“non-government organizations do not only teach activity and citizenship responsibility but also regarded as the third sector they constitute essential condition towards initiating an authentic citizenship society in contemporary democracy.”

(Hanyga-Janczak, 2013, p. 156)

**Abstract:** The following article takes an attempt to bring a closer look at a proper place and the meaning of non-government organizations and voluntary activity in Poland in the context of social inclusion. Inclusive social help is directed towards motivation and social integration, searching for solution at international, state and also local level, including the one of the closest neighbourhood as well. It is focused on the beginnings, aims and tasks of voluntary actions in Poland perceived both in theoretical and scientific aspect. Studies were carried out among Polish students in January 2016 (among the group of 104 young people) and in Belorussia at the end of February and the beginning of March 2016 based on an experimental group of 98 young people. During the research a diagnostic survey method supported by open and half-open question poll survey was used. The aim was to study voluntary actions, motifs of bringing help and its rejection but also quality and intensity of supporting actions. The studies prove that the idea of helpfulness and charity active part found in Poland is gradually increasing pace. Moreover, there were described and enumerated sectors of social and economical activity and their importance in the process of social inclusion of numerous help offering actions. A detailed characteristics was presented as an example of one of the best and the most thriving non-government organization in Poland called The Foundation of Great Orchestra of Christ-
mas Charity. There are references in the text to problematic and constantly increasing these days the issue of refugees in the light of research based on volunteering, inclusion and assimilation actions, even though the term of isolation acts can be heard more often instead.

**KEYWORDS:** social activity in Poland, philanthropy, non-government organizations (NGO), social work, voluntary work, social inclusion, The Foundation of Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity, immigrants, refugees.

**INTRODUCTION**

Organizations of social benefit and voluntary work constitute an active part in the process of social inclusion and the system of support towards people who have been socially excluded. The system of support towards the excluded is an instrument of social policy in any democratic country including Poland and other EU membership countries. It is estimated that the lowest percent of people who are endangered with social exclusion can be mainly found among wealthy EU countries, those with effective, proven and modified forms of support towards those of social exclusion and endangered with this phenomenon.

Among various reasons for social exclusion there can be found: unemployment, addictions, low social and material status, illnesses, advanced age, immigration (especially referred to refugees from Islamic countries).

Social care is directed towards activating and social integration, searching for solutions at international, state and local levels, including the closest local environment. In that way it triggers well understood autonomy and beneficiary responsibility for using help, teaching from resourcefulness and moving around the constantly changing environment. It demands to take up steps directed towards eliminating claim attitudes and being dependent on material support. Social policy is closely linked to the policy of the job market, new challenges to be adjusted to modern world situations.

It is hard to determine the time of voluntary actions understood as selfless and free help towards other non-family related person. Care about the other person has always accompanied man’s existence since the time *homo sapiens* appeared on earth and it depends on numerous factors. Mutual support and help provided both at spiritual and physical dimension have been mainly found among multi-generation families. Various forms
of help have been provided in little societies: neighbouring, countryside, co-workers and small associations. It has been closely linked with cultivating common support tradition, passed from generation to generation, also with the hope to receive needed help in the future e.g. in poverty during illness, after natural disasters and other sad occurrences, etc. Moreover, in small dwellings or agglomerations we can point to some theoretical premises which refer to the issue of voluntary work such as the theory of Tadeusz Kotarbiński of trustworthy educator, the theory of pro-social acts by Janusz Reykowki, the theory of altruistic attitudes by Jerzy Karyłowski, the theory of needs by Maslow which is coherent with the theory of motivation, the concept of personality features – the theory of personality by Gordon W. Allport, the theory of human powers deeply rooted in social pedagogics and widely promulgated by Helena Radlińska, Aleksander Kamiński and Andrzej Olubiński When referred to theoretical science John Paul II with his encyclical *Dives in misericordia* needs to be recalled. The thought of helping acts as a natural feature of human values which are rooted in religious, philanthropy and altruistic premises (Roguska, 2010, p. 27).

Voluntary work found in the Middle Ages was functioning due to an active part of Catholic church and the idea of mercy towards the neighbour. Even though, that those times are perceived in negative angle, frequently unjustified, we cannot neglect propagating mystical character, theoretical attitude towards life and death, faith in eternal life or initiating universities in those times. Cathedral schools followed a syllabus called trivium and it was in the 12th century when in Wroclaw and Krakow courses of seven liberated art sciences were implemented. The term itself ‘middle ages’ was created *ex post* in the time of the Enlightenment. Development of philanthropy was linked with the Christian tradition. The term itself of philanthropy derived from the Latin word *charitativus* and meant Christian mercy shown towards the poor. According to Polish law policy, a charity action can be undertaken in various spheres of social order starting with social care to end up with consumer rights.

