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Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Children and Adolescents in Institutions Run by the Catholic Church: The Procedures for Documenting Prevention Strategies

Przeciwdziałanie przemocy wobec dzieci i młodzieży w instytucjach prowadzonych przez Kościół katolicki. Procedury tworzenia dokumentów prewencyjnych

ABSTRACT

Preventing and responding to sexual violence against children and adolescents is a crucial task of the contemporary Church. The article first outlines the historical foundations of prevention measures taken by the Catholic Church in Poland. This section is followed by the conclusions of the audit of the documents drafted in dioceses and provinces of religious orders in Poland. The last section summarizes the conclusions from two meetings of the persons responsible for prevention in Catholic dioceses and religious orders in Poland.

KEYWORDS

prevention, care and protection of children and youth, standards of counteracting violence, audit conclusions, preventive documents

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

prewencja, ochrona dzieci i młodzieży, standardy przeciwdziałania przemocy, wnioski z audytu, dokumenty prewencyjne

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These meetings were held in Częstochowa and Gniezno, and their participants discussed the results of the audit of the prevention documents and the reception of this audit.

The method used in the study was analysis: the analysis of relevant documents (the article presents the conclusions of this analysis) and the analysis of the conclusions formulated during the meetings of those in charge of prevention. These conclusions will be used in the development of further prevention strategies for the protection of children and adolescents in Poland. They will also be the basis for planning preventive actions by individual dioceses and orders such as planning both training classes and workshops for employees, volunteers as well as children, adolescents and parents. They will allow planning methods of monitoring and supervising the work of educators.

ABSTRAKT

Przeciwdziałanie przemocy seksualnej wobec dzieci i młodzieży to ważne zadanie współczesnego Kościoła. W artykule ukazano najpierw historyczne podstawy tych działań w Kościele katolickim w Polsce. Następnie zaprezentowano wnioski z audytu przeprowadzonego na dokumentach wytworzonych przez poszczególne diecezje i prowincje zakonne w Polsce. Na końcu zaś przedstawiono wnioski ze spotkań osób odpowiedzialnych za prewencję w katolickich diecezjach i zakonach w Polsce. Spotkania te odbyły się w Częstochowie i Gnieźnie. Dotyczyły one między innymi potrzeby audytu dokumentów prewencyjnych i odbioru tego audytu przez osoby odpowiedzialne za prewencję.

Metodą zastosowaną w artykule była zarówno analiza dokumentów (zostały przedstawione wnioski z takiej analizy), jak również analiza wniosków przedstawionych podczas spotkań z osobami odpowiedzialnymi za prewencję. Wnioski te posłużą do określenia dalszych działań prewencyjnych w zakresie ochrony dzieci i młodzieży w Polsce. Będą też podstawą do planowania działań prewencyjnych przez poszczególne diecezje i zakony, takich jak prowadzenie warsztatów dla pracowników, wolontariuszy oraz dzieci, młodzieży i rodziców. Pozwolą na zaplanowanie metod monitoringu i nadzorowania pracy wychowawców.

Introduction

Preventing and responding to sexual violence in institutions run by dioceses and provinces of religious orders of the Catholic Church in Poland has been a widely debated topic in recent years. However, not everyone knows that the Church started developing programs aimed at protecting children and adolescents who are entrusted to its care in order to address this issue several years ago. To ensure that these programs are not merely an idle activity, which functions solely on paper, those responsible for prevention seek to amend them with a view to improving the existing strategies of preventing and responding to violence against children and adolescents. The article begins with outlining the historical circumstances which affected the process of creating prevention documents. The next section presents the main conclusions of the audit of the first 51 documents drafted before 2020, while the last one section outlines the conclusions of the meeting of those in charge of the prevention of sexual violence against children and adolescents in dioceses and provinces of religious orders related to the audit of these documents.

