

Aldona Wiktorska-Świąćka, Dorota Moron

'ASSISTANCE FROM A TO Z' AS AN INNOVATIVE SOCIAL INVESTMENT IN ACTION. EVALUATION OF A CASE STUDY

DOI: 10.1515/ppsr-2015-0032

Authors

Aldona Wiktorska-Świąćka, Chair of European Studies, University of Wrocław
aldona.wiktorska-swiecka@uwr.edu.pl

Dorota Moron, Institute of Political Science, University of Wrocław
dorota.moron@uwr.edu.pl

Abstract

The aim of the article is to present a case study of the implementation of innovative social investment in the area of social inclusion. The case study analysed, namely the project *Assistance from „A” to „Z” – Professional activation of homeless people from Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society*, refers to the social and vocational integration of homeless people at the municipal level in Poland. The authors hypothesize that innovative social investments are key to the success of the policy of social inclusion, which requires new, innovative ideas to empower people at risk of exclusion.

The article uses the case study method and the method of desk research, in which an analysis of the strategy documents, source materials and activities was carried out. The results were subjected to critical analysis, using the achievements of research in the field of social investment, social innovation and social inclusion policy. The paper is the result of partial studies carried out within the framework of the research project *Innovative Social Investment: Strengthening communities in Europe (InnoSI)*, financed by the EU Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020.

As a result, one has to consider the question “What works?”. The analysis showed the accompaniment method to be the most effective tool in the project’s actions and one which may be disseminated as a recommendation for social investment. The question “How?” brought evidence that the existing set of activities and their sequence (integrity and complexity) was appropriate, necessary and effective from the perspective of beneficiaries, the Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society and stakeholders. Considering the question “In what circumstances?”, the key element was related to the leadership offered by the Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society, which was running the implementation of the project. As a conclusion, one can formulate the cautious thesis that the outcomes can to some extent be generalized, particularly at the level of other local entities in Poland or in other countries/regions of Central and Eastern Europe, which have a similar welfare model (e.g. the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia).

Keywords: social investments, social innovations, social inclusion policy, public policy on social development, homelessness, accompaniment method

Introduction

The investment approach in social policy is a completely new approach to public policy, which traditionally – from the perspective of the welfare state – was seen as a cost to the

economic system justified by citizens' social rights (Hemerijck 2013). It means looking at different optics – drawing attention to productivity, investment that brings a return – in both social and economic areas (Morel et al. 2012). Emphasis on knowledge and development based on these policies, which invest in human capital, allows its use, prevents its wastage and promotes development and economic growth. The investment approach looks at the activities in the area of social policy as an investment that will contribute in the future to improve the situation of individuals in the labour market and in social life, as well as stability and social cohesion (Van Kersbergen and Hemerijck 2012).

The concept of social investment involves the creation of solutions which in the future will pay for the citizens and the state. In this context it is extremely important to innovate and to search for new solutions that will bring social benefits, more effectively meeting needs and solving social problems. Innovation is one of the success factors in social investment, leading to a better response to social needs, especially those that are not traditionally catered for by the private sector or public institutions.

Social investments which involve innovation and innovative social investments are today the best way of acting in the area of social policies that will solve problems, meet the needs and contribute to the future success of citizens, and thus society as a whole. Such activities play an important role in social inclusion policy, the aim of which is the social and professional inclusion of groups at risk of social exclusion. Very often existing activities in this field brought limited success, hence the necessity of exploring new ways of inclusion, in order to allow the empowerment of excluded persons, enabling them in a future well-functioning society (Nicholls et al. 2015).

The aim of the article is to present a case study *Assistance from „A” to „Z” – Professional activation of homeless people from Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society* (hereinafter referred to as *Assistance from A to Z*) as an example of the implementation of innovative social investment in the area of social inclusion. The analysed case study refers to the social and vocational integration of homeless people at the municipal level in Poland. The project was implemented from 30.09.2012 to 30.10.2015 in Wrocław by Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society. The project involved the socio-professional activation of 136 homeless people, out of work and at risk of social exclusion, in three annual editions.

The authors hypothesize that innovative social investments are key to the success of the policy of social inclusion, which requires new, innovative ideas to empower people at risk of exclusion. The paper uses the case study method and the method of desk research, in which an analysis of the strategy documents, source materials and activities was carried out. The analysis concentrates on needs assessment, the accompaniment method as an innovative tool of social investment and Social Return on Investments as key elements of the evaluation performed. The results were subjected to critical analysis, using the achievements of research in the field of social investment, social innovation and social inclusion policy. The article is the result of partial studies carried out within the framework of the research project Innovative Social Investment: Strengthening communities in Europe (InnoSI), financed by the EU Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020.