In the years 1795 – 1918, which meant the period of Poland’s lack of existence on the world’s maps, there were still charity organizations in use. After the year of 1918, when Poland finally regained independence, voluntary organizations took an active part in shaping national identity and supporting people in need. The period following the Second World War during communist regime, was rather unfavorable for voluntary work. Organizations which brought help were subjected to administration and
political control. Repressive measures led to disappearance of charity subjects which even resulted with confiscation of its property. It was already in times of the end of communism period, which means after 1989 when Poland experienced growth in the third sector including non-governmental organizations, associations, foundations and voluntary activity. Generally there are three sectors of social and economic activity: public administration (sector 1), business sphere (sector 2) and non-governmental organizations (sector 3). After the fall of communism and the transformation period in Poland, which means the years of 90’s there started a significant growth in number of non-government organizations, independent social and voluntary initiatives. Numerous subjects used voluntary workers activity.

SECTORS OF SOCIAL - ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND VOLUNTARY WORK

Social and economic activity of modern democratic countries can be divided into sectors - the so called 3S derived from English. According to this typology the first sector is the public administration, commonly referred to as the state sector. The second one is the business, sphere which comprises all institutions and organizations which are focused on bringing profits, also called the private sector. The third sector consists mainly of private organizations, which are aimed at public interest rather than bring profits, which means here non-government organizations. The third public sector can be referred worldwide as: charitable organizations, non-profit organizations, voluntary sector or independent sector.

When referred to Poland statistics prove about 17,000 foundations and 100,000 associations out of which 70,000 of them lead an active part. Foundations and associations become two major most popular forms of non-government organizations. A significant difference is that in order to initiate a foundation just one person is satisfactory (the so called founder) whereas in case of an association a group of minimal 15 people is required. The governing body for an association is the general meeting of its members while in case of a foundation it is the board. (Polish non-government organizations 2015. Research ….2015, p. 8, 10, Non-government myths and facts …)
Table 1. Examples of subjects which act in 3 sectors of social and economic activity of a democratic country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTORS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY</th>
<th>1st sector – stately governed</th>
<th>2nd sector – private for profit</th>
<th>3rd sector non-profit non-government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• sector mainly financed by tax incomes,</td>
<td>• the aim is to maximize profits which come from business activity,</td>
<td>• civilian sector,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• public, government and local administration,</td>
<td>• company sector,</td>
<td>• non-government organizations,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• state institutions,</td>
<td>• subjects which run business activity,</td>
<td>• an opportunity to reduce income tax to a natural person by 1%,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• public governing bodies,</td>
<td>• activity run to bring profits,</td>
<td>• social organizations,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• courts, prosecutor’s offices,</td>
<td>• private business,</td>
<td>• voluntary organizations,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• employment offices,</td>
<td>• production,</td>
<td>• associations,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• social insurance,</td>
<td>• trade,</td>
<td>• foundations,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• health care centres,</td>
<td>• services,</td>
<td>• trade unions,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• culture centres,</td>
<td>• business.</td>
<td>• organizations for varied professional groups,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• social care centres.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• country housewives’ clubs,</td>
<td></td>
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</table>


Such division can be found in modern democratic countries and the individual activities in the sectors complement each other in its activity, adding to general image of the society and the state image and its position. NGO subjects work aside the public sector, they often support it and supplement. Non-government organizations carry out numerous actions towards the growth of citizenship society. The activity in the third sector is possible due to decentralization and subsidizing.

Legal basis towards voluntary work functioning in Poland was possible due to 1984 act on foundations and the law of 1989 on associations. It is also worth mentioning about the act on public benefit and voluntary work of 24th April, 2003 and following amended.

The act on public benefit and voluntary work appoints a voluntary worker as a physical person who freely and with no salary income offers services towards other people, institutions and organizations. A voluntary worker can
also become the member of an association (law passed on 24th April, 2003……). The word itself ‘voluntary’ derives from the Latin word *voluntas/ voluntarius* which means here generally a good will, willingness, freedom of choice (e.g. in French *volontariat*, in English – *volunteerism*, in German – *volontariat*). Any kind of work can be done on a voluntary basis – not only simple jobs, which do not require any professional training. A voluntary worker means here not only a benefactor, a helper, a guide and a community worker but also a teacher, IT programmer, politician, engineer, graphic designer etc. who uses his knowledge while helping others. (*Information guide. What every volunteer …*, 2005, p. 6).

**Table 2.** Major areas of organizations activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of organizations activity</th>
<th>Numbers given in percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport, tourism, recreation, hobby</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and upbringing</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and art</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services and social care</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local development</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the data found in: *Polish non-government organizations 2015*. Studys carried out by Klon/ Jawor Association. Edited by research team: Piotr Adamiak, Beata Charycka, Marta Gumkowska, Editor KLON/ JAWOR ASSOCIATION, Warszawa 2015, p. 5.

The international day of a voluntary helper was appointed by UNESCO in 1981 and it is celebrated on 5th December. Moreover, it was the year 2001 which was proclaimed by OUN as the international year of volunteerism. In 1993 first voluntary centre was opened in Warsaw as the first of its kind institution throughout Poland. Since the year 1995 similar centres were initiated in other Polish cities. The centres were formed into the network of voluntary centres (*Volunteerism in social help …*, 2011, p. 5).

