



RESEARCH REPORT - POLAND

COUNTERING RACISM AND INVISIBLE RACISM AMONG YOUTH

PREPARED BY

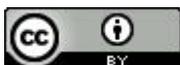
ANNA LECHOWSKA
DARIUSZ GRZEMNY



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Association for Children and Youth People CHANCE
ul. Perseusza 13, 67-200 Głogów, POLAND
<https://szansa.glogow.pl>



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THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Association for Children and Young People CHANCE has been active in the field of violence prevention and work against different types of violence for 19 years now. The activities for children and young people include human rights education and anti-discrimination education aiming at building the culture of human rights and developing attitudes of understanding and tolerance. All activities are the direct response to the needs of local community and young people themselves.

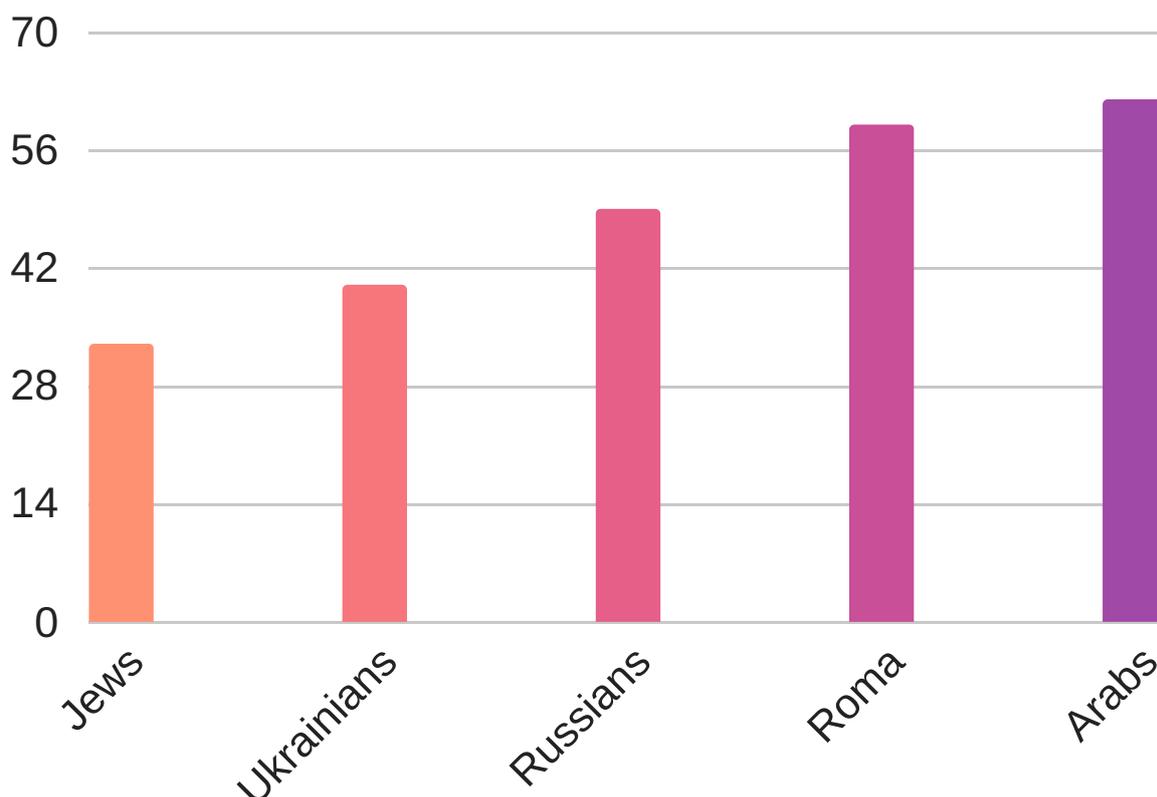
Głogów, as the most of regions of Poland is quite homogeneous when it comes to cultural, ethnic or national diversity. Roma people are the biggest ethnic group present in town. However, there are more and more families from Ukraine moving to the region; therefore, Ukrainian young people become visible in schools and the community.

As in the rest of Poland, nationalistic attitudes shown by young people are very present in town: one of the organisations registered in Głogów aims at developing young people's patriotic attitudes, running activities in schools that very often vilify foreigners and refugees. The attitudes to the before-mentioned groups are very hostile among young people mainly due to the nationalistic propaganda in the media. The level of hate speech, as expressed by young people, especially on the Internet is quite high, targeting refugees, LGBT people and Jewish people. In this respect, Głogów does not differ from the rest of Poland. The schools our association works with sometimes notify us about violent incidents that target people of different skin colour, perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender.

