operating in the Dolnośląskie, Mazowieckie, Lubelskie, Śląskie and Wielkopolskie voivodships. Non-profit organizations in the Lower Silesia region dominated as entities obtaining financial support for the education for teachers among all project implementers, with a share of 24.62%. They also obtained the highest financial support in terms of value – EUR 2,493,851.6, higher even than organizations from the Mazowieckie voivodship ranked second (EUR 1,575,145.84) [mapadotacji ... 2016]. 46,335 teachers were employed in the Dolnośląskie voivodship in the school year 2014/2015, and 99,020 – in the Mazowieckie voivodship [Rachubka 2015, p. 4]. This results in financial support values per 1 professionally active teacher: EUR 53.82 per 1 teacher in the Lower Silesia region. Non-profit organizations in the Lower Silesia region as part of action 9.4 covered 9,098 teachers which gives EUR 274.11 for each of them. Data from the SIO system indicates that 1,198 teachers increased their qualifications and professional competences in the Lower Silesia region as part of the systemic education [Rachubka 2015, p. 28]. Referring these numbers to the number of teachers covered by education offered by non-profit organizations (almost nine times more), it should be stressed that these organizations successfully filled the gap in the education system for teachers and conducted educational activities consistent with the statutory requirements and needs related to the professional qualifications of teachers. The research also indicates that they conducted educational activities compliant with the statutory requirements and needs with regard to teachers' professional qualifications.

To sum up, the key argument justifying the stated below more detailed description of non-governmental organizations from Lower Silesia, is that the value of educational projects for teachers implemented by them (actions 9.4 of the Human

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<sup>2</sup> EUR 98,292,471.

Capital Operational Program) is the highest on the national scale, and the same applies to their percentage share among other entities implementing similar projects.

In 2014 in Lower Silesia, there were more than 9.9 thousand non-governmental organizations, which accounted for 9.6% on the scale of the country [Kondycja sektora ... 2016, pp. 19-23]. The number of non-governmental organizations in Lower Silesia per inhabitant is one of the highest in Poland -34 per 10 000 inhabitants [Kondycja sektora ... 2016, pp. 29-30]. 73% of the organizations in Lower Silesia cooperate with competent offices, **64% with schools, and more than one third (37%) cooperate directly with teachers.** In addition [*Organizacje pozarządowe...*2008, pp. 21-25]:

1. 40% of them have operated for more than 10 years.
2. On average, every fourth organization operates across the whole country, and approximately 9% are European or global entities.
3. 13% of the organizations implement projects subsidized by European funds, and nearly half of them are entities with large experience in the implementation of the projects financed from subsidies of local government units.
4. The most common area of operations is **education – more than 45%.**
5. Almost 90% of the organizations assessed the professional knowledge and competences of their staff as very good or good. 85% of the organizations assessed the quality of provided services as very good or good. 80% of the organizations assess as high and very high the recognition they enjoy in the community in which they operate. A similar percentage of the organizations are convinced about the high or very high effectiveness of their activities and organizational management skills.
6. The share of people with higher education acting in the integrative and social entities is higher than on the national scale.
7. More than 60% of the organizations employ individuals with managerial competences.

#### **4. A non-profit organization in the teacher education system – case study**

The presented case study is intended to identify and characterize the role of a non-profit organization in the process of professional training of teachers in Lower Silesia.

The examined non-profit organization is located in Wrocław. It was established in 1995. It has a license to conduct information-consulting and training activities. In 2001 the organisation was listed in the register of schools and non-public institutions. Since 2007 it has been included in the register of training institutions of the Lower Silesian Provincial Labour Office.

The presented organization, despite its small size, shows great activity in comparison to the whole sector of non-governmental organisations. It owes its relatively high stability on the market to its personnel. It has four permanent employees;

however, many more people are involved in its activities: these are substantially full-time employees, whose activity depends upon the emerging demand for the services provided. The team of consultants is made up of dynamic and educated people of different specialisations (these individuals have as a minimum a higher education and pedagogical preparation). The management keeps on raising their competences, mainly through postgraduate studies.

