

**PROFESSIONALISATION AND ECONOMISATION
OF RURAL NGOs AND THE ACTIVITY
OF THEIR MEMBERS. AN EXAMPLE
OF LOCAL ACTION GROUPS FROM WIELKOPOLSKA**

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Abstract. Among rural non-governmental organisations there are those, which unite few members and act incidentally using mainly the resources which have been obtained from member fees, as well as those, which unite several hundreds of people and conduct regular activities characterised by high level of economisation and professionalisation. The other kind of organisations can be exemplified by local action groups. The purpose of this article is to address the question whether the high level of professionalisation and economisation has positive influence on the activities of its members or – the opposite – it constitutes a hindrance. The issue shall be addressed basing on research (carried out via the distributed surveys) conducted in 2012 on a sample of 104 respondents from local action groups located within the territory of Wielkopolska. The analysis demonstrated that the high level of economisation and professionalisation of an organisation does not imply increased activity of its members.

Key words: professionalisation and economisation of non-governmental organisations, local action groups

INTRODUCTION

Analyses of socio-economic changes occurring in contemporary Poland more and more often refer to the role of different forms of social capital. Fedyszak-Radziejowska [2012, p. 117] points out that: “Researchers, both sociologists and economists, are con-

vinced that social capital constitutes an asset, whose possession and utilisation allows to eliminate social discrepancies of marginalised social groups and communities of peripheral location. It is the social capital that is nowadays commonly believed to be an important factor supporting socio-economic development also in the case of those communities where insufficient economic capital or lower level of human capital constitute a considerable obstacle¹. When determining its level and character in the researched communities or social groups, the following factors are taken into consideration: mutual trust of its members and the ensuing network of connections, which result in a given socio-political activity. Particular attention is paid to the shape and mode of functioning of non-governmental organisations (which by definition constitute the embodiment of the idea of conscious participation in public life based on bottom-up engagement). Different analyses emphasise their diversity depending on location. There are not as many rural non-governmental organisations as those, which function in cities; moreover, rural organisations usually undertake actions merely on the local level. Their organisational potential is inferior (the number of members is usually smaller, they less often hire paid personnel); it applies to the financial potential as well (they more rarely obtain the so-called external financial resources to support their activities) [Kamiński 2008, p. 41-52, Herbst and Przewłocka 2011].

One of the mechanisms whose aim was to overcome the aforesaid circumstances was the introduction of the so-called LEADER² approach; the effect was the establishment of organisations which, by definition, were characterised by superior organisational and financial potential – within the period 2005-2008 339 foundations, associations and their unions referred to as local action groups³ (hereinafter referred to as LAG) were established. They are territorial partnerships acting for the purpose of the development of a given area comprising of either one or over a dozen municipalities. They consist of representatives of three sectors: the public, social and economic sector. As a consequence, the capital which they have at their disposal is accumulated. Already in the beginning of their operations, i.e. when the so-called II Pilot Programme LEADER+ (hereinafter referred to as PPL+) was being realised, local action groups obtained up to 750K PLN to realise their goals. In the period 2007-2013 the resources are much more abundant – up to a few dozen million PLN only from the Programme of Rural Development⁴. Simultaneously, the financial and organisational potential of LAG allows them to obtain additional funds to support their activities. By the end of 2011 more than 3/4

¹ The significance of social capital for the development of Poland has also been emphasised in governmental documents. For example, the report “Poland 2030. Developmental Challenges” (commissioned by the Prime Minister’s Office) states: “Social capital is a significant factor affecting the social and economic development of our country. Its level, after the transformation period has been completed, is not sufficient in order to realise developmental challenges facing Poland in the next 20 years” [Boni 2009, p. 339].

² Since 2005 local action groups have been created with the support of resources from the Sector Operations Programme called “Restructuring and modernisation of the food sector and rural development”. In the period 2007-2013 the same structures obtain resources (to meet their goals) from the Programme of Rural Development 2007-2013.

³ They are both organisations which were established as a result of implementing the Pilot Programme LEADER+ and after it was finished, i.e. after 2008.

