

**OPTIONAL PROTOCOL ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN
IN ARMED CONFLICT**

**List of issues to be taken up in connection with the consideration of the initial
report of Poland (CRC/C/OPAC/POL/1)**

1. Please provide information on the competent governmental departments or bodies responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Optional Protocol. Please also indicate if there is any mechanism available for monitoring and periodically evaluating its implementation.

The institution responsible for the coordination of the Optional Protocol in Poland, is the Ministry of National Education. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation is done periodically by each of stakeholders: Ministry of National Defence - Department of Defence Education and Promotion, Department of Legal Issues; Ministry of Justice - Department of International Cooperation and European Law; Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration - Migration Policy Department (Unit for Trafficking Human Beings); National Police Headquarters - Plenipotentiary for Human Rights Protection; Office for Foreigners; Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – Department of Equal Treatment of Women and Family Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Department of United Nations and Human Rights, Department of the Development Cooperation.

The outcomes of their activities, having been taken with the cooperation of numerous NGOs are disseminated via their websites.

2. Please provide information on budget allocations given to implementation of the Optional Protocol.

1. On 19 August 2008 the Council of Ministers adopted “**the Governmental Programme of Aid to Foreigners and Other Persons Collaborating with Polish Military, Police and Border Guards Contingents Allocated for the Performance of Tasks outside Poland**”.

The programme allows granting aid by Poland to citizens of other countries and their families, the safety of whom was enfeebled as a result of the collaboration with Polish contingents outside Poland.

The Programme specifies the terms and conditions to be fulfilled by foreigners in order to apply for the aid from Poland. In accordance with the terms and conditions, the Programme is intended for persons, who:

- cooperated with Polish contingents within the mission for the minimum period of 6 months. In special cases the Programme may cover persons, who undertook the collaboration in a shorter period or even on one-off basis, if the collaboration was of great significance for the success of operations of Polish contingents, and the direct risk of their lives resulting from the collaboration requires immediate aid;
- in the course of the collaboration, such persons reported significant deterioration of life conditions or risk to life, being the consequence of the collaboration with Polish contingents;
- they found themselves in difficult life situation related to a reasonable lack of sense of

security, including a possibility of losing life upon the completion of the mission of the Polish contingent;

- filled in written, voluntary requests and delivered such requests with the help of the commanding officer of the Polish contingent to be considered by the Preparation and Verification Group, not later than within 30 days before the end of the mission;
- were positively verified under the provided documents, written statements and an interview with Preparation and Verification Group;
- obtained positive opinions of Military Intelligence Service, Military Counterintelligence Service, Intelligence Agency and Internal Security Agency and are not a threat to the public order and safety of the Republic of Poland and its citizens,

The Programme provides for three optional forms of aid:

First form of aid - consists in payment of non-repayable, one-off benefit up to the amount of USD 40 000 to a collaborating person or its family. The amount shall depend on the contribution of work or assistance granted to Polish contingent, and on the material situation of the person requesting the aid.

Second form of aid - consists in helping the person to settle in neighbouring countries of the region, indicated by the candidate, and payment of non-repayable, one-off benefit up to the amount of USD 40 000 for the settlement.

Third form of aid - consists in enabling the foreigner to apply for the protection in the territory of the Republic of Poland.

In Poland protection shall mean granting the status of a refugee, supplementary protection, asylum or consent to a tolerated stay.

Funds for the implementation of the Programme in 2008 came from the general budgetary reserve, and in the subsequent years, from target reserve.

2. The main idea of the activity of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) involves implementation of long-term investments and projects aiming at improvement of life conditions of Afghanistan inhabitants. This purpose is being achieved by the implementation of aid projects that in the case of the Polish part of PRT are financed from the funds of Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Polish team of specialists under PRT Ghazni started its activity on 28 June 2008 during the 3rd rotation of the Polish Military Contingent in Afghanistan. **In 2008, 3 million zlotys were spent** on that purpose. **In 2009 these resources were increased to 23,5 million zlotys.**

3. Minors staying within the territory of the Republic of Poland with their statutory representatives are eligible for the social benefits under the Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to aliens within the territory of the Republic of Poland. Medical care is ensured for all children on the same basis as Polish citizens (e.g. they are subject to the vaccination scheme). Children staying in a centre are provided with accommodation, food, pocket money for small personal needs, continuous financial assistance for the purchase of cleaning and personal hygiene products. Children up to three years of age and children attending preschools, primary schools, lower or upper secondary schools receive a cash equivalent of food.