Data related to attitudes of Polish people towards different minorities are regularly collected by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS). In the latest survey report of the Centre (CBOS 37/2018) from 2018 on the attitudes of Polish people towards other nationalities, the data show that Polish people are very negative towards Roma people (59%) and the Arabs (62%). It is worth mentioning that the demographic data related to these results show that the younger the people the more positive attitude they show.

HOSTILITY TOWARDS OTHER NATIONALITIES

Source: CBOS, Komunikat z Badań, Nr 37/2018



In another report on the attitudes towards LGBT people (CBOS 174/2017) some 55% of the respondents consider homosexuality as something abnormal (though it should be tolerated), however 24% of the surveyed people believe it should not be tolerated. 62% of people think that LGBT people should not show affection in public places, 64% are against gay marriages and 82% would not allow LGBT people to adopt children.

However, as in the previous report, the young people constitute the group that show the most inclusive approach. The situation changes when it comes to the attitudes towards refugees. In its latest report the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS 163/2017) on the attitudes towards receiving refugees in Poland, the data show that people in the age 18 - 34 constitute the group that shows the least tolerant attitudes towards refugees.

62% of people think that LGBT people should not show affection in public places, 64% are against gay marriages and 82% would not allow LGBT people to adopt children

Source: CBOS, Komunikat z badań, Nr 174/2017

63% of the respondents would not allow refugees to settle down in Poland regardless of the place they originate from

Source: CBOS, Komunikat z badań, Nr 163/2017

Some 63% of the respondents would not allow refugees to settle down in Poland regardless of the place they originate from. This number grows when the region of origin is specified: 75% of people show disapproval towards refugees from the Middle East and Africa. However, when it comes to accepting refugees from Ukraine fleeing the regions affected by war, some 61% of Polish people are in favour of providing them with shelter and support.

These numbers allow to get an orientation when it comes to attitudes towards minority people as the surveys were run on the representative sample. It is worth noticing the increase of positive attitudes towards LGBT people when the results are compared with the ones from previous years. However, due to the political atmosphere and the media propaganda in the times of massive movements of refugees from Syria to Europe, the attitudes towards the Arab people and the refugees decreased significantly.

RESEARCH PROBLEM QUESTIONS

The research aims to find answers to the following questions:

- what is young people's experience, understanding and perception of racism, invisible racism and other related phenomena, such as hate speech or discrimination?
- what are the needs to tackle it?
- what are the existing practices and policies in the local and national contexts that are there to address these needs.

**#racism #invisible racism
#young_people #hate_speech
#discrimination #needs
#attitudes #practices
#policies**

MAIN FINDINGS

YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT FORMS OF RACISM

Young people who took part in the research do not see the presence of 'old' racism around them (besides the one expressed by neo-nazi groups). However, they notice a lot of forms of subtle racism, such as racist jokes, denying someone's identity or hate speech on the Internet. Hate speech is probably something they young people see the most and can easily recognise.

(INVISIBLE) RACISM IS ACCEPTABLE

All interviewees, mentioned the presence of verbal violence and the use of words that can be offending, such as: calling someone Jew (greedy, stupid) or homo ('pedał' in Polish). These words are often used with no special meaning: they become floating signifiers with no reference to specific object or situation. The research clearly shows that young people nowadays become indifferent towards occurrences of racist hate speech, especially on the internet, but also in social interactions. Racist vocabulary is seen as a part of daily vocabulary of young people "everybody uses". The level of acceptance towards hate speech has recently increased.

PROBLEMS WITH DEFINITION(S)

Young people find it hard to define racism and invisible racism, They usually use the term very intuitively and define it through different expressions of racism. The term 'invisible racism' is completely not known to them. Young people miss conceptual apparatus to be able to define racism.

RACISM DOES HARM

Young people were very emotional about their own experience with hate speech, mentioning such emotions like: hopelessness, fear, inability to react, anger or sadness

IGNORANCE IS STILL THE MOST USED STRATEGY

Young people use different strategies to deal with hate speech or other forms of violence: many of them ignore it believing that no reaction is the best reaction. Such an approach appeared misleading for 2 of them, as the ignorance led to the increase of violence.

DIFFERENT NEEDS

Young people claim that they need to learn how to recognise various forms of racism. They would like to get competences to be more courageous to be able to react when they are confronted with racism and invisible racism. They also would like to be able to convince friends that they are wrong about different minorities.

