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Cooperation of the Local Government and the Church in the Service of the Old People² in Poznań

According to the World Health Organization, one million people turn 60 each month, and 80% of them live in developing countries. Conversely, the United Nations Organization forecasts that the current number of 600 million old people will have doubled by 2025. In 2050, this group may already consist of 2 billion people³. According to the forecasts of the Central Statistical Office, in 2035 the number of people over 65 will increase by 35%, and by as much as 87% the number of people over 85 years of age⁴.

Most people in their 60s live in their homes and environments, which are often not adapted to their limitations and needs⁵. This means that many of them are excluded from active social life. State and local authorities as well as various social organizations reflect on this phenomenon to a greater extent. A manifestation of the new style of activity for seniors in their living environment is the

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² The term *old* in the literature on the subject is neutral, similar to other names of age groups. See J. Kurosz, *Oddziaływanie pastoralne wobec osób starszych*, in: *Dei enim sumus adiutores. Opuscula Adamo Przybecki septuagenario dedicata*, Poznań 2019, pp. 312–313; B. Szatur-Jaworska, *Wstęp*, in: *O sposobach mówienia o straości. Debata. Analiza Przykłady*, red. eadem, Warszawa 2014, p. 5; P. Czekanowski, *Wieloznaczność określeń odnoszących się do ludzi starych*, in: *ibidem*, p. 52.

³ Cf. *Global Age-Friendly Cities Project*, https://www.who.int/ageing/projects/age_friendly_cities/en/ [access: 11.11.2019].

⁴ *Polityka senioralna Miasta Poznania na lata 2017–2021. Załącznik do Uchwały Nr LV/1001/VII/2017 Rady Miasta Poznania z dnia 17 października 2017 r.*, Poznań 2017, p. 3.

⁵ Cf. *Global Age-Friendly...*

declaration on cooperation in the field of senior policy, signed on October 20, 2017 by 21 mayors of Polish cities⁶. It is worth mentioning that in 2010 The WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities⁷ was established, as well as the government's 'Program na rzecz Aktywności Społecznej Osób Starszych na lata 2014–2020' ('Program for Social Activity of the Elderly for 2014–2020')⁸ or interdisciplinary PolSenior research, which all take into account the medical, biological, social and economic aspects of the aging society⁹.

From the very beginning of the existence of the Church, the old and the sick have had a special place in its life and teaching. Over the centuries, many works of mercy have been created for the most needy¹⁰. Pastoral influence and the involvement of lay people in helping the elderly is the fulfillment of the Gospel call (cf. Mt 25:31–46). Therefore, the Church reflects on the changes taking place in society and the way how to effectively help those most in need. In his Letter to the Elderly, John Paul II expressed solidarity with his contemporaries and reminded the faithful of the importance of old age in a broader perspective — eternity¹¹. Pope Francis even said that responsiveness for old people should be an essential feature of civilization¹².

The aim of this study is to analyze the initiatives of local government units and the Church in Poznań¹³ addressed to the elderly. The study uses state documents, including those of the Poznań City Council. Information obtained during interviews with representatives of local government units of the city, i.e. Lidia Płatek from the Department of Health and Social Affairs, Wojciech Bauer, director of

⁶ Cf. *Deklaracja współpracy prezydentów miast w obszarze polityki senioralnej*, [uml.lodz.pl › artykuł › 2017/10/30 › printPage](http://uml.lodz.pl/arttykul/2017/10/30/printPage) [access: 2.12.2019].

⁷ Cf. *WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities*, https://www.who.int/ageing/projects/age_friendly_cities_network/en/ [access: 2.12.2019].

⁸ Cf. *Uchwała nr 237 Rady Ministrów z dnia 24 grudnia 2013 r. w sprawie ustanowienia Rządowego programu na rzecz Aktywności Społecznej Osób Starszych na lata 2013–2020*, M.P. 2014 poz. 52; *Załącznik do uchwały Rady Ministrów z dnia 24 grudnia 2013 r. Rządowy Program na rzecz Aktywności Społecznej Osób Starszych na lata 2014–2020*, M.P. 2014 item 52, p. 4 (hereinafter: ASOS Program).