⁴ The amount of resources obtained in order to realise their goal (inscribed into the local strategies of development) is proportionate to the number of residents within the area of partnership.

of LAG applied for such funds and 1/3 out of them did it more than seven times [Ocena... 2012, p. 60]. Therefore, the functioning of LAG implies economisation and professionalisation, which require that management mechanisms identical to those applicable to organisations aimed at making profit be used [Wygnański 2008, p. 25, Zajda 2011 a].

In the next programming period (2014-2020) the significance of LAG, as far as the influence on socio-economic changes of rural areas is concerned, will increase⁵. It has been postulated, among others, that they should acquire new responsibilities as institutions allocating grants (i.e. deciding which other rural non-governmental organisations or entrepreneurs will receive grants to realise their projects). As a consequence, the level of economisation and professionalisation of these organisations will also increase. Is it not against the idea of the third sector? Working within the third sector is provided otherwise than in the case of organisations focused on profit. It is volunteer work (for the common benefit) undertaken by different people of different competences. Does not even nowadays the high level of economisation and professionalisation of these organisations limit the possibility of active participation on the part of rural residents, particularly those characterised by relatively low level of human capital (indispensable e.g. in the case of managing financial projects from European funds) or those who do not constitute a part of the community of people involved in the work of such bodies as the board of directors or the council? In other words, does the high level of economisation and professionalisation of LAG have positive effect on the activities of its members, or just the opposite – does it constitute a hindrance?

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

When undertaking the research of local action groups in the first half of 2012 one of the aims was to determine who acts in these organisations and how⁶. Taking into consideration the increase of LAG powers in 2014-2020, there were attempts to determine whether the high level of professionalisation promotes the development of competences of the members of such organisations as far as the understanding of the mechanisms of changes in rural Poland is concerned (an attempt to diagnose, among others, the level of their knowledge concerning the rules of multi-functional and sustainable development, which are fundamental for the realisation of the 2nd pillar of Common Agricultural Policy).

⁵ In 2011 there took place several meetings regarding the future of LEADER approach. The most important, which gathered representatives of various institutions from all voivodeships which participate in its implementation, included: a) a conference entitled: "LEADER approach after 2013 in the face of new challenges for the development of rural areas in Europe" (4-5.10.2011), and b) a working meeting devoted to the future of local action groups organised by The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, LAG network from Małopolska and the Regional Office of National Rural Network for Małopolska (12.13.05.2011). The outcome of those meetings was the elaboration of proposals regarding the functioning of LAG after the year 2013, one of which was to increase their powers [Psyk-Piotrowska and Zajda 2012].

⁶ The research was conducted within the project entitled: The structure and conditions of social capital of local action groups (contract no. 6996/B/H03/2011/40 concluded between the University of Łódź and the National Science Centre).

The research was conducted in Wielkopolska. The object of the study were organisations which implemented the second scheme of PPL+, such as: Local Action Group Gościnną Wielkopolska, Ostrzeszów Local Action Group, Local Action Group KOLD Association, Światowid Association, Association Czarnkowsko-Trzcianecka Local Action Group⁷. It was assumed that the relationships between members (representing three sectors) in the case of longer-lasting partnerships are relatively stable and that a few-year experience shall allow the respondents to approach from a distance the problems under discussion.

The study used the technique of distributed surveys. Questionnaires of the survey were handed in during general assemblies of the members of these organisations and/ or during meetings of the board or the council (104 sheets were returned). The respondents stemmed predominantly from the social sector (40% of the total). The sample included a representation of the public sector in the number of 37% and of the economic sector - 23%. 21% of the respondents act as members of the board. About 39% of the respondents participated in the work of the council (i.e. a decisive body in the case of local action groups). The smallest number of respondents belonged to the revision commission (about 2% of the total)⁸.

THE ACTIVITY OF THE MEMBERS OF LOCAL ACTION GROUPS UNDER STUDY

In Wielkopolska local action groups acquired the form of associations⁹. Those, which were analysed supported the residents from 7 to 14 communes (Table 1).

