
SOCIAL ALERT

10

gap.



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summit

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10 principles of effective and sensible action. Indications arising not only from the pandemic

It is not known how long the pandemic will last in Poland and with what social and economic restrictions we will live in autumn and winter. Nobody is sure whether we will have a chance to help others, because we will be healthy, we will have jobs and material problems will not affect us, or whether health or economic meanders will force us to get help from others. The crisis, which is the time of the epidemic threat, triggers the risk of the breakdown of existing ways of thinking and acting. Therefore, it is important how individually, but also as a community, society or state, we are prepared to review the ways in which we can act and get ready for change. The pandemic can result in a crisis that changes individual destiny, but also the condition of society and the economy as a whole. Professor Kazimierz Dąbrowski was talking about positive ¹ disintegration which can be a trigger for building new life, professional, social and economic relationships. The beginning of the change may start from the experience of the pandemic.

We suggest thinking about how to show and accept support reasonably so that it does not result in social divisions.

The support should, as far as possible, be reciprocal rather than paternalistic, superior or hierarchical. Charity and philanthropy should enrich each other's relations and make

¹ A Hermeneutic Historical Study of Kazimierz Dabrowski and his Theory of Positive Disintegration;
<https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/26692/Dissertation.pdf?sequence=2>

both the contributor and the beneficiary better people. owing to such bonds, developmental support is possible, which is priceless: the passive support system does not bring new quality to improving the life situation of people or communities in need of support. It is important that situations in which some people help and others accept this help do not increase the social distance and, thus, do not deepen the gap between them.

For personal and intellectual development, it is different to make donations into the can, and to involve the time and the liberation of emotions. Social or charitable activities help in the development of personality and community competences. Ad hoc support sometimes results from existing support schemes, sometimes it is derived from disbelief in the ability to change the attitudes of those in crisis, but sometimes it is the only way to respond to human destiny. The solidarity-based economy enables cooperation and the creation of new community solutions.

In the times of crisis, responsibility for those who have been affected is important. Combining potentials can multiply the possibilities of solving problems by looking for new, effective solutions. That is why it may be so important, as we recommended in previous Social Alerts² to conclude social agreements (Local Partnerships) bringing together representatives of various institutions, companies, organisations, informal groups, including leaders elected in democratic elections, i.e. mayor, president or governor.³

² <https://oees.pl/dobrzewiedziec/>

³ Example of the Local Partnership in Pniewy: local self-government received the 1st prize in the competition for socially responsible local government for the formation of the inclusive community. In Pniewy, a Centre for Social Inclusion was established, helping 30 people without work to re-enter social and vocational relations. There is a social cooperative "Horizon", which invited 3 neighboring communes (Obrzycko, Ostrorog, Kwilcz) as members. It created the opportunity to create more than a dozen jobs. The Local Government in Pniewy commissions various works of the "Horizon" social cooperative, which, on the one hand, cares for the city while on the other hand helps to revalue the life priorities of people dependent on social support, and on the third allows to experience the members of the local community "changing attitudes" towards inclusion rather than rejection.

Public means belonging to community

A serious obstacle in building an inclusive community is the politicisation of public functions. Support requires animating community responsibility in place of seeking individual success or interest. Interest groups interfere with support and perceiving the common good. It is especially difficult now when we are simultaneously facing social and economic problems arising from the pandemic and participating in the political struggles of the presidential elections. In recent months, differences have been stressed in society about the role of the state in the economy, but also in the way individuality and diversity are treated, in the approach to civil and institutional freedoms and in the role of citizens in state building. Significant differences in the systems of values can make it difficult to work together to offer support locally or even within families.

In a crisis situation, the ideas of a responsible local community resulting from civic involvement should be restored, whether we represent the public sector, the private sector or NGOs. We all are citizens and we can have an impact on resource management in a sustainable, cooperative and inclusive way. We understand that the revaluation of attitudes takes a long time. Even more so, we believe that it is worth promoting examples of positive actions and creating local communities.

The strength is in partnership

The time of the pandemic triggered solidarity, but it also showed many people or institutions how difficult it is for them to overcome hermetism and become involved in the community action. **Let us not be afraid of an exchange of opinions or that someone will "steal" our idea. Let us share data, contacts and conclusions. Let us exchange ideas about what we do and talk about what we can do together.** it will give us a chance to see and scale up

valuable solutions. Let us share in public ideas that might be useful to others.

Recommendations – 10 principles of effective and sensible involvement. Indications resulting not only from the pandemic:

- I. Anyone can do something good for others. You do not have to do great things now. Start with small things – you will help another person and you will feel the satisfaction. Think humbly about your commitment. Try to understand situations, reach the root causes, choose the “support point” well. As you have little resources be as precise as possible. The list of needs is always longer than the available resources so choose wisely. Remember that whenever you do something, you do not do something else.
- II. Learn about the actions of others. Before you start acting, check the local community, the region, the country, or even the global dimension for similar solutions. In business, the market is thoroughly analysed before a new product or service is launched. Such a principle should also be applied in social actions. Contact those who have experience. Develop it, learn from them. Together, you will take it a step further.
- III. Ask about the results of your actions. The intentional and unintended: desirable and undesirable ones. Intentions are important, but they are not enough. Approach the consequences of actions with such seriousness as if it were about doing business. However, do not confuse one with the other. Social change and assistance are not easier than doing business: they require a lot of activities, logistics, and they do not result in profit. Be efficient and effective in doing good – even if others do not demand it from you or themselves.
- IV. Whenever possible (and it is not always so) try to mobilise those you are trying to support. Do not make everything for them, do not push them into passivity. Avoid

paternalism and a sense of moral superiority. Lead to independence – do not make those who can do without it depend on the help of others. Be open – wise help is such that responds to the specific needs of a person in need, and not to the one who helps.

- V. Act consistently, decisively and do not give up too easily. Sometimes you achieve success only after some time. Urgent and spectacular often wins over what is important – learn to distinguish one from the other.
- VI. Beware of the presumption that you are better and “bend over” the more vulnerable. In particular, do not believe in illusions that you owe everything to your hard work and support those who “turned badly” and did not try hard enough. In the vast majority of cases, you owe your position just to the fate and others. We also have no control over many situations: whether we are healthy, on natural disasters or economic crises. Therefore, offer solidarity when something wrong happens and someone encounters misfortune.
- VII. Take care of relationships, build bonds and offer a sense of community. Most people who suffer from loneliness and isolation have families. Offer support in the vicinity, open your eyes to the neighbours. People in need of support often do not verbalise their needs. Do not wait for another epidemic to see an 86-year-old lady from the 8th floor.
- VIII. Help the way you can. If you are a driver – offer a drive, if you are a lawyer – offer advice or help with writing a letter, if you are a teacher – offer help with classes.
- IX. Civil and social dialogue is possible where respect and good will are present. Be kind to others, including those who think differently. Involve in discussions on topics you know well. Listen to others to learn something about areas that are new to you.

- X. Technology can be an ally in social activities. Take the opportunity to improve your competences and pass them to others.

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