Social inclusion policy in Poland

Policies in the fields of social inclusion and active inclusion are important areas of Polish social policy, conducted as part of national, as well as regional and local, campaigns ,

including the support of the European Union. This policy is focused on development and design solutions in the field of social activation and implementation in practice of standard and innovative measures for social inclusion.

The main strategic documents demarcating the policy of social inclusion are *The National Strategy for Polish Social Integration* (MPiPS 2004), and the subsequent *The National Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2020: a new dimension of active inclusion* (MPiPS 2014). Other important strategic documents concerning the development of human capital and social activation are, as follow: *Poland 2030. Long-term National Development Strategy 2030 Third Wave of Modernity* (MAiC 2013), *The National Development Strategy 2020 Active society, competitive economy, efficient state* (MRR 2012) and *The Human Capital Development Strategy* (MPiPS 2013a).

The key statutes bearing on active inclusion, including those implementing the project, are as follows: Act of 12 March 2004 on social assistance, Act of 13 July 2003 on social employment, Act of 27 April 2006 on social cooperatives, Act of 20 April 2004 on promotion of employment and on labour market institutions, Act of 27 August 1997 on vocational and social rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities and Act of 24 April 2003 on public benefit and volunteer work.

Active inclusion policy focused on the fight against unemployment and labour market inclusion (through social and professional activation), but other important action areas included the fight against poverty, especially among children, support for families, the development of activities for young people including training and support in entering the labour market and the safety and activation of seniors and people with disabilities.

An important, though underestimated, policy area is the area of housing and homelessness support. This area is marginalized for two reasons. Firstly, there is a low rate of homelessness, which does not make homelessness appear a major social problem in public perception. A national survey of homeless people conducted on 21/22 January 2015 found 36,100 homeless people in Poland, of whom approx. 25,600 people were in institutions for the homeless, and approx. 10,500 people outside the institutions (MPiPS 2015, 9). The homeless are therefore 0.09% of the population. Poverty and unemployment are significantly more prevalent and hence are seen as more important problems (fig. 1.).

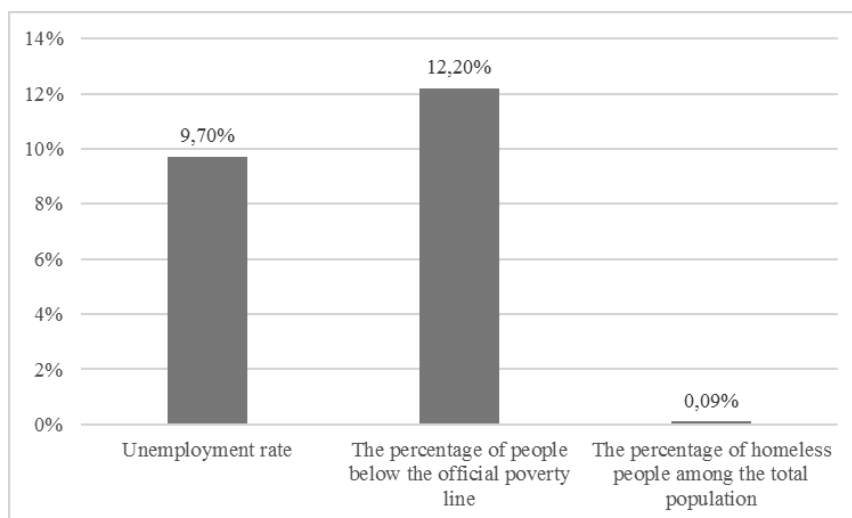


Figure 1. Social problems in Poland in 2015.

Source: MPiPS 2015, 9; GUS 2017; GUS, 2015, 6.

Secondly, there is the significant cost of housing policy and lack of funds for its implementation. Since the early 1990s in Poland there has been no professional housing policy, especially in support of social housing. Limited financial resources and a lack of public housing (including social and protected) at the disposal of municipalities do not allow for real housing support for people in need.

With active inclusion policy being defined at the national level, the regions have limited scope to act to solve the most important problems from the point of view of regional and local policy. This policy is implemented mainly at the local level, chiefly by local governments, but also in cooperation with other entities, for e.g. non-governmental organizations.

