

***Working Community of Associations of
Social Organisations (WRZOS)***

Warsaw 2002

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I. Basic information on WRZOS

1. Name of organisation: Working Community of Associations of Social Organisations (WRZOS)

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2. Name of the bank and account number

Bank Inicjatyw Społeczno-Ekonomicznych 13601135-24963-27005-000-00001

3. WRZOS authorities and staff

Management Board:

Name	Profession	Function	Since when in the Management Board
Prof. Danuta Zalewska	University Teacher, Sociologist	President of the Board	3
Marek Hola	Communal Politician	Vice-President of the Board	3
Zbigniew Wejman	Social Manager	Vice-President of the Board	3
Krzysztof Balon	Social Manager	Board Member	First year
dr Andrzej Juros	University Teacher, Psychologist, Social Politician	Board Member	3
Maria Remiezowicz	Social Politician	Board Member	First year

The current Management team was appointed in the second quarter of 2002. WRZOS Management function term lasts for two years. The current term is the second one in WRZOS history. The Management is appointed by the General Meeting. Members of WRZOS Management Team are scientists and practitioners dealing with social issues. They represent the largest Polish scientific centres in the field.

WRZOS Office

The Office is managed by a director, as a separate statutory WRZOS organ. The Director is appointed by the Management Board for a period of three years. The Director manages work of

WRZOS, prepares meetings of the Committee and the Management Board, prepares drafts of the budget, co-ordinates work of the office and its full-time staff, represents WRZOS along the provisions of the Statute and Board decision.

Name	Profession	Function
Jacek Sutryk	Sociologist	Director
Kamila Płowiec	Social Politician	Advisor in a project called 'Human Action'
Agnieszka Krawczyk	Sociologist	Advisor in a project called 'Human Action'
Anna Pachulska	Social Manager	Secretary of a program called 'Homelessness'
Adam Wąsik	Accountant	Accountant

Additionally to full-time staff WRZOS co-operates with 5 volunteer-assistants and a legal consultant.

Expert knowledge

WRZOS permanently co-operates with 25 experts specialising in social politics and specific fields especially in the issue of the handicapped, old age and homelessness.

Review Commission

WRZOS Review Commission is made of three persons appointed by the General Meeting for a period of two years. Its basic tasks include review of budget performance, evaluation of financial activity, accounting, as well as verification of the Management and Director activity against the Statute.

Review Commission:

1. Andrzej Bogdanowicz
2. Anna Hyla
3. Artur Misiewicz

4. Structure of the organisation.

Working Community of Associations of Social Organisations (WRZOS) in Poland is a non-governmental organisation created in the year 2000. Its objective is to represent interests of individuals and groups of people who are socially marginalized or excluded from the society – by providing services to organisations and institutions which are concerned with social issues.

WRZOS has been created as a community of social organisations operating on the whole territory of Poland. Currently it associates 8 regional communities of social NGOs which act at regional level (one community per region) in Lubelskie, Lubuskie, Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Pomorskie, Śląskie, Zachodniopomorskie and Wielkopolskie regions (fig. 1). According to the statute of WRZOS, a regional community of NGOs may join WRZOS if at least 2/3 of its member organisations is concerned with social issues and their activities cover varying areas.

Moreover, the following 4 over-regional structures acting at the national level belong to WRZOS: (Polish Committee for Social Services, The Polish Federation of Food Banks, Physical Education, Sports and Tourism Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted "CROSS", Association of Employees and Supporters of Local Self-help Homes). Social NGOs operating at the national level may join WRZOS if they satisfy the criterion of having their offices or other associated structures at least in three regions.

WRZOS, as a federation, exerts influence on more than 350 social organisations with various types of activities.

Both the regional associations of social NGOs and the over-regional nation-wide organisations which belong to WRZOS have to adopt the statute and program principles of WRZOS. They also have to stick to fundamental values which are observed by WRZOS.

Figure.1

Region	Name of Association	Year of Foundation
Dolnośląskie	Working Community of Associations of Social Organisations	1994
Lubuskie	Lubuskie Region Forum of Non-governmental and Civil Initiatives	1996
Małopolskie	Krakow Forum of Social Organisations	1998
Mazowieckie	Federation of Service Organisations „Mazowia”	1999
Śląskie	Silesian Forum of Social Organisations	1998
Pomorskie	Association of Self-help Organisations	1996
Wielkopolskie	Wielkopolskie Region Coordination Council. Association of Charity Organisations	1994
Zachodniopomorskie	Zachodniopomorskie Region Forum of Social Organizations	2001
Lubelskie	Lublin Forum of Non-governmental Organisations	1996

Currently, another union of regional associations, Podkarpackie Region Community of Social Organisations, wishes to join the structures of WRZOS.