There can be distinguished a few types of volunteerism: indefinite, short-term, single act, temporary, individual and group.

A voluntary helper may ask his addressee to make a written statement on the services provided. If the service provided lasts longer than 30 days
the statement should be obligatory made in written form. The consumer, e.g. an institution should provide the voluntary worker safe and hygienic working conditions to do his work – depending on the kind of service and dangers involved – he should be equipped with personal safety means. The consumer is also obliged to cover any travel costs and daily allowance (in accordance with the act on 24th April, 2003... p. 2-3). The organization a voluntary worker works for may cover the cost of a training course.

Once the agreement is made over the time period less than 30 days, the consumer does not have to make a written statement of agreement. Even though, the voluntary worker may claim for one. The voluntary worker should be insured. In case the service lasts longer than 30 days the voluntary helper becomes insured based on the so called minor accident act passed on 30th September, 2002 about providing support for any accident victims and those who suffer from professional illnesses which occurred in special circumstances. A voluntary work can be done for:

- Non-government organizations (foundations, associations)
- Public administration units (municipal offices, communes, hospitals, schools)
- Church institutions (parishes, Caritas Poland).

In accordance with the act on public benefit activity and voluntary actions based on it (Dz.U. 2003 nr 96 poz. 873), the taxpayer who pays income tax from people who do physical work may allow 1% of his income for individually chosen organization of public benefit which can be found on an official list. It needs to be stressed that the allowance is not a donation. This is the public money which can be in restricted range used by the taxpayers. Based on the taxpayer’s will when filling the official annual tax statement until 30th April each year the mechanism of 1% allowance can be triggered. The organizations which are entitled to receive 1% off the income can be found in the register of the Ministry of Work and Social Policy. While filling the tax form, the taxpayer states the KRS number of the institution and the amount of money which does not exceed 1% of his income rounded down to full tens of groszy. It needs to be stressed that an ordinary citizen does not profit or lose anything based on his decision. He only states which organization he wishes to support. This type of activity is not regarded as a charity as we deal here with the duty of a taxpayer. However, it becomes a widespread process to raise awareness as to possibilities of participation in supporting varied non-government subjects building confidence with them. It also means participation in the process of social inclusion, a conscious and aimed support.
Voluntary helpers’ work does not only mean physical activity towards the others or institutions but also broadly meant help, they also guard social actions among different institutions and state organizations. Moreover, they support the organizations activity and it happens infrequently that they gain funds for various subject and institution activity. “On volunteer’s side his virtue is the fact to contribute to wider social solidarity and co-responsibility about the local issues. On the social perspective a voluntary work turns away negative social trends and supports building social relations at lowest stages (it refers to family link and uniting local community). Voluntary work creates a network of interpersonal relations and integrates local community. Major advantages of voluntary work for a direct beneficiary may include:

- promoting organizations on a local area level;
- increasing social confidence towards non-government organizations and public life institutions;
- widening range of services run by organizations;
- new concepts and fresh look at everyday matters;
- benefits from engagement and enthusiasm of voluntary helpers;
- labour work economy (Studies on voluntary work … p. 26-27).

“Engagement into voluntary work differs significantly depending on the country membership ranging up to 48% in difference between the most and least developed countries. Voluntary work is deeply widespread in Holland where more than a half of the respondents take part in that kind of activity (57%), with 31% who admitted that they do it regularly. Similar situation can be found in Denmark (43%, regularly 21%). More than a third of the respondents confirmed voluntary work in Finland (39%), Austria (37%), Luxemburg (35%), Germany (34%) and Slovenia (34%). On the other hand, much below the average were such EU countries as Malta (16%), Spain (15%), Greece (14%), Romania (14%), Bulgaria (12%), Portugal (12%) and Poland (9%)” (Volunteerism and solidarity….2011, p. 7).

**The Foundation of Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity Help as a typical example of a commonly approved initiative in Poland**

It was in February 2016 when the Study Centre for Social Opinion published a report which concerned a social trust among the Poles both referred to the private sphere (family, neighbours, friends, close and further acquaintances)
Non-government organizations and voluntary work in Poland...

The study revealed that the most trusted was the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity Help with the highest rank and supported by 85% of the respondents. Following there was Caritas with 83% support, Polish Red Cross 79%, the army 79%, the police 65%, the Spokesman for Civil Rights 63%. A significant trust is laid to international organizations such as the Organizations for United Nations 57% and the European Union with 56% support. At the same time the study presented least trusted subjects among the Poles. Out of 20 organizations on the list the worst result was attached to political parties where 65% of the respondents admitted to the lack of trust, the Parliament and the Senate 54%, the press with 56% disapproval of the respondents, who do not believe in sincere source of information (http://chos.pl/PL/publikacje/raporty.php).

