



Cooperation between the public sector and non-government organizations for road safety

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Abstract— Road safety is one of the biggest concerns in today’s world. Every year 1.25 million people are killed and 50 million seriously injured due to road crashes. Many different organizations with various areas of competence try for the betterment of road safety. New legislation, technical solutions and educational measures are being introduced. However, to achieve the desired effect, a strict cooperation between organizational entities from different sectors is required. The article will focus on presenting research data concerning the cooperation for road safety between the public sector and non-government organizations. Problems existing between those entities will be indicated, and a solution trying to alleviate said problems and help achieve fruitful results for increasing road safety will be proposed.

Keywords—road safety, non-governmental organization, public sector, partnership

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest dangers today’s world faces is the one related to road safety. According to World Health Organisation’s (WHO) data, road accidents are amongst the top ten causes of death (Table 1).

TABLE I. TOP 10 CAUSES OF DEATH IN 2016 YEAR PER 100 000 POPULATION

Cause	Deaths
Ischaemic heart disease	9 433
Stroke	5 781
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	3 041
Lower respiratory infections	2 957
Alzheimer disease and others dementias	1 992
Trachea, bronchus, lung cancers	1 708
Diabetes mellitus	1 599
Road injury	1 402
Diarrhoeal disease	1 383
Tuberculosis	1 293

Source: [http://www.who.int/gho/mortality_burden_disease/causes_death/top_10/en/\[dostep:20.08.2018\]](http://www.who.int/gho/mortality_burden_disease/causes_death/top_10/en/[dostep:20.08.2018])

In 2016 road accidents were the eighth most prevalent death cause in the world. In Europe, in its respective age groups: 5 – 14 years old – were the main cause of death, 15 – 29 years old - were the second, and in the 30 – 49 years old group they took the fifth place [1]. Furthermore, 370 people suffer critical injuries in road accidents throughout the European Union, which totals to roughly 135 000 people yearly [2]. Even excluding the social effects they have, road accidents carry with themselves tremendous costs for both the injured parties, as well as the nation’s economics; their cost estimates around 1.5% GDP. As can be seen on the figure below, Poland ranks amongst the top in death toll per 1 000 000 inhabitants (fig. 1).

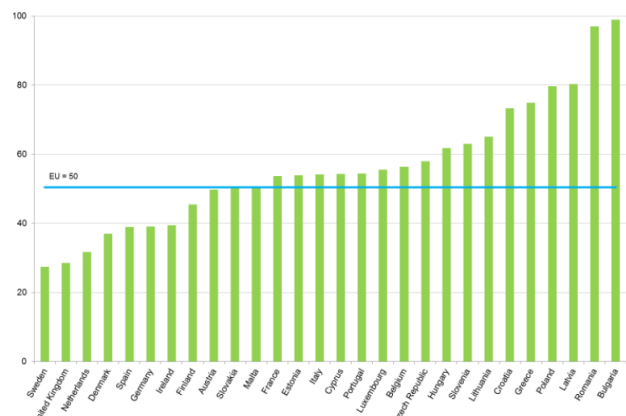


Figure 1. Number of road accident casualties per 1 000 000 inhabitants in 2016.

Source: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20171119-1?inheritRedirect=true\(08.04.2018\)](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20171119-1?inheritRedirect=true(08.04.2018))

It can be easily observed that the number of fatal casualties per 1 000 000 inhabitants in Poland is drastically higher than the European norm. Passengers rank the highest in road accident casualties, followed by pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and finally moped riders. The main causes of road accidents in Poland are speeding (around 30% of all people involved in speeding accidents suffer fatal injuries) and driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol (around 9% fatal

casualties in DUI accidents) [3]. Other factors are mainly: lack of concentration, fatigue, lack of sufficient skill, bravado (young drivers are often inexperienced in dealing with the driving infrastructure and its particular characteristics like geometry or visibility), weather conditions (rain, snow, glaze ice, fog), mechanical malfunction, improper fastening of seatbelts and child's safety mechanisms [4].

Documents such as: UN resolution 64/255 *A Decade of Action Towards Improvement of Road Safety 2011–2020* as well as *Fourth European Programme for Improving Safety in Years 2011–2020* or *National Programme for Road Safety 2013–2020* [5] do show that improvement of the current state is in fact possible, and should be based on partnership between three sectors: public, private, and non-governmental.

The focus of this article is to try and highlight the areas in which public sector entities take action to improve road safety, as well as different factors influencing the public-social cooperation from these entities' standpoint. Based on the results of direct research (pilot study), the following questions have been tried to answer:

- Which types of action do public sector entities take to improve road safety?
- If and with whom do public sector entities take action to improve road safety?
- If and on what terms do they cooperate with non-government organizations?
- What are the direct reasons of not wanting to cooperate with non-government organizations, and which - if any - factors would result in such cooperation?