Until the end of 2015, the examined organization involved 3216 people in its activities and implemented successfully 34 projects, financed mainly with European funds. Managing projects focused on the needs emerging in the region with the use of a project-based approach brings the organisation measurable benefits in the form of an increased efficiency and effectiveness of action, etc.

In 2009–2014, the presented organization completed five training and advisory projects that related to improving the professional competences of the inhabitants of Lower Silesia and were targeted at teachers. The project implementation involved a project team consisting of five people and a 20-person group of coaches, consultants, psychologists and language teachers. The implementation of the above projects resulted from the conducted research and training and advisory experience of the examined entity in teachers' education. From the conducted market research into the situation of education in Poland it can be concluded that 94% of teachers participate in professional training, mainly to gain the degree of qualified teacher which involves a guarantee of employment. However the activities related to professional development are not intensive. It turned out that:

1. Only 7.1% of teachers were improving their competences in the period of the past three years, but more than 62% expressed their will to do so, especially in short forms [Machniewicz, Organiściuk, Rolczak et al.. 2013].

2. Only 25% of teachers had a command of foreign languages [Gazeta Prawna 2015]. Whereas, pursuant to the Regulation of the Ministry of National Education on the education standards<sup>3</sup>, teachers should have an advanced command of at least one foreign language.

3. Inadequate support was noticeable for rural teachers in reaching high education standards, adapted to the requirements of the labour market and the educational policy.

4. Spatial diversity of kindergarten education: in cities 66.2% of children were subject to education, in rural areas – 35.5% [<http://www.frd.org.pl/file/pdf/uwarunkowania.pdf>].

5. 60-70% of teachers were at risk of occupational burnout as a consequence of, among others, mental overload, decreasing social prestige and authority of the profession [Sęk 2014].

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<sup>3</sup> The Regulation was signed on 17 January 2012, according to the authorisation contained in Article 9c of the Act of 27 July 2005- Law on Higher Education (Journal of Laws No. 164, item 1365 as amended)

6. A statistical average teacher is a 40-year-old woman. Women accounted for 80% of the whole population [Gazeta Prawna 2015] They were affected by glass escalator effect<sup>4</sup>.

According to the results of “Badanie czasu i warunków pracy nauczycieli” (“Surveys of working time and conditions of teachers”) [Federowicz, Sitek (ed.) 2011], teachers dedicate for self-education and professional training around 4% of the weekly working time (less than for preparing documentation of teaching and work of the school). Teachers most often participate in professional training concerning the taught subjects: 62% receive addition training in knowledge, and 57% receive training in pedagogical competences. Other chosen topics are: working with pupils with special educational needs, assessment, knowledge and individualization of the curriculum, and the use of computer technologies. Teachers with the shortest job seniority choose less frequently training for work with pupils with special needs, assessment and knowledge of the curriculum. High school teachers participated more often in training in teaching, while primary school teachers often choose training in working with pupils with special educational needs, individualization of education and cooperation with pupils’ parents [Hernik et al. 2014].

The organization supplemented the above information with a survey of the situation of education in Lower Silesia [Central Statistical Office (GUS); SIO data for the years 2013/2015]:

1. 20% of the population of professionally active teachers were working in rural areas.

2. 17.7 thousand pupils were subject to special education, including only 12.6% in regular schools.

3. The number of educational institutions and jobs was decreasing gradually. In 2012, local governments closed more than 300 schools, including 119 in rural areas.

4. According to the estimates, schools intended for closing were located in the area of 20 communes and districts of Lower Silesia. In 2015, 27 schools were closed. In the following years, Lower Silesian local governments intend to close further 79 schools.

A detailed characteristic of the undertaken project activities is presented below.