They united predominantly people, who had previously been engaged in social activity (about 77% of the respondents had been involved in social work before they joined LAG, 60% out of which had participated in the work of another non-governmental organisation). Therefore, it should be assumed that those people, when joining LAG, were interested in taking advantage of their capital, among others human capital. It is connected with high level of education (merely 12% of respondents boasted less than secondary education) and competences induced by job experience (almost 2/3 of LAG members were 45-54 years old, which implies that they usually had worked for more than 20 years)¹⁰.

⁷ In the period 2004-2006 14 LAGs were founded in Wielkopolska. Apart from the five enumerated groups, research was also conducted on LAG „Między Ludźmi i Jeziorami” (“Between People and Lakes”). However, there were only two survey forms and, thus, this LAG was omitted from the sample. No questionnaires were obtained from the following LAGs: „Wspólnie dla Przyszłości” (“Together for the Future”), „Doliny Noteci” (“The Valleys of Noteć”) and „LGD7 – Kraina Nocy i Dni” (“LGD7 – the Land of Nights and Days”). The remaining five LAGs („Dolina Wełny” (“The Valley of Wool”), „Kraina Lasów i Jezior” (“The Land of Forests and Lakes”), „Stowarzyszenie Ziemi Grodzkiej” (“The Grodzka Land Association”), „Unia Nadwarciańska” (“The Union upon Warta”), „Puszcza Notecka” (“the Notecka Wilderness”)) did not realise II PPL+ scheme.

⁸ The remaining respondents (38%) were ordinary members of LAG.

⁹ Local Action Group Gościnną Wielkopolska was established in 2006 as a foundation. It changed its legal form in 2008.

¹⁰ Relatively few LAG members (12% of the total number) were young people, i.e. between 18 and 24 years old. The fact of smaller participation of such people in LAG can be explained by

Table 1. Number of members and structure of LAG under study
Tabela 1. Liczebność i struktura badanych LGD

Name of LAG Nazwa lokalnej grupy działania	Number of members Liczba członków				Number of municipalities constituting the partnership Liczba gmin wchodzących w skład partnerstwa	Number of residents in the partnership Liczba mieszkańców partnerstwa
	public sector sektor publiczny	economic sector sektor ekonomiczny	social sector sektor społeczny	total suma		
Local Action Group Gościnnia Wielkopolska Lokalna Grupa Działania Gościnnia Wielkopolska	14	8	42	53	9	87 499
Ostrzeszów Local Action Group Ostrzeszowska Lokalna Grupa Działania	8	8	62	78	7	54 621
Local Action Group KOLD Association Lokalna Grupa Działania Stowarzyszenie KOLD	7	4	113	124	7	78 837
Światowid Association Stowarzyszenie Światowid	14	10	46	70	14	138 853
Association Czarnkowsko- Trzcianiecka Local Action Group Stowarzyszenie Czarnkowsko- Trzcianiecka Lokalna Grupa Działania	8	19	49	76	7	75 217

Source: own studies based on the analysis of local development strategies and data concerning the number of LAG members (taking into consideration division into three sectors) obtained from their offices (as of 31.12.2011).

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie analizy lokalnych strategii rozwoju oraz danych o liczbie członków LGD (z uwzględnieniem podziału na trzy sektory) pozyskanych od ich biur (stan na 31.12.2011 roku).

The size of structures (they united from 53 to 124 people) does not, however, indicate their potential in the field of activating local communities. Official data does not reflect the number of the groups which actually undertake some actions within the or-

the fact that they continue education and start independent life (including the fact of having small children); they lack experience in the area of work for non-governmental organisations (compared to the other respondents, the youngest ones had rarely been involved in some social work before they joined LAG, nevertheless 3/5 of them had such experience).

ganisation (i.e. who do more than solely appear at the general assembly of members). It also happens that the size of a particular LAG derives from the number of organised foreign study tours – before the tour the number of members increases, however, when it is over, those numbers fail to be verified. Local action groups do not provide statistics of “dead souls”. More often than not they do not cross out from their registers those members, who fail to pay dues. This collectivity includes approximately 17% of the respondents, who admitted that they are members of particular organisations only formally as well as 32% of the respondents whose only form of activity was expressing their opinion during the meetings of a given group. Thus, not all members of LAG are interested in working for the benefit of the development of their partnership’s area (or its part). Why, then, did they decide to join in?

