Non-profit organisations in nursery care and education in post-1989 Poland. Co-provision of nursery services as a new model for the activation of local communities and institutionalisation of foundations and associations? Or as a response to a crisis in public finance?

The author undertakes an attempt to present the role of non-profit organisations in the democratisation of nursery care and education in post-1989 Poland and their rooting in the community. Three phases of social policy during the period of transformations were distinguished, namely 1989 to 1995, 1996 to 2002 and 2003 to 2013. Besides this, taking the concept of co-provision of social services as her departure point, the author aims at describing both the involvement of associations and foundations at the stage of setting out, planning and programming the public policy in question, as well as at the stage of implementing it, which is to say, the direct provision of the nursery services by non-profit organisations. Solutions favourable to the institutionalisation of non-profit organisations’ role in the nursery policy which have actually been implemented in Polish communities are also pointed out and innovative forms, tools and objectives for public-private partnerships are discussed. Apart from this, the study attempts to define the most important barriers hindering the institutionalisation of the non-profit sector in nursery care and education policy, pointing to the structural factors, namely the Poles’ low level of involvement in the public sphere and the lack of strong post-primary structures such as consortia and federations of non-profit organisations; legal and economic factors, which is to say, the organisational and financing model for nursery services and the treatment of multiple-supplier provision of nursery services as an instrument helpful in improving the condition of public finances; and social factors, which is to say the lack of balance among the partners participating in the social dialogue on education, including the the powerfully organised trade unions, which defend the status quo in education.

Key words: non-profit organisations, nursery education, co-provision of social services