**Project 1** was completed in the period November 2009 – October 2011. The main objective of the project was to raise the qualifications of teaching staff of the Lower Silesian system of education, through vocational training under short forms of teaching such as courses. The following detailed objectives were indicated:

- preparing pedagogical staff for the vocational counselling system in junior high schools and high schools, in the scope of providing assistance to pupils, their

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<sup>4</sup> Glass escalator effect is a phenomenon where in professions that are traditionally considered as women’s professions (for instance, kindergartens, schools), men have significantly greater chances of promotion. And though they are statistically fewer in the profession, it is easier for a man to get promoted and occupy high executive position, and a man is also privileged in the access to training and the courses raising qualifications.



parents and teachers with regard to pupils planning a professional career and selecting the direction of further education,

- raising teachers' skills in command of a foreign language. Improving teachers' general knowledge and skills, including a foreign language,
- preparing teachers starting work in the profession to teach a second subject, providing knowledge and practical skills related to information and communication technologies and improving their foreign language competences.

In order to obtain the effect of synergy to achieve results, the project was implemented within the partnership between the non-profit organization (leader) and a university (partner). Under the project the following courses were completed: English with a unit of mediation completed with TOEiC (Test of English for International Communication), mediation in education, operation of computer with elements of mediation, entrepreneurship with elements of vocational counselling, vocational counselling with elements of entrepreneurship. In addition, the project was offering psychological support in the form of two-hour meetings with a psychologist before each course.

**Project 2** was implemented from 2011 to 2012. The main objective was to develop Lower Silesian teachers' competences. The following specific objectives were determined:

- preparing teachers to provide assistance for pupils, their parents and teachers in conflict situations,
- raising teachers' qualification in different scopes, including raising teachers' skills in their command of a foreign language, ICT,
- counteracting occupational burnout,
- improving the quality of the teaching process by raising qualifications of teaching staff in kindergarten education,
- providing knowledge and practical skills related to ICT and improving foreign language competences,
- raising qualifications related to the use of ICT in natural and mathematic sciences.

Under the project 28 courses were completed, preceded by four hours of meetings with a psychologist for the purpose of increasing their motivation to self-improvement. The completed courses related to English along with the TOEIC exam, counteracting and solving conflicts at school, changes at school, occupational burnout of teachers, supporting the development of children at the stage of kindergarten education, computers in school education and natural and mathematic sciences.

The implementation of three subsequent projects (projects 3, 4 and 5 ) was the continuation of the last two projects during which, at the stage of recruitment, 348 applications were received for only 70 available places at the English courses and 117 applications were received for 48 available places at the training course "Kindergarten Education". In addition, the presented organization conducted a survey among 182 teachers, whose results indicated the demand for training in English, kindergarten education and work with difficult pupils, and occupational training.

The surveyed individuals pointed out the need to:

- achieve the degrees of promotion (the requirement – command of a foreign language),
- raise qualifications,
- improve their work skills;
- prepare for classes for pupils with various deficiencies.

At the stage of preparing the project aims, it was also taken into account that (1) Lower Silesia records an increased number of pupils who enrol to vocational schools given the present need to modernize vocational education (to confront theoretical knowledge with practice) and reinforce professional development and improve qualifications of teachers in rural areas and in basic vocational schools; (2) the changing needs of education require the improvement of skills and qualifications of teachers, and a decreasing number of educational institutions and, at the same time, jobs for teachers make those qualifications become a factor ensuring obtaining and maintaining their employment, (3) according to the regulation on teacher training standards, teachers should have an advanced command of at least one foreign language.

In the surveys and direct interviews conducted by the presented organization the teachers were pointing out the need for the completion of an English course ending with a language certificate. This was due to lowering in 2008 the age of beginning foreign languages education to the first class of the primary school. It was assumed that each teacher gaining the qualifications to teach as part of the first degree philological majors with pedagogical specialisation will be prepared to teach a foreign language to children starting from the 6-year-old system. The planned effective date in 2015 for the new provisions of the curriculum basis for the kindergarten education, introducing mandatorily a foreign language at kindergarten (the Ministry of National Education, 2014) increased the demand for teachers with competencies to teach even smaller children. Currently, more than 90% of pupils in all types of schools for children and teenagers obligatorily learn English [Central Statistical Office (GUS)].