4. In 2007 the Polish aid projects (addressed for people, including children, living in post-conflict regions) **were implemented in:**

- Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation received a grant to implement a humanitarian aid project amounting to PLN 1 million (USD 360,000), The project's beneficiaries were in particular the refugees in camps of Western Darfur.

- Poland allocated PLN 1 million (USD 360,000) to the purchase of emergency goods for the people of Lebanon. The MFA also co-financed two assistance projects which won the Minister's call for proposals "Humanitarian aid to Lebanon": Polish Humanitarian Organisation's project: "Improvement of water supply system in Tiri and Rmaich" – amounting to PLN 250,000 (USD 90,000); Polish Medical Mission's project: "A healthy impulse – medical aid to local clinics in southern Lebanon and hospitals in Tebnine and Zahle" – amounting to over PLN 190,000 (USD 68,000).
- Polish humanitarian aid, transferred through the National Red Crescent Society in Afghanistan, amounted to PLN 419,000 (USD 150,000).

5. The Polish assistance programmes implemented in 2008 were the continuation of previous Polish activities in particular countries. The Polish aid amounted to 110 MLN PLN (USD 37 MLN) was allotted to Georgia, Afghanistan, Angola, the Palestinian Autonomy, Sudan, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Uganda, Togo, Ethiopia and Iraq.

For more details see issue 11 below.

3. Please provide information on measures taken to disseminate information on the Optional Protocol, including, but not limited to, inclusion in school curricula as part of human rights education. Please also describe other measures taken to disseminate information on the Optional Protocol, particularly to the general public.

Dissemination of knowledge of the provisions of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning involving children in armed conflicts takes place within the popularization of international humanitarian law. Undoubtedly one of the most important multilateral international contracts concerning international humanitarian law that the Republic of Poland ratified, are the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning involving children in armed conflicts.

In the Republic of Poland a whole range of actions is undertaken for the dissemination of the international humanitarian law, acknowledging the great importance of its provisions for the whole international community. The compliance with the international humanitarian law constitutes grounds for the functioning of contemporary democratic societies and is the practical implementation of the rule of law in international relations.

In relation to the foregoing, also in the national defence department, the issues concerning international humanitarian law of armed conflicts to which definitely belongs the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning involving children in armed conflicts, were given a definitely greater practical dimension.

The result of such actions was the increase of significance of military law in practical training of soldiers, intensification of trainings for commands and staff of military units, as well as preparation of military law instructors.

Officers of the Polish Army started to participate systematically in international seminars and courses devoted to that area of law, organised, inter alia, by the International Committee of the Red Cross, International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo and International Association of Military Law.

New publications and teaching materials (brochures, textbooks, instructional films on DVD/CD and VHS, training materials) were prepared.

Handbooks including, inter alia, information within the scope of international humanitarian law of armed conflicts were prepared for the participants of Polish Military Contingents. So far, the following handbooks have been prepared: Iraq, Afghanistan,

Pakistan, Chad, Syria, Lebanon, Congo and Kosovo. Moreover, two editions of the study entitled *International humanitarian law of armed conflicts – rules of using force* (Afghanistan, Chad) were published. Specialist publications concerning international humanitarian law of armed conflicts, which can be found on the publishing market, are systematically purchased and provided to all military libraries and departments and divisions of education units and military institutions.

