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Assumptions for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation”

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present assumptions for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18). The project is carried out jointly by three entities: Saint Nicolas Foundation, Warsaw University and Centro Studi Medi in Genoa, Italy. The second purpose of this paper is to document the fragmented information about the Project with a view to the future use of its potential, both with respect to implementation as well as its scientific and educational aspects. The third aim of this paper is to promote the described Implementation Project and the Educational Programme “Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it”.

Key words: education, identity, politics, religion, security, labour market

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present assumptions for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18). The project is carried out jointly by three entities: Saint Nicolas Foundation, Warsaw University and Centro Studi Medi in Genoa, Italy. The second purpose of this paper is to document the fragmented information about the Project with a view to the future use of its potential, both with respect to implementation as well as its scientific and educational aspects. The third aim of this paper is to promote the described Implementation Project and the Educational Programme “Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it”.

Issues

The project entitled “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18)¹ has been carried out since 2018 in international

¹ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project)*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18, Own archives of the Centre for European Projects in Warsaw, hereinafter *Application*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18). The Centre For European Projects is a government budgetary unit established by Regulation No. 16 of the Minister for Regional Development of 15 December 2008. The main goal of the Centre is to improve the effectiveness of absorption of European funds. Cf. Ordinance of the Minister for Development and Finance of 10 November 2017 on establishing organisational rules of the Centre for European Projects, Official Journal of the Minister for Development and Finance, 14 November 2017, item 224.

cooperation between three entities – Saint Nicolas Foundation² (Poland), Warsaw University³ (Poland) and Centro Studi Medi⁴ (Italy). The outcome of the project is the programme “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ (hereinafter: PRB Programme) focused around the following challenges: the effect of religion on norms and security, multiculturalism, identity, the relationship between religion and religious identity and security. In the plan of the project it was assumed that religion is an element of the feeling of a community, eliminates the threats to security through values and norms, whereas its homogeneity results in the uniformity of moral norms, which frequently overlap with religious norms. It was also assumed that the system of statutory law has a core and roots in the historical cultural heritage.⁵ By making the re-

² Saint Nicolas Foundation – a public benefit organisation set up in Poland in 2002. It is involved in publishing, educational, and scholarship activities.

³ Warsaw University – the largest university in Poland. It was founded in Warsaw in 1816.

⁴ Centro Studi Medi – a non-governmental organisation based in Genoa, Italy, established in 2003, involved in broadly conceived issues of migration. It is involved in research, publishing, and educational activities.

⁵ Cf. Kluza (2017): 68–71. Cf. Kluza (2017): 68: “In the basic form moral norms constitute a set of ethical principles which in a given human community are considered to be fundamental, common, universal, and with which the activities taken up by people should comply. With a view to various categories of classification, size of a given group or various types of social determinants, there may be divergent views as to what values can be included in the set of moral norms. The catalogue of moral norms frequently overlaps with religious norms, since the principles of the professed faith usually are reflected in morality, as well as with informal or customary norms, since one of their characteristic is universal acceptability. The relation of moral to legal norms may be in turn defined as a relationship of crossing – not all ethical

ipients aware of the power of their own identity, the PRB programme, which is the product of the project, is meant to build in them the ability to move around in the multicultural society without fear and consolidate the general sense of security.⁶

A starting point for the concept of the project and then the development of the PRB Programme were the observations made by Dariusz Karłowicz and Cezary Smuniewski. For the needs of archiving the project they have been written down and are kept in the project archives at the Saint Nicolas Foundation in Warsaw. The scholars arrived at the following conclusions:

1. "The religious reality is directly linked with the sphere of the worship, religious experience, is a subject of metaphysical and theological reflection, though also is constitutive for individual and collective identity, and thus the basic component of the socio-political reality and all of the broadly conceived culture. Apart from a vision of the deity and salvation, religious convictions usually contain a specific vision of man and community: purpose, prevailing rules, desirable form of communal life as well as what deserves to be condemned. Just like religious experience, religious convictions – both when they are an expression of religious faith and when they arise from negating that faith – constitute one of the major elements of individual and collective identity. It is impossible

standards are reflected in law. In the case of criminal law this convergence is even further restricted. The purpose of penal sanctions, the main task of which is to protect legal interests specified by the lawmaker, is substantially different. However, because the system of codified law has a core and roots in historical cultural heritage, it is indispensable to ensure some links between criminal law and morality."