**Project 3** was implemented from 2011 to 2013. The main objective was to raise the competences regarding professional training of vocational teachers and teachers from rural areas as necessary for the system of education and the labour market. Specific objectives related to the:

- reduced sense of occupational burnout of teachers,
- acquisition/growth in qualifications with regard to command of English,
- acquisition/growth in qualifications and practical knowledge of vocational teachers in the gastronomic field,
- growth in qualifications of teachers from rural areas with regard to kindergarten education,
- acquisition of the ability to organise education, working methods and customisation of the educational process with regard to disabled pupils.

The project assumed delivery of training concerning English, support for children's development at the stage of kindergarten education, work with disabled pupils in a generally accessible class, the organisation of catering services and carving techniques and group psychological consulting.

**Projects 4 and 5** were implemented from 2013 to 2014 and assumed growth in the competences and professional development of teachers from rural areas according to the needs of the system of education. Specific objectives assumed growth in the stability of employment and motivation for self-improvement, growth in qualifications with regard to English, growth in professional qualification with regard to kindergarten education or growth in the ability to customise the educational process with regard to disabled pupils. The project involved the completion of courses of English with CAE, FCE and TOEFL exams, kindergarten education, early years education for 1st-3rd classes and courses of work with disabled pupils in a regular class.

The presented projects contributed to strengthening vocational development and to increasing qualifications of teachers in Lower Silesia through the adjustment of qualifications to the requirements related to strategic demand (e.g. foreign languages) for new qualifications. In addition, through the implementation of the adopted assumptions (consistent with the Lower Silesian Development Strategy to 2020) the projects contributed to improving the quality and effectiveness of education by further education of teaching staff, raising education quality, professional training of teachers and the development of continuous education and adjustment of teacher education to the needs of the region.

Below are presented collective data concerning the projects completed by the examined non-profit organization.

**Table 1.** Specification of projects completed in 2009-2014 by the examined non-profit organization

PROJECT	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Number of teachers who participated in the project, including:	160	440	321	265	135	<b>1321</b>
from rural areas	39	73	194	265	135	<b>706</b>
employed in kindergartens	15	156	80	78	48	<b>377</b>
employed in primary schools	93	176	93	175	83	<b>620</b>
employed in junior high schools	17	29	19	12	4	<b>81</b>
employed in secondary schools	35	79	129	0	0	<b>243</b>
Number of total completed training hours	1680	2800	1860	2880	1620	<b>10.840</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „English” (48 groups x 120h)	0	95	98	161	110	<b>464</b>
Number of obtained language certificates	48	92	96	35	46	<b>317</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Kindergarten Education” (18 groups x 60h)	0	93	91	41	14	<b>239</b>

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Number of teachers attending the course „Early Years Motivation for 1st – 3rd Classes” (4 groups × 60h)	0	0	0	42	0	<b>42</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Working With A Disabled Pupil in a Generally Available Class” (7 groups × 60h)	0	0	61	21	11	<b>93</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Organisation of Catering Services and Carving Techniques „ + 20h of internships (4 groups × 60h)	0	0	56	0	0	<b>56</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Counteracting and Solving Conflicts at School” (4 groups × 120h)	0	65	0	0	0	<b>65</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Changes in School”(2 groups × 60h)	0	28	0	0	0	28
Number of teachers attending the course „Occupational Burnout of Teachers: How to Overcome?” (4 groups × 60h)	0	62	0	0	0	<b>62</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Computers in School Education” (4 groups × 80h)	0	49	0	0	0	<b>49</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Computers in Natural And Mathematic Sciences” (4 groups × 80h)	0	49	0	0	0	<b>49</b>
Number of teachers who completed the course „English with Mediation Unit” (4 groups × 180h)	50	0	0	0	0	<b>50</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Mediation in Education” (2 groups × 100h)	24	0	0	0	0	<b>24</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Knowledge of Computers with Elements of Mediation” (2 groups × 160h)	32	0	0	0	0	<b>32</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Entrepreneurship with Elements of Professional Counselling” (2 groups × 100h)	20	0	0	0	0	<b>20</b>
Number of teachers attending the course „Professional Counselling with Entrepreneurial Elements” (2 groups × 120h)	34	0	0	0	0	<b>34</b>
Number of teachers of group professional counselling for women (105 groups × 4h)	148	415	276	183	114	<b>1136</b>
Number of women in the project	150	415	288	195	123	<b>1171</b>
Number of men in the project	10	25	33	70	12	<b>150</b>
Number of teachers with job seniority under 5 years	37	109	79	68	32	<b>325</b>

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of available research material.