⁹ Cf. P. Błądowski, M. Massakowska, A. Szybalska, *Program badawczy PolSenior — cele i metoda*, 'Zdrowie Publiczne i Zarządzanie' 1 (2011), p. 156. The results of the first study were presented in a special publication: *Raport na temat sytuacji osób starszych w Polsce*, Warszawa 2012. Another study started in 2018. See <https://gumed.edu.pl/50307.html> [access: 2.10.2019].

¹⁰ Cf. W. Przygoda, *Wyzwania duszpasterskie wobec osób w podeszłym wieku*, 'Polonia Sacra' 19 (2015), pp. 71–94; J. Kurosz, *Oddziaływanie...*

¹¹ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *List do osób w podeszłym wieku*, Poznań 2000, No. 910, 17.

¹² Cf. Franciszek, *Adhortacja apostolska Amoris Laetitia*, Kraków 2016, No. 192.

¹³ The research work was carried out at the turn of 2019 and 2020, the availability of documents was the main determinant of the time frame (i.e. 2018). The data of 2019 obtained during the interview were also used.

the Center for Senior Initiatives (CIS) in Poznań¹⁴, and Beata Paszkiewicz from Caritas of the Poznań Archdiocese¹⁵, appeared to be very important.

Basics of cooperation between the state and the Church

In the description of social activity of old people in the government's ASOS Program, local communities operating at churches and religious communities were listed¹⁶. Such a provision was possible thanks to the legal basis regulating the principles of cooperation between the state and the Church. *Konkordat między Stolicą Apostolską i Rzeczpospolitą Polską (The Concordat between the Holy See and the Republic of Poland)*¹⁷ provided the legal personality to the Catholic Church and its institutions¹⁸.

They were allowed to carry out charity and care activities, and simultaneously, they were legally equalized to initiatives serving similar purposes, conducted by state institutions¹⁹. This provision and the possibility of establishing foundations²⁰ are of particular importance in the cooperation of local governments and the Church. In turn, *Ustawa o stosunku Państwa do Kościoła Katolickiego (The Act on the Relationship of the State to the Catholic Church)*²¹ contains guidelines for charity and care activities, including Caritas, to which the relevant legal entities of the Church are entitled. The legislator enabled religious orders and Catholic organizations to provide services to the needy²². Here, it is worth mentioning what follows, namely: running institutions for the elderly, physically or mentally handicapped people, hospitals and other medical facilities and pharmacies, organizing help for families and people who are in a difficult financial or health

¹⁴ Interview conducted on October 31, 2019 at the Center for Senior Initiatives in Poznań, the author's private archive.

¹⁵ Interview conducted on November 13, 2019 in the Caritas building of the Archdiocese of Poznań, the author's private archive.

¹⁶ Cf. *Uchwała nr 237...*, p. 6.

¹⁷ Cf. *Konkordat między Stolicą Apostolską i Rzeczpospolitą Polską, podpisany 28 lipca 1993 r.*, Dziennik Ustaw 1998, No. 51, item 318; *Ustawa o ratyfikacji Konkordatu między stolicą Apostolską a Rzeczpospolitą Polską z dnia 8 stycznia 1998 roku*, Dziennik Ustaw 1998, No. 12, item 42.

¹⁸ Cf. *Konkordat...*, art. 4 and 19.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, art. 22.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, art. 26.

²¹ Cf. *Ustawa z dnia 17 maja 1989 r. o stosunku Państwa do Kościoła Katolickiego w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Dziennik Ustaw 1989, No. 29, item 154; cf. also *Obwieszczenie Marszałka Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 28 czerwca 2019. W sprawie ogłoszenia jednolitego tekstu o stosunku Państwa do Kościoła katolickiego w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Dziennik Ustaw 2019 item 1347.

²² *Ibidem*, chapter 6, art. 38.

situation, as well as promoting the idea of helping other people and social attitudes that will favour it²³. In addition, the act regulates the financing of this type of activity, thanks to which it is possible to obtain ‘subsidies and donations from national institutions and state, social, religious and private enterprises’²⁴.