⁶ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project), POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.*

to appreciate the great monuments of culture: *the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Iliad, the Aeneid, the Divine Comedy*, Adam Mickiewicz's *Dziady*, without understanding religious convictions and the knowledge of the nature of worship. There is neither any doubt that without having any knowledge on this subject it is impossible to understand the policies of the today's United States of America, contemporary France, Israel, Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Germany, Sweden or Poland. A politician, a tourist or a businessman who happened to visit those countries without at least a little knowledge about religion and the relationship between religion and social life there, would encounter a wall of misunderstanding, if not aggression. To enter a deeper relationship requires an appropriate more profound knowledge, whereas to enter into a deep relationship – virtuosity. It is similar as regards possible contacts with representatives of other cultures and individuals or communities living in Poland. A Turk who sells kebabs, an owner of a Chinese restaurant, a German selling garden gnomes manufactured in Poland, a construction worker from Ukraine or Bangladesh are not like us in this respect – as regards the relationship between religion and social life.”⁷

2. “Religion determines culture to a degree which enables many thinkers and sociologists speak even about ‘atheist Protestants’, ‘atheist Catholics’, ‘atheists of the Jewish Faith’. The famous phrase spoken out by John Paul II at the Victory Square in Warsaw that “It is impossible to understand the history of Poland without Christ” may be understood also

⁷ *Rzeczywistość współczesna oczami Dariusza Karłowicza i Cezarego Smuniewskiego, Notes from the preparatory work (7 March 2018) for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation”, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.*

as a certain research guideline for someone who is interested in Polish culture, politics, social life. Without religion it is impossible to understand the history of nations, without religion it is impossible to understand the contemporary threat to security, without religion it is impossible to create personal, social and cultural security, but also security of individual states and international security.”⁸

3. “It is impossible to understand politics without analysing the place of religion in the world and its relation to political reality. Every political doctrine has a concept of the religious sphere in the world. Regardless of whether it is a concept of power in the Middle Ages or in ancient Egypt, or in contemporary France, Britain or the US. In order to comprehend the differences between them it is necessary to understand their attitude to religion. Why does a Russian politician think differently about different religions? Every political doctrine has an implied attitude towards religion. In order to understand the world it shall not suffice to know political or global reality, or even that concerning the legal order, but one needs to understand the religious context.”⁹

4. “Graduates of the faculties of political studies, international relations or security studies need to be as fully as possible capable of seeing the reality, which is impossible without their knowledge, skills, competences to master the ability to learn the religious dimension. A major fault of contemporary education is the lack of knowledge about religious reality and inability to combine it with both political theories and political practice.”¹⁰

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

5. "This type of ignorance gives rise to absurd ideas such as forcing Muslim women to wear bikinis. Elimination of ritual slaughter of animals proclaimed by animal protection movements or undermining the conscience clause in what concerns pro-life choice. There are boundaries of religious identities the crossing of which compels the faithful to assume an attitude of fundamental confrontation with codified law even if they would not wish to do so."¹¹

6. "Hence it becomes absolutely obvious that the knowledge of this subject is indispensable not only for politologists, experts in international law and international relations, but also creators of security in its diverse dimensions and at various levels. This knowledge is also indispensable for policemen, journalists, doctors, schoolteachers, employees of cultural institutions, central and local public administration, social workers; it is indispensable for legislators and judges, all professionals whose work makes it necessary to move around in social reality in a manner requiring its understanding. The issue becomes even more urgent when we taken into account contemporary migrations, travelling, job changing."¹²

The above observations made by Dariusz Karłowicz and Cezary Smuniewski turned out to a starting point for the development of the project and the PRB Programme.