Determinants of the procedure for documenting the policy of preventing and responding to sexual violence against children and adolescents in the Church in Poland

A historical outline¹

An increase in the number of publicized cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests has been noted in many countries. For example, in 2013, after a series of cases of sexual abuse by priests came to light, Ireland implemented a set of protective procedures, engaging both employees of church institutions and volunteers in preventing and responding to this problem (Cesareo 2013).

Sex scandals in church institutions in the US were first revealed in the 1980s. Media reports of scandalous cases of sexual abuse of

¹ The remarks of Adam Źak SJ played an important role in the preparation of the historical part of the text.

minors from that period indicated that a serious crisis was looming on the horizon. The 1985 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops analyzed a report on the cases revealed in the media which focused on the characteristics of priests-abusers and emphasized the need to prepare a multifaceted response of the Catholic Church in the United States to the impending crisis. In February 2002, a group of investigative journalists from *The Boston Globe* revealed a large number of cases of sexual violence against children and adolescents (Cullen, Kurkijan, Pfeffer, Robinson 2002). The response of Cardinal Bernard Law to the exposure of over 90 child abusers in his archdiocese was grossly inadequate, and included, e.g., a refusal to compensate the victims (“Cardinal Law Gives Deposition...” 2002). The articles published in *The Boston Globe* triggered a huge wave of exposures of sexual abusers in the American Catholic Church and led to a radical change in its approach to this problem. Professional measures aimed at protecting minors were taken on a massive scale. A professional prevention policy which included all forms of work with children and adolescents within the Church institutions was developed and implemented. Over a dozen years, more than five million of broadly defined Church “employees” were trained. Priests were required to undergo regular training. Professional screening for seminary candidates and human formation programs in American seminaries were first introduced as early as the 1980s. In 1990, the Synod of Bishops devoted to priestly formation was held in Rome. In 1992, Pope John Paul II issued a post-synodal exhortation entitled *Pastores dabo vobis*, in which great emphasis was placed on the formation of candidates for priesthood.

In order to adequately address the issue of the prevention of sexual crimes in church institutions, the American episcopate solicited the help of not only clergy but also competent lay people. An example of such episcopal initiative was a letter from Cardinal Harry J. Flynn, in which he discussed the preparation of priests, personnel, and educators in the area of prevention (“Bishop Asked to Consult...” 2004). In 2003, he organized a meeting between victims and priests who performed an act of apology on behalf of abusers (“Victims of Sexual Abuse by Priests...” 2003).

Appalled by the wave of disclosures sweeping across all Church jurisdictions, in June 2002, the American Bishops adopted *The Charter*

for the Protection of Children and Young People (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2002) and publicly committed to the following points:

- to promote healing and reconciliation with victims/survivors of sexual abuse of minors;
- to guarantee an effective response to allegations of sexual abuse of minors;
- to ensure accountability of approved procedures by establishing the National Review Board, whose members are lay people, and the Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and equipping both of them with appropriate competences;
- to protect the faithful in the future (prevention programs to ensure a safe environment for the young, procedures for transferring priests, and background evaluations).

In 2001, during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, less than a year before the publications of the articles in *The Boston Globe* and before the wave of disclosures in all dioceses and religious orders in the United States, the Pope's motu proprio letter *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* was published. In this letter, he obliged all Ordinaries or Hierarchs to report every plausible accusation of sexual abuse of a minor under the age of 18 to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and reserved the legal proceedings in all such cases to the jurisdiction of that Congregation.

At this point, it became obvious that the previous practice of hushing up scandals linked with child sex abuse by clergy would not be tolerated (Whelan 2002). Priests cannot be above the law. Recommendations issued to bishops at that time strongly emphasized the need for openness and transparency of procedures (“Dallas Revisited” 2002). The parents of the victims were assured that children would be protected and abusers would be removed from parish life.

A survey conducted in the United States in 2013 found that 34% of the faithful considered abuse of minors to be priests' and bishops' greatest problem (Wadge 2013). Other behaviors, such as neglecting Mass, was important for only 10% of the respondents. According to 25% of the Catholics in the United States, the image of the Catholic Church can be improved through charitable activities, while according to 11%—through deep moral cleansing.