*Ustawa o działalności pożytku publicznego i o wolontariacie (The Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work)*²⁵ is also important for our issue. It predominantly regulates principles of: activities for public benefit by non-governmental organizations, cooperation of public administration bodies with non-governmental organizations or granting non-governmental organizations the status of public benefit organizations²⁶. Such activities may also be carried out by legal persons and organizational units acting on the basis of the provisions on relations between the State and the Catholic Church, provided that the statutory objectives include public benefit activities under certain conditions. This provision enables to apply for a subsidy²⁷. The legislator also specifies the sphere of public tasks, including social assistance addressed to families and people in a difficult life situation, and activities: for the social integration of people at risk of social exclusion; charity; health protection and promotion; for people in retirement age; leading to the development of local communities; promotion and organization of volunteering; in favour of non-governmental organizations, as well as legal persons and organizational units operating on the basis of the provisions of *Ustawa o stosunku Państwa do Kościoła Katolickiego (The Act on the Relationship between the State and the Catholic Church)*²⁸.

Senior policy in Poland

In our country, we define it as all activities undertaken by public administration bodies, organizations and institutions implementing tasks and initiatives aimed at creating appropriate conditions that enable people over 60 to live with dignity and age healthily²⁹.

²³ Ibidem, chapter 6, art. 39.

²⁴ Ibidem, chapter 6, art. 40.

²⁵ Cf. *Ustawa z dnia 24 kwietnia 2003 r. o działalności pożytku publicznego i o wolontariacie*, Dziennik Ustaw 2003, No. 96, item 873 (Dziennik Ustaw 2019, item 688, 1570, 2020).

²⁶ Ibidem, art. 1.

²⁷ Ibidem, art. 2–3.

²⁸ Cf. ibidem, art. 4.

²⁹ Cf. *Ustawa z dnia 11 września 2015 roku o osobach starszych*, Dziennik Ustaw 2015, item 1075.

The preamble of the Polish constitution clearly states that all citizens are 'equal in rights and obligations towards the common good'³⁰. The document emphasizes the importance of human dignity, which is the source of human rights and freedom. The constitution guarantees equal rights in family, political, social and economic life³¹. The basis of any activity aimed at the elderly is the human right to a dignified life³².

Among the important documents delineating the areas of activity addressed to seniors in Poland, the above-mentioned ASOS Program should be listed³³. It is closely related to other strategic documents, such as: 'Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2020' ('National Development Strategy 2020'), 'Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Ludzkiego 2020' ('Human Capital Development Strategy 2020'), 'Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Społecznego 2020' ('Social Capital Development Strategy 2020'), 'Perspektywa uczenia się przez całe życie' ('Lifelong learning perspective'), 'Europe 2020 — A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth'), 'European Innovation Partnership for Active and Healthy Aging (EIP AHA)', 'EU Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning', 'New financial perspective 2014–2020 for funds from the European Social Fund'³⁴.

Ensuring the improvement of the quality of life of the old people was the basis in the ASOS Program to define specific goals, among which the following were distinguished: 'increasing the diversity and improving the educational offer, creating conditions enabling integration between generations and among peers, taking into account the use of the existing social infrastructure, increasing the scope of volunteering and participation in decision-making processes related to social life, improving the quality of services and increasing their availability for seniors, supporting activities for self-help and self-organization'³⁵. Possible areas of cooperation among various environments were also identified, taking into account church communities.

The appointment of the Council for Senior Policy in February 2013 was one of the manifestations of implementing rights set out in the constitution. It was supposed to be a system component of the Government's ASOS Program. Representatives of various ministries and central public administration bodies were

³⁰ Cf. *Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Dziennik Ustaw 2009, No.114, item 946.

³¹ Cf. *ibidem*, chapter 2, art. 30, 33, 68, 71.

³² I. Lipowicz, *Międzypokoleniowa solidarność*, in: *Miasta przyjazne starzeniu: przewodnik*, red. M. Żakowska, Warszawa 2014, p. 5.