One of the reasons could be the significant role that local action groups play within particular communities. Being a member thereof ennoble the member, especially that they obtain resources from European funds (which are usually unattainable for other rural NGOs); moreover, they decide who will receive them (e.g. from the so-called small grants¹¹). Another reason could be the specifics of the process of establishing a LAG itself. More often than not local authorities (encouraged by the perspective of obtaining substantial financial resources for the development of their municipalities) were the main subject seeking people interested in joining LAG. Such proposals very often could not be refused. Hence, these organisations were joined by people, who expected that their membership would be passive, however, that it would contribute to the statistics, which would then show that a given local action group consists of representatives of all three sectors [Zajda 2011 b]. The third variable, which explains why passive LAG members constitute such a large group (49% in total) could be their poor awareness concerning the specifics of how these organisations function. When joining them, they were not ready for the high level of professionalisation and economisation, which differentiates them quite significantly from rural associations (which the majority of them actively participated in). The respondents’ declarations tend to confirm this state of affairs. Almost half of them (49%) admitted that in their opinion others would perform better undertaking different activities. In other words, they are convinced that their competences are either not useful or not enough in order to actively and fully participate in different actions. Almost every fifth respondent expressed their conviction that active participation in LAG is constantly reserved for the same group of people, who therefore have much larger experience than all the other members (including the respondents). Therefore, high level of LAG professionalisation (connected with their economisation) incurs the risk that these members who do not have adequate competences shall be excluded from the participation in different undertakings.

The people who have participated in LAG since they were established and belong to the board of directors, as well as to the decisive body – the council – demonstrate the highest level of activity. It is significant that their image is not coherent. On the one hand, their work is evaluated positively. They are believed to be motivated by their willingness to work for the benefit of the residents of all the municipalities comprising a given partnership (76% of replies) or of a part of the partnership (31% of replies)¹².

¹¹ Some of the groups allow grants already now. A good example is „Kraina Rawki” (“The Land of Rawka”) from Łódź voivodeship [Zajda and Michalska 2011].

¹² Interests do not sum up to 100, because the respondents were allowed to choose two answers.

Respondents relatively rarely indicate that the motivation of these people is related to their willingness to promote themselves (10% of replies) or to earn extra money (7% of replies). On the other hand, though, these people are perceived as performing a particular function in LAG and that they would be hard to replace. In this context, we may observe the phenomenon of elite anchoring in LAG structures – since a given LAG was founded, the same people have been performing the key functions.

Defficiency of good experience in cooperating with other members constitutes an impediment for undertaking actions by these organisations (third most important impediment mentioned by the so-called passive respondents)¹³. Thus, in the LAGs of Wielkopolska we can observe a potential for conflicts (an exaple of which can be the recent case of a court trial; a former member of the board of a local action group sued two other members). It seems that lack of trust towards the representatives of the public and economic sector does not constitute the ground for all the hidden conflicts. The situation of the social sector representatives is much more problematic, though. A relatively low percentage of LAG members trust them – 57% (interestingly enough, entrepreneurs enjoy higher level of trust). It might result from the high level of LAG professionalisation, which creates a belief that, in fact, they do not much differ from profit organisations. Their fluid identity (on the one hand, they are non-profit organisations; on the other hand, their goal is to obtain substantial financial resources) affects the image of these non-governmental organisations, which create them. They commence to be perceived not as associations for the public welfare, but as structures whose goal is to obtain financial resources in order ro renumerate their members. From this point of view, the composition of LAG might be crucial – representatives of the social sector predominate. It might be assumed that, in fact, physical persons represent other sectors (i.e. the public sector). False identity might be the variable which explains the relatively low level of trust that they enjoy. This interpretation might be confirmed by the fact that these members are the least frequently trusted by the representatives of the public and the social sectors, who are definitely well-informed about the specifics of their identity (Table 2, 3).