The process of purification of the Church initiated by John Paul II was continued by his successors. Benedict XVI not only revised the *Norms on More Serious Crimes (Normae de gravioribus delictis)*, which were published together with John Paul II's motu proprio, and sent a pastoral letter to Catholics in Ireland, but also initiated the practice of meetings with the victims. Pope Francis continued the policy of his predecessors from the beginning of his pontificate: he expressed strong views on the issue of protecting minors in church institutions (Stewart 2015) and also addressed the issue of the responsibility of the church superiors for negligence and errors in responding to reports of priests' crimes. In his apostolic motu proprio letter *Come una madre amorevole* (4.06.2016), he clarified the binding canon law by specifying that those bishops who have been grossly negligent in handling sexual abuse cases reported to them would be removed from ecclesiastical office. However, cases of bishops' failure to report instances of child abuse and to fulfil their obligation to pass on this information either to the Vatican or the police were still reported, for example, in Benjamin Wasserman's report (Wasserman 2017).

As Ewa Kusz describes in her article, during the pontificate of Pope Francis, new institutions were created to improve the effectiveness of the protection of children and adolescents in institutions run by the Church (Kusz 2020). In 2014, the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors was established as an advisory body to the Holy See. This commission works under the chairmanship of Cardinal Seán Patrick O'Malley OFMCap, and cooperates with the Centre for Child Protection (CCP), founded in 2012 and presided over by Prof. Hans Zollner SJ. On the initiative of the Holy See and the Rome-based Centre for Child Protection, a world congress on "Child Dignity in the Digital World" was held in Rome in 2017. It brought together global experts who deal with the issue of sexual abuse of children and adolescents in the digital world. The congress ended with the formulation of the Declaration of Rome signed by all the participants and an initiative to create the "Child Dignity Alliance." Another new initiative in the field of prevention is also the "Global Safeguarding Alliance"² established by eight Catholic

² The Centre for Child Protection is one of the founders of the Global Safeguarding Alliance.

academic centers in 2020. It brings together academic centers which research the problem of sexual abuse of minors, spread knowledge and promote international exchange of information on the subject. The reflection undertaken by the Holy See on priestly formation and the preparation of clergy for ministry is also pertinent to the topic. Local Churches on all continents are implementing a wide range of strategies to prevent sexual violence against children and adolescents. The Church in Poland also undertakes relevant activities in this area, especially through such institutions as the “Centre for Child Protection,” “St. Joseph Foundation,” and “The Hurt in the Church” initiative. However, in order to be truly effective, the efforts to build a coordinated system for the protection of minors still require a profound change in the mentality of the members of both the Church and society.

The issue of sexual abuse in church institutions has become the subject of numerous discussions (Chan, Scott-Ladd 2014), whose participants include both pessimists, who do not believe such abuse can be prevented, and optimists, who believe that legal regulations and monitoring the activities of employees and volunteers will lead to effective elimination of such crimes. There are studies that analyze priests-abusers; one of them was conducted in the United States by researchers from John Jay College (*The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse...* 2011; cf. Calkins, Fargo, Jeglic, Terry 2015) among 1121 respondents and took into account individual, family, and social factors related to the problem. The study demonstrated that church institutions are most thoroughly studied in terms of familiarity with the problem of abuse of minors. However, due to a lack of comparable studies conducted in other institutions, it is impossible to draw any legitimate conclusions about the problem in a broader perspective.

Protective standards in institutions that work with children and adolescents

All institutions involved in education and care should meet certain standards for protecting the safety of children entrusted to their care. Monika Sajkowska lists seven such standards (Sajkowska 2011). The first (1) is to implement the policy of protecting children against harm and ensuring their safety. The next (2) is to monitor

the behavior of employees. The third (3) is to ensure that employees have adequate knowledge obtained through relevant training and to provide assistance to children in emergency situations. (4) Institutions should also provide parents with education on nonviolent parenting. (5) They should educate children about their rights and protective strategies. (6) Moreover, institutions should provide access to information on how to obtain help when children are abused or their safety is threatened. (7) Finally, they should monitor and verify the compliance of their activities with the child protection principles adopted by the institution. These standards offer the simplest way of evaluating the programs implemented in childcare institutions which to protect minors.