³³ Cf. *Załącznik do uchwały Rady Ministrów z dnia 24 grudnia 2013 roku...; Założenia Długofalowej Polityki Senioralnej w Polsce na lata 2004–2020*, Warszawa 2013, senior.gov.pl ›source› Założenia Długofalowej Polityki Senioralnej [access: 16.12.2019].

³⁴ Cf. *Uchwała nr 237...*, pp. 18–21; J. Kurosz, *Oddziaływanie...*, p. 316.

³⁵ J. Kurosz, *Oddziaływanie...*, p. 316. Cf. *Załącznik do uchwały Rady Ministrów z dnia 24 grudnia 2013 roku...*, pp. 9–10.

invited to participate in the works of the council. Representatives of organizations of local government units were not forgotten³⁶. The council is of an advisory nature, and its tasks include developing lines of actions addressed to this age group, supporting and promoting solutions in the field of social policy, presenting proposals for solutions for the support system development³⁷.

In 2015, *Ustawa o osobach starszych (The Act on the Elderly)* was signed. It obliges the government to provide the Polish Parliament and Senate with information on the condition of this age group every year. The document contains 13 detailed topics that should be included in this report (such as a demographic situation, dimensions of life of older people, assessment of senior policy, conclusions and recommendations)³⁸.

In 2018, the Council of Ministers adopted the document '*Polityka społeczna wobec osób starszych 2030. Bezpieczeństwo — Uczestnictwo — Solidarność*' ('*Social policy towards the elderly 2030. Security — Participation — Solidarity*')³⁹. It takes into account the WHO recommendations, and its aim is to improve the quality of life of seniors by enabling them the longest possible independence, activity and ensuring safety. It provides for the implementation of measures to guarantee the elderly decent social conditions. The Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy is entrusted with programming and monitoring the senior policy⁴⁰.

At this point, it is necessary to mention the nationwide government program 'Senior +', covering the years 2015–2020, previously known as 'Senior-WIGOR'⁴¹. It aims to increase the active participation of old people in social life, thanks to pro-health, educational, cultural, recreational, care services and in the field of physical activity or kinesiotherapy, depending on the needs. Material

³⁶ Cf. Zarządzenie nr 2 Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 25 lutego 2013 r. w sprawie powołania Rady do spraw Polityki Senioralnej, Dziennik Urzędowy Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej 2013, item 2; Zarządzenie nr 29 Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 16 września 2014 r. zmieniające zarządzenie w sprawie powołania Rady do spraw Polityki Senioralnej, Dziennik Urzędowy Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej 2014, item 31; Załącznik do uchwały Rady Ministrów z dnia 24 grudnia 2013 roku..., p. 18.

³⁷ Cf. Rada do spraw Polityki Senioralnej, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rodzina/rada-ds-polityki-senioralnej> [access: 10.12.2019].

³⁸ Cf. *Ustawa z dnia 11 września 2015 roku...*, art. 1, art. 5 point 2.

³⁹ Cf. *Uchwała Rady Ministrów z dnia 26 października 2018 roku w sprawie przyjęcia dokumentu Polityka społeczna wobec osób starszych 2030. Bezpieczeństwo — Uczestnictwo — Solidarność*, Monitor Polski 2018 item 1169; *Załącznik do uchwały nr 161 Rady Ministrów z dnia 16 października 2018 roku (item 1169) Polityka społeczna wobec osób starszych 2030. Bezpieczeństwo — Uczestnictwo — Solidarność*.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Załącznik do uchwały nr 161...*, pp. 5–8.

⁴¹ *Uchwała nr 157 Rady Ministrów z dnia 20 grudnia 2016 roku zmieniająca uchwałę w sprawie ustanowienia programu wieloletniego Senior-WIGOR na lata 2015–2020*, M.P. 2016, item 1254.

resources under this program are intended to develop infrastructure in the local environment. Among the preferred solutions there are ‘Senior +’ facilities, ‘Senior +’ Day Homes and ‘Senior +’ Clubs⁴².