The policy towards people in difficult life situations, including the homeless, the unemployed and people who are not able to overcome their difficult life situation focuses on support through the social assistance system. In the case of unemployed people these actions are complemented by the activities of labour market institutions. The main objective is social inclusion, empowerment of individuals and families, overcoming the difficult life situation and to enable existence in conditions compatible with human dignity. Notwithstanding that social assistance institutions (particularly social assistance centres) offer activation, they are, however, in their core activities largely focused on assistance and shielding activities, including ensuring a minimum income, food, clothing and other necessities of life.

Financial support measures from the European Social Fund have therefore been essential for active inclusion policy, the main programmes in this field being the Operational Programme Human Capital (2007–2013; PO KL) and the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development (2014–2020: PO WER). These programmes are a response to challenges posed by the revised Lisbon Strategy on EU-member states, including Poland. Those challenges included: making Europe a more attractive place for investment and working, development of knowledge and innovations, as well as creation of a larger number of permanent work places. Pursuant to objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and to objectives of the EU cohesion policy, development of human and social capital contributes to the more efficient use of work resources and fosters the competitiveness of the economy. Projects financed from European funds in the area of social inclusion policy mainly include social integration and professional activation of people at risk of social exclusion. The ideas in this regard can be implemented by public institutions and other entities, especially non-governmental organizations.

The *Assistance from A to Z* project is an example of an activation project implemented by a non-governmental organization. It was realised under the regional component of Operational Programme Human Capital, priority VII: Promotion of social integration (measure 7.2 Counteracting exclusion and strengthening the social economy sector; sub-measure 7.2.1 Social and vocational activation of persons threatened by social exclusion). Within this framework activities aimed at enabling access to the labour market by persons threatened by social exclusion and developing social economy institutions as effective form of socio-professional integration were undertaken. An important support element was the elimination of diverse barriers (organisational, legal or psychological ones) which are encountered by persons threatened by social exclusion, experiencing discrimination problems on the labour market.

Assessment of the beneficiaries' needs

The basis for effective social projects is a professional assessment of the beneficiaries' needs and a plan to solve their problems and meet their needs. The basis for the preparation of the project should be a thorough analysis of the target population and a needs analysis of the target group. In order to perform a needs assessment a variety of methods should be used, including literature review, secondary data analysis, legal acts and strategies analysis, documents analysis, interviews/surveys with potential beneficiaries and the employees involved in solving the problems of the target group, observations, etc. It is important to use a variety of methods that allow the assessor to fully diagnose the target group.

Although a needs analysis showed that the availability of data on homeless people is sparse, it does allow the identification of the key characteristics of homeless people and their needs.

The needs assessment carried out as part of the case study indicated that in 2015 in Poland there were about 36,100 homeless people, of whom approx. 25,600 people were in institutions for the homeless, and approx. 10,500 people outside the institutions (fig. 2.).

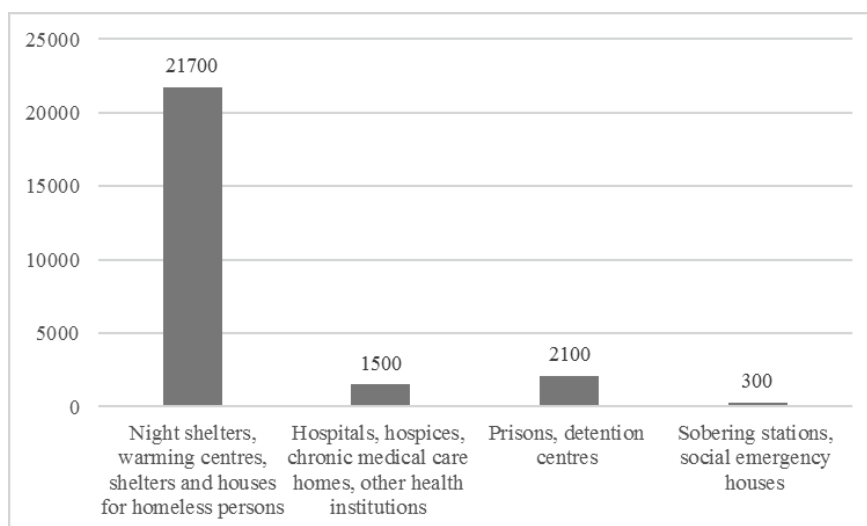


Figure 2. Homeless people in institutions in Poland in 2015

Source: MPiPS 2015, 9–10.