What is more, WRZOS supports unification processes in the following regions:

- Łódzkie
- Opolskie
- Podlaskie

At Working Community of Associations of Social NGOs in Poland there also exists Co-ordination and Advisory Agency of Polish-German Social Co-operation (PKD) with its head office in Warsaw. Tasks performed by the Agency include: developing a forum for consulting and co-operation between independent social organisations or social NGOs from both countries; regular exchange of information and experience, giving advice and support for chosen model projects, giving advice concerning the financing of Polish-German co-operation; developing programs concerned with social issues, policy addressed to family and elderly people; exerting influence on public opinion in favour of Polish-German co-operation within social policy; Polish-German specialised journal “SOCIUS”.

II. Activities of WRZOS.

1. Objectives, strategy and a detailed plan of action

Mission of WRZOS

Representing interests of individuals and groups of people who are socially marginalized and who are facing the threat of exclusion from the society – by providing services to organisations and institutions addressing social issues.

The following values are important for all of us:

- ▣ **Independence** – freedom in deciding about the mission, objectives and methods of work, diversification of sources of finance; apolitical attitude which means that we do not identify with or act under the influence of any political option or party,
- ▣ **Tolerance** – based on the respect to any person, institution, organisation or partner within or outside the federation,
- ▣ **Transparency** – the program, statute, plan of actions and principles of work of an organisation should be publicly available and after completion of a task, reports on actions that have been carried out as well as financial reports should be made public.
- ▣ **Reliability** – undertaking activities according to actual financial capabilities and competence; fulfilling contracts and meeting the responsibilities which have been undertaken; evaluation and checking of the results as a common element of every activity, focus on learning and development as well as on the highest quality of work.
- ▣ **Open attitude to co-operation** – seeking partners in the society in order to solve existing problems, equality of rights and partnership between parties which means, among others, the ability to reach an agreement.

Since the year 1997, there has been a constant movement towards federation within Working Community of Associations of Social NGOs. This movement has been resulting in creation and strengthening of federations of non-governmental social institutions in Poland. The nation-wide association created by regional umbrella organisations enables all organisations within it to exchange information and experience in a free and unlimited way. Moreover, it enables these organisations to take advantage of their capabilities in a more efficient way.

Our association, which was registered in the March of 2000, provides expert aid which is necessary to create structures of federations on regional and local levels. We conduct training in legal matters for the poor who are clients of social services in order to provide them with

information on their rights especially as regards social services, regulations concerning tenancy contracts and building societies activities as well as labour regulations.

In order to increase its effectiveness, WRZOS co-operates with other non-governmental organisations. For example, an agreement signed with the SPLOT network makes it possible to conduct common projects, especially in training.

The aim of the initiatives which WRZOS undertakes is to change unfavourable trends in how the social policy, which is addressed to people whose social needs are particularly serious, is being created and carried out. The objective of these activities is to create a vision of development which will be widely accepted and which will result in a long-term social policy of the state supporting development of individuals, groups and organisations.

Another objective of Working Community of Associations of Social NGOs in Poland which is a network of regional umbrellas of social NGOs is to provide a forum for purposes of exchanging information and experience between social organisations from all regions of Poland and the sectors of public administration and business in order to support the interests of the clients of organisations within WRZOS. In addition to this, its objective is to make social services more professional in Poland.

Main objectives of WRZOS include:

- Representing interests of its members before other civil partners (state administration, business sector, politicians),
- Supporting activities of member organisations with regard to their statutory objectives as well as methods of working
- Co-ordination of exchange of experience and information among the members of the Community,
- Lobbying for active participation in the processes of creating law regulations and social policy,
- Stimulation of co-operation and exchange of information with foreign partners,
- Supporting and developing civil activities, for example, by providing help in creation of new regional federations.