II. THE ESSENCE OF PUBLIC-SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

Cooperation and partnership are often said to be alternatives to introducing public policies and supplying services traditionally handled by administration in their respective organizations. This phenomenon is not new however, as it has been going for around 20 years [6]. One of the first attempts considering such partnership has been made by the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) in England and Wales, just before beginning research about the Children Act of 1989. The definition of partnership coming from that act referred to trade unions defined by common goals, mutual respect and openness to negotiation, pointing out that sharing information, duties and skills is as important as sharing responsibility and the will to participate in the decision-making process [7]. Sharing does not mean even distribution of resources, rather it is the recognition that each partner has different resources that can be shared, and others that can be demanded from others [8].

In general, partnership is defined as a voluntary cooperation agreement involving public, private, and/or civil society organizations formalized by mutual, non-hierarchical decision-making procedures, focusing on solving public policy problems [9].

One of the forms that gained increasing popularity in recent years is partnership between different sectors. The author of cooperation within sectors, known as *third party government* is L. Salamon, who in 1981 introduced main

assumptions of realizing the concept of civil partnerships [10]. According to L. Salamon, the concept of inter-sector cooperation relies on mutual relations between the government and non-governmental entities, in which the government provides the funds and creates the social services policy, and the non-government organizations (NGOs)- or other entities- provide services for certain beneficiary groups. This partnership had an alternative character to the theory of State Failure and Market Failure, in which the main purpose of a non-benefit organization is to fulfil the needs of groups that were ignored by public and private sectors [11].

Depending on the subjects willing to participate in a cooperation, four types of partnerships can be distinguished:

- public-civil partnership,
- public-private partnership,
- civil-private partnership,
- public-private-civil partnership [12].

NGOs operating within the public-civil partnership are increasingly becoming partners of public sector entities. This partnership is much more readily achievable than that with private subjects because the goals and interests of both parties often intertwine. At the same time, the rules of this cooperation were defined in the Preamble of The Constitution of the Republic of Poland [13] as "the fundamental rights of the nation based on respecting freedom and justice, cooperation of authorities, civil dialogue and the principle of subsidiarity strengthening the rights of citizens and their respective communities" [14]. By contrast, the norms and character of cooperation have been introduced in detail in the bill from 24 April 2003, which concerned public interest and voluntary activities [15]. Records in this act are non-preclusive, which enables engaging in other forms of cooperation than those strictly stated in the bill, but the most popular forms are indeed those stated directly in the bill itself [16].

The cooperation between the public sector and NGOs happens on three different levels:

- the cooperation of local authorities and NGOs for making public policies,
- the cooperation of local authorities with NGOs for realization of public tasks,
- the infrastructure of cooperation, creating conditions enabling social activity [17].

Within the first level, it is important to take actions that are systematic, orderly, and based on objectified knowledge (i.e. based on research and analysis). Actions are usually taken based on partnership, because many current issues of various policies have intricate and complex characters, thus needing shared knowledge and resources to be successfully solved. Local authorities have a major role in such partnerships due to their democratic mandate and the resources they possess. Complex local policies such as social politics, local and environmental development, education, job market etc. all need these kinds of partnerships to be realized efficiently, as these areas are the most challenging in terms of actual cooperation. NGOs should be allowed to participate in making different plans, programmes and strategies to fulfil citizen's

needs, as well as solve social issues as early as possible. This highly increases the chance to prepare local policies that are most suited to the needs and problems of different citizen groups. Policies that are a result of partnership stimulate the interest of the community in the general planning and realization process, and encourage to partake in it [18].

The cooperation between local authorities and NGOs in terms of realizing public tasks takes place in three distinct areas:

- Area 1 – realization of public tasks with the use of forms of funding,
- Area 2 – realization of public tasks without the use of forms of funding,
- Area 3 – project partnership in realizing public tasks.

Financial cooperation of local administration with NGOs in terms of realizing public tasks is carried out in two forms:

- entrusting the realization of public tasks with subsequent financial funding,
- supporting the realization of public tasks with subsequent financial funding [19].

On the other hand, the non-financial aspect of cooperation relies on mutual information about planned strategies, consulting normative acts concerning statutory objectives with their respective NGOs, taking into consideration the engagement of citizens or direct beneficiaries, consulting normative acts concerning public tasks with different advisory bodies, taking into consideration the knowledge and information coming from the citizens, and their general interests. This cooperation also relies on making mutual advisory panels consisting of both local administration and NGOs' representatives [20].

Within the level of infrastructure and encouragement of social activity, the cooperation between local authorities and NGOs happens in the following areas:

- Area 1 – encouraging civil and NGO initiatives,
- Area 2 – encouraging NGO interaction process,
- Area 3 – local partnership.