Why is there a need for the PRB Programme

The authors of the concept of the programme note that the Polish labour market suffers a shortage of workers in certain sectors of the economy and point out the problem of a low birth

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem.

rate. Citing the results of surveys carried out by the Office for Foreigners (UdSC) and the Central Statistical Office (GUS) they state that by 2050 the population of Poland will drop down to 33.5 million. The gap of 4 million people on the Polish labour market may be filled in by immigrants, especially Ukrainians. Since 2014, the number of foreigners applying for the permit to stay in Poland has been constantly increasing (2017: 202 thou., up by 33% on 2016 and 71% on 2015). The applications have been filed by the citizens of Ukraine (62%), Byelorussians (9.5 thou.), Indians (8 thou.), Vietnamese (6.4 thou.), Chinese (6 thou.), Germans (2.3 thou.), Italians (1.1 thou.).¹³ That data has become a basis for the creators of the PRB Programme to state that the contribution of immigrants to the economy and culture could be significant if the barriers to their proper functioning in Poland are eliminated. They also assume that the effects of the programme will change the attitude of employers as regards hiring foreigners, make it easier for immigrants to find a decently paid job, eliminate prejudices in recruitment, finding a flat with an affordable rent, access to the health service and settle official formalities.¹⁴ The premises for formulating such assumptions arose from the analysis of data published by the Senate of the Republic of Poland. That documents stated that institutions and organisations acting for the integration of foreigners in Poland observed little interest in the integration courses addressed to foreigners coming to Poland. Not all of them are willing to benefit from the integrational offer prepared for them – some of them treat their stay in Poland as tran-

¹³ Cf. Central Statistical Office (2014); Office for Foreigners (2016), Office for Foreigners (2017).

¹⁴ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project)*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

sitory. They are rather passive, have a demanding attitude as regards satisfaction of their daily needs, are not interested in good integration with the society. At the same time, in their daily life in Poland they encounter several problems, of which the following have been pointed out as typical:

- communication problems due to no or poor knowledge of the Polish language;
- no availability of municipal housing and problems with finding accommodation with an affordable rent;
- homelessness as a result of inability to find appropriate accommodation;
- problems with finding a job paid adequately to the needs (e.g. renting a flat), among other things because of the poor command of the Polish language;
- no documents confirming occupational skills and reluctance of employers to hire foreigners;
- problems with health and health service due, among other things, to not knowing the language and lack of medical records;
- problems with settling official formalities;
- no sufficient information as regards their rights as well as about the institutions and organisations that offer help to refugees.¹⁵

When elaborating the project aimed at developing the PRB Programme the authors assumes that the deliberate management of multiculturalism is a major challenge nowadays faced not only by Poland but also all of Europe. Neither the Polish educational nor training system include a comprehensive syllabus preparing students or workers to operate in a multicultural environment. There are only scarce examples

¹⁵ Dragan (2016): 13.

of programmes addressed to a limited number of people. Courses offered at certain universities to a limited number of students do not cover all issues that have an impact on security.¹⁶ Thus, there are no comprehensive programmes available in this respect.

In February and March 2018, under the preparation of the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” the scientists (Cezary Smuniewski – War Studies University, academic director of the project, Karolina Kochończyk Bonińska – War Studies University, Dariusz Karłowicz – representative of an NGO, Saint Nicolas Foundation) together with a group of assistants (Tomasz Herbich, Konrad Majka, Adam Talarowski) and with the support of scientific consultants (Krzysztof Koseła – Warsaw University, Tomasz Żyro – Warsaw University, Ewa Maria Marciniak – Warsaw University, Maciej Marszałek – War Studies University, Ryszard Szpyra – War Studies University, Cyprian Kozera – War Studies University, Ilona Urych – War Studies University, Andrea Zanini – Genoa University, Agostino Massa – Genoa University, Andrea Tomaso Torre – Centro Studi Medì in Genoa) carried out investigations aimed at validating the thesis concerning the need for implementing the programme. The following surveys were conducted:

- a questionnaire survey of 200 students from Białystok, Siedlce, Poznań, Katowice, Gdańsk, Toruń, Opole, Warszawa, Wrocław, Olsztyn, Rzeszów, Kraków, Kielce (political sciences, international relations, international security, law, administration);

¹⁶ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project), POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.*

- 30 interviews with NGOs dealing with the issues of creating social security,
- 30 interviews with primary and secondary school teachers (Warszawa, Katowice, Rzeszów, Jelenia Góra, villages from Zachodniopomorskie and Podlaskie voivodships);
- 30 interviews with the clergy of various Christian denominations (22 Catholics, 5 Orthodox, 3 Protestants).