Among the total number of homeless 28,900 were male, 5,300 women and 1,900 were children (MPiPS 2015, 9).

Homeless people are usually male and older people of the age of 51–60. They also usually have a low level of education – people with primary and basic vocational education dominate (GUS 2013). Another important variable is the period of time of being homeless. The majority of homeless people have been so for less than five years and there are few people homeless for over 20 years (GUS 2013). An important factor is also the health condition of homeless people. The homeless often have multiple health problems resulting from many years of neglect and poor housing conditions. Research shows that 32% of homeless people have a disability certificate (MPiPS 2013b, 44), but it should be noted that many homeless people do not try to get the legal confirmation of disability. The situation of homeless people and their needs show the income sources of the homeless. Only 5% of the homeless are working legally, 11% have a pension or retirement, and 6% have other

benefits from the Social Insurance Institution (MPiPS 2013b, 41). Homeless people are working illegally, are engaged in begging or collecting scrap metal and other materials, and most of them get benefits from social assistance centres. Thus the emphasis on the professional activity of this group is fully justified.

In 2013 in the province of Lower Silesia 3,216 homeless people were located, while there were 990 in the city of Wrocław, including 799 in the institutions for the homeless and 191 in other places (fig. 3).

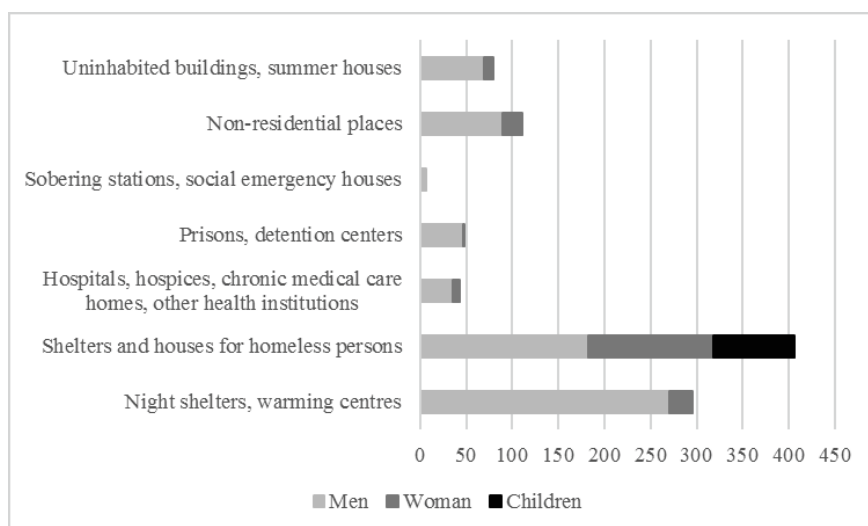


Figure 3. The location of the homeless people in Wrocław, in 2013.

Source: GUS 2013.

The analysis of documents of the Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society in the years 2013–2015 concerning homeless people under the care of the Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society, indicates that:

- Among the homeless of working age 5% are aged 18–24, 42% aged 25–49 and 53% aged 50–64;
- 40% of homeless people have disabilities, but only half of them have a disability certificate;
- 11% of homeless have a job, others are unemployed or economically inactive;
- 15% of homeless are married or in partnership, the others are single;
- 50% of homeless people have debts, mostly alimony arrears;
- 25% of homeless have conflicts with the law;
- 80% of homeless have problems with addictions (Wrocław Circle St. Brother..., 2013–2015).

The author's own analysis showed that the key problems of the homeless are:

- Lack of dwelling in connection with eviction, family conflicts, etc.;
- Conflicts in family, lack of family contacts, loneliness;
- Unemployment and economic inactivity;
- Lack of qualifications and skills;
- Employment with low-paying jobs, casual work, illegal work;
- Addictions;
- Poor health, disability;

- Conflicts with the law, imprisonment;
- Debt, including alimony;
- The stereotypical perception of homeless people in society.

A needs analysis must be simultaneously linked with the analysis of the possibility of action under a specific legal framework, defined project framework etc. The analyzed project was implemented within the framework of priority VII: Promotion of social integration of Operational Programme Human Capital and actions have to be adapted to the objectives of this programme.