WRZOS uses the following main means to achieve these objectives:

- Giving advice and providing means for exchange of information

- Setting up conferences and seminars, especially with the presence of representatives from public administration and from other civil groups
- Setting up and conducting training courses,
- Publishing materials,
- Providing specialised, non-material services for member organisations and co-operating entities, especially for informal initiatives aimed at creation of new regional federations of social NGOs,
- Undertaking social activities which can support achieving the above mentioned aims,
- Organising humanitarian aid for the members of WRZOS and for their clients by arranging public collections and organising foreign donations of devices, medical, rehabilitation and rescue equipment, clothes, food, sanitary and cleaning agents, means of transport and other which can be used to improve health and living conditions of the clients of social services,

Activities undertaken by WRZOS are aimed at solving the issues important for effective functioning of NGOs and civil initiatives which address their activities to individuals, families and other groups in the society facing the threat of various deficits, poverty, degradation or exclusion from the society.

2. Main achievements of WRZOS in the years 2000-2002

1. Representing interests

- an agreement on co-operation has been signed with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The co-operation includes support of the processes aimed at creation of federal structures and federations of regional social NGOs as well as co-operation with public social institutions as regards creation of local programs concerning social services, local strategies on how to address social problems and shaping the social policy on regional, state and inter-national levels.
- establishing permanent contacts with Social Policy and Family Committee of the Polish Parliament, Social Policy and Health Committee of the Polish Senate, the Office of the Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection, activists of regional authorities of the Association of Polish Counties, Association of Polish Cities and the Union of Rural Commune of the Republic of Poland on four levels (team for the disabled, team for the homeless, team for the elderly people and Subsidiary Forum).

- creation of rules regulating co-operation of nation-wide social organisations (including Caritas Poland, Polish Red Cross, Deaconship of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church) in order to influence and shape the social policy.
- signing an agreement with The Network of Information and Support for NGOs SPLOT. The parties of this agreement have agreed to co-operate as regards the opinion-forming processes in key issues concerning non-governmental organisations and with regard to their activities related to public administration. They also agreed to support regional initiatives aiming at creation, in particular regions, of representative organisations which could integrate local third sector and to undertake common actions aimed at working out ethical and professional standards that could be adopted by NGOs as well as to undertake other actions in order to support member organisations of SPLOT and WRZOS both in their statutory activities and as regards their methods of work.
- supporting the activities undertaken by Permanent Working Group which provides expert information and advice services for social NGOs and government structures in Poland and Germany

Permanent members of Working Group:

- representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- representatives of Federal German Ministry of Family, the Elderly People, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ),
- representatives of Caritas Poland, Deaconship of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland, Polish Red Cross, Working Community of Associations of Social NGOs in Poland,
- representatives of German Associations belonging to Federal Community of Umbrella Organisations
- representatives of federations and organisations related to local authorities,
- Members of Parliament (heads of appropriate committees),

Temporary members:

- people who are invited by an unanimous agreement by the group of permanent members
- people (experts) from various organisations and institutions invited to take part in the works undertaken by PWG (including diplomats and officials from EU). The Secretariat of the Group is run by Co-ordination and Advisory Agencies of German-Polish and Polish-German social co-operation in Salzgitter and Warsaw.

2 Increasing the capabilities of social NGOs and co-ordinating of the exchange of experience

- training of 140 leaders from social organisations, which provide care for elderly people, has been carried out
- 3 specialised seminars for leaders of organisations of disabled people have been set up in Łódzkie, Podlaskie, Podkarpackie and Opolskie regions. The topics of the seminars included: creation/takeover of social agencies, self-help and voluntary work in social services.
- setting up 10 regional meetings devoted to the issues of federalisation of the non-governmental sector and of working out procedures of co-operation between social NGOs and the local government administration.

3. Taking part in legal processes and in creation of social policy

- initialising series of meetings of task groups aiming at preparation of appropriate legal regulations which will improve living conditions and the quality of life of the elderly, the homeless and the disabled (financial support from EU Representative)
- setting up Subsidiary Forum – a wide and open forum for discussions and working out procedures for co-operation between public administration and social NGOs.
- an active engagement of members of the Management Board in works of Council of Social Services. It operates under auspices of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy as a body providing opinion and advice on the issues of social services. The dialog between civil partners conducted within Council of Social Services concerns social issues. Representatives of units of state and local government as well as of social organisations engaged in realising tasks regarding social services and of academic environments take part in this dialogue.
- Participation of the members of the Management Board in the works of the Contact Group at the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. The task of the Contact Group is to co-operate on regular basis with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. This group has a temporary and working character. Its creation is aimed at regular work with preparation of detailed solutions of the Act on pro publico bono activity and voluntary sector. Persons chosen to work in the Contact Group work for the benefit of the whole organisation environment.
- Participation of a WRZOS Management Board representative in task team for social reintegration, consisting of representatives of non-governmental organisations. The team works under the supervision of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, and one of its main tasks is preparation of a Common Memorandum on Social Integration Poland-EU (JIM)

- Participation of a WRZOS Management Board representative in the works of Local Consulting Council for NGOs, acting within the National Council for European Integration created by the Decree of the Prime Minister. One of the tasks of the National Council for European Integration is acting for the benefit of social agreement on European integration, support of social dialogue within the European integration issues and presenting opinions on matters connected with the process of integration.