The Foundation of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity was established on 2nd March, 1993 by Jerzy Owsiak, Lidia Niedźwiedzka-Owsiak and Piotr Buczyński. The idea arose after money raising action for Children Cardiology Ward at the Child Health Care Centre in Warsaw on 3rd January, 1993 initiated by Jerzy Owsiak in the music programme called ‘Do what you like’ who was also known under the nickname of ‘Twisted’. In the past he used to work as a psychotherapist. He is a person with stuttering problems but even thought did not restrain him from public appearance with fund raising and enchanted millions of Poles. Personally he admits to forgetting about his disability and does not care about it much.

The foundation is mostly associated with the figure of Jerzy Owsiak and the month of January, because it is the time when in the second week of the month, supported by thousands of voluntary helpers and millions of Poles, there is a national fund raising even called the Final of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity. The money is raised for an aimed medical purpose, previously appointed by the foundation. The main aim of the foundation is to lead an activity towards health care based on saving ill people’s lives and especially of children but also actions directed towards promoting health and health prevention (the Statue of the Foundation of ‘the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity Help’ …p.2).

Since the beginning of the foundation and fund raising events (since 2004 until 2016) the amount of 722 million PLN has been collected, which means 189 million Euros (according to the currency rate on 14th March, 2016). It was only during 24th Final of the Great Orchestra held on 10th January, 2016 which was aimed to raise funds in order to buy specific medical
equipment for pediatrics wards and medical support for the senior citizens when the organizers managed to collect 72 million PLN. All the collected money based on auctions, individual donations etc. was used to purchase medical equipment for over than 7,000 medical centres throughout Poland. All the funds raised during an annual event of the Foundation allow for particular aims of the final and it mostly covers the expenditures for the new medical equipment sent to hospitals, subsidizing medical research programmes, they partly cover the cost of organizing the Final event (e.g. cost of printing the label hearts, posters, the expenditures to cover volunteer service, transport services and telecommunication costs). Throughout the year the Foundation finances and runs 5 medical programmes:

- The Programme of Common Selective Neonatal Hearing Examination.
- Cross Country Treatment Programme to Provide Help with the use of Insulin Pump for Diabetes Children.
- The Programme of Non-Invasive Breathing Support Among Infants – Infant Flow.
- The Rhetinopathy Treatment and Prevention Programme among Premature Babies.
- The Programme called ‘Save and learn to save’.

Thanks to Mr Owsiak, since the year 2002, there has been planned and initiated free all year round programme of Common Selective Hearing Examination which comprises nearly all infant children throughout Poland. The examination is carried out on the second day just after child’s birth. In case the result is positive the hearing test is repeated on the last day before the child leaves the hospital. Independently on the medical test result the infantry ward staff collect information on hearing loss risk factors. The idea of the programme is to put diagnosis to the child who is suspected with hearing loss not later than during the first 3 months after birth in order to take up further specific examination.

In 2016 we celebrated 24th Final of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity and the event has become annually celebrated in our Polish calendar, becoming that way a part of our Polish culture and national identity. On the final day numerous places across Poland held concerts and festivities which are enlightened by pop music Polish stars but also international artists who perform for free. Moreover, the event is supported by cultural and sports festivities. In every district there are local teams coordinating fund raising and artistic activities at the same time. Similar teams can be found outside Poland as well. There is a tradition of fireworks display at all cities held at
20.00 hours which is meant here as ‘The Spark to the Sky’. The event is monitored and supported by Chanel Two of our state television broadcast. At the same time there are 1.600 teams and 120.000 volunteers involved. It is also a tradition that during the final ‘Golden Hearts’ and ‘Golden Phone Cards’ are displayed on auction but there are also gifts donated by Polish and foreign people to the Foundation. Among the objects there are either the ones donated by famous sports people, artists, politicians and journalists.

The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity has been also teaching Polish society for all these years how to bring first aid in emergency. Among the events the most prominent is the International Day of First Aid beating the record to apply artificial breathing by the biggest group of people at the same time.

In 2006 there initiated a charity organization in Ukraina called ‘Heart to Heart’ (uk. Серце до серця). It was established by Oksana Wasylenko based on the structure of Polish Great Orchestra…which became an honour partner for the Heart to Heart Foundation. During its final held in May there are fund raising events with money collected into the boxes, supported by concerts, happenings and the label hearts distributed around. “There is so much need to be provided in the east. It especially refers to Ukrainian hospitals than in any other European country. Ukrainian children’s hospital lack nearly everything, starting with needles, syringes then the medicine, specific equipment which becomes just a natural tool in case of an average west European hospital – said Oksana. She also added that looking at Jurek Owsiak’s Orchestra she was astonished by incredible clarity of the actions. For the Ukrainians it may be seen as a complete surprise because there is a total lack of trust observed among the society, not only towards state but also non-governmental institutions, and if any activity involves collecting money the more suspicious it becomes.” (Ukraina has also got its own Orchestra … 2014, p. 2-3).

Voluntary help crisis or its revival?