Karen Dix, who analyses the situation related to the protection of children and adolescents in institutions in Illinois, takes a similar approach to juvenile protection standards (Dix 2006). She lists five points which should be taken into consideration in developing strategies for protecting minors. The first (1) is to ensure that the premises are free from violence, namely, to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is created in such a way as to avoid danger, i.e. places that are not properly monitored. She also mentions refraining from inappropriate touching, inappropriate “gifts” used as a form of bribery, and foul language. In the next point (2), she draws attention to the need to control the access of employees, volunteers, and acquaintances to children. Additionally (3), she recommends monitoring the institution and offering staff supervision. In the fourth point (4), she points out the need to be vigilant while observing children and to encourage such transparency and openness as to prevent any form of secrecy that may put children at risk. In the last point (5), she recommends cooperating with competent people, including police officers and supervisors. This last point, which is linked to the need for employees’ training, is also emphasized by other authors.

Joe Feuerherd, who also reports on the situation in the United States (in Texas), aptly observes that the development of programs for the protection of minors requires cooperation between teachers, priests, other church personnel, volunteers, and parents (Feuerherd 2003). Undoubtedly, this is a costly but necessary endeavor, as is relevant education for all these groups.

Frank Brennan, a law professor at Australian Catholic University, lists several measures which can help protect minors in the Church (Brennan 2014). These include the assessing the actions of those who work with children, educating, training and supervising them, and, once inappropriate behavior has taken place, intervening adequately, including informing, investigating, and collecting complaints from victims.

Documents which provide the foundations for the protection of children and adolescents in institutions run by the Catholic Church in Poland

In Poland, two basic documents lay the foundation for programs aimed at the protection of children and adolescents in institutions run by dioceses and religious orders.³ The first was issued by the Polish Bishops' Conference in 2017 and is entitled *Wytoczne dotyczące dochodzenia kanonicznego w przypadku oskarżeń duchownych o czyny przeciwko szóstemu przykazaniu Dekalogu z osobą niepełnoletnią poniżej osiemnastego roku życia* [*Guidelines for canonical investigation in the case of accusations of clergy of acts against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue with a minor below the age of eighteen years*] (Polish Bishops' Conference 2017).⁴ This document specifies how to deal with suspected sexual abuse by clergy in institutions run by the Church regardless of when it occurred. It also stipulates that the person entitled to receive the report and handle the case is the Church superior, usually acting through his delegate. Usually, but not always, the delegate is tasked with initiating a preliminary canonical investigation. If the accusations seem plausible, the superior is obliged to restrict the suspect's ministry and, if he holds an office, to suspend him from it. The delegate verifies the information, offers assistance to the (alleged) victim of abuse, and refers the suspect for psychosexual diagnosis. If the accusation is found to be probable, he forwards all the collected documentation to his superior to be further sent to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and reports the case to the relevant state

³ New versions of these documents are currently being drafted.

⁴ Hereinafter, the document will be referred to as *Guidelines 2017*.

law enforcement agencies with which he cooperates. If the accusation is not confirmed and the case has become public, the superior is obliged to restore the good name of a suspect. Apart from outlining the procedures to be followed, the document also lists the guidelines for assisting victims and the principles for the formation of educators and the implementation of preventive measures.