4. Starting the co-operation and the exchange of experience with foreign partners.

- Co-organisation of Polish-German specialist conference in Warsaw concerning the subject: "The role of social organisations' federations in shaping the social policy in the process of integration with the European Union". Creation of organisational background for creation and management of Polish-German Permanent Working Group on social policy. The Group consists of the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Federal German Ministry of Family, the Elderly People and Youth, Federal Working Community for Independent Social Services, representative of Caritas Poland, Deaconship of Evangelical-Augsburg Church in RP, Polish Red Cross and WRZOS. WRZOS has the function of the Group's Secretariat.
- Performing the function of the Co-ordination and Advisory Agency for Polish-German co-operation in social matters. The Co-ordination and Advisory Agency's tasks include: development of the consulting and co-operation forum of independent social welfare organisations or non-governmental social organisations from both countries; regular exchange of information and experience, advisory services and support of chosen model projects; advisory services concerning the financing of the Polish-German co-operation; development of programs related to the social policy, policy towards the family and elderly people; shaping the public opinion in favour of the Polish-German co-operation in social area; Polish-German specialist magazine „SOCIUS”
- Development of the co-operation with ESAN- the European Social Action Network – an umbrella organisation, created in 1991 the main tasks of which are: development of co-operation between non-governmental organisations the activity of which concerns social policy, as well as building a holistic European policy based on and respecting human rights.
- WRZOS actively participates in co-creation and reinforcing the Polish NGOs Office in Brussels. The Representation's mission is to serve all the organisations concerned by providing them with useful, actual, reliable and free of charge information about the European Union.

3. Basic fields of WRZOS' activity

The experience gained during a few last years inclines WRZOS to promote the activities aiming at building the space for:

- Activity
- Advocacy
- Mediation
- Lobbying
- Creating the standards of work for non-governmental organisations

WRZOS promotes actions of social organisations aiming at strengthening the people who are left aside in their process of joining the social life (self-help) and at creating the conditions for the society's opening towards these groups of people (volunteers). This process requires both the strengthening of the infrastructure of the social sector, and professional work of social organisations' staff.

In the opinion of membership structures (mainly local federations) of WRZOS, and also of social organisations in regions where the federation structures of social organisations are being developed at present, the activity of WRZOS so far is very helpful for the activities undertaken by such federations both locally and internationally.

In the nearest future WRZOS is going to focus on the following priority areas:

- 1) Improvement of the self-organisation level of WRZOS' structures, including:
 - improvement of the functions and tasks of the office,
 - permanent location in the structure of Expert Teams – Working Communities – target groups, preparing opinions on particular issues,
- 2) Support of the member organisations in the area of their activity, including but not limited to:
 - Training for the increased professionalism of services performed, advocacy of interests, conducting research, educating the society about the role of the organisation;

- Development of publication activity such as the continuation of issuing the WRZOS Bulletin, publishing the Polish-German magazine "Socius", publishing of other specialist materials including the „Społecznik” magazine.
- 3) Reinforcement of the federalisation process, especially by:
- continuation of local meetings in order to integrate activities and creating the atmosphere of dialogue
 - animation of the local coalitions and associations creation
- 4) Strengthening the financial stability of social organisations:
- Continuation of works of the Initiative Group of social organisations, which has been started by WRZOS, in order to create an Association for Social Savings Bank as a bank-related structure
 - Conducting concept works and lobbying activities for the creation of Social Savings Bank.

The above-mentioned fields are interdependent and their aim is to make the vision come true and gaining the main aim of the development of Working Community of Associations of Social NGOs, its member organisations and other social non-governmental organisations.