Pursuant to the *Methodology of civil education of soldiers in active military service*, introduced by decision No 2/MON of the Minister of National Defence of 8 January 2008 *on the methodology of civil education of soldiers in active military service* (Dz. Urz. /Official Journal/ MON No 1 item 4, appendix), subject of classes within the scope of the international law of armed conflicts is implemented in all personal corps of the Polish Army within classes on civil education. International humanitarian law of armed conflicts is moreover included as a separate course subject (60 hours) or within other subjects, such as: national safety or crisis management, lectured at the National Defence Academy, Naval Academy, in the Polish Air Force Academy and Land Forces Training Centre. Within the transferred knowledge the meaning of basic principles of military law is especially emphasised, such as: military necessity, principle of differentiation, proportions, taking appropriate precautions during military actions, prohibition of using particular methods and means of combating, as well as principles of protection of persons and civilian property (including humanitarian personnel), and principles of dealing with prisoners and detainees. Classes are conducted not only in the form of lectures but also making use of interactive methods, requiring engagement of participants and their independent analyses and resolutions of relevant cases.

Implementation of the international humanitarian law of armed conflicts in training practice, taking these issues into account during classes and performance of tasks related to peace and stabilization missions are very significant. The main purpose is shaping the attitude and habits of professional staff and soldiers of the compulsory military service, which will exclude conduct in extreme combat situations that is inconsistent with the norms of international law.

Between 1997 and 2008 the following training undertakings were implemented:

- 36 specialist courses for commanders of battalions and companies;
- 6 courses on the protection of cultural heritage in case of conflict;
- 23 specialist trainings for subsequent NATO Response Force sets (each year two sets undergo the trainings).

Cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross is very important for the dissemination of the international humanitarian law of armed conflicts. Within the implementation of agreement on cooperation on the dissemination of international humanitarian law, concluded between the Minister of National Defence and the International Committee of the Red Cross (signed on 31 May 1999), Department of Defence Education and Promotion of the Ministry of National Defence organised in Warsaw, in 1999 and 2001, in cooperation with the ICRC Regional Delegation in Budapest, two regional seminars for the countries of Middle and Eastern Europe, concerning inclusion of the law of armed conflicts in the subjects of military trainings. The first seminar was participated by the deputies of staff heads and directors of departments of armed forces trainings from nine countries. The second seminar that concerned issues of the operation of legal advisors at armed forces, was participated by representatives of nineteen countries.

National Defence Department participates in the organised annually by the Central Board of the Polish Red Cross - Polish School of the International Humanitarian Law of

Armed Conflicts in Radziejowice (the School is funded from the Ministry of National Defence budget, part of lectures is delivered by military specialists and moreover the classes are participated by 8 to 10 representatives of Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland).

Representatives of the National Defence Department participate in cyclic works of commission and teams engaged in the popularization of knowledge concerning the international humanitarian law of armed conflicts:

- Inter-departmental group for the International Humanitarian Law;
- Committee for Dissemination of the International Humanitarian Law, operating at the Central Board of the Polish Red Cross;
- Programme Board for Protection of Cultural Heritage in case of Special Threats, established at the Chief of the Headquarters of the State Fire Service.

In relation to amendments introduced in provisions of the Article 166 of the Act on universal duty to defend the Republic of Poland, new subject “education for safety” was introduced in lower and upper secondary schools, from 2009/2010 school year. It will replace the subject taught so far in upper secondary schools “civil defence training”.

Pursuant to the new core curriculum of the pre-school education and general education in particular types of schools specified by the provisions of the regulation of Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 (*Journal of Laws* No 4 item 17) within the scope of the subject “education for safety”, one of the main thematic areas, implemented in lower and upper secondary schools, are the issues including the international humanitarian law.

School students will become familiar not only with functioning of the civil protection and civil defence and the political and military conditions of state safety guarantee, but mainly with the origin and documents of the international humanitarian law. The circular classes on education for safety will include, inter alia, knowledge of the basic legal acts of the international humanitarian law, i.e., conventions, protocols and other international documents creating humanitarian law, as well as purposes and tasks of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Centre for Dissemination of the International Humanitarian Law, operating from 2 September 1977 at the Central Board of the Polish Red Cross that is obliged to disseminate knowledge about the international humanitarian law, as well as principles and mission of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, is responsible for the organisation of various types of undertakings, mainly addressed to students and employees of non-governmental organisations. Actions directed to the recipient in the country constitute the greater part of the activity of the Centre for Dissemination of the International Humanitarian Law. Main target group are the following: representatives of the world of science, employees of non-governmental institutions, representatives of armed forces, volunteers and employees of the Polish Red Cross, representatives of state institutions, media, as well as broadly understood public opinion. The tasks undertaken by the Centre for Dissemination of the International Humanitarian Law are organised at the cooperation with the government.