From those surveys it transpired that over 80% of the interviewed members of the clergy and teachers anticipated an improvement of life in a multicultural environment owing to the presence in the local community of persons with competences acquired thanks to taking part to the planned programme. 80% of teachers and NGO representatives anticipate an improvement in the functioning of their work environment (schools, house of culture, employees and volunteers of NGOs). On the average, 80% of respondents (members of the clergy and teachers) anticipate an improvement in the functioning of public institutions as a result of their employees having competences acquired under the planned programme. This investigation confirms that implementation of the PRB Programme, which builds the competences for functioning in the multicultural world, is an effective and needed measure awaited by the labour market and answering its major challenges in the forthcoming years as well as enriching the teaching offer of universities and the training market.¹⁷

When working out the concept of the project the authors decided to use information acquired by the IDI method (Individual In-depth Interview). During the work of the team (Cezary Smuniewski, Karolina Kochańczyk Bonińska, Konrad

¹⁷ Cf. *Application*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

Majka) i konsultacji (Krzysztof Koseła, Ewa Maria Marciniak, Maciej Marszałek, Cyprian Kozera, Ilona Urych, Andrea Zanini, Agostino Massa, Andrea Tomaso Torre) the following arguments were articulated in favour of using the IDI method.

- minimization of survey costs;
- the subjects dealt with in the survey are difficult and even intimate (e.g. concerning religion, worldview, political preferences);
- the possibility of gaining a good knowledge of the opinions and views of respondents;
- a fast method to validate the degree of understanding the concept of the project;
- fast effects of the survey;
- getting to respondents' unrealised opinions;
- expected considerable self-presentation;
- building a friendly environment around the project;
- no negative impact from the group which may happen in group interviews (conformism, dominance of certain people in the group);
- anticipated greater openness in a face-to-face conversation of people who might not want to disclose their views in front of a larger group or in writing;
- development of team competences;
- broadening of team experience.

The IDI method was used, which boils down to a face-to-face conversation of a researcher with a single respondent. Thanks to than method it was possible to deepen the knowledge of the studied phenomenon and get to the emotional and motivational patterns of respondents' behaviours. Used were structured interviews (scenario) and semi-structured interviews, where the starting point is a list of questions. The goals that the researcher wanted to attain (to get

responses to the questions) were clearly defined. At the same time, it was assumed that during in-depth interviews it would be possible to introduce elements of a non-standardised questionnaire if it is needed to get information from a respondent (open interviews with only a generally outlined scenario). The authors of the project expected that thanks to in-depth interviews it would be possible to learn individual experience of respondents, the mechanisms and motivations of the decisions they make, as accurately as possible learn the reasons underlying their actions.¹⁸

Interviews with representatives of NGOs involved in the issues of creating social security – na at the local or nationwide level – turned out to be of special significance.¹⁹

The following answers were given to the question: "Would the competences of NGO employees and volunteers in the area corresponding with our project make their work more effective?":

- Definitely yes – 26 people
- Rather yes – 2 people
- Hard to say – 2 people
- Rather not – 0 (none of the respondents)
- Definitely not – 0 (none of the respondents)

¹⁸ Cf. Smuniewski, *Notes from the preparatory work for the project "Implementation of the educational programme 'Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it' basing on international cooperation"* POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

¹⁹ Cf. *In-depth individual interview (IDI) with NGO representatives* (February/March 2018), Archives of the project "Implementation of the educational programme 'Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it' basing on international cooperation", POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of employees of public institutions, such as public offices, schools, in the area corresponding with our project contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?”:

- Definitely yes – 26 people
- Rather yes – 2 people
- Hard to say – 2 people
- Rather not – 0 (none of the respondents)
- Definitely not – 0 (none of the respondents)

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of employees of enterprises in the area corresponding with our project contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?”:

- Definitely yes – 22 people
- Rather yes – 3 people
- Hard to say – 2 people
- Rather not – 1
- Definitely not – 2

Below are examples of answers given to the question: “How would the competences of potential NGO employees and volunteers in the area corresponding with our project make their work more effective?”:

1. “Those who wish to do away with alcohol addiction need people who are capable to using not only their professional skills, who have not only knowledge but, what is very important, who are capable of invoking their own religious worldview, but of course also showing respect for different views of their interlocutor.”

2. "Work in such organisation as ours, that is offering help to those who are in need, poor, unemployed, helpless, vulnerable, sick, requires very specific competences. It requires the ability to listen to another man, to understand his situation, empathy, spiritual sensitivity."
3. "In our foundation we are involved, among other things, in promoting attitudes which are to contribute to building the most efficiently possible functioning civil society. For such a society to be able to live as best as possible, it cannot be built basing on a fear of other people, fear of a multicultural world. What is needed is the expertise of people working in houses of culture, teachers, doctors, clergymen, all people employed in public administration. In order to build a civil society it is necessary to know the rules and ways of utilising what is latent in people, it is necessary to wake up what is asleep in them for various reasons. There are great unutilised deposits of energy in the society, which may be used for the good of others. Local communities need both leaders as well as an army of workers who understand how religion influences the way of thinking, everyday choices, decisions not only in personal matters but also concerning the life of the community."
4. "Basing on the observation of what is done by many charitable organisations I can responsibly say that people who can understand the interrelationships between social life and values carried in the message of individual religions are very creative individuals, praised by those who need assistance and also appreciated by co-workers. There is a shortage of such people on the labour market. These are people with training that gives them courage and skills to utilise thinking arising

- from religious identity, from the call of individual religions to cooperate and create a space of care for another man.”
5. “Employees of public administration must have knowledge not only about multiculturalism, but first of all about the potential of religion and religious thinking.”
 6. “It is hard speaking about social security in Poland without the activity of entities associated with Churches and religious associations. Those who know what is going on at the grassroots, in villages and small towns, perhaps understand it better. Those who engage in social activity are people who very frequently do it because it is part of their faith, who also know that it is possible to reconcile faith with social life. This is what we should teach in Poland.”
 7. “The majority of volunteers who engage in the activity of our foundation, who want to work with “difficult” youth, want to spend time with them, help them do their homework, etc. are people who can draw on what they learned in the Church, in Churches. It so happens that in our foundation we have volunteers who identify themselves with the Catholic Church and two Churches based on the heritage of Protestantism. We take care so that all of them use what they are for a common cause. We know that this has to be learnt. The assumptions for a university curriculum that have been presented to me, in which the central idea of which is to look at people integrally, makes us hopeful that other voluntaries will join our foundation. This also makes us hope that there will be ever more such foundations as ours in Poland and in Europe. There are so many young people that need help! Our foundation was established by a few

people who know that it is necessary to understand the great potential that is hidden in the relationships that arise when religion and social life meet.”

Data obtained from 30 interviews with the clergy of various Christian denominations (22 Catholics, 5 Orthodox, 3 Protestants):²⁰

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the presence of people having competences corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to improvement of the quality / comfort of life in a multicultural / multi-religious / denominationally diverse environment?”:

- Definitely yes – 14
- Rather yes – 11
- Hard to say – 5
- Rather not – 0
- Definitely not – 0

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of school teachers, people working in schools and houses of culture corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to improvement of the functioning of schools and houses of culture in a multicultural / multi-religious / denominationally diverse environment?”:

- Definitely yes – 13
- Rather yes – 11
- Hard to say – 5

²⁰ Cf. *In-depth individual interviews (IDI) with the clergy (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant)* (February/March 2018), Archives of the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation”, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

- Rather not – 1
- Definitely not – 0

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of employees of public institutions (e.g. public offices) corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to improvement of the functioning of those institutions?”:

- Definitely yes – 13
- Rather yes – 10
- Hard to say – 4
- Rather not – 2
- Definitely not – 1

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences of employees of enterprises corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to improvement of their functioning?”:

- Definitely yes – 2
- Rather yes – 7
- Hard to say – 16
- Rather not – 2
- Definitely not – 3

The following answers were given to the question: “Would the competences corresponding with the effects of our project contribute to the promotion of the idea of voluntary activity?”:

- Definitely yes – 23
- Rather yes – 4
- Hard to say – 3
- Rather not – 0
- Definitely not – 0

Data obtained from 30 interviews with primary and secondary school teachers.²¹ In-depth interviews were carried out with teachers from Warsaw (5 people), Katowice (5 people), Rzeszów (5 people), Jelenia Góra and the vicinity (5 people), villages from Zachodniopomorskie and Podlaskie voivodships (10 people).

The following answers were given to the question: "Would the competences of employees public institutions, such as public offices, in the area corresponding with our project contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?":

- Definitely yes – 17
- Rather yes – 8
- Hard to say – 2
- Rather not – 1
- Definitely not – 2

The following answers were given to the question: "Would the competences of school teachers and school employees in the area corresponding with our project contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?":

- Definitely yes – 18
- Rather yes – 6
- Hard to say – 5

²¹ Cf. *In-depth individual interview (IDI) with primary and secondary schools* (February/March 2018), Archives of the project "Implementation of the educational programme 'Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it' basing on international cooperation", POWR.04.03.00-00-0013/18.

- Rather not – 0
- Definitely not – 1

When developing the concept of the project, the team (Cezary Smuniewski, Karolina Kocharczyk Bonińska, Konrad Majka) after consultations (Ewa Maria Marciniak, Maciej Marszałek, Ilona Urych, Cyprian Kozera, Andrea Zanini, Agostino Massa, Andrea Tomaso Torre) carried out investigations by the diagnostic method and the questionnaire technique (the research tool was a questionnaire form) among 200 students.²² Students of political studies, international relations, international security, law and administration in major academic centres in Poland (Białystok, Gdańsk, Katowice, Kielce, Kraków, Olsztyn, Opole, Poznań, Rzeszów, Siedlce, Toruń, Warszawa, Wrocław) were interviewed on 2–8 March 2018.

The following answers were given to the question: “Is religion an important element of political life in contemporary states?”:

- Definitely yes – 18%
- Rather yes – 33%
- Yes – 9 %
- No – 8%
- Rather not – 20%
- Definitely not – 12%

To the question “How important is religion in the processes of creating security nowadays?” 64% students ticked off

²² Cf. *Questionnaire of the student survey (2–8 March 2018)*, Archives of the Project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18), Archives of the Saint Nicholas Foundation, Warsaw.

"Nowadays it is the most important element". Whereas to the question "How important is religion for understanding contemporary threats to security?" 86% ticked off "Without a reflection on religions it is impossible to understand contemporary armed conflicts." The question "How important is religion for understanding contemporary armed conflicts?" 72% of respondents believe that "Religion is the most important factor for understanding contemporary armed conflicts", while 96% are of the opinion "Religion and economy are major factors for understanding contemporary conflicts". To the question "Are you interested in taking part in an educational programme offering knowledge concerning identification of the religious element in contemporary politics?" 74% students selected the answer "Definitely yes". To the question "Are you interested in taking part in an educational programme offering knowledge concerning identification of the religious element in inciting and escalation of contemporary armed conflicts?" 83% answered "Definitely yes". To the question "Are you interested in taking part in an educational programme offering knowledge concerning identification of the religious element in contemporary terrorism?" 78% answered "Definitely yes".