NO POLICIES

The research shows the lack of national level policies to counteract racism in education. School level policies exist, however, they do not provide structures and procedures of action and reaction to racist incidents and violence.

THERE ARE MANY GOOD PRACTICES

Practices to counteract racism in educational practice are mainly developed by the civil society sector that provides many educational resources on anti-racist and anti-discrimination education. The No hate Speech Movement campaign in Poland mobilised some 90 organisations that provided a lot of tools to deal with racist hate speech.

METHODOLOGY

In order to find answers to the research problem questions the researchers decided to use qualitative research methods. The choice of such an approach was motivated by several factors:

- qualitative methodology allows for deeper understanding of how people involved in the research perceive racism and other phenomena. They express their opinions in their own words, adding emotions, which can be observed by the researcher. We believe it constitutes an important factor when it comes to violent behaviours that are the matter of this research.
- the methods used - in-depth interviews, focus groups and the research experiment - allow the research participants „to be who they are” - the direct form of communication used in the research facilitates the process of opening up, therefore there are bigger chances that the replies are authentic and spontaneous.

Using such methodology has some limits: the understanding of the issues tackled in the research is limited to the perception of small number of people and their direct experience. It does not, therefore, show the whole picture of the researched problem. The same goes to the scope of emotions expressed by the research participants. However, these limits should not minimise the value of knowledge collected during the interviews and focus groups. Racism, hate speech or discrimination are individual experiences in the strict sense, limited to concrete experiences of every individual. The phenomena described in this report are also very emotional for the research participants; therefore, using quantitative methodology did not seem to be the best option. The methodology of the research included several interconnected elements that contributed to getting an overall picture of the understanding of the problems and questions tackled by the research:

1. In-depth interviews with young people: 7 young persons in the age 15-18 were interviewed, using the questions prepared beforehand. This part of the research was meant to get data related to young people's understanding of the notions of racism and invisible racism and explore their needs when it comes to tackling two above mentioned phenomena. The questions were also related to young people's perception of racism and their own experience. Such a method allows for collecting data directly from the person and adapting it to the person's experience, knowledge and context. As it is an open method, the interviewer does not need to stick to the pre-set questions but rather explore aspects that are interesting both for the surveyed person and the interviewer, taking into account the research problem. As Steinar Kvale put it: „The in-depth interview is a specific form of talk between two people, during which the knowledge is created through interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee”. (Kvale, 2007)

2. Focus group with school counsellors: 14 school counsellors took part in the focus group, which was run by the project coordinator in order to explore their perception of racism and invisible racism and discuss different forms of interventions that are undertaken and practices used when a racist incident or attack takes place at school. The participants were also asked about their perception of young people's attitudes towards people or groups that are often targeted with hate or violence. The group of counsellors was chosen as they are usually the ones that have to deal with problem behaviours of children and young people. They are considered the first person at school that need to take care of people involved in a conflict or problematic situation, so one can assume they are well informed when it comes to racist incidents and other forms of intolerance that happen at school. They also supervise the implementation of the educational programme related to developing young people's attitudes of non-violence and tolerance.

3. Research experiment with young people: The experiment was run in late 2017 by our Association but has never been properly analysed. It was based on the idea of creating spaces for young people to freely express themselves and create a book together, which would include voices of youth on the issues of hate speech. 498 young people in 8 schools in Głogów took part in the experiment: each school was given a different aspect to discuss and put it in written form, so after collecting all papers from schools, they will all make a single publication. During the experiment, done without any intervention from an adult, young people discussed in smaller groups the following issues: the notion of hate speech, the experience with hate speech, the perspective of a victim and

a perpetrator and what should be done to limit hate speech. Such a method allows for collecting a lot of data, which is usually very spontaneous and free from bias - young people can express themselves without being observed, judged or corrected. The answers can be disputable and controversial but they all should be taken into consideration.

4. Desk research: this part of the research consisted of consulting various web sites and materials in order to gather data on the practices and policies related to racism and invisible racism. The authors used different methods in this part of the research:

- random search using key words such as: racism, invisible racism, anti-racism, hate speech, discrimination, young people;
- targeted search on the web sites of various NGOs and institutions that are active in the field of anti-racism: consulting policy papers, existing research and methodologies used in the work against racism.



RACISM AND INVISIBLE RACISM

GENERAL REMARKS

The racist statements become floating signifiers with no reference to specific object or situation, becoming a part of everyday vocabulary of young people.