4. Partners and sponsors of WRZOS

The following entities, among others, take part in the implementation of WRZOS' projects by providing financial and/or organisational support:

- "Human Action" Foundation
- S. Batory Foundation
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- EU Commission Representation in Poland
- German Social Association and German-Polish Agreement Association in co-operation with Federal German Ministry of Family, the Elderly People, Women and Youth
- US Embassy in Poland
- Foundation for the Development of Educational System. National Foundation of the "Youth" Program

- Polish-German Co-operation Foundation
- The Network of Information and Support for NGOs SPLOT

Moreover, WRZOS actively co-operates and develops working relationship with governmental and municipal administration. As a result of active policy of WRZOS in this area, a co-operation with several important governmental and municipal entities has been signed and commenced.

- Agreement of co-operation with The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- Regular contacts with the Office of the Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection
- Starting the co-operation with local authorities associations: Association of Polish Counties, Association of Polish Cities and the Union of Rural Commune of the Republic of Poland
- Working contacts with Regional Agencies of Social Policy

WRZOS in its activity closely co-operates with non-governmental organisations functioning in the area of social policy, which are not the members of WRZOS, such as e.g.:

- Support Association of St. brother Albert
- Mutual Help Foundation „Barka”
- Polish Association for the Mentally Disabled
- „Przyjaciele Integracji” Association
- Third Age University in Warsaw
- Polish Association of Pensioners and the Disabled,
- Polish Gerontology Association

WRZOS co-operates also with universities all over the country, and especially with:

- Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
- University in Gdańsk
- University in Warsaw
- University in Wrocław
- Catholic University in Lublin

5. Accounting in WRZOS

Carrying out the statutory activities of WRZOS takes place within the valid law and contracts concluded. The evaluation of the subject's activity is performed by proper statutory bodies as

well as external organisations. The Managing Board of the subject, within its competence, applies various tools and forms of evaluation to the activity, it realises a critical approach towards the quality of actions taken, and consulting the results of its own activities with external bodies. The experience gained so far with regard to methods and forms of co-operation with various public and non-public partners, both in Poland and abroad, allowed increase of standards of the organisations' activity. Both the evaluations: financial and subject matter as well as the evaluation of the statutory activity and of project type enterprises undertaken have been positive.

All resources obtained from the sponsors have been spent and accounted for in accordance with their purpose, and the evaluations of the enterprises which are completed, obtained a positive opinion of the grant-givers.

From the beginning of its activity (the year 2000) the organisation prepares and makes available annual reports of its statutory activity (on the subject of the activity and financial matters) including the settlements of projects completed and plans, which consist of a part devoted to the subject of the activity and the financial settlement. In accordance to the widely applied standards and the practice accepted in WRZOS office, the reports are available in the organisation's head office and during the meetings with partners and sponsors.

Financial activity of the organisation is regularly checked by its sponsors. In 2002 the audit of finances was conducted by authorised persons representing Stefan Batory Foundation and the European Commission.

The end of the financial project financed from the resources of the European Commission – "Working together for the change" was obliged for the first time in its course of activity to have the financial audit carried out. The audit resulted in a positive opinion of the licensed auditor and it was submitted to the EU Commission Representation in Poland, which officially on 16th December accepted the report from the implementation of the project within the framework of Access 1999 program.

6. Management of the financial means

Financial means, together with the partners' potential and the plan of activity, are an important component for the conducting of the statutory activity of WRZOS. Improvement of the strategy in the first period of the entity's existence was connected with steady improvement of the skills connected with planning the activity and monitoring the financial means management.

Financial means management takes place in three stages and is connected with the process of the improvement of skills in the optimal management of the financial means. The first level of management is connected with structural competence of the director and his special authority.

At this level, among others, the following elements of financial means management are carried out: preparation of the budget framework, implementation of the budget, shaping the flow of financing sources, planning the effective usage of the means, carrying out a credit policy, choice of banking financial tools used for the optimal application of the financial resource, checking the current status, performing simulation projections of the development of resources. At the second level, the Management Board takes the responsibility for the following elements: audit and approval of the budget, planning the way of gaining the sources of financing, analysis of the speed and correctness of the financial streams' flow, supervision and control of business activities and effective application of financial means, shaping the credit policy and defining a safe limit of entity's indebtedness, evaluation of the usage of banking financial tools, defining the directions of strategic and financial development, implementation of the postulates of adequate control institutions, using audits for the purposes of management optimising and effective usage of resources granted and developed to the advantage of the organisation. The activities undertaken at the third level connected with control and supervision of the financial means management have been presented above, in the description of the applied ways of activity's evaluation. Practically it is connected with the work of the revision commission and external entities assigned by the legal system for this purpose. ■