Based on the survey carried out in November 2008 (Information Guide. What every volunteer …, 2005, p. 9-10) it shows, that in the previous year alone only 11.3%, which means 4 million adult Poles, admitted that they had committed their free time towards helping others. It means 10 percent points less than in 2006!
The results shown about volunteerism illustrate annoying tendencies which have been observed while studying non-government organizations. Lack of people willing selflessly engage in actions is being experienced by every organization. Does that mean that Poles are becoming less active! Or it denotes that Polish society instead of developing, becomes weaker! The answer is not definite and easy to be resolved. It may result from the fact that volunteerism is the only consequence of pro-social attitude but also objective economic and structural determinants which outline behaviour and people’s life strategies. Such determinants, potentially linked with latest trends in volunteerism development in Poland may include: improving situation on the job market or intensive migrating process. It may be especially important when referred to younger people (these are mainly the ones who get engaged into voluntary actions) for whom it is easier now to enter the job market without the need to gain experience based on voluntary work.

Since the year 2001 the Association Klon/ Jawor has been studying activity among Poles in reports entitled *Volunteerism and Philanthropy*
Among Poles in cooperation with the Association of Voluntary Centre and Millward Brown SMG/KRC company. The studies carried out in November 2008 based on a randomly chosen group of 1003 adult Poles and compared to 2007 year revealed that we experienced a decrease in the number of voluntary helpers and a lack of the respondents’ engagement in social work. The statistics show that 68.5% of the volunteers spent hardly 5 hours per year on doing some social work. Moreover, there has been a decrease among the group of voluntary helpers in 2008 compared with the previous year.

It was also in 2008 when the studies revealed that 20% of the voluntary helpers (which means 2% of Poles) declared that they had worked for more than one organization (comparatively in 2007 the number constituted 40% of volunteers which meant 6% of Poles). It turned out that voluntary helpers most frequently support:

- organizations and groups aimed at helping the poor;
- organizations and religious movements run by a parish;
- organizations and groups which are active in the sphere of education and upbringing;
- Voluntary Fire-brigade Teams, Mountain Voluntary Rescue Service, Water Voluntary Rescue Team.

Most voluntary helpers can be found among people with higher education (generally there can be found a relation – the higher education one possesses the more willing the person is to bring help). It needs to be stressed that voluntary service cannot be added to work serving. Studies confirm that there are mostly young people aged 15-19 who are involved in voluntary work. Relatively high level of social activity can be found among people aged 40-44. Voluntary work can be also frequently done among countryside communities. A significant role in the characteristics among views and beliefs of the volunteers is paid to their social attitudes (Klon/Jawor Association …, 2008).

Latest research into voluntary work reveals more optimistic. Data which come from the study made by Jawor/Klon Association entitled “The condition of non-government sector organizations in 2015”, which was carried out among 4,000 randomly chosen associations and foundations and reveal that one in five Poles takes part in voluntary actions towards or with the use of non-government organizations. Since the year 2012 with systematic growth of foundations and associations the percentage of voluntary workers in Poland has been increasing. At the same time there has been revealed a growth in number of the subjects which make a use of voluntary help (in
2006 there were 40% of such organizations whereas in 2015 the number has increased to 60%). An increase in number and activity of volunteers may result from growing in popularity trend to set up new foundations and non-government organizations. Nearly a half of Polish associations and foundations (45%) are based on their members and volunteer’s work. There were at least 35% of non-government institutions which employed one full time regular worker. Moreover, there are 20% of non-government organizations which do not have a full time paid worker. The tendency is that Polish non-government organizations exist in communes, little settlements and villages and rely in much more extent on voluntary work compared to similar subjects in big cities (Polish non-governmental organizations 2015. Jawor/ Klon Association studies… 2015, p. 8,10).

Volunteerism in the light of own research

Studies were carried out in January 2016 among the 1st and 2nd degree university students of education at their both regular and extra-mural courses taken at Siedlce University of Natural Science and Humanities, the Department of Humanities in Poland. It comprised a group of 104 (78 women and 26 men) supported by a similar study during a scientific training period in Brest in Belorussia at the Belarussia State University named after A. Pushkin at the Social and Education Department and Psychology and Education Department during the period of 29th February until 4th March, 2016. A questionnaire survey was done with the group of 98 university students (83 women and 5 men) who were either regular or extra-mural students. The study used a method of a diagnostic survey supported by multiple choice half open and open question questionnaire technique.

The respondents were asked how they understood volunteerism. Below there are some of the answers of Polish and Belarusian students as the answers were alike:

- “Voluntary work means for me selfless acts directed towards the others and a form of social support.
- Selfless non-paid participation in various charity actions towards people in need. In my opinion it is always an active activity which results from own personal and inner heartfelt need.
- Selfless and free non-paid work in order to help individual people or associations.
For me a volunteerism means a selfless help, what we do towards other person simply because of heartfelt need.

- Help towards those who have found themselves in hard situation.
- Selfless help towards others in need.
- Vocation, personal belief what one wants. Selfless help towards those in need.
- Selfless form of help which can result in interesting and challenging experience.
- Help towards those who need support, talk.
- Voluntary work is a good experience for the future.
- Selfless help not to show off.
- Help towards the others without paying attention to own convenience.
- Sharing personal free time with others.
- A voluntary work is for me a help towards those in need leading to own further development” (based on own study among Polish and Belarussian university students examined on a group of 202 respondents of both nationalities from January until March, 2016).