Important needs, which corresponded the programme include:

- The need to supplement professional qualifications and experience, particularly through vocational courses and professional internships;
- The need to supplement the skills needed for functioning on the labour market, including the preparation of application documents, for interviews with employers etc.;
- The need for support in looking for a job, though, for example, support in contacts with employers, offering a job corresponding to the qualifications and capabilities of the homeless person, checking working conditions;
- The need for support in remaining in employment through motivational support and assistance in contacts with employers during the period of at least the first year of work;
- The need for motivational support in the whole process of social and professional activation. The response to this need was the accompaniment method, which was very positively assessed by both beneficiaries and project staff. The research shows that the homeless need a wide range of accompanists' support. The accompanists to do this job well, will often spend more hours on cooperation with the homeless than was originally planned in the project. Hence, it is necessary to plan a larger number of working hours for accompanists and to extend the period of homeless support;
- The need for social activation through sport, culture and education in forms of activation adapted to the preferences of homeless persons;
- The need for support in solving health problems and obtaining a disability certificate. Related to this is the need to recognize the health situation and to identify employment opportunities for people with health problems;
- The need for support in the fight against addiction and maintenance in abstinence;
- The need for psychological support adapted to the individual needs of the homeless;
- The need to support the renewal of contacts with the family;
- The need for support in solving legal problems related to debt, especially alimony;
- Economic and living needs, associated with satisfying the basic life needs, such as: grant, food, public transport costs, accommodation in night shelters, shelters or houses for homeless persons;
- The response to the identified needs should be projects of long-term and multi-faceted activation, adapted to the individual needs of the homeless.

An important diagnosed need that could not be met within the framework of the *Assistance from A to Z* project was the need for housing support towards housing independence and leaving the institutions for the homeless. In this context, the important issues are: the availability of social/municipal housing and the availability of protected/ training housing as a dwelling during the transitional stage between shelters/houses for homeless persons and housing emancipation.

It should be emphasized that the needs of this target group were not sufficiently met within the available forms of support provided by the social assistance centres and district labour offices. Although social assistance centres have an individual programme of overcoming homelessness and supporting the homeless, they offer a limited range of support forms and often are not used. The actions of district labour offices are also limited – generally they act narrowly to support employment. The assistance offered by social assistance centres and district labour offices is lacking in efforts to improve social skills and does not provide access to lawyers, psychologists or motivational support. The accompaniment method used in the project allowed the provision of ongoing support to the beneficiaries.

The Accompaniment method as a tool of an innovative social investment

The accompaniment method is a proven tool of social inclusion which can be regarded as a means of innovative social investment (Wiktorska-Świąćka, 2008). Its aim is to restore subjectivity and dignity to an individual and to equip him or her with the specific competencies and skills necessary to be a part of society, particularly in the labour market. This method applies to process (accompaniment), product (support model), actors (beneficiary, accompanists, institutions), management (participation, multi-sectoral partnership), orientation to the common good (equal opportunities) and public values (solidarity). This method was developed in France. Based on observations of local conditions and experiences, Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society (and other selected NGOs in Poland) came up with the idea of joining forces with public services and charity organizations working for the benefit of job seekers. Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society began to apply this method in the domestic environment. The analysis shows that a clear understanding about the purpose and nature of the accompaniment method by potential users determine the extent to which this innovative approach is routinely used in practice of social service. Moreover, the properties of the accompaniment method influence whether and how it is implemented in practice.

The accompaniment method was established as a grassroots initiative and was initially applied in Eastern and Southern regions of Poland. Each time they were solutions tailored to the local specifics, but the general rule is that the accompaniment method combines into a single coherent strategy three types of support: income-oriented, pro-employment and service for excluded people, which is consistent with the concept of active inclusion. However, it has been not directly established institutionally in Polish law. There is no integrated funding of such an approach in Poland. It is dispersed into separate mechanisms of funding for each of these areas and only a small amount of public money is transferred to non-public and non-governmental entities such as: employment agencies, training institutions, social dialogue institutions, local partnership institutions within the outsourcing of public tasks to non-governmental and religious organizations. The financial framework is based mainly on the European Social Fund, which is distributed in Poland at both the national and regional level. It is not a system-, but a project-oriented approach. However, as a tool of social investment, based on an established legal framework which is developed through inclusive and transparent processes, it could be used more frequently in practice. In this sense, the accompaniment method, based on a clear and robust evidence base, can more likely impact positively on outcomes. Additionally, locally developed modifications of the accompaniment method may be more useful and effective for both beneficiaries and practitioners.