The cooperation of local authorities with NGOs in terms of promoting social activity should help the local community to undertake civil initiatives, create new NGOs, voice their own opinion, realize public tasks and services, as well as partake in managing local growth [21].

III. RESEARCH SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

27 public sector entities took part in the pilot study, which means 54% response rate (surveys were sent out to 50 different public sector entities). The results obtained from this sample are very general and by no mean have definitive value, being but a base for further, more detailed research. Further studies will include a greater number of public sector entities. The general structure of subjects used in this research, based on the territorial scope, is shown below on Figure 2.

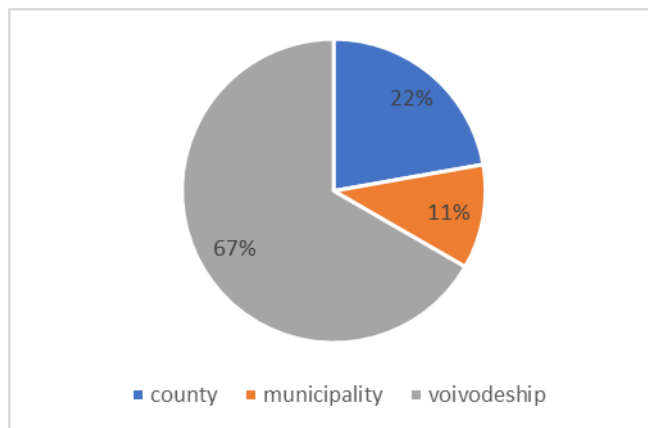


Figure 2. Structure of subjects used in the research– respective territorial scope of activity.

Amongst all subjects partaking in the research, those that territorial scope reached the whole voivodeship were dominant. The whole structure is as follows: central public administration entities – 8, national organisational entities – 7, local public administration of the voivodeship – 3, local public administration of the county – 3, local public administration of the municipality – 6.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS CONCERNING THE RATING OF COOPERATION FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ROAD SAFETY BETWEEN PUBLIC SECTOR ENTITIES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS – PUBLIC SECTOR ENTITIES' PERSPECTIVE

The first question aimed at whether or not public sector entities take direct action to improve road safety. Results show that all subjects do indeed take such action for more than 10 years, from who 12 of them do it individually, 6 with NGOs, and 9 do it in cooperation with different organizations, both non-governmental and from the private sector.

When asked about the time spent on cooperation between the public sector and NGOs, 3 subjects answered 6 – 8 years, and 12 of them “more than 10 years”.

Public sector entities undertake many activities to improve road safety (Table II).

TABLE II. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR ENTITIES TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY

Activity	Contribution %	
	Individual	In cooperation with a NGO
Coordinating activities to improve road safety	50,00 %	40,00 %
Contribution in local projects focused on improving road safety	40,00 %	60,00 %
Contribution in national projects focused on improving road safety	25,00 %	20,00 %
Consulting legal acts considering the improvement of road safety	50,00 %	-
Financing actions focused on improving road safety	50,00 %	80,00%
Education and training for road users	6,66 %	60,00%

Supervising activity undertaken to improve road safety	75,00 %	33,33%
Conducting research focused on improving road safety	50 %	-
Taking part in research focused on improving road safety	50 %	-

The biggest individual activity in trying to improve road safety is shown by the public sector entities in their share in research and monitoring of actions undertaken. The lowest share can be seen in educational and training activities. On the other hand, when cooperating with NGOs, this form of activity is rather popular. During their cooperation with NGOs, public sector entities take part mainly in local projects focused on improving road safety, some actions focused on educating and training road users and financing various action keyed in on improving road safety. The main contributing factors when deciding on their potential NGO partner were stated by the public sector entities to be as follow:

- information about potential cooperation – 50% of subjects,
- information about initiatives that can be undertaken – 50% of subjects,
- the prospect of improving the perceived image of the subject – 50% of subjects,
- potential partner’s professional – 33,33% of subjects,
- strengthening one’s favourable image with potential partners – 33,33 % of subjects,
- strengthening one’s image in their local community – 33,33% of subjects,
- others (activities undertaken within governmental administration bounds) – 33,33 % of subjects.

Public sector entities undertook many activities in favour of NGOs (Table III).

TABLE III. PUBLIC SECTOR ENTITIES ACTIVITY IN FAVOUR OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Type of activity	Answer share %
Voluntary service	40%
Financial support	60%
Material support	20%
Content support	20%
Strengthening partners image nationwide	20%
Providing support in obtaining Community’s Solidarity Funds	20%
Providing support in realizing objectives	40%

The main types of activity of public sector entities in favour of NGOs are financial support, voluntary service and providing support in realizing objectives. Material and content support, as well as obtaining Community’s Solidarity Funds and strengthening public image all have lesser priority.

According to public sector entities, cooperating with NGOs in order to improve road safety is highly beneficial. (fig. 3).