This part of the analysis concentrates on young people's experiences, understanding and perception of racism, invisible racism and related phenomena, such as discrimination and hate speech. It will also try to identify the needs of young people related to tackling before mentioned phenomena.

At the beginning of the interviews young people were asked to describe the general atmosphere at school focusing mainly on the attitudes towards people who are considered to belong to minority groups. All interviewees were very positive about what happens in schools: they rather described the atmosphere as free from serious violence and quite open to minority people. Majority of them stressed that the attitudes towards minority people changed over the past years and now racism is not only visible but also in many cases not acceptable.

Such an attitude may be the result of the fact that all people who were interviewed were quite conscious about the issue of racism,

and they most probably function in the networks of their peers who may be open towards "otherness". Some of them also identify as minority young people, belonging to sexual minorities. All interviewees, however, mentioned the presence of verbal violence and the use of words that can be offending, such as: calling someone Jew (greedy, stupid) or homo ('peda' in Polish). These words are often used with no special meaning: they become floating signifiers with no reference to specific object or situation. One of the young persons interviewed explains it well:

"When I use them, I do it naturally... like other people do. We all do it. I do not want to offend people and when I say it nobody seems offended."

However, the reason such expressions exist is based in stereotypes related to sexual, ethnic or national minorities that are deeply rooted in people's conscience. One of the girls (18) explains it:

"I believe that young people are intolerant as they have deep stereotypes about different people. These stereotypes have been solidified from generation to generation and repeated all over again. So, there is a moment when they do not even realise it... they are not aware they are stereotypes... they think it is OK to say it. And nobody reacts..."

When it comes to the school atmosphere, the report on discrimination at schools done by the Anti-Discrimination Education Society in 2016 (TEA 2016) shows very similar results. The young people who took part in the focus groups within the research described school atmosphere as positive, though when it came to details their reactions were far from enthusiastic. They rather described it as 'neutral' or 'nothing special'. They highlighted that school is the place where different groups get together and operate and some people stay aside and do not integrate, which they considered normal. However, when asked for details, they realised that these seemingly 'neutral' groups might have been created on the basis of exclusion of some people who did not fit it.

Young people who were interviewed are sure that young people are rather tolerant; some of them clearly stated that young people are more tolerant than adults. However, when asked about the attitude towards refugees or Muslims, all of them said that there is a lot of hate towards these groups of people. These two groups are often the topic of discussions, which

finish with negative judgements. One of the girls once tried to react to a group of her peers who were very negative of Muslims and she was laughed at. The school counsellors who also believe schools are rather friendly places free from serious occurrences of violence were very clear that young people are not tolerant. They often blame parents for such a situation. One of them said:

"There is a student in the class that includes children with disabilities. This is the idea the school implements – to bring together able-bodied people with people with disabilities. It is parents who decide to send a child to such a class. This student is very aggressive towards children with disabilities. During the conversation with parents I presented the situation and asked them if they are aware to what type of class they sent their child. They said they were aware, but they had nothing against their child to be nasty to kids with disabilities."

The parents are also blamed for stereotypes and prejudice towards refugees and immigrants. One of them said:

"A student came to me after an anti-discrimination workshop and said that she had nothing against refugees and she would like Poland to receive them. However, she said "I can be in favour, but how it is going to change anything? My parents are very negative about refugees and in the TV they all the time say we should not tolerate them."

It is interesting to notice that young people who were interviewed point out at their peers as the source of stereotypes while the school counsellors focus mainly on family upbringing and atmosphere at home. It is clear that young people in certain age believe that other young people have the biggest influence in their socialisation process, which is often true. However, the reinforcement of stereotypes towards other people is usually the combination of different factors: the influence of peers, the need to adapt to the peer group, atmosphere at home and the influence of the media.

NOTIONS

Young people miss conceptual apparatus to be able to define racism. Their definitions are rather intuitive and refer mainly to expressions of racism. They never heard of "invisible racism"

The notion of racism might be difficult to understand for young people, let alone invisible racism. Young people who were interviewed did not find it easy to define racism: they mainly referred to 'bad attitude or behaviour' to people of different races. When asked what 'race' means for them, some of them were reluctant to say it and some referred to skin colour. Two people stated that racism is associated with degrading treatment of people who have different skin colour, ethnic origin or nationality. However, most of young people who were interviewed defined racism using a very archaic definition that takes into account the notion of race only. Although defining racism was not easy for young people, giving examples of racism was not problematic. They mentioned: jokes about Jewish people, hate speech against Muslims and refugees, assaults on people with different skin colour, killings of people of different nationality, skin colour or ethnic background. When asked if they had even heard about invisible racism, all of the interviewees were sure they hadn't. Situations like racist jokes, using racist expressions were identified by them as racism, not invisible racism.