In the activity of the Centre it is possible to distinguish the following types of undertaking participated, inter alia, by the Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

- organisation of schools within the international humanitarian law – **Polish School of the International Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflicts** – organised once a year, 4-day course, addressed to students of law and international relations of schools of higher education

(civil and military), representatives of Police, Border Guard as well as employees and volunteers of the Polish Red Cross (in total 30 persons). The lecturers of the School are recognised specialists in the international humanitarian law from state civil and military schools. 13 editions of the School have taken place so far;

- organisation of **seminars** - e.g. for legal advisors of armed forces from the Middle-East Europe, organised at the cooperation with Ministry of National Defence and ICRC (October 2001) for judges and military public prosecutors, organised at the cooperation with ICRC and the Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw (December 2008);

- organisation of **scientific conferences** (with the participation of international guests), inter alia, “Methods of the dissemination of the international humanitarian law in Poland” (Police Training Centre in Legionowo, November 2000, at the cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, Ministry of National Defence and Ministry of National Education), “Contemporary challenges of the international humanitarian law” (University of Warsaw, December 2004, at the cooperation with the representatives of ICRC), “Custom in the international humanitarian law of armed conflicts” (23 March 2006, Polish Red Cross, Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Warsaw, ICRC, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs);

- delivering lectures and conducting classes and specialist trainings within the scope of undertakings organised by:

- the Ministry of National Defence - mainly courses and trainings for non-commissioned officers and officers of the Polish Army, during which the issues concerning the international humanitarian law and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are discussed;

- Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, e.g. workshops on the dissemination of the international humanitarian law in armed forces (Cracow, November 2002), an international conference on the 50th anniversary of the Hague Convention 1954 (May 2004);

- other institutions, inter alia, the Institute of Public Affairs – international conference on “small weapons” (2000), OSCE – conferences on the participation of children in armed conflicts (2000), human rights and humanitarian law (2001), International Criminal Tribunal (2002 and 2003), the Academy of National Defence (classes on Postgraduate Studies), Land Forces Training in Poznań (co-organisation of training for officers) January 2008.

- preparation of educational programme “**Exploring humanitarian law**” (approved by the Ministry of National Education on 27 February 2004) and carrying out cascade trainings preparing future programme trainers. The programme elaborated by ICRC in 1999 entitled “Exploring Humanitarian Law”, in 2001 started to be officially implemented in Europe. The Polish Red Cross trained about 100 trainers from various institutions (local education authority, methodological centres and in-service teachers training centres as well as employees and volunteers of the Polish Red Cross). For the purposes of trainings and the whole programme 3500 training sets were produced (curriculum, methodological guide for a teacher, cassette). Representatives of the Ministry on National Education and the Polish Red Cross each year participate in meetings organised by ICRC, during which the degree of programme implementation is discussed. In 2008 the Minister of National Education signed an order No 32 (of 25 November 2008) concerning the appointment of coordination team for the implementation and monitoring of the EHL programme in schools and education institutions.

4. Taking into account the State party's Declaration upon ratification of the Optional Protocol regarding the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces and paragraph 4 of the State party's report, please provide further clarification as to the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces or other armed groups.

and

5. Please provide information on whether the provisions of the Optional Protocol have been fully incorporated into domestic laws and if not, please provide information on the measures required to do so.

Under art. 58 clause 1 of the Act of 21 November 1967 on the universal duty to defend the Republic of Poland (Journal of Laws 04.241.2416, as amended), compulsory military service in scope set forth in this law, shall apply to Polish citizens:

- 1) males, starting on the 1st January of the calendar year in which they complete 18 years of age, until the end of the calendar year in which they complete 50 years of age, whilst those with officer ranks: 60 years of age;
- 2) females with qualifications useful for the service, starting on the 1st January of the calendar year in which they complete 18 years of age, until the end of the calendar year in which they complete 40 years of age, whilst those with officer ranks: 50 years of age.