The second document was also issued by the Polish Bishops' Conference (11 June 2014) and contains the principles of prevention of sexual abuse of children, adolescents, and persons with disabilities (Polish Bishops' Conference 2014).⁵ The document recommends that institutions should develop appropriate prevention programs and codes of appropriate behavior in cooperation with parents. It emphasizes the need for the formation of priests who conduct educational activities and for the introduction of requirements for those of them who are delegated to work with children and adolescents: their relevant training and supervision. All this should be done in cooperation with parents. Each institution should have a designated person responsible for prevention and for providing assistance when needed. The training should focus on the emotional and social competencies of employees, parents, and children; effective communication; conflict resolution; victims' psychological dynamics; abusers' strategies; the structural elements of institutions that can be conducive to abuse; and the criminal acts themselves. Children and adolescents should also be informed about protection programs in ways that are suitable for their age. They should know who they can turn to when they experience discomfort or are threatened by someone's abusive behavior. The person responsible for the prevention of sexual violence in church institutions is the coordinator for the protection of children and adolescents appointed by the Church authorities.

Prevention documents and their audit

The documents issued by the Polish Bishops' Conference were used as the basis for drawing up relevant documents in dioceses and provinces of religious orders. The analysis of the documents prepared by each diocese and province whose results are described in this

⁵ Hereinafter, the document will be referred to as *Prevention 2014*.

article was conducted within the paradigm of grounded theory (Babbie 2013). Based on prevention activities which are implemented in various countries and documented in articles and studies, several categories were created for the verification of documents developed in Poland. Next, these documents were analyzed and assigned to an appropriate category, and the results of this analysis were publicized (Babbie 2013).

The main questions asked in the analysis were related to the following categories:

1. Does the institution create a safe space for children and adolescents (in terms of the places where they spend time, the internet, verbal and non-verbal behaviors)?
2. Does the institution control access to children and adolescents by employees, volunteers, and other persons?
3. Does the institution monitor and supervise its employees?
4. Does the institution create an atmosphere of openness and transparency in its dealings with minors? Do minors know who they can turn to if they experience violence? Do employees have this knowledge?
5. Does the institution cooperate with experts, does it train its employees, parents, and volunteers? Does it cooperate with parents?
6. Does the institution have clear intervention rules for the situations when sexual abuse occurs?

The tool used in the analysis was a table with the categories used for ordering the analyzed material, and the method was document analysis. Fifty-one documents selected in the procedure of nonprobability sampling were analyzed in the study: they were prevention documents sent by dioceses and religious orders for verification. Several dioceses had not sent their documents by the time the analysis was conducted. These documents were audited by the Centre for Child Protection (Seredyńska 2020). The following conclusions of the audit were formulated:

- It seems best if the structure of the documents accounts for three levels of prevention: universal, selective, and indicated. Universal prevention is designed for the entire population and is aimed at prevention of dysfunctional behavior. Thus, at the beginning of the document, it is advisable to outline

general anthropological principles related to the protection of children and adolescents, list their rights and obligations in a given institution, describe their developmental needs, and, finally, present the code of good practices which are binding in the institutions run by dioceses or religious orders. As far as particular institutions run by dioceses or religious orders are concerned, their specific codes of conduct should be provided. Next, the documents should list the rules used in recruiting and vetting employees and volunteers and specific solutions used in their supervision, including the source of funds for regular supervision sessions. The next section should provide information regarding their training as well as the institution's cooperation with parents, adolescents, organizations, and foundations. This section should also include contact information of the delegate, priest, curate, and lawyer, as well as links or contact information of institutions offering relevant support and institutions and foundations with which the diocese or religious order cooperates.

- The next section of the document should detail the principles of indicated prevention, namely the intervention procedures related to the handling of sexual violence on the premises of the institution. This part could be preceded by a brief outline of the profiles of both the abuser and the victim. It seems that this is the right place for relevant extracts from canon law, criminal law, and civil law, which should be referenced and cited where necessary rather than being simply copied from the codes. The appendices should primarily include declarations, consents, or other forms to be signed by parents and educators. The documents issued by Bishops' Conferences and the Holy See can be placed on the website as separate files.
- The rules for creating a safe space for children and adolescents should be prepared in two parts: the first should contain general principles that can be useful in all institutions, and the other those prepared in cooperation with particular institutions.
- Another suggestion is to proofread the documents and correct language mistakes in them. The language used in the documents should be clear and avoid broadly defined labelling.