In 2018, the first edition of the government program ‘Care 75+’ took place, the addressees of which are urban, rural, and urban-rural communes with fewer than 60,000 inhabitants. Subsidies for this purpose may not exceed 50% of the task implementation costs⁴³. Pursuant to *Ustawa o pomocy społecznej z 2004 roku (The Act on Social Assistance of 2004)*⁴⁴, local governments are obliged to provide people in need with care and specialist services at their place of residence. The key objective of the ‘Care 75+’ program is to improve the availability of care services (including specialist services) for people over 75 years of age. It is an element of social policy, which is to contribute to providing them with assistance depending on their needs and health, to improving the quality of life, enabling municipalities to expand the offer of care services and financial support in fulfilling the obligatory tasks of local governments⁴⁵. The scope of activity of the latter is specified in a special act⁴⁶. Local governments can carry out public tasks thanks to the legal personality guaranteed in the document. Many of them directly affect the elderly⁴⁷. Actions aimed at improving their lives should be closely related to shaping the attitude of intergenerational solidarity and creating ‘conditions for stimulating civic activity of older people in the local community’⁴⁸. The municipal council of seniors, which has a legal basis, is a significant sign of appreciating the potential of this group⁴⁹.

Service for seniors in Poznań

At present about 148 thousand seniors live in Poznań. Actions aimed at using their potential and raising the standard of their everyday life were taken into account in the city’s strategy after the transformations that took place in the

⁴² Załącznik do uchwały nr 157 Rady Ministrów z dnia 20 grudnia 2016 roku. Program wieloletni „Senior+” na lata 2015–2020, M.P. 2016, item 1254.

⁴³ Cf. Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, *Program ‘Opieka 75+’ na rok 2019*, Warszawa 2018, p. 4.

⁴⁴ *Obwieszczenie Marszałka Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 20 lipca 2018 roku w sprawie ogłoszenia jednolitego tekstu ustawy o pomocy społecznej*, Dziennik Ustaw, No. 2018, item 1508 as amended.

⁴⁵ Ministerstwo..., pp. 6–7.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Ustawa z dnia 8 marca 1990 r. o samorządzie gminnym*, Dziennik Ustaw, 1990, No. 16, item 95.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibidem*, chapter 2, art. 2.1; 7.1–7.15.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, chapter 1, art. 5c.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, art. 5c.

1990s. The sentence repeated by the present vice-president Jędrzej Solarski has been pursued for a long time, ‘Nothing in the city for seniors happens without seniors’⁵⁰. Almost 16 years ago, on the initiative of older people, the first Council of Seniors in Poland was established in Poznań, which initially operated outside the existing formal structure⁵¹. In 2007, a resolution of the City Council established the Municipal Council of Seniors, which, as an advisory body, continues its cooperation with the authorities⁵². It was on its initiative that the Centre for Senior Initiatives⁵³ was established, which has been implementing projects for seniors as a municipal unit since May 2010. It has an informative function and is a place where seniors can meet every day from 8 am to 4 pm. The employees of the center try to activate them so that they can participate in the life of Poznań creatively and with satisfaction. It is supervised by the Health Department, and its chief superior is the President of the City⁵⁴. Many departments and municipal units are involved in the service for the elderly, for example, the Department of Culture and Sport, Poznań Center of Benefits, the Community Family Support Centre, Public Transport Authority, Municipal Roads Authority, Management of Housing Resources⁵⁵.

The creativity of seniors’ representatives during meetings with the city authorities and their involvement in the implementation of various activities are positively surprising. It was them who in 2016, along with the Centre for Senior Initiatives and social activists, proposed to join the Global Network of WHO Age-Friendly Cities and Communes. Poznań was the second city in Poland to join this network. As a result, the scope of activities in this dimension was expanded and a faster pace of changes was observed⁵⁶.