Doing the recruit military service voluntarily is regulated by the provisions of Article 83 and Article 32 of the Act on universal duty to defend. Pursuant to the provisions also persons subject to military classification who came forward to do the recruit military service are appointed to do the service. Pursuant to Article 32 of the cited Act, the military classification covers men who in a particular calendar year attained nineteen years of age, and may come forward as volunteers, including women irrespective of the qualifications and education if they have attained at least eighteen years of age. Moreover, for the recruit military service are appointed also men approved as capable of doing the military service who have attained eighteen years of age and came forward to do the service voluntarily.

However, it should also be said that the law of 9 January 2009 amending the law on the universal duty to defend the Republic of Poland and amending some other laws (Journal of Laws No. 22, it. 120), has guaranteed the regulation of their military service status to citizens reporting after the day the law entered in force, by allocating them to reserve without having done active military service. Which also means that these persons will not be called to do compulsory military recruit service. A similar solution applies to current conscripts. As under art. 18 clause 1 of this law, persons reporting after the day the law entered in force (i.e., 11 February 2009) for military qualification, are officially allocated to the reserve by the military draft officer, and nominated soldiers of reserve with the military rank of private on the day the verdict of the respective military commission on their capacity to do military service becomes final, unless they file an objection in this regard.

6. Please briefly provide information on legislation being prepared relating to recruitment into the armed forces. Please indicate the status and provide the Committee with copies of any such legislation.

According to the process of reorganization of National Force of Poland, the target of which is to set up a military service of professionalsoldiers, the draft law amending the law on universal duty to defend the Republic of Poland has been prepared (currently analysed by President). The draft defines compulsory military service in art. 55 and 55a, introducing a full

list of ways to do compulsory military service. Furthermore, it distinguishes the types of military service in their different contexts. Therefore, it regulates the issue of the period of compulsory military recruit service and military training and recruit service or training in civil defence, service in armed units not forming part of Polish Armed Forces, as well as alternative service, which may be the case in event of a threat to national security. It also states that the starting date and duration period of this duty would be determined by the President of the Republic of Poland by way of ordinance, at motion of the Council of Ministers. Moreover, it indicates that compulsory military service shall also be done by way of candidate service and professional military service, under the provisions of the law on military service of professional soldiers. Therefore, according to art. 55 of the draft law, compulsory military service consists in:

- 1) Military exercises done by soldiers of reserve and persons allocated to reserve and persons who are not soldiers of reserve, as well as volunteers who report to the exercises and to whom compulsory recruit military service does not apply;
- 2) Preparatory service done by persons allocated to reserve, including soldiers of reserve who until then had not done active military service, as well as volunteers who report to the service and to whom compulsory recruit military service does not apply;
- 3) Periodical military service done by soldiers of reserve.

Art. 55 clause 2 states that in event of threat to national security, if it is essential in order to ensure the execution of tasks of the Armed Forces, compulsory military service shall also consist in:

- 1) Recruit military service done by persons to whom this duty applies;
- 2) Military training done by university graduates.

The President of the Republic of Poland, on motion of the Council of Ministers, shall determine by way of ordinance the date of commencement and the period of duration of compulsory recruit military service and military training, considering the gravity of threat to security of the state.

The issue of age from which it is possible to do the compulsory military service voluntarily were regulated analogically to the applicable Act on universal duty to defend.

We enclose an extract from the amendment to the Act on universal duty to defend within the scope of amendments specified hereinabove (CRC/C/OPAC/POL/1_add1).

The draft law has not passed the parliamentary procedure and has not entered into force.

7. Please provide information as to whether Poland assumes extraterritorial jurisdiction over the war crime of conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 into the armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities. Also in relation to extraterritorial jurisdiction, please indicate whether Polish courts can establish their jurisdiction in case of forced recruitment or involvement in hostilities of a person under 18 if committed outside Poland, by or against a Polish citizen.

Please also clarify whether, in the case that extraterritorial jurisdiction has been assumed, there is a requirement of double criminality for such offences.

As regards the issue of jurisdiction, it should be said that in Poland two basic guidelines rule in this regard, namely (1) the principle of territorial jurisdiction, i.e. offences committed in Polish territory are prosecuted, and (2) the principle of prosecuting Polish citizens for offences committed abroad (preserving the requirement of double criminality, with certain exceptions).