The respondents were asked if they had ever helped anyone selflessly in the context of a voluntary activity.

**Fig.2.** Selfless voluntary support towards a non-related person examined among Polish and Belarusian university students, given in percent.

Source: author’s study – Agnieszka Roguska
The study revealed that 75% of the responded people willingly helped others. Below there are some of the answers given:

- “I’m a volunteer in a common room where we help play with children. I help in organizing events for disabled children.
- During 2015 I organized frequent concerts based on charity work e.g. Picnic for Gabriela – a girl who had suffered in a car accident, Papal Concerts to express thankfulness for the gift of His being canonized, to celebrate the anniversary of Warsaw – Praga district diocese of Caritas festivities for Single Mother’s Home ‘Open Hearts’ in Otwock.
- I annually take part in the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity.
- I ran for free self – defence training course for women.
- I helped an elderly woman – my neighbour with everyday household duties (cleaning, cooking, shopping) I also read books to elderly people in the Social Care Home for the elderly in Siedlce.
- It was a long-lasting help. Together with my family we helped our neighbour with shopping and other household jobs which involved physical work.
- I was a voluntary helper in Caritas project at people’s homes where I was helping an elderly woman keeping household for 2 years.
- I worked for an elderly person, it was a longer help.
- Financial support – money transfer to a bank account for the animal shelter – single occurrence, ‘Help children to survive winter time’ (the name for an annual event – added by the author A.R.) and collecting food for the needed the activity. I was taking part in for a few years.
- Active part in a fire-brigade service as a firefighter for the last four years.
- I’ve been collecting food for the poor. Helping elderly people, voluntary work for the children’s village.” (based on the author’s study in Poland held in January 2016 with the group of 104 respondents).

When referred to voluntary work the respondents usually mentioned holding a street collection for the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity, varied kinds of actions helping with food collecting, supporting Social Care Home, children’s orphanage or a prison.

In Belorussia it was even 81.6% of university students who confirmed their helping hand based on voluntary work. Here are some of the chosen responses:

- I collected gifts for an orphanage children.
- I was a voluntary worker at a disabled person centre.
- I was doing shopping for my neighbour for some time.
I worked for ‘the Sisiters of Mercy’ group and I was helping a disabled girl.
I helped a man to overcome with alcohol addiction.
I was helping an elderly woman to run her household – she had no one to do it as she had no children.
I was helping in a monastery for a year.

Within the examined group Belarusian students most frequently enumerated help offered to particular people, infrequently those who were disabled, elderly and suffering from numerous diseases.

The examined students of both countries enumerated varied kinds of activities, including those of a long-lasting period. However, what mainly was stressed was just simple a short term care based on voluntary acts. Moreover, the activity was infrequently spontaneous and was rather the result of the situation encountered on the spur of the moment.

An interesting fact in the survey was that it asked in the context of voluntary actions and then it turned out that young people reluctantly helped others, but what was significant was the fact that the help was not understood in the context of voluntary work.

Here are some of the answers given by Polish students:

- I helped elderly people to get on the train or with the luggage, I bought something to eat for a disabled and many others.
- It was a single act when I helped an elderly woman to cross the street.
- Single act. I helped an elderly man when he slipped on the ice and fell down.
- It happened that I helped strangers in minor things (arranging some minor office work, helping with carrying the shopping to an elderly neighbour, picking up people by car I met on the way. Mostly it was just an incidental help.
- Sometimes people lacked 10 groszy while paying for their shopping and I automatically took out my money when I saw such a situation.
- It was rather a single occurrence when I offered some food to a homeless person.
- I helped others with their exams.
- Yes, I bought some food for a homeless person.
- Help while giving directions.
- If it happens when a stranger in the street asks me for money, then I either give him or buy some food.
- Once travelling on the train I helped an elderly woman to insert SIM card in her mobile and switched it on. It was just a single event.
Some of the Belarusian students’ responses:
- Once I helped 8 year old girl with finding her parents because she got lost in Brest.
- I gave a girl some money for a ticket at the station as she didn’t have any on her.
- I helped a woman with a child to get off the bus.
- I carried shopping on the fifth floor to an elderly woman.
- A girl in the street nearly fainted. I offered my help and she accepted so I called for help.
- I offered my mobile to a girl so she could make a phone call.

The above acts do not fit the definition of a voluntary work. The activity shown may be just regarded as a natural act of kindness, the result of good upbringing, actions which result from education based on empathy. There are single voluntary acts e.g. while helping those who suffered a disaster.

There is an increasing problem of refugees coming to Europe who leave their countries which are currently at war, because of political regime and dictatorship, religious extremism e.g. from Syria, Erytrei, Afghanistan. The respondents were asked about their declaration of help, their motifs and the ways of providing help or rejecting. Previously young people of both nationalities confirmed their willingness to bring help, even though it mainly referred to their countrymen.