Tabel 2. Trust of the respondents towards the representatives of three sectors of LAG in % (N = 104)

Tabela 2. Zaufanie respondentów do reprezentantów trzech sektorów w LGD w % (N = 104)

Do you trust the representatives of the following sectors: Czy posiada Pan/Pani zaufanie do reprezentantów sektora:	Yes Tak	No Nie	Hard to say Trudno powiedzieć
Public – Publicznego	70	9	21
Social – Społecznego	57	12	31
Economic – Gospodarczego	72	7	21

Source: own elaboration.
Źródło: opracowanie własne.

¹³ 21% of the respondents agreed with the following opinion: “I do not participate in the initiatives for the benefit of the residents of the municipalities comprising our partnership, because I lack positive experience in cooperating with other LAG members”.

Table 3. Correlation between the sector that the respondents belong to and their trust towards the representatives of different sectors in LAG (N = 104)

Tabela 3. Zależność między sektorem, do którego należy badany, a zaufaniem do reprezentantów poszczególnych z nich w LGD (N = 104)

Sector that the respondent represents Sektor, który reprezentują badani	Percentage of respondents who trust the representatives of the following sectors Odsetek badanych, którzy obdarzają zaufaniem reprezentantów sektora		
	public publiczny	social społeczny	economic gospodarczy
Public – Publiczny	77	54	74
Economic – Gospodarczy	86	73	82
Social – Społeczny	64	54	67

Source: own elaboration.
Źródło: opracowanie własne.

The local action groups under study are dynamic structures – approximately 61% of the respondents have been their members since their establishment. Their composition has changed, which was probably partially connected with “the drainage of partnership elites” by local authorities and business [Knieć 2010, p. 65]. This phenomenon does not pertain to regular members, i.e. to those who often joined the structure on the spur of the moment or as a result of rumors concerning the benefits connected with membership (even such as an approaching study tour). Approximately 64% of the respondents (who participated in their work up to the realisation of II PPL+ scheme) recognised that PPL+ was hard to implement; at the same time about 48% of the total number of respondents expressed a similar opinion concerning the four axes of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013¹⁴. Interestingly enough, the solutions adapted during the current period of programming appeared to be complicated mostly for those respondents, who worked actively for LAG (approximately 76% of the board members declared that implementing LEADER approach is too hard). They are the members of this body that every day perform most of specialised tasks and all the work in their organisations (including reporting and accounting). Members of the council (the decisive body) predominantly deal with assessing the concordance of applications submitted by the residents of the area of partnership (or legal persons) with the plans and strategies for the partnership’s development¹⁵. They meet regularly, however usually less frequently than once

¹⁴ Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is divided into the so-called four subject axes. LEADER axis constitutes the fourth of them, out of which the functioning of LAG is financed.

¹⁵ In the period 2007-2013 local action groups are realising goals enlisted in the local operating strategies. They are implementing projects, which were selected via contests from the so-called 4 operations: Renewal and rural areas development, Diversification towards non-agricultural activity, Establishment and development of micro-companies, Small projects. Every LAG determines the total amount earmarked for funding projects submitted within these operations. They apply to local authorities – Marshal Offices – so that they announce a call for applications. Every LAG is responsible for gathering applications, their evaluation according to the local development strategy and their assessment (according to local selection criteria). Every LAG submits selected applications to the Marshal Office, recommending them for funding [Ocena... 2012, p. 19].

a month and they do not deal with the current operations of the organisation. It might explain, why from their point of view implementing LEADER approach is not that hard (55% of council members shared this opinion). Thus, the most active people who have experience in working for LAG recognised that their level of professionalisation constitutes a challenge even for people of high competence. Are these competences really high from the point of view of mechanisms governing the changes in rural Poland? In other words, does professionalisation of these organisations refer merely to managing the funds that they have at their disposal or does it actually imply high competences¹⁶ in the area of knowledge concerning the specifics of Common Agricultural Policy and, in particular, regarding the notional categories critical for its II pillar, i.e., for example, ‘multifunctional development’ or ‘sustainable development’?