The current projects implement the indications contained in the document ‘Senior Policy of the City of Poznań for 2017–2021’. Its preparation was attended by councilors, magistrate officials and representatives of senior and non-governmental organizations taking actions for this social group. It takes into account the WHO guidelines that indicate areas of activity for seniors: construction, public space management, transport, housing, professional and social activation,

⁵⁰ J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 31.10.2019.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² *Uchwała nr XXIV/228/V/2007 Rady Miasta Poznania z dnia 25 października 2007 roku w sprawie powołania Miejskiej Rady Seniorów*, <https://bip.poznan.pl/bip/uchwaly/uchwala-nr-xxiv-228-v-2007-z-dnia-2007-10-25,19389/> [access: 20.02.2020].

⁵³ *Uchwała nr LXIV/898/V/2009 Rady Miasta Poznania z dnia 8 grudnia 2009 r. w sprawie utworzenia Centrum Inicjatyw Senioralnych*, p. 1, <https://centrumis.pl/dokumenty1.html> [access: 10.03.2020].

⁵⁴ J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 31.10.2019.

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

⁵⁶ Ibidem; M. Żakowska, *Wstęp do polskiego wydania*, in: *Miasta przyjazne starzeniu: przewodnik*, red. eadem, Warszawa 2014, p. 3.

counteracting exclusion, social support, health protection⁵⁷. Furthermore, the senior policy in Poznań involves, among others, creating conditions for the development and life of old people, respecting their subjectivity and autonomy, strengthening and using their potential, shaping a positive image of old age in the society, integration, undertaking various types of cooperation with other entities⁵⁸. Supervision over the implementation of the tasks resulting from this document is carried out by a specially created Program Council⁵⁹, which meets once a quarter. Detailed reports are published each year in a special document⁶⁰.

The number of projects implemented for seniors is large, and therefore, only some examples of them will be presented here.

‘Pakiet Viva Senior’ (The ‘Viva Senior Package’) includes free amenities for the oldest residents of Poznań, which they can read about both on the website and in a special leaflet. Each of them has separate regulations, taking into account the rules of using and qualifying individual persons for it. The package is addressed to the residents of Poznań, who pay taxes in this city and are 60 years of age. However, individual services are dedicated to people who, due to various limitations, e.g. health restrictions, cannot perform certain activities themselves⁶¹.

In the ‘Viva Senior Package’ we will find ‘Pudełko Życia (‘Box of Life’) containing the necessary information about the health condition and contact details collected in a plastic container intended to be placed on the refrigerator door, which aims to improve assistance in health and life emergencies. In turn, ‘Poznańska Złota Karta’ (‘Poznań Golden Card’) entitles you to take advantage of discounts and rebates in municipal cultural, sports, educational institutions and private companies. Along with it the senior receives a catalog containing information on the place and time of using the discounts. As part of the ‘Książka dla Seniora’ (‘Book for Seniors’) project, books and other resources of the Raczyński Library are delivered to the apartments once a week, and ‘Złota Rączka dla Seniora’ (‘Handyman for the Senior’) offers free help with minor household faults.

There are also special packages of services for people over 75 and 80, such as ‘Taksówka dla Seniora’ (‘Taxi for the Senior’) (free transport to the office, cemetery or doctor). The ‘Municipal Rental of Rehabilitation Equipment’, operating on behalf of the City in the Caritas building of the Archdiocese of Poznań, provides rehabilitation and orthopedic equipment to those in need. ‘Mobilna Pielęgnacja Paznokci u Stóp Seniorów’ (‘Mobile Nail Care at Seniors’ Feet’) is

⁵⁷ J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 31.10.2019; *Polityka senioralna Miasta...*, p. 18.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Polityka senioralna Miasta...*, pp. 16–17.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Sprawozdanie z realizacji Programu „Polityka senioralna miasta Poznania na lata 2017–2021” w roku 2018*, Poznań 2019, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 3–42.

⁶¹ Cf. *Poznań Viva Senior*, <https://centrumis.pl/poznan-viva-senior.html> [access: 20.02.2020].

a free cosmetic service with home access. Other solutions aimed at the oldest ones include washing windows, cleaning tombstones, and transport within city cemeteries⁶².