The following answers were given to the question: "Will the acquisition of knowledge and competences in the area corresponding with the project 'Religion, politics, security' make it easier for students to operate in the global labour market, including in the process of seeking a job domestically and abroad, that is facilitate passing from the educational to the employment stage?":

- Definitely yes – 26%
- Rather yes – 32%

- Yes – 9%
- No – 7%
- Rather not – 15%
- Definitely not – 11%

The following answers were given to the question: “Will the acquisition of competences in the area corresponding with the project ‘Religion, politics, security’ make it easier for students to operate in the global labour market, including in a multicultural environment after they complete their studies?”:

- Definitely yes – 28%
- Rather yes – 33%
- Yes – 11%
- No – 5%
- Rather not – 12%
- Definitely not – 9%

The following answers were given to the question: “Are university students interested in acquiring competences in the area corresponding with the project ‘Religion, politics, security’?”:

- Yes – 71%
- I have no opinion on this issue – 17%
- No – 13%

With the use of the IDI method, which has been described above, an expert interview was carried out with the head of Lesznówola commune.²³ The respondent was Maria

²³ *In-depth individual interview (IDI) with the Head of Lesznówola Commune, Ms Maria Jolanta Batycka-Wąsik (6 February 2018), Archives of the project “Implementation of the educational programme*

Jolanta Batycka-Wąsik (b. 1960), in this office since 1998. To the question "What is the specificity of Lesznówola Commune?" Ms Batycka-Wąsik answered: Our commune creates employment opportunities for people with diverse professional skills, experience and education. A relatively new phenomenon is the labour market demand for people trained to work in an ethnically and culturally diversified environment. About 20% of the inhabitants of our commune are not ethnically Polish. We try to create the possible conditions for those who settle or work here. There is a constant demand for educated people who know Western civilisation and Western culture, and will be able to work as effectively as possible with people coming from other parts of the world: China, Vietnam, Turkey, or India. Needed are people who are academically trained to promote attitudes of respect for diversity, for the otherness of people who live next to them. I am convinced that the knowledge of cultural, ethnical, religious differences is one of the preconditions for successful coexistence and the best possible cooperation. Employees of public administration, teachers, doctors and all those who work in the area of culture should be well prepared for working in such a community like ours. Graduates of such faculties as political sciences, national security, administration should be prepared to work in a multicultural, multi-religious and ethnically diversified environment. Educated people have a special mission; the culture of living together, new jobs depend on their behaviours and attitudes."

Maria Jolanta Batycka-Wąsik gave the following answer to the question "Do the university graduates who start working

'Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it' basing on international cooperation", POWR.04.03.00-00-0013/18.

in Lesznówola Commune have competence in the area corresponding with the presented project?": "There is a visible shortage in the labour market of people who are able to combine thinking arising from religious identity with collaborating with people of other than their own traditions. Therefore, what is needed is such preparation of students so that their trump card on the labour market were the understanding of contemporary (and at the same time constantly growing) cultural diversity. The point is that we should be able to take advantage of our differences for the common good. This should be taught at university, but also after graduation, permanently."

The next question was: "Would such competences of potential employees as you have mentioned improve the effectiveness of their work?" The reply was explicit: "Yes. I am sure about it. Firstly, understanding the effect of religious reality on the political one and understanding the weight of religious identity of individuals and communities; secondly, realisation of relationships between thinking and actions motivated by religious beliefs and the secular order of the state and the functioning of local communities; thirdly, utilizing one's own way of thinking arising from religious identity for collaborating with people from other than our own traditions – those are three important abilities sought in those who work in multicultural environments. One should also ask "How?" Well, I am convinced that the well thought out encounter with the "otherness" of people who know who they are, who are aware of themselves and the one whom they meet may be a space for developing ideas, will enhance their creativity. In the space of such encounter new ideas will be born as regards joint actions, which will in turn result in the emergence of new jobs.