The study revealed astonishing data. Only 18.4% of Belarusian students admitted to their willingness to bring help towards immigrants, whereas 50% out of the examined Polish respondents declared their refusal of help towards refugees. Mostly disapproval was confirmed by males rather than females. Such a big scale of Polish neglect of help towards refugees can be explained by the fact that the problem at the time of the survey was much more tense to Poles rather than Belarusian students. Closing the Balkan route meant that the new wave of immigrants dashed across the Mediterranean Sea. There is also considered the route which leads through Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraina, Poland and finally to Germany. There grows annoying situation in many European countries including Poland connected with the wave of refugees and illegal immigrants. Poland unlike Belorussia is a direct neighbour to Germany which becomes a destination for refugees. Immigrants arriving to Belorussia do not directly bother the countrymen even though it needs to be prepared for various screenplays of the events happening. Once the problem of refugees much more concerns Poles rather than Belarusian nation thus it may explain why there are so different
opinions as to the declared help. Tense situation is even emphasized by the media which has no scruples and bring images to present in rather bad light refugees seen as terrorists, orthodox Muslim religion followers who brutally treat other religion followers or young deserters who leave their motherland on its own.

**Fig. 3.** Help declared among Polish and Belarusian university students towards refugees (given in percent)

Source: Author’s study – Agnieszka Roguska

The study carried out in March 2016 with the use of a direct interview and supported by computer technique initiated on 2\(^{nd}\) March until 9\(^{th}\) March with the use of a representative group of 1034 randomly chosen Poles by the Survey Centre of Social Opinion Examination (in Polish CBOS for short) confirmed the author’s study: ‘53% of the examined claim that Poland should not accept refugees from countries which are at war. Forty percent of Poles admitted that the state should provide help and offer stay for them – but only until the moment they can return to their motherland. According to 4% of the respondents Poland should not only allow for refugee stay but also refuse permanent settlement within its borders.
Following there is an explanation for some of the Poles’ attitudes:

a) in favour of the refugees:
   - help should be provided but only to those who escape from the war. The condition is a must to study Polish and take up work. I could help with adapting to our society and teach Polish.
   - I could help them return to their home country.
   - Provide humanitarian aid.
   - I’ve been helping for many years. These days I’ve been helping not only people from the East, former Russian republics. I definitely wouldn’t like to help refugees who are flooding Europe because it makes hard to distinguish who really needs it, opposed to those who may destroy our culture and fight with Christian religion.

b) those who opposed to helping refugees proved:
   - Terrorist threat.
   - As I know what’s been happening in neighbouring countries. They cause a lot of trouble and bring threat.
   - I cannot see such a need.
   - We shouldn’t help people who don’t respect my home country and culture.
   - As I think they wouldn’t help us if we were in similar situation.
   - Because I think that immigrants from Middle East have different culture and become a threat for the state safety.
   - I’m scared by the number of immigrants flooding. They are more and more in number and they start behaving as they were at home, not the guests. They are often aggressive and don’t respect the state culture where it comes to live.

Those who found it difficult to give definite answer whether to support or disapprove such help, stuck to ‘hard to say’ option and did not give any further explanation for personal choice or simply their responses sounded with fear about the refugees. These are some of the answers given by Polish students:
   - there is varied kind of threat connected with terrorism;
   - I have mixed feelings when it comes to immigrants. If we have to help these should be Christians who escape from religious prosecutions in Islamic countries;
   - Because the problems with immigrants denotes a considerable risk of people who are extremists. Another point is that refugees should be helped as it’s different to be an immigrant and a refugee;
   - It’s hard to predict consequences of their stay in our country;
In fact, I’ve already been helping. They are some of my new acquaintances at my studies and they’re mostly from Ukraina and Belorussia. My help refers to ordinary and daily duties, arranging help at offices. However, when you have a look at what’s been happening in Europe and all over the world I’m rather scared by the look of it. I’m against such a mass immigration without respecting culture of the host nation.

The students’ threat mainly referred to the lack of security caused by the immigrants, imposing own customs such as humiliating women, lack of acceptance towards Christian religion, fear about disintegration of European social order.

Arguments among Belarussia university students

a) supporting refugee help:
   - depending on situation and needs of these people;
   - I can bring material help (clothes, food)
   - help with finding a workplace and accommodation;
   - I can help their children with learning the language, doing homework;
   - help with finding way in a new city;
   - I may help with understanding our religion;
   - no one knows what brings tomorrow (with Belarusian nation – added by the author A.R.) and that’s why it’s worth helping;

b) rejecting work towards the refugees:
   - I don’t know whom I should trust;
   - I’m scared of them;
   - honestly I don’t know who really needs support and who will come because of better living conditions;
   - they get help from various organizations and I still don’t know which immigrants are going to come.