Proper information is an important link in activities for seniors. Messages from various institutions are reported to the Centre for Senior Initiatives, from where they are forwarded to interested parties in 'Poznański przewodnik seniorki i seniora' ('Poznań guide for seniors')⁶³ and in the form of 'Tytka⁶⁴ dla Seniora' ('Paper Bag for the Senior'). It is prepared and distributed by about 40 volunteers from the Centre for Senior Initiatives. Every month, leaflets with offers and promotions in the field of culture, sport, tourism, health, training, science and volunteering, as well as information related to the safety of seniors are put into thousands of bags. There is a great need for this type of the initiative. Four years ago, the paper bags were distributed within 30 days, and in 2018–2019 — 1.5 days. Therefore, since 2020, the Centre for Senior Initiatives plans to include the 'Paper Bag' in the form of a page supplement to the monthly 'Senioralny Poznań' ('Senior Poznań'), the circulation of which is 20 thousand copies. It will also be available in an electronic version⁶⁵.

Since 2010, the 'Viva Seniorzy' Fair has been organized, which in 2018 took place as part of another important event, 'Senioralni. Poznań' (held continuously since 2011). It was then that in the pavilion on the premises of the Poznań International Fair, special zones were separated: workshop, lecture and main zones, and the exhibitions were divided into four thematic zones: health, activity, knowledge, environment. Over 100 different exhibitors, including 40 non-governmental organizations, Caritas of the Archdiocese of Poznań⁶⁶ and senior clubs from Poznań and Greater Poland, could present their offers free of charge. Seniors had the opportunity to participate in various workshops, trainings and concerts. Railways of Greater Poland prepared a special promotion in the form of a free return ticket⁶⁷. As part of the project 'Senioralni. Poznań' for a month and a half, the elderly can take part in many dedicated events. The event and the fair are a great holiday for this social group and contribute to creating a positive atmosphere around old age.

The great interest in senior initiatives is also the aftermath of the activities of eight Third Age Universities and about eighty Senior Clubs. Several of them

⁶² J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 31.10.2019.

⁶³ *Poznański przewodnik seniorki i seniora*, Poznań 2018 [edited by the Team of the Center for Senior Initiatives].

⁶⁴ 'Tytka' in Poznań dialect means a paper bag.

⁶⁵ J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 31.10.2019; *e-Tytka Seniora*, <https://centrumis.pl/e-tytka-seniora-opis.html> [access: 15.02.2020].

⁶⁶ J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 13.11.2019.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Viva Seniorzy. Edycja 2018*, <https://centrumis.pl/edycja-2018.html> [access: 15.02.2020].

function in parish communities⁶⁸. Thanks to the support of the Department of Health and the initiative of councilors, the Centre for Senior Initiatives employs two people who mainly deal with clubs. They are senior animators who meet with them, advise them on how to obtain funding, and diagnose their needs. Cooperation with the departments of the City Hall enables the implementation of new projects in response to the expectations of seniors (e.g. Academy for the Senior Community Leader)⁶⁹.

Among the huge number of proposals addressed to seniors, we can also find offers from Caritas of the Archdiocese of Poznań related to activities with the local government. Caritas implements, among others, the project ‘Nowoczesny i aktywny senior’ (‘Modern and active senior’), co-financed by the City Hall⁷⁰. It is addressed to residents over 60 years of age and includes computer training (e.g. Excel, Power Point) at the basic and extended level, as well as the use of specific programs or tablets. Seniors also participate in English, Spanish and Italian language courses⁷¹. In September 2019, the first rehabilitation training cycle took place. In the theoretical part, the participants learned about the causes of pain, the most common ailments in muscles and joints and how to eliminate them. The practical part was to teach seniors how to overcome or reduce pain using safe exercises that they can do themselves at home⁷². The result of the cooperation between Caritas and the Centre for Senior Initiatives is greater access to the prepared offers for seniors.

They participate in many projects, such as the annual joint Christmas Eve at the Poznań Fair, a Mobile Medical Aid Point or nutritional aid⁷³.