A person who has not been proven to have committed a forbidden act must not be labelled a criminal, and a person who has been wronged must not be labelled by calling the harm “alleged.” Documents should avoid any such wording. Children and adolescents who will read these documents should feel that they are protected and safe and should not be afraid that their reporting the case will lead to treating them with suspicion.

- The document should include the rules for hiring employees and the rules for hiring volunteers. The fundamental rule mentioned by the document should be to check the National Criminal Register and to obtain a certificate of clean criminal record. Other rules can include the Salesians idea to create a separate document regarding the procedure for recruiting and vetting personnel (*Procedura naboru i weryfikacji kadry w dziełach wychowawczych prowadzonych przez Towarzystwo salezjańskie Inspektoriat św. Wojciecha* [*Procedure for recruiting and vetting personnel in educational projects run by the Salesian Society of St. Adalbert Inspectorate*]). Such a document can list the rules for conducting an initial job interview (for example, by two independent persons), describe questionnaires used for vetting, and brief comments on the formation of clergy. However, it is also important to describe how a particular diocese or religious order carries out the recommendation of the most recent (16 June 2021) document issued by the Polish Bishops’ Conference entitled *Droga formacji presbiterów w Polsce* [*The Road of Formation for Presbyters in Poland*], which also addresses formation issues related to the crisis caused by sexual abuse by clergy.
- It is vital that all documents include information on the recruitment and vetting procedures of volunteers and the scope of responsibility of trainees. These two areas are described in detail in the document prepared by the Sisters of Nazareth.
- Most documents do not mention supervision of the work of educators and volunteers, and this issue definitely need to be addressed in all of them. Regular supervision sessions (at the very least, peer supervision) are an element of monitoring the work of a team. Supervision allows noticing problems

at the stage when they are not serious, which makes its indispensable in educational activities. The documents should specify, first, how often educators and volunteers will be supervised, second, who will conduct the supervision (a psychologist, an educator, or a therapist), third, where the funds for regular supervision sessions will come from, and, fourth, what kind of supervision it will be (group, individual, or peer).

- Another vital point is to provide relevant contact information in the document, which should include delegates; persons responsible for prevention in the institution; members of the Prevention Team in the diocese, curates for clergy, as well as and individuals and institutions providing psychological, legal, and spiritual assistance in cases of abuse. The institution's website must include detailed contact information: phone numbers and email addresses. Some people might find it difficult to discuss such sensitive issues over the phone, and it might be easier for them to describe them in an email, at least in the initial report. Phone numbers should lead directly to the person in question, rather than intermediaries who sometimes do not know how to handle such delicate and crisis situations.
- Another pertinent issue is the way in which information is posted on the institution's website. It seems that the best way is to create a separate subpage: Child Protection. This makes it easy to find the information about the delegate and other persons who can offer support without having to nervously search for them, which is invaluable in crisis situations. It also seems that the very choice of contact persons should be prudent and thoughtful. For example, psychological assistance should not be provided by a priest when an abuser is also a priest.
- Some documents contain information about training on a wide range of relevant issues that is dedicated for employees, volunteers, parents, and adolescents; it is advisable to include this topic in the documents where it is missing. This recommendation also refers to cooperation with competent individuals and institutions. Some documents provide information and links to such organizations as "Fundacja Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę" [The We Give Children Strength Foundation], "Fundacja św. Józefa" [St. Joseph Foundation], "Inicjatywa Zranieni

w Kościele” [The Hurt in the Church Initiative] or “Centrum Ochrony Dziecka” [Child Protection Centre]. This is definitely an idea worth spreading.

- If the documents mention training, it should actually take place. In other words, documents should not simply copy the name of a training course from some other sources. It seems reasonable to specify when the training session will take place and who will conduct it (what institution). Then it becomes more tangible and has a chance to move beyond the realm of wishful thinking.