The evaluation of the case study *Accompaniment from A to Z* showed that the impact of the accompaniment method in practice is positive but it is rather hard to find evidence for this. It is very context-bound. However, within studies there is evidence to indicate that the accompaniment method can be influential, if only to raise awareness about its opportunities to implement it into current law-based solutions. The impact of the accompaniment method is influenced by the character of the particular approach being used, by who is using it/how and in what circumstances. The key element of implementation is the accompanist, the person who uses it in practice. The impact of the accompaniment method on decision making is influenced by the current political situation and interests expressed by decision makers.

The accompaniment method is based on diversity and mixed forms of support for the groups at risk of unemployment or the ones defavourized in the context of the labour market. This model consists of the following steps:

- First contact: building a climate of trust, creation of the best conditions that will encourage interaction and build mutual understanding;
- Active listening: the aim of the accompanist is to learn the needs of the beneficiary, find bottlenecks which hinder integration with the labour market and to propose solutions;
- Evaluation: development of a vocational plan, feasibility study and implementation of the plan in the short- and long-term;
- Diagnosis/goal: this concerns developing a strategy and action plan. To make this possible, it is necessary to: develop the required tools, including a CV and covering letter, determine the direction of job seeking (sectors), start an active search (selection of training offers and job opportunities);
- Job search: developing a strategy which is the culmination of all the work done during previous phases. It is necessary to provide a person with the resources necessary to find permanent/temporary work or training in accordance with the vocational plan created earlier.

Approaches to implementation, including clear project leadership, that are wide enough in scope to identify and address the complexities of use may be more successful in encouraging uptake than those that do not. In addition, certain contextual factors may facilitate or inhibit the use of the accompaniment method, although what these detailed factors are requires further investigation (the general factors are obvious: time, people, budget, scale). That is why interactive approaches and strategies to implement the accompaniment method may influence whether or not it is used in practice. Additionally, the support of the project leadership may increase the likelihood of the ongoing use of the accompaniment method. Moreover, embedding the accompaniment method into systems and processes may facilitate use, but there is a lack of evidence about how this might work for different groups of stakeholders or in different contexts. Also some contexts will be more conducive to use of the accompaniment method than others, but it is unclear what might work in what circumstances and how (Wiktorska-Święcka A., Moroń D., 2016).

The economic effectiveness investment actions

The economic analysis of the project was carried out using Social Return on Investment analysis (SROI). The choice of SROI analysis is connected with the fact that it combines the advantages of cost-benefit analysis with the social audit. What makes it unique is the

monetary presentation of all relevant investments and the effects of the activity, a simple conversion of social influence into money. The SROI ratio, indicating the ratio of investment in the enterprise to the benefits received from it by society, will demonstrate the legitimacy of such projects. The preference for SROI analysis was dictated by the fact that it focuses on the impacts and in particular the long-term impact, which in the case of the target group of the *Assistance from A to Z* project is of great importance. SROI, while taking into account the financial costs of the project, compares them directly with its effects, which are often overlooked. What is important is the fact that the SROI takes into account the perspective of the stakeholders, which promotes objectivity. Given that SROI analysis describes well the NGO's activities, it was hence considered appropriate to apply it to the analysis of the project implemented by the NGO.

The main objective of SROI analysis is to obtain information on the SROI ratio generated by the project *Assistance from A to Z*. This allows the economic evaluation of the project and the economic justification of the activities. SROI analysis was conducted in accordance with methodological assumptions which allowed the calculation of the SROI ratio for the *Assistance from A to Z* project (the full SROI analysis is included in the report Wiktorska-Święcka A., Moroń D., 2016).

By conducting an economic evaluation of the *Assistance from A to Z* project the SROI method allowed the identification of the true cost of the project, the inputs, activities, outputs and impact of the project. Total Inputs for the project amount to PLN 3,229,371.71 and the costs have been borne by the public sector from the European Social Fund. Outcomes value for key stakeholders amounted to PLN 1,276,502.40. After taking into account certain effects: deadweight (6%), displacement (0%), attribution (5%), drop-off (15%) and discount rate (3.5%) we can show that Total Present Value (PV) amounted to PLN 3,859,770.28 and Net Present Value PLN 630,398.57. The SROI ratio is 1.20, meaning that for every PLN 1.00 invested in the *Assistance from A to Z* project we obtain a PLN 1.20 refund.

The outcomes achieved justify the investment of resources. The significant benefit to the homeless, and to the public sector, which bore the cost of the project, indicates that the project brings social benefits and therefore responds to social needs. We believe that the achievement of such results is not possible with lesser financial means, so expenditures are fully justified. Greater benefits would be possible were housing activation (availability of social/municipal housing, availability of protected/training housing) and social-professional activation projects to be incorporated, but the costs of such a project would be incomparably higher.