Both Caritas employees, the Centre for Senior Initiatives and city officials are aware that there is still a lot to be done for the elderly in Poznań. The most urgent thing is to reach more seniors, which was emphasized by all interviewees during the interviews. Wojciech Bauer indicated the parish as the fastest way of communication. What seems like a formality appears to be difficult to implement. Caritas directors can be a bridge between the Centre for Senior Initiatives and parishes. Often after their interventions, the parish priest’s attitude towards cooperation with the Centre for Senior Initiatives changes. This was the case with the distribution of ‘Boxes of Life’, which they did not want to give out to older

⁶⁸ Cf. *Poznański przewodnik...*, pp. 151–154; J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 13.11.2019, p. 7.

⁶⁹ J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 13.11.2019.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Ustawa z dnia 24 kwietnia 2003 r...*, art. 4.

⁷¹ J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 13.11.2019.

⁷² Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 1–2; *Warsztaty poświęcone zajęciom rehabilitacyjnym*, <https://centrumis.pl/warsztaty-po%C5%9Bwi%C4%99cone-zaj%C4%99ciom-rehabilitacyjny.html> [access: 20.02.2020].

⁷³ J. Kurosz, Interview conducted on 13.11.2019.

parishioners. It changed after the Caritas director made calls to the parish priest and added a sticker of the organization⁷⁴. It can be assumed that the difficulties between the Centre for Senior Initiatives and parishes result from the fear of cooperation with someone from outside the Church, fear of misunderstood competition or overworking of priests as a consequence of the clericalist perception of the pastoral service. It seems that the situation may also be the aftermath of prejudices against the city authorities. It is impossible, however, to indicate the true motives in this article. Regardless of the attitude of the clergy, the parish remains a place that could increase the scope of influence towards seniors. The priest's visit is still a missed opportunity — providing information or a leaflet on important matters for seniors may be the first step in overcoming various adversities characteristic of this period of life. However, it should be clearly emphasized that the Centre for Senior Initiatives, various organizations and officials learn to cooperate and — as the interviewees emphasize — the problem is much wider.

Activities undertaken in Poznań are aimed at enabling seniors to live as long as possible in their own environment. Nursing homes should be the last resort, hence the need to organize efficient care services and ensure social integration⁷⁵. It is a challenge for both the city authorities and parish communities. Demographic changes will also be reflected among parish members. It is good now to prudently shape the cooperation for seniors with local government units — this especially applies to parish Caritas branches.

Summary

About 148 thousand seniors live in Poznań and according to forecasts, this number will systematically increase. The cooperation of the local government, non-governmental organizations and the Church counteracts the social exclusion of this group of people and is a necessary condition for seniors to live in their environment as long as possible. The senior policy in Poznań is implemented in the areas indicated by the WHO: construction, public space management, transport, housing, social support, professional and social activation, counteracting exclusion, social support, health protection. The Center for Senior Initiatives, as a municipal unit, implements projects for seniors and cooperates with Caritas.

Keywords

the elderly, local governments, the Church, senior policy, new initiatives, cooperation

⁷⁴ Ibidem.

⁷⁵ Ibidem.

Współdziałanie samorządu i Kościoła w służbie ludziom starszym w Poznaniu

Streszczenie

W Poznaniu żyje ok. 148 tys. seniorów i według prognoz liczba ta będzie systematycznie wzrastała. Współpraca samorządu, organizacji pozarządowych i Kościoła przeciwdziała wykluczeniu społecznemu tej grupy osób i stanowi konieczny warunek, by seniorzy mogli jak najdłużej żyć w swoim środowisku. Polityka senioralna w Poznaniu jest realizowana w obszarach wskazanych przez WHO: budownictwo, budownictwo przestrzeni publicznej, transport, mieszkalnictwo, wsparcie społeczne, aktywizacja zawodowa i społeczna, przeciwdziałanie wykluczeniu, wsparcie społeczne, ochrona zdrowia. Centrum Inicjatyw Senioralnych jako jednostka miejska realizuje projekty na rzecz seniorów i współpracuje z Caritas.

Słowa kluczowe

osoby stare, samorządy, Kościół, polityka senioralna, nowe inicjatywy, współpraca

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