Three of them even said they did not see the point of calling it invisible racism as it diminishes the meaning of the notion of racism and the word 'invisible' can suggest that something is acceptable.

The interviewees were asked to identify the reasons why certain people are racist. All of them mentioned the stereotypes and prejudices that are learnt in the process of socialisation, mainly in the family and in the peer groups, with the special emphasis on the later. One of the said:

"Racism has become a part of daily life. I have a feeling we all use it to certain degree... all in all, we all have stereotypes. I realised how often I used racist statements, but I was not even aware they were racist, and they can be offending to people around me."

It is interesting to state that most of the young people who were interviewed pointed at media, both social and mainstream media as one of the main sources of reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices:

"It makes me sick when I see what happens on Facebook: people use so many racist words or expressions and nobody reacts. But when I watch the news sometimes and hear stories about refugees, it makes me even sicker – how can you say so many lies about refugees."

The interviewees mentioned other reasons as well, such as: stupidity, low or high self-esteem, lack of contact with people from other cultural or ethnic groups or peer pressure. They also connected racism with other phenomena, for example:

"When someone is racist, he/she is usually homophobic or hates other people for whatever reason. I know people like that. Hate has become a lifestyle for such people: the more you hate the cooler you are... and it does not only apply to boys, there are more girls who are like that."

In the research experiment we ran, young people were asked to define hate speech. This turned out not to be an easy task as well. The definitions provided, as in the case of racism, were very intuitive, and the term was rather defined through the expressions of hate speech. Only 2 entries referred to racist hate speech (out of 54), while the others pointed at hate towards people who have different opinions, some of them mentioned homophobic hate speech and hate towards people who come from poorer families and do not wear clothing that is considered fashionable.

A very similar situation appears in the research on discrimination done by the Anti-discrimination Education Society when it comes to defining discrimination. "Students were not able to differentiate between unequal treatment related to concrete aspects of identity from other characteristics like liking other types of music or being a fan of a particular football team. In general, all "departures from norm" can be the reason for something unpleasant (like exclusion or isolation) regardless if it is smoking cigarettes or being the best student in the class." (p.88)

After analysing different entries in the research experiment and the statements made by young people during the interviews, it can be stated that young people miss a conceptual apparatus to be able to define racism and related terms. It is much easier to provide examples of racism, hate speech or discrimination than to be able to provide a definition. One can think, if it is important. On one hand, it is not as it often happens that people are not able to define things but at the same time they are able to recognise that something is wrong or unacceptable. On the other hand, the definitions provide a conceptual framework that can be helpful in recognising occurrences of racism, hate speech and discrimination and be able to name them and react accordingly. Such a situation occurs in defining hate speech, where students mainly refer to hate towards people who think differently than they do, without mentioning characteristics related to identity. What is more, their way of thinking focuses on the relationship between two individuals, totally omitting groups that can be target of racism, hate speech or discrimination. Such a lack of conceptual understanding leads to complete neglect towards such issues as privilege and power, which is missing in students' statements.

Young people during the interviews and the research experiment claim they sometimes experienced hate speech. Most of them, however, were witnessing racism, hate speech or discrimination. They were targeted with hate speech for different reasons: because they objected homophobic or racist statements both online and offline or because they were perceived as a minority. One of them was very explicit about own experience:

“... I was often backbitten on the Internet. People said that because I was lesbian I should have been exterminated and I should be dead by now, that I should not call myself Polish, that I should not exist and that I should be treated in the hospital. So, these kinds of words have always had an influence on me... but I always tried to fight against it and explain to people... I think it all comes from the lack of knowledge or fear.”

Young people were very emotional about their own experience with hate speech, mentioning such emotions like: hopelessness, fear, inability to react, anger or sadness.

EXPERIENCE

Some young people, when targeted with hate speech, felt empowered and motivated to react, either by writing an alternative post or reporting it to the school counsellor.

However, some of them they state that offence on the Internet is less painful than hate speech offline. This is not the case for some young people: in the research experiment many young people describe strong feelings when they were targeted with hate speech:

“We posted a photo of ours on Facebook... and the hate started to flow. Very soon nasty comments appeared. At the beginning we were very indifferent about it, but when we saw some comments with our pictures that were modified, something changed in us and the tears appeared in our eyes. One of us was seen, when crying, by mother, who decided to report it to the class headteacher. Then, the conversations with the school counsellor started – with the person who did it and with his parents. We felt humiliated.”