Almost 72% (i.e. 75 out of 104) have never heard about the first category. The analysis of the opinions of the remaining 28¹⁷ allows to assume that only 13 are able to define the multifunctional development quite correctly¹⁸, among others in the following way: “The development not only of agriculture, but of other forms of business activity as well”, “The development of agriculture, functions other than agriculture and the improvement of the residents’ life and work conditions”, “Diversification of rural economy”.

Other respondents (15), who declared that they understood the idea of multifunctional development, explained it either using utterances, which lack concrete meaning, e.g.: “Development of all areas”, “Activities taken in many directions”, “Fulfilling many social areas”, or too briefly, employing inexact terms, which failed to refer to its referents: “It is development, which performs multiple functions”, “versatile”.

Similarly, a majority of respondents (65%) declared that they had never come across the concept of “sustainable development”. The statements made by the remaining part of the respondents rarely matched the meaning of this term, which prevails in subject literature. Only 11 out of 36 respondents referred to one of its three concepts when defining sustainable development (ecological, socio-economic, socio-economic-natural). To provide an example, the respondents explained the idea of sustainable development thus: “It means the development of culture and business activity, while maintaining natural values”, “It signifies socio-economic development, where there occurs the process of integrating socio-economic and social activities with maintaining the natural balance”, “It’s the kind of development, when current needs are satisfied, while the possibility of satisfying the needs of future generations is not threatened”. When explaining this conceptual category, the remaining part of respondents (25) utilised formulations: 1) basing on which it is hard to judge, whether or not they possess any

¹⁶ Competences signify the possession of knowledge as well as skills and attitudes that enable its utilisation.

¹⁷ One instance of lack of data has been noted.

¹⁸ Multi-functionality is understood as realising not merely production functions in the rural areas, but also such functions as: recreation, housing, or services [Kłodziński 1995, p. 124, Czarnecki 2009, p. 45]. In subject literature, a few concepts of balanced development are presented: 1) ecological (balanced development is here tantamount to ecological development), 2) socio-economic (balanced development here signifies economic activity boosting social wealth and protecting natural resources), 3) socio-economic-natural (identifying balanced development with balancing social, economic, spacial and ecological development approached as a process occurring in time) [Paszkowski 2001, p. 215-216]. In the hereby analysis it was assumed that the statements made by the respondents can correspond with all the concepts.

knowledge in this area¹⁹, 2) whose analysis indicates wrong identification of this concept with multi-functional development²⁰. Few respondents (3) identified sustainable development with one, which is : “stable”, “levelling chances”, “multi-dimensional”, which also shows shortage of knowledge concerning the specifics of such development. Therefore, it might be assumed that out of 104 respondents merely 13 acquired knowledge concerning the idea of multi-functional development and only 11 concerning the idea of sustainable development. This outcome is more than astonishing and disappointing, especially taking into consideration the fact that almost 60% of members of the board of local action groups, as well as 65% of council members have not heard about multi-functional development. They constitute the most important bodies for these organisations – in the current programming period, the council is responsible for evaluating submitted applications. It is hard to provide evaluation, not comprehending the idea of transformations taking place in contemporary rural areas.

SUMMARY

The economisation and professionalisation of rural non-governmental organisations lead to changes, which may have an impact on the activity of their members. The research demonstrated that more substantial resources earmarked for their activities do not imply that ordinary members participate more actively in the work of local action groups. Most of work is completed predominantly by the members of the board and the council. Their active work (usually visible since the moment when the organisation was established) has consolidated their position within the organisations, which, in turn, caused marginalisation of other members, including those who would like to be more active, however their motivation is hindered by the fact that all the work is done “constantly by the same people”.