They often gave ambitious answers e.g. I haven’t come across such problem yet, I don’t know what kind of help we may provide, depending on the needs. “In the West there has appeared a new word of securutization which has not been included in dictionaries yet. It is mainly used to label a tendency widespread in Europe to move the issue of immigration from the sphere of social, moral or even economic problems into the sphere of security. It denotes that as a result of such ‘securatization’ the issue of refugees knocking on our doors and from the transponded place those who have already gone through the doors in the future we may experience some danger from the refugees’. You will receive what you’ve been given – as the country proverb says. Yesterday disillusioned with safety measures of our households and
today faced untamed powers to wonder, condemned to homelessness and plunged into social void, refugees personify biggest threat from our nightmares. Then they remind the precarious about quicksands they walk on (the precarious – a group of people who work under their education, frequently employed part-time. They usually have lower expectations and ambitions. The founder of such a term is Guy Standing – added by the author A.R.)

(…) Of course public and widespread stigmatizing of runaways who have already escaped from semi-slaughter and treat them as a potential danger may convert, even the most loving Europe into enemies”. (Professor Zygmunt Bauman: If there were no terrorists …2016)

Summary – conclusions and postulates

In the system of social care, voluntary work may add to social work, inclusive actions, it helps activating those who make a use of such help and is provided for local community. It may be claimed that voluntary work is slowly rebuilding. Mostly these are higher educated people, high school and university students who are involved.

Voluntary helpers cannot replace social workers, family assistants or others who are responsible and get paid. They support the latter’s actions and add to the comfort of the task accomplishment, they add to reliability of undertaken ventures. Moreover, they act as a kind of social control upon some of the subjects’ activity, strengthen belief in efficiency and the need of citizen’s activity.

A voluntary worker is an important link in the system of social care. Institutions and organizations which are comprised within the system of social care make a use of voluntary help. Those who for obvious reasons cannot be supported by volunteers are economic subjects based on own run economy.

There also arises another problem connected with refugees and defectors from such countries as Syria, sub-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan or Mali. It brings a question of combining inclusive actions referred to own citizens and similar activity considering differences in material, psychological, religious and cultural sphere of the newcomers. According to the United Nations, due to 5 year conflict in Syria, the largest numbers of refugees got to Greece and Italy. Countries such as Germany, France and Spain are becoming among most frequent refugees’ destination places. All that calls for immediate actions to find common solutions in the sphere of inclusive
acts taking into account the group of refugees. It may involve europeization of social services with the staff exchange and experience, search for and incorporating examples of good practice. Inclusion in this respect, means also conscious strategy of welcoming refugees and accommodating them throughout the country without creating massive populations of people representing different culture, allowing for cultural assimilation process. Integration with refugees is not an easy one taking into account various reasons, also including vast cultural and religious differences and the threat of territory and mental expansion, using force against native civilians by illegal immigrants. It becomes a huge problem the entire Europe faces also considered in the aspect of voluntary and inclusive actions.

The main financial instrument to fight social exclusion is the European Social Fund, European Globalization Adjustment Fund (directed towards unemployed), Progress (European Committee Programme addressed to local governments, universities and colleges, public employment service and non-government organizations supporting social integration and eliminating discrimination.

Based on the theme resources, reports and research some proposals can be already put forward to support existing voluntary actions and a broader development of philanthropy actions connected with the idea of help against social exclusion which are mainly referred to Polish citizens but can be also used by other European countries.

1. Volunteerism is a form of social inclusion.
2. There exists a will towards helping others but it still lacks reasonable solutions, first of all – effective tools to spread the idea of volunteerism.
3. The idea of voluntary work is praised in Poland even though it is not so common and popular as in other countries such as Denmark, Finland, Austria and Slovenia.
4. Poles frequently take part in occasional, temporary actions but it still lacks involvement in building permanent and responsible voluntary staff.
5. Poland as a country lacks of citizenship education understood as educating Poles towards conscious use of own rights and duties, including the right of personal involvement into the actions of non-government organizations which provide help.
6. There is a lack of system and efficient educational actions aimed at building up social capital, especially in local communities, lack of social capital understood as acquiring social competence to enable cooperation and trust those who are involved in voluntary work, including the ones based on inclusion.
7. Helping hand is usually offered by those who sympathize with volunteers, those who bring help to other people, animals or those who volunteer for natural environment organizations.

8. There is a significant lack of advertising campaigns towards voluntary work which:
   - teaches sensitivity and openness towards the other person;
   - helps to perceive our life from different perspective;
   - is a good practice to learn new skills and improve those already possessed;
   - creates background towards a professional job or its change;
   - teaches confidence and boosts self-esteem by doing voluntary work;
   - allows to spend free time in a nice way;
   - may provide good example for others.

9. Institutions and organizations too rarely introduce services to encourage voluntary Workers.

10. Fear of failure among potential voluntary helpers and the feeling of uncertainty to receive support in single failures.

11. Mass media, especially hose which are public should become a scene for a dialogue about social issues, involving citizenship institutions and informal movements towards promoting and initiating inclusive actions widely understood.

12. Newly occurred problems in the sphere of inclusive actions, including those of voluntary acts e.g. a problematic issue of illegal refugees.

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