What is interesting, some young people mention that verbal attacks motivated them to take action. They somehow felt empowered and motivated to react, either by writing an alternative post or reporting it to the school counsellor.

All young people who were interviewed and took part in the research experiment witnessed racism and hate speech – on the Internet, in the news and in close relations with their peers. But, as previously mentioned, some racist expressions were considered “normal” by them as they are a part of everyday vocabulary of young people and some were painful or humiliating, especially when they referred to the person they knew or liked.

The school counsellors notice the increase of verbal attacks at school – calling someone names, slurs, slanders or insults. These expressions very often refer to Jewish people or Roma people, however they are not targeting the ones who represent such groups. What is more, the counsellors are very positive when it comes to treatment of e.g. Roma people. They feel they are very well integrated and do not suffer visible intolerance or discrimination. When asked what they do if the situation of verbal abuse happens at school, they only mention conversation as the remedy. Such conversations are usually run with the person affected and the person who committed violence and, in some cases, parents are involved. In some situations, the school counsellors use confrontation as a method to solve problems. What is really worrying is the fact that greater attention is given to the perpetrator than the victim: the task is to find out who is guilty rather than provide support to the person affected by violence.

They very rarely use external resources, such as psychologists or other specialists: these people are only contacted in case gross violence happens.

Young people use different strategies to deal with hate speech or other forms of violence: many of them ignore it believing that no reaction is the best reaction. Such an approach appeared misleading for 2 of them, as the ignorance led to the increase of violence. Others decide to respond, especially on the Internet. In such cases, the reaction from the perpetrator(s) was either positive (no more comments) or negative (massive negative comments). One of the girls who was interviewed said she was threatened with rape when she tried to defend refugees in the Internet forum discussion. Many young people claim they are afraid to react – one of them says that nowadays one must be thick-skinned when using the Internet as the attack may come in any time, especially when you use social media or play Internet games. This often shows when young people witness the situation of racist speech in the offline environment: they are afraid to be rejected or considered 'different'. What they all state is the fact that lack of reaction is the result of the lack of knowledge and competences to react.

Therefore, they either ignore violence or run away from it, by deleting their profiles or banning a person who committed violence. One of the girls, who was interviewed, acts as a group administrator on Facebook and her only way to deal with violence is to remove members who commit it. Naturally, all those reactions are very valid and should not be criticised, taking into account a very high emotional burden they carry. However, young people do not feel prepared to deal with violence that is perpetrated against them: neither the school nor the families play the role of equipping young people with competences to deal with difficult situations. When it comes to the situations when they witness racism in different forms, there might be many reasons they do not react: either fear of rejection or insensitivity, that is often the result of many racist expressions being accepted in the society.

It is also clear from the research is the fact that young people's level of tolerance towards hate speech (including racist speech) increased in the past years. One of the young person who was interviewed said that he had an impression that nowadays it is allowed to say more than in the past times. This opinion is very justified and confirmed by other research. The Batory Foundation ran in 2016 a research on hate speech (Batory Foundation 2016), which brings very interesting results, that are somehow confirmed by the interviews we ran. The research shows that:

- Refugees and gay people were the groups targeted with hate speech the most
- Hate speech is encountered mainly on the Internet (by young people), on TV (by adults), in everyday conversations and in the streets
- The more people are exposed to hate speech in their surrounding the more immune they become towards it; they stopped perceiving it as a serious social problem
- Young people who encounter hate speech are ready to break other rules of social co-existence declaring readiness to use violence in everyday life
- The more hate speech in the surrounding, the more people are ready to use it. 50% of young people declared they had used it at least once
- Hate speech is mainly perpetrated by young people – 64% of teenagers said they used it
- Most of the hate speech results from disdain rather than from hate.
- The content of hate speech towards groups corresponded with the existing common stereotypes about such groups
- In most cases, when hate speech targets the representatives of certain groups – such as Jewish people, Roma people, Ukrainian people, people with dark skin colour or feminists – the content is very specific: it reflects relations between the majority and the minority.
- Secondary prejudices seem to play an important role in formulating hate speech: perceiving a given group as the one that deserves bad treatment because they behaved badly previously.
- Young people, in comparison with adults, declared frequent contact with racist hate speech.
- Hate speech targeting Jewish people and refugees is considered less offending by young people; adults see it as more offending.