Ms Batycka-Wąsik was asked: "Would the appropriate competences of employees of public institutions such a public offices or schools contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?" The answer was as follows: "Definitely yes. This requires training, courses... We have to prepare ourselves for being together, consciously being and creating a good tomorrow in a multicultural environment. Local communities need enlightened people, that is such who know who they are, what is their heritage, what they can bring in to the space of the common good, where they encounter good intentions and desires of people who settle in Poland, who wish to work and raise their children here. Together we can do more, better. Employees of public institution, teachers, all people involved in creating social and personal security, all people involved in creating the culture of living together, who are well prepared and permanently improve their skills are a precondition and foundation for happy life of a local community, especially a multicultural one. I am not afraid of multiculturality, but I know that ignorance can be destructive."

The last question concerned employees and their competences. "Would the appropriate competences of employees of enterprises contribute to improvement of their functioning in a multicultural environment?" Maria Jolanta Batycka-Wąsik replied: "Employees of enterprises functioning in a multicultural community have to be well prepared and need to be willing to understand all those who represent different than their own traditions; there is no cooperation without it. New jobs are created by people who understand the diversities of contemporaneity. Only those who are not afraid of otherness will be willing to work together; also only those who know how to take advantage of "otherness" brought into

work will be able to be creative, enterprising. Saying this I have in mind creation of the culture of work and cooperation in a multicultural environment.”

Project's objective

The objective of the project is to develop and implement in practice by August 2021 by the Saint Nicolar Foundation in collaboration with an Italian partner Centro Studi Medi from Genoa and Warsaw University of an educational programme covering:

1. Twelve subjects out of the list of credited general university subjects as an elements of adjusting the system of education used in universities to the challenges of the labour market arising from contemporary threats related to the co-existence on the labour market of people of different cultures and religions and testing it on participants.²⁴

2. A summer school curriculum as a support to the system of education by providing courses to train competences required on the labour market and testing it on 67 participants.²⁵

3. Developing a new solution with respect to professional activation and life-long education. The project envisages development of a programme as a foresight of challenges on the labour market and a complement to university curricula and training offer. The project allows for supporting implementation of public policies in the area of building securing basing on cooperation with a foreign partner.²⁶

²⁴ Cf. *Application for a grant, Operational programme Knowledge Education Development (implementation project)*, POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18.

²⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*.

²⁶ Cf. *Ibidem*.

4. Building students' awareness as regards the existence of relationships between religious identity and the legal order of the state leading to improvement of cooperation between people and in effect to building security at the local, regional and global level.²⁷

5. Developing a new solution worked out in cooperation with an Italian partner who is experiences in developing and implementing educational programmes associated with creating security based on conscious management of the migration problem.²⁸

It is possible to realise the project thanks to the fact that cooperation has been joined by the educational sector, namely Warsaw University, which develops an educational offer and supports the process of adapting university graduates to the needs of the labour market, and a non-governmental organisation (Centro Studi Medi), which have been operating for years in the areas of multiculturalism, strengthening the sense of security and making people more sensitive to migration phenomena.

The authors of the project indicated the following effects of the PRB Programme:²⁹

1. The knowledge of the multicultural environment by students who after leaving the university will enter the labour market should allow for creating a climate favourable for various groups and environments so as to ensure effective management of cultural diversity and without trouble adjust to any alien work environment.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*.

²⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*.

²⁹ Cf. *Ibidem*.

2. Participation of students in the project will enrich their knowledge with respect to cultural differences thus making them more valuable employees, e.g. in international teams.

3. The confirmed need for developing personal intercultural competences with respect to specific cultural skills (knowledge of the language, norms, customs, special events in a given country) and general cultural capabilities (empathy, perceiving things from their perspective, emotional resistance, flexibility).

Conclusion

Assumptions for the project “Implementation of the educational programme ‘Politics-Religion-Security. Conflict and attempts to resolve it’ basing on international cooperation” (POWR.04.03.00–00–0013/18) carried out together by the Saint Nicolas Foundation, Warsaw University and are focused around the following concepts: individual and collective identity, security in the state (Poland), creation of jobs in a multicultural environment (religious diversity). The PKB Programme requires further promotion in the academic community and third sector organisations. The above work documents information about a unique implementation project in the academic area.

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