Economic analysis showed that innovative social investments are not only beneficial from a social perspective, but also bring visible economic profits in the next 5 years. The evaluation of the project and the experience of the Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society shows that this type of investment is the most effective means of social inclusion of the homeless.

Conclusions

The implementation of the project *Assistance from A to Z* proved its social investment potential. Considering the aspect "What works?", one can consider that the accompaniment method was the most effective tool in this regard. It supported project activities addressed

to both beneficiaries and the Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society. Not social workers, but individual mentors were the key persons in implementing the method. They facilitated the autonomous practice, which resulted in more accompanists' services. This was perceived to be a positive development by beneficiaries. However, it was difficult to determine whether it was the accompaniment method itself or rather the framework of the project that supported the autonomous practice while the intervention was being implemented. Other findings related to the extension of traditional roles showed that the Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society' leadership was crucial for establishing different management solutions (i.e. vocational practice which was offered by local institutions). Unfortunately, referring to incentives, the accompaniment method linked to the existing legal framework will not be consistently used. Nevertheless, the accompaniment method was perceived as making the difference by the beneficiaries, the Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society and the stakeholders. Most of the participants certainly made enormous progress and the project was an opportunity for them to change their thinking about themselves, and in consequence, to deal with the challenges they faced in getting a job, in renewing contacts with the family, and in settling legal matters. However, the group for which the intervention was most effective, was that of people with disabilities and of the age of 50+, which was related to their stronger motivation for independence. At the same time the intervention was ineffective for those who do not have the willingness to change and who returned to addiction. In general, among social outcomes of interventions for the beneficiaries one can indicate: increased self-awareness, higher self-esteem, increased motivation to come out of homelessness, greater willingness to cooperate with others, new social contacts and new interests and hobbies.

In parallel, the method also proved itself a suitable tool to enhance existing practices and improve the quality of services offered by both Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society and accompanists. However, despite the existence of evidence on the effectiveness of the method, stakeholders rarely used it.:

- Positively impacting in a relatively short period of time a large group of beneficiaries;
- Implementation and testing of the accompaniment method;
- Optimization of project management processes.
- Indirect stakeholders could profit by:
 - Getting new employees;
 - Access to motivated, determinate and competent employees;
 - Less reliance on public subsidies.

The question "How?" brought evidence that the existing set of activities and their sequence (integrity and complexity) was appropriate, necessary and effective from the perspective of beneficiaries, Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society and stakeholders. The accompaniment method was not explicitly used and shared with beneficiaries. However, its principles were referred to and determined the course of the project. It was embedded in appropriate project documentation. What was crucial in terms of the active participation of beneficiaries, were different supportive tools (free public transportation, financial subsidy).

Considering the aspect of "In what circumstances?", the key element was related to the leadership offered by Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society, which was running the project. Other supportive elements were the way in which the team managed the pro-

ject and tailor-made sequences of activities offered to beneficiaries. Other crucial contextual factors were the:

- Demands of local businesses for new employees;
- Interest of public institutions in vocational activation of homeless people;
- Favourable conditions related to the availability of European funds (including ESF);
- Increasing professionalization of the activities carried out by NGOs.

It was found that although stakeholders were aware of the accompaniment method and appreciated its positive impact on project outcomes, they did not undertake to influence a change in the current legal framework. However, it was rather time consumed to observe, that it is to say that the same findings would result in different care delivering settings. This should be tested through detailed research and in-depth study of on-going procedures, which we did not have the resources to accomplish within this study. Such an evaluation would surely be of interest to public institutions offering social services. The private sector could also profit from more detailed findings. Last but not least, this evaluation should also be considered by Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society itself. It may be helpful in the reorientation of its basic activities which will be necessary if the long-term outcome, the self-sufficiency and independence of homeless people is to be achieved. Moreover, the project was a breakthrough in the sense that Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society broke with traditional thinking in terms of projects for homeless people. For the first time such a large group of people participated in the activities, which resulted in many finding employment. Thanks to the project, public institutions increased cooperation with Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society, not only in terms of standard subsidies, but in supporting the establishment of social cooperatives, created by homeless people who participated in the *Assistance from A to Z* project.