These outcomes of the research are very much in line what we found out in the interviews and the experiment. Hate speech, including racist speech, becomes acceptable as people are confronted with it more frequently, so it does not make a big impression on young people. It somehow became a part of the public discourse, especially when it comes to refugees and recently Jewish people, due to the new law we have in Poland that prohibits attributing crimes perpetrated by the Nazi soldiers to Polish people. Some lawyers believe that the law prohibits talking about Polish people who were involved in crimes against Jewish people.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS

TO TACKLE RACISM AND INVISIBLE RACISM

One could ask the question if young people have any needs in relation to tackling racism, hate speech or discrimination after seeing the results from the research, notably bigger acceptance of verbal violence targeting different minority groups. Nothing can be more misleading than that. Young people stress the emotional burden in the situations when they are either targeted or witness racism and other forms of violence. They are aware that in extreme cases such violence is very harmful and ends up with suicidal attempts or self-harm. They notice how their social environment deteriorates and how it affects their well-being. Many people who took part in the research experiment expressed the need to live in the world that is free from violence.

We have collected the list of different needs of young people in order to tackle racism, both from the perspective of young people themselves and the perspective of school counsellors in order to have two perspectives, which are equally important.

YOUNG PEOPLE

- To learn how to react to hate speech both online and offline
- To develop competences of communication, especially with people who use racist hate speech
- To learn how to be courageous enough to react when other people use racists expressions
- To learn what is acceptable and what is not when it comes to certain expressions
- To be able to stand against people who are racists
- To know where to go when one is targeted with racism or hate speech
- To know how to create friendly atmosphere at school
- To be able to recognise that something is based on stereotypes or should be treated as disinformation and deceit when it comes to information about certain groups of people who are affected by racism, e.g. refugees
- To be able to receive positive information in the media, not only the ones that are shocking or full of hate
- To learn how to convince friends that they are wrong about people who they target with hate speech and that their opinions are based on stereotypes
- to make friends with people of different origin or background

SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

- To get involved in social campaigns or other initiatives that would change attitudes towards minority young people
- To take part in the educational programmes on discrimination, racism and hate speech
- To learn about the consequences of racist behaviours, how racism affects other people
- To be able to turn up for help and advice when one is targeted with racist behavior or hate speech
- To develop communication and conflict resolution skills
- To be able to have contact with people from other backgrounds without discrimination or intolerance
- To treat other people with respect
- To learn how to responsively use the Internet and especially social media
- To learn how to be pro-active in the work against racism
- To learn how to talk to parents and peers when they express racist remarks or use hate speech

POLICY AND PRACTICE

OF LEARNING AND ACTION AGAINST RACISM



When discussing policies on countering racism through education it is good to start from the national level to set the ground. Former Law on Educational System, in its Preamble, stated that school should guarantee conditions indispensable for development for all school students; it should prepare the students to fulfil all family and civic responsibilities based on the principles of solidarity, democracy, tolerance, justice and freedom. This Preamble was repealed in the new law that entered into force in 2017 (Dz.U. 1991 Nr 95 poz. 425). In the same law the words 'democracy' or 'tolerance' do not appear anymore. The new Teachers' Charter, however, still states that: "(Teachers should) take care of developing students' moral and civic attitudes in accordance with the ideals of democracy, peace and friendship between people of different nations, races and worldviews." (Dz.U. 1982 Nr 3 poz. 19).

In 2015 the Ministry of National Education included antidiscrimination education in the document on requirements from schools and educational institutions, stating that it should be obligatory for all students. This entry in the document was also repealed by the new Ministry. Therefore, it is valid to say that national policies clearly do not feel obliged to support antidiscrimination education in any way.

The latest report on anti-discrimination education at school published by the Anti-discrimination Education Society in 2016 sets some recommendations to strengthen antidiscrimination education (TEA, Edukacja antydyskryminacyjna 2016), including the need to run educational programmes that tackle discrimination, prejudice-based violence and hate speech. While the national level policies fail in setting the ground for anti-discrimination education in formal education, NGOs feel responsibility to run such programmes and provide tools to be used both in formal and non-formal education.

The national legislation does not support anti-discrimination education. The law obliging schools to run anti-discrimination education was repealed by the new government.



The local level does not look that bad. We examined school statutes and educational programmes that aim at developing young people's attitudes and we can say that all of them included provisions related to the development of competences related to anti-discrimination. All statutes claim that school will do everything in order to be free from discrimination on any ground.