As part of the implemented projects, soft results were also achieved, i.e.:

- change in attitudes (awareness of benefits) of teachers towards activities aimed to gain new qualifications,
- growth in the ability for team communication (growth in effectiveness and working comfort),
- growth in the sense of emotional safety of a teacher endangered with a conflict with a difficult pupil or parent and in the face of changes,
- growth in communication skills in a foreign language,
- greater awareness of the weight of kindergarten education and its skilful performance,
- reduced sense of occupational burnout,
- growth in the sense of professional and economic safety by ensuring a proper promotion path.

In addition, surveys were conducted among the 1296 teachers participating in the presented projects. The assessments covered coaches and classes, self-assessment of participants and psychometric tests were used, conversations and interviews with course participants were conducted with regard to current training needs and class curriculum. At the beginning of the classes, the participants were asked to assess the expected results resulting from participation in the course. At the end of training, they filled in surveys aimed to examine the results of participation in the training. The assessment was made in a 5-degree scale where 1 meant “the lowest mark” and 5 “the highest mark”. On the basis of the received surveys, the results were prepared – they presented averages received in each category and together for all the implemented projects.

**Table 2.** Survey findings

ISSUE	AVERAGE ASSESSMENT	
	Expected results of participation	Achieved results of participation
Greater safety (stability) of employment	4.1	3.8
Suitability to get promotion	3.9	4.2
Facilitated conducting classes with pupils	4.0	4.3
Reduced sense of occupational burnout	3.8	4.5
Growth in self-confidence	4.3	4.7
Growth in motivation to work	4.2	4.1
Growth in willingness for further self-improvement	4.9	4.8

Source: prepared by the author on the basis of available research material.

The presented research material makes it possible to formulate conclusions concerning the role of non-profit organizations in the professional training of teachers

in Lower Silesia. The analysis of the system of teacher education and professional training in Poland shows its compliance with the common educational policy. The presented case study of a non-profit organisation allows the conclusion that the projects implemented by the presented organization contributed to :

1) raising qualifications of teaching staff in Lower Silesia and increasing their professional activity, in particular with regard to:

- preparing teachers for the role of vocational counsellor,
- preparing teachers for teaching and raising their pedagogical competences,
- providing to teachers knowledge and practical skills related to ICT,
- improving competences in English,

2) raising educational adaptability to the labour market requirements.

The value added of implemented projects was:

1) education of teaching staff in Lower Silesia towards the reinforcement of the educational and social potential of the region. As a result, Lower Silesia has gained a comparative advantage and development potential,

2) decreased discrimination of women and people from rural areas and small towns in the access to training courses in the Lower Silesian system of education.

It is also worth emphasising that the participation in the presented projects influenced the development of a habit of continuous improvement in the qualifications of the project participants.

## 5. Conclusions

The presented case study and the conducted research<sup>5</sup> clearly indicate that non-profit organizations have effectively joined the system of teacher education and professional training. First of all, this fact was determined by the **professionalism of the provided training services**. These organizations, as small units, did not have, as a matter of fact, their own regular team of trainers/coaches. However, they have verified the basis for cooperating individuals, not only with high substantive competences, but also communication and pedagogical competences. This is confirmed by the conducted analyses that indicate that the quality of training services offered by the non-profit organizations for teachers was very high, which was definitely attracting interest of clients in their training scope. This facilitated recruitment for subsequent editions of the implemented projects. In addition, the discussed organizations were prepared, as part of the statutory activity and mission, to act for the benefit of a specified beneficiary, to meet fully their needs and expectations. For this reason,

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<sup>5</sup> A detailed analysis covered the data available at <http://mapadotacji.gov.pl/projekty> as of 15.09.2016 concerning projects implemented by non-profit organizations in the area of Lower Silesia and focused on education and professional training of teachers through the access to free training and courses. Non-profit organizations have implemented a total of 24.62% of free projects targeted at teachers and covered by EU co-financing under the Human Capital Operational Program, action 9.4 in the area of Lower Silesia.

actions focused on teacher training were preceded with a survey of their needs and expectations.