Conclusions from the meetings of the persons responsible for prevention

Two meetings of those in charge of preventing and responding to sexual violence against children and adolescents in institutions run by the Catholic Church took place: one in Czestochowa on 1 June 2022 and one in Gniezno on 9 June 2022. The former was attended by 81 people, and the latter by 32 people. After summarizing the results of the audit of the documents prepared by dioceses and provinces of religious orders and presenting the projects undertaken by the Centre for Child Protection, the persons responsible for prevention met in discussion groups to develop effective prevention strategies to be implemented in institutions run by the Church in Poland. Conclusions on the documents addressing the issue of countering sexual violence in dioceses and provinces of religious orders were as follows:

- The majority of the participants were of an opinion that one general document on the prevention of sexual violence against children and adolescents should be developed, and it should serve as the basis for drafting relevant documents in dioceses and provinces of religious orders, which will be adapted to the specifics of the institutions under their care. During this second stage, it is advisable to ensure the cooperation of persons from each institution, which would allow their unique characteristics to be taken into account.
- There is a need to provide supervision in institutions. The participants of the meetings suggested a range of solutions. One

of them was to establish supervision groups bringing together people from different institutions. Such groups could operate, for example, within the Centre for Child Protection. Another solution was to establish supervision groups in particular institutions, where sessions should be run by educators, psychologists, or guest supervisors. In the first two cases these would be peer supervision groups.

- There is also a need for practical workshops and trainings. It seems reasonable to create a common base at the disposal for all institutions. The participants of the meetings emphasized the practical value of such workshops and training courses, which should be devoted to, e.g., methods of passing knowledge on sexual violence and its prevention to young people in a way that is not only educational but also attractive to them.
- There was a suggestion to prepare a brochure with information about normal human sexual development, so that the codes of behavior could have a positive reference.
- It was also suggested that dedicated training should be conducted for specific professional groups. It would focus on issues selected by those working in a given institution.
- When discussing training, it was mentioned that workshops for all employees in schools would be beneficial, especially ones in which they would receive detailed information the standards in place and asked to sign a declaration that they would observe them.
- It was considered important to raise awareness that clear procedures provide an opportunity to break down barriers and to make it easier to take appropriate action even in the face of strong emotions.
- It was considered a good idea to conduct regular training sessions in religious orders every few years not only for young confreres and newly hired teachers but also for senior confreres and for parsons. These training sessions should focus on revising the principles of preventing and responding to violence against children and adolescents.
- It was observed that female congregations still lack provincial-level documents—sometimes only general documents for the entire congregation are available.

- In female congregations, there is a need for training devoted to working with girls who have been harmed and are currently in formation in congregations.
- The need for training on peer violence was also mentioned.
- One participant from a female congregation noted that the document prepared by her congregation neglects the problem of abusive dependency relations among sisters, wrongly assuming that only men (priests, monks, etc.) can pose a threat to them.
- It was also emphasized that monitoring and evaluating training classes can be helpful in planning further effective work in the area of protection.

Summary

Both the audit of the prevention documents and the meetings of those responsible for preventing and responding to sexual violence against children and adolescents in institutions run by the Catholic Church in Poland can be considered an important stage in building an efficient prevention system. The conclusions stemming from both reveal that the path leading to the preparation of relevant documents in institutions run by religious orders and dioceses must begin with a general document and end with specific documents drafted in particular institutions. Many conclusions were related to the need for a wide range of training programs and opportunities to expand the knowledge of employees, volunteers, trainees, parents, and children on the issue. Other conclusions concerned the need for supervision—at least at the peer level—of educators of children and adolescents.

Summarizing, it can be said that the meeting of those responsible for preventing and responding to sexual violence against children and adolescents ended a certain stage in the drafting of prevention documents. At the same time, it gave hope for further development of effective protection of children and adolescents in institutions run by the Catholic Church in Poland.

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