To sum up, the policy level related to anti-discrimination education is quite weak. It seems there is no will from the state authorities to implement measures to tackle racism and discrimination, especially when it comes to education. This, however, does not inhibit schools and NGOs from implementing their own approaches to tackle racism and discrimination. Some of these practices will be described in the next chapter.

SCHOOL PRACTICE

Amnesty International in Poland (and in other countries) implemented the project called "Human Rights Friendly Schools", which aimed to prevent oppression, discrimination and violence at schools. It was based on the whole-school approach, involving parents, school management and staff, teachers, students and parents in the activities. The project started with measuring school temperature in order to identify potential areas of improvement. Then, through series of educational activities, all groups involved developed the Charter of Behaviour: this collective work served then as a code for all school community members to make sure there is no discrimination on any ground at school. Students were also involved in developing and running their own campaigns at schools. All activities were supported by the staff of the organization and, according to evaluation, ended up with the success. For some schools it was the first time they actually thought about how to address racism and discrimination. The project finished with measuring the school temperature again in order to see the change. More information about the project can be found here: <https://amnesty.org.pl/co-robimy/edukacja/szkola-przyjazna-prawom-czlowieka/>

NO HATE SPEECH MOVEMENT

The No Hate Speech Movement, the project that actually tackled invisible racism, expressed mainly through hate speech, was very active in Poland and involved some 96 organisations, actively running activities in their local communities. Most of them focused on educational workshops either in schools or in places where young people meet. There are however some activities worth mentioning:

1. The night of temples

This activity was organized on regular basis and aimed at reducing young people's stereotypes and prejudices towards different religions. In the first night 11 churches and places of worship took part in the activity. These communities organized social and cultural programme for the visitors, including presentations of prayers, the rules of faith, sightseeing, educational workshops, film screenings, meetings with religious leaders and discussions. The activity was very popular and drew attention of a lot of people. It was also widely covered by the media.

2. Different faces – photo campaign

This action aimed at showing social, cultural and ethnic diversity of Warsaw. Accidental people were asked to formulate a message to a person they did not know. Once they did it their pictures were joined together in a single photo. The idea was to show how many things people have in common, though they might come from very various backgrounds. The photos were put on the Internet in an online gallery where people could ask questions and discuss issues related to racism and discrimination together.

3. Opowiedz się (the combination of two meanings: telling a story and taking a stand for something)

This project run in the region of Łódź is an internet platform that collects stories of people who experience exclusion. The stories of people who come from different backgrounds (Muslim people, transsexual people, homeless person, etc.) are recorded and the films are put on the platform and Facebook. They tell the stories of the challenges they face in the Polish society and the questions they have about own identity. The movies aim to fight against stereotypes related to different minorities in the Polish society.



The campaign produced various educational resources that are available on its website and collected different campaign practices in the good practices manual, where the readers can learn about how to run campaign activities in their local environments.

Association for Children and Young People CHANCE was also very active in the Campaign running several educational projects with young people. One of the actions we undertook was training of young people (aged 15 – 18) who then became **peer educators** and prepared and implemented educational workshop on hate speech with local young people in schools. The workshops were very welcomed by the local young people and the fact that they were run by young people themselves was a very motivating factor for the youngsters to take part in the activities. In order for the workshops to be attractive and respond to the realities of local young people, peer educators prepared three educational clips that were screened and discussed during workshops with young people at schools.



The clip made for children and young people (picture above) up to the age of 13 telling a story of a young person who comes to visit a doctor in order to be healed from hate. This funny story presents different examples of hate speech children can be confronted with on the Internet and shows the ways how to deal with it. The clip on violent hate speech (picture below) for young people shows how hate speech affects young people.





Living Library

Living Library is the project that has been run for 10 years now and it is well coordinated in Poland - a Wrocław based organisation manages all living library projects in Poland and provides various educational resources on its web site, including the organisers' guide. They also provide support in getting 'books' in the local libraries organised across Poland. The Living Library acts as a normal library, with the difference that instead of paper books it lends people. These people, called "books" represent different groups that are confronted with stereotypes and prejudices in the community where the library is organised. One of the slogans of the library reads: "meet your own stereotype". The readers, people who visit the library, can borrow a person for 30 minutes and can have a conversation. The books are specially trained to deal with different questions and the library is coordinated by the librarians who manage the process of lending and borrowing books. The libraries are organised in schools, youth meeting places and in usual libraries. In the past two years the Living Library Poland has organised and supported some 70 living libraries across the country. The project is always met with great enthusiasm from the people who participate in it - for many of them it is the first time they actually meet a person from different background.

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