High level of economisation and professionalisation of the analysed organisations does not imply that they include solely extremely competent members. Lack of knowledge on the part of LAG members concerning the new model of rural development is disquieting. Few are able to explain the direction in which rural development is heading (poor knowledge regarding the conceptual categories which are significant from the point of view of programming activities aimed at local development (i.e. multi-functional and sustainable development) confirm this fact. The approaching programming period assumes that local action groups shall gain importance as far as affecting socio-economic rural changes is concerned. New provisions and procedures are bound to appear and group members will have to acquire them; there shall be new regulations, which they will be obliged to explain to those rural residents who will be willing to apply for available financial resources (e.g. to support their business activities). Taking the above into account, it will be even more important to increase the competence level of local action groups' members, particularly in the case of members of the board.

¹⁹ 18 statements in total: “The development of different social aspects at similar pace”, “Even development of all fields”, “Taking into consideration in the development policy all the elements, which are significant to the local community”.

²⁰ 4 statements in total: “It's the kind of development, when agriculture and other areas develop evenly”, “It is a combination of a few functions: agriculture, tourism and services”.

However, obtaining substantial resources for the purpose of operations, hiring staff and professionalisation of the management system imply that there appears a new threat for the analysed local action groups. Their more active role, as well as more creative role towards the social capital will be realised on condition that the motivation of their members will relate to the norms and values aimed at achieving common welfare, rather than private and particular goals. The new threat, hence, is the necessity to oscillate within the thin border that differentiates them from subjects whose main purpose is to generate profit. In other words, local action groups have to answer the question how to use the process of professionalisation and economisation for their members' activation. Otherwise, they may transform into new offices responsible for rural areas development.

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PROFESJONALIZACJA I EKONOMIZACJA WIEJSKICH NGO A AKTYWNOŚĆ ICH CZŁONKÓW. PRZYKŁAD WIELKOPOLSKICH LOKALNYCH GRUP DZIAŁANIA

Streszczenie. Wśród wiejskich organizacji pozarządowych można wyróżnić zarówno te, które zrzeszają niewielką liczbę członków, działają incydentalnie wykorzystując głównie środki pochodzące ze składek członkowskich, jak i te, które zrzeszają kilkaset osób, prowadzą regularną działalność charakteryzującą się wysokim poziomem ekonomizacji i profesjonalizacji. Przykładem drugiego rodzaju struktur są lokalne grupy działania. Celem artykułu jest odpowiedź na pytanie, czy wysoki poziom ich profesjonalizacji i ekonomizacji wpływa korzystnie na aktywność ich członków czy wręcz odwrotnie jest dla nich ograniczeniem? Została ona udzielona na podstawie badań (przeprowadzonych za pomocą techniki ankiety rozdawanej), zrealizowanych w 2012 roku na próbie 104 respondentów z pięciu lokalnych grup działania ulokowanych na obszarze Wielkopolski. Analiza wykazała, iż wysoki poziom ich ekonomizacji i profesjonalizacji nie oznacza zwiększenia aktywności ich członków. Pracę w organizacjach wykonują przede wszystkim członkowie zarządu oraz rady. Ich aktywność (najczęściej wykazywana od momentu powstania organizacji) utrwaliła ich pozycję w grupach, co stało się jedną z przyczyn marginalizacji innych członków, wśród których znaleźli się także ci, których chęć działania blokuje fakt, iż wszelkie prace wykonują „ciągle te same osoby”. Wysoki poziom ekonomizacji i profesjonalizacji analizowanych organizacji nie oznacza również, że w ich skład wchodzi tylko członkowie dysponujący wysokimi kompetencjami. Niepokojący wydaje się deficyt wiedzy członków LGD w zakresie specyfiki nowego modelu rozwoju wsi. W przyszłym okresie programowania przewiduje się zwiększenie znaczenia tych organizacji w zakresie oddziaływania na społeczno-gospodarcze przemiany wsi. Tym bardziej będzie wskazane podwyższenie poziomu kompetencji członków lokalnych grup działania, zwłaszcza tych, którzy przynależą do zarządu.

Słowa kluczowe: profesjonalizacja i ekonomizacja organizacji pozarządowych, lokalne grupy działania

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