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Manifestation of social energy

In the second issue of The Global News we are talking with Grzegorz Miecznikowski, the board member of Young Journalists' Association POLIS.

POLIS was founded in 1995 and their main goal is to spread knowledge about media. They organize workshops for youth, issue magazines and cooperate with the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights.

From the very beginning POLIS is the partner in the European Youth Press which is an umbrella association of joung journalists in Europe. The overall aim of this international body is to strengthen the role of youth media and the freedom of press in Europe.

Urbanska team: What do you understand under the Global Civic Society?

Grzegorz Miecznikowski: The Global Civic Society is a manifestation of social energy released by an awakening of human consciousness to possibilities of creating societies that nurture and rejoice in love of all human beings. The energy thus released is flowing towards, what the writer and Buddhist scholar Joanna Macy calls, the "Great Turning".

The Global Civic Society is the awakening of a cultural, social, scientific, and spiritual consciousness of the interconnections that bind the whole of life — including the human species — into the living web of the Earth community. The melting of ancient spiritual wisdom in advanced scientific knowledge and planetary perspective is unique for the present moment in the history and opens the gate to the evolutionary leap, to a new level of human social, intellectual, and spiritual function.

All humans share a desire for meaning, community and purpose. Some find it in love, hope, generosity, compassion and a sense of spiritual connection to the whole of life. Others seem to find it in fear, despair, cynicism, hatred, violence, greed, and material indulgence. Belief that community will ultimately prevail is based on the premise that for the vast majority of people a life of love, hope, generosity, compassion and spiritual connection is more attractive than a life of ruthless competition, fear, violence, and hate.

Maybe there is too much poetry in this but this is how I feel about it...

What can be a company benefit that decides to support NGO?

For now - only image, unfortunately. There are no visuable advantages that a company or concern can benefit from engaging in the cooperation with NGOs. Supporting of NGOs is still perceived as charity. Luckily, image is very important for companies that decide to support NGOs, and luckily more and more companies are getting involved in non-for-profit actions of some fundations an organizations.

What is the future of cooperation between NGOs and corporations?

Cooperation between NGOs and the business community, this relationship has to move beyond the charity approach. The step forward is different in every company, depending on how much they have previously been involved in CSR issues.

Does business owe anything the society?

Business and the society glide along if without any reason professionals can come to a common understanding that we will have to "scratch each other backs" if there is any semblance of normality. This is one of the major reasons that the upper class has the opportunity to rub elbows, engage in business deals and hang out a private clubs. These groups of elites have learned that their individual strength lies in their abilities to help the others to maintain and increase their wealth. Therefore, there is no such thing as a simple favour. Favours are calculable and bankable in the sense that there is both a return on these favours and that these favours can be saved, stored and spent e.g. on political capital.



Grzegorz Miecznikowski fot. Katarzyna Szymańska

Is it profitable for companies to work with NGOs?

The biggest profit for companies cooperating with NGOs is the image of the concern. No bigger profit can be achieved. Creating this type of image, by engaging in actions of NGO, helps earning trust of the society and makes trade mark more human-friendly. Cooperation with NGOs is the easiest way to build the civic society.

What does the cooperation of NGOs with companies look like?

NGOs expect that companies will fund realization of their projects. Companies expect some benefits and profits from the project. It is very hard to create a good cooperation beetwen NGOs and companies. It depends on the NGO and the company what the cooperation will look like. POLIS has no cooperation with private companies at the moment but mostly when we have, we can only put company logo as a partner or sponsor in the newsletter. It is satisfisting for the most companies.

Have you experienced the interest from any corporation in help in organizing any project? Why was the corporation interested?

Main aims of POLIS are spreading journalistic education among young people, education about human rights, civic society, toleration, situation of ethnic and religous minorities. It is very hard to find a sponsor and to cooperate with private sector in organizing events and workshops that cannot bring any "big" benefit for the company. We are trying to cooperate with some other foundations and Warsaw local government which was interested in our education programme in Warsaw high schools.

Is it hard for NGOs to find a commercial partner/sponsor? If yes, what makes it hard?

I must say: yes. Unfortunately. Difficulties are obvious. NGOs cannot give enough benefits that will satisfy a private sponsor. But there are some kind of actions that maybe are not bringing profits but they are worth realizing. And luckily for us, private sponsors or partners are also human beings and they see what have to be done to spread things important to the civic society.