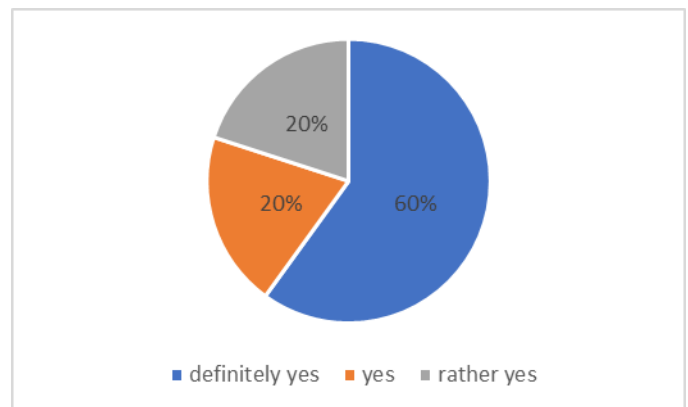


Figure 3. Evaluation of actions focused on improving road safety by public sector entities cooperating with NGOs

None of the organizations being surveyed responded negatively about the effects of cooperation with NGOs, stating however the most common problems encountered during such cooperation (Table IV).

TABLE IV. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WHEN COOPERATING WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Type of problem	Answer share %
Conflict of interests	40%
Problems communicating with partner	40%
Formal difficulties when applying for subsidies	20%

When compared to their private sector counterparts [22], public sector entities have shown negligible problems when cooperating with NGOs. This can be a result of both parties realizing the same tasks, as opposed to private sector entities. Such situation reduces the number of areas where potential conflict of interests can occur.

A part of public sector entities works individually, claiming the main reasons for this are:

- lack of clearly specified demands for a potential partner – 25% respondents,
- restriction of public sector entity engagement to providing financial support – 25% respondents.

On the other hand, among factors that would decide in favour of engaging in a partnership with an NGO, public sector entities have stated:

- information about initiatives they could undertake together with NGOs – 66 % of subjects,
- information about the partner willing to cooperate – 60% subjects,
- professional approach of an NGO – 60 % of subjects,
- partner’s recommendation – 50 % subjects,
- clearly defined demands – 40 % of subjects,

- pressure from the local community – 40 % of subjects,
- the possibility of gaining a positive image within the local community – 40 % of subjects.

A following question has been asked to the public sector entities working individually: „what kind of activity would they be willing to take in cooperation with NGOs to improve road safety?” The answers have been laid out in Table V

TABLE V. TYPES OF ACTIVITY THE PUBLIC SECTOR ENTITIES ARE WILLING TO TAKE IN COOPERATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY

Type of activity	Answer share %
Coordinating activities focused on improving road safety	20%
Engagement in local projects focused on improving road safety	27%
Engagement in nationwide projects focused on improving road safety	40%
Funding activity focused on improving road safety	40%
Promoting activity focused on improving road safety	66%
Educating and training road users	60%
Supervising activities undertaken to improve road safety	66%
Taking part in research dedicated to improving road safety	20%

Public sector entities are most likely to cooperate within these three areas: engagement in nationwide road safety projects, promotion of activity focused on improving road safety, and supervising activities undertaken to improve road safety.

None of the public sector entities engaged in an international project, consulted legal acts and projects focused on improving road safety, nor lead research dedicated to improving road safety. The lack of willingness to participate in these areas of cooperation is a direct result of the public sector entities' scope of operation.

Those public sector entities that do not cooperate with NGOs stated that they would be willing to take the following actions in favour of an NGO:

- content support – 80 % of subjects,
- strengthening partner's positive image – 40 % of subjects,
- support in obtaining Community Solidarity Funds – 40 % of subjects,
- legal support – 20 % of subjects,
- financial support – 20 % of subjects,
- material support – 20 % of subjects.

None of the public sector entities were interested in providing voluntary service or accounting support.

RECAPITULATION

Based on given literature review, data relevant to road safety topic and results of pilot studies, the following can be deduced:

- the amount of accidents and their consequences are in correlation with actions taken to improve road safety. Providing effective solutions means not only legislator work, but most of all cooperation between the public sector, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations,
- public sector entities undertake many activities to improve road safety, both individually and in cooperation with non-governmental organizations,
- subjects taking part in the study support non-governmental organizations mainly financially, help them realize set goals, provide voluntary service as well as declare providing content, financial and legal support, maintaining positive image and obtain subsidies from the EU,
- all public sector entities positively rate the effects of cooperation for improvement of road safety,
- a part of public sector entities prefers to work individually, stating lack of clearly defined demands and restriction of their role to only financial aid as the main reasons against cooperation,
- some factors that made part of the public sector entities not cooperate with non-government partners were the lack of information about possible initiatives and the lack of information about NGOs themselves.

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