The above analysis showed that behaviour of individuals has changed due to the social intervention carried out under the project. It also brought about the desired social change by helping them take up jobs and causing changes in their life aspirations. At the same time the above analysis helped to understand better one of the mechanisms of the described intervention that was crucial for the change (the accompaniment method). In parallel, the analysis indicated that the project did not affect the existing institutional arrangements and did not cause changes in policies, programmes, strategies, and the new division of tasks and the quality of cooperation between the sectors. This was due to the micro scale of the intervention. Last but not least, the positive return on investment is further evidence that innovative tools are required when one considers social inclusion campaigns. However, regardless of the above, one can formulate the cautious thesis that the outcomes can to some extent be generalized, particularly at the various local levels in Poland or in other countries/regions of Central and Eastern Europe, which have a similar welfare model (e.g. the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia).

References:

- GUS (2013). *Dane dotyczące bezdomnych we Wrocławiu. Materiały GUS we Wrocławiu*. Wrocław: Główny Urząd Statystyczny.
- GUS (2015). *Zasięg ubóstwa ekonomicznego w Polsce w 2015 r.* Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny.

- GUS (2017). *Bank Danych Lokalnych GUS*. Warszawa: Główny Urząd Statystyczny. Available at < <https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/>> [Accessed on: February 25, 2017].
- Hemerijck A. (2013). *Changing Welfare States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- MAiC (2013). *Poland 2030. Long-term National Development Strategy 2030 Third Wave of Modernity*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Administracji i Cyfryzacji. Available at < <https://mac.gov.pl/files/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Strategia-DSRK-PL2030-RM.pdf> > [Accessed on: February 20, 2016].
- Morel N., Palier B., Palme J. (eds.) (2012). *Towards a social investment welfare state?*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- MPiPS (2004) *National Strategy for Polish Social Integration*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej. Available at < <http://www.mpips.gov.pl/userfiles/File/mps/NSIS.pdf>> [Accessed on: June 10, 2016].
- MPiPS (2013a). *Human Capital Development Strategy*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej. Available at < <https://www.mpips.gov.pl/download/gfx/mpips/pl/defaultopisy/7616/1/1/Strategia%20Rozwoju%20Kapitalu%20Ludzkiego%202020.pdf> > [Accessed on: February 20, 2016].
- MPiPS (2013b). *Sprawozdanie z realizacji działań na rzecz ludzi bezdomnych w województwach w roku 2012 oraz wyniki Ogólnopolskiego badania liczby osób bezdomnych (7/8 luty 2013) i Badania socjodemograficznego (Aneks)*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej.
- MPiPS (2014). *The National Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2020: a new dimension of active inclusion*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej. Available at < http://www.mpips.gov.pl/download/gfx/mpips/pl/defaultopisy/8664/2/1/KPPUiWS_1707_na_RM_.pdf > [Accessed on: February 20, 2016].
- MPiPS (2015). *Sprawozdanie z realizacji działań na rzecz ludzi bezdomnych w województwach w roku 2014 oraz wyniki Ogólnopolskiego badania liczby osób bezdomnych (21/22 styczeń 2015)*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej.
- MRR (2012). *Development Strategy 2020 Active society, competitive economy, efficient state*. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego. Available at < https://www.mr.gov.pl/media/3336/Strategia_Rozwoju_Kraju_2020.pdf > [Accessed on: February 20, 2016].
- Nicholls A., Simon J., Gabriel M. (2015). *New Frontiers in Social Innovation Research*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Van Kersbergen K., Hemerijck A. (2012). 'Two Decades of Change in Europe: The Emergence of the Social Investment State'. *Journal of Social Policy*. Vol. 41, No. 3, 475–492.
- Wiktorska-Święcka A. (ed.) (2008), *Wyprowadzić na prostą. Innowacyjne metody aktywizacji społecznej i zawodowej na przykładzie wdrażania modelu lokalnej sieci wsparcia osób bezdomnych i zagrożonych bezdomnością*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza ATUT.
- Wiktorska-Święcka A., Moroń D. (2016), *Evaluation report on case study: Assistance from „A” to „Z” – Professional activation of homeless people from Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society*. A deliverable of the project: "Innovative Social Investment: Strengthening communities in Europe" (InnoSI), European Commission – Horizon 2020, Brussels: European Commission, Research Executive Agency.
- Wrocław Circle St. Brother Albert Aid Society (2013–2015). *Dokumenty źródłowe Towarzystwa Pomocy im. Św. Brata Alberta Koła Wrocławskiego*. Wrocław: Towarzystwo Pomocy im. Św. Brata Alberta Koło Wrocławskie.