In addition, non-profit organizations are mostly project units that have skilfully acquired funds for teacher training and courses. As a result, their educational offer was free, which, given the high prices requested by units of the systemic teacher education, i.e. universities (public and non-public) and commercial training centers, gave them them a competitive advantage.

The survey also indicates that non-profit organizations, as organizations operating in the Polish education system, were implementing projects aimed to equip teachers with the new qualifications necessary from the point of view of providing the premium quality of the teaching process and training resulting from the regional educational policy. These projects were aimed to support teachers who were interested in supplementing or extending formal education (e.g. getting a degree). The essence of the implemented projects was to support flexibility of the teacher education system in connection with cyclical demographic conditions that brought about the need for the requalification of some teachers so that they could add a second subject or classes in their employment contract in one school or teach or conduct classes in adult life-long education institutions.

**To sum up:** non-profit organizations stand out as compared to other institutions, first of all, by the ability to act for the benefit of specific groups. As a result of such characteristics as professionalism, innovativeness, flexibility of action and social commitment, these organizations have developed effective methods of working with different groups of recipients of their services. Nothing else but specific competences of non-profit organizations are a strong argument supporting their increasing role in the use of structural funds, including those channelled to continuous improvement of teachers' qualifications. A characteristic feature of non-profit institutions that benefit from structural funds is their flexibility with regard to responding to the needs of beneficiaries and the pursuit of the improvement of quality of the services provided. The available market research of non-profit organizations confirm that in Poland already more than 40% of these organizations are trying to develop their human resources and re-organize institutionally. In addition, non-profit organizations as project units<sup>6</sup> [Seiler, Stankiewicz 2011] skilfully acquire funds for teacher

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<sup>6</sup> Because the majority of NPOs incorporated into the system of training for teachers are project organizations which use project management tools, the first condition of professionalization not leading to the disfunction of their operation is met. According to the research, the management of non-governmental organizations in Poland assumes various forms which may be assigned to two extreme models: leadership and partnership. The leadership model is used by 38% of NPOs, 45% use the participative model, and 17% - the mixed model. The leadership model is typical of organizations focused around a strong leader who is responsible for the majority of decisions. The participative model is located on the opposite side, and is characterized by a strong team and joint decision-making processes. The use of the participative model in management by almost half of the organizations should be assessed positively, mainly due to the use of the synergy effect: professional management + competent personnel. At this

training and courses<sup>7</sup>. Their free educational offer is translated into their competitive advantage, which should also be examined in accordance with the contract failure theory<sup>8</sup>.

The above conclusions from the conducted survey clearly indicate that non-profit organizations have joined effectively the system of additional education and the professional training of teachers.

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point, however, we should remember about the specific nature of the functioning of non-profit organizations which is reflected in the opportunity to use and transfer tools for the management of numerous projects and IT support from business to non-governmental organizations, provided that this process is well thought-out and adapted to the actual needs of this sector and the ideology of its operation.

<sup>7</sup> This is discussed in detail in the subsidiarity theory, which assumes that non-governmental organizations are able to use both internal and external sources of funding [see: Hansmann 1987, p. 29].

<sup>8</sup> In the contract failure theory, which assumes that the quality assessment of certain services is different or even impossible, it should be clearly emphasized that service users unable to directly verify and assess the quality of provided services need to trust the service provider in this respect. Customers, also with regard to training services, prefer to use the offer of non-profit organizations than commercial offers. It is easier to trust an organization which does not operate for profit than one which is driven by the primacy of the profit (this raises concerns that the service will be of worse quality than in the offer, as the service provider will be “economizing” on the implementation of the service to generate the greatest profit possible). The conducted analyses also indicate that the quality of training services for teachers offered by the entities in question was very high, which definitely created the demand of customers for their training offer, see: [Young 2001, pp. 193-196].



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