However, regardless of above rules, Poland also applies the principle of so-called

universal jurisdiction. This principle is reflected in art. 113 of the Penal Code, that states that regardless of regulations valid at the site of offence committed, Polish penal law shall apply to the Polish citizen and foreigner who was decided not to be extradited, in event when he commits an offence abroad, that Poland is obliged to prosecute under international agreements.

In the light of current Polish penal regulations (art. 124 Pc) the forcing - against international law - of persons covered by international protection to join enemy armed forces, is considered a war crime. This provision does not determine the victim's age limit. In this case, the principle of universal jurisdiction should apply, because Poland is obliged to prosecute this crime by the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The provision in question would only apply to the cases of enlisting the children mentioned in the question, into enemy armed forces. It would not apply to recruitment of persons under 15 to own army. However, depending on the specific factual circumstances, such action could meet the prerequisites for other common offences, such as unlawful depriving of freedom (art.189 Pc), forcing certain behaviour (191Pc) or exposing to direct threat to life (art.160 Pc).

Furthermore, the draft art. 124 § 2 of the Penal Code included in the government's draft law amending the Penal Code act, the law Regulations Introducing the Penal Code, and the law Code of Penal Proceedings, provide for complementing the list of war crimes with, among other, penalising behaviour consisting in „(...)whoever breaching international law (...) enlists, recruits to armed forces persons under 18 years of age, or actually uses such persons to participate in hostilities.” The draft amendment is currently in the process of agreements between ministries. Once it becomes valid, all forms of using children in armed conflicts will be penalised as war crimes.

Regarding the second part of the question, it should be said that the possibility of exercising jurisdiction by Polish judiciary organs over offences (offences stated in the question included) committed abroad by a Polish citizen or against him, results from the articles 109¹ and 110² Pc, and the principle of universal jurisdiction not subjected to the double criminality rule, expressed in art. 113 Pc³.

¹ Art. 109. The Polish penal law shall apply to the Polish citizen who committed an offence abroad.

² Art. 110 § 1. The Polish penal law shall apply to the foreigner who committed abroad an offence against the interests of the Republic of Poland, the Polish citizen, Polish legal person or Polish organisational unit that is not a legal entity, and to the foreigner who committed abroad a terrorist offence.

§ 2. The Polish penal law shall apply in case of committing by a foreigner abroad an offence other than set forth in § 1, if the offence is penalised by Polish penal law with a penalty exceeding 2 years of imprisonment, and the perpetrator is staying in the territory of the Republic of Poland and was not decided to be extradited.

³ Art. 113. Regardless of the regulations valid at the site where the offence was committed, Polish penal law shall apply to the Polish citizen and the foreigner who was not decided to be extradited, in case he commits abroad an offence that the Republic of Poland is obliged to prosecute under international agreements.

8. Please provide information on the link between military schools in Poland and the Polish armed forces, particularly on steps taken to ensure that enrolment of children in military schools does not expose them in any way to' situations of armed conflict or encourage their recruitment into the armed forces before the age of 18. Please also indicate whether the Ombudsman for children has access to military schools in the context of investigating claims of violations of children's rights.

In Poland, there are no military schools for minors.

9. Please provide information on physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration programmes for asylum-seeking and refugee children who may have been involved in armed conflicts.

Information in the Polish system of care of foreign minors seeking the refugee status as provided by the Office for Foreigners

The Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to aliens within the territory of the Republic of Poland specifies the scope of assistance provided to foreigners seeking the refugee status, including also the assistance provided to minors.

Article 62 of the Act quoted above provides that unaccompanied minors seeking the refugee status are placed with professional foster family not related to the child, operating as an emergency family care or educational care facility. In practice, all minors are placed in educational care facilities. The Office for Foreigners has signed an agreement with the Capital City of Warsaw on placing foreign minors seeking the refugee status and staying in the Republic of Poland without a statutory representative in an educational care facility. Actual care of foreign minors is exercised by Children' Home No 9 in Warsaw at 13 Korotyńskiego Street. The Office for Foreigners pays all costs involved in stay of minors in an educational care facility. Foreign minors staying in children's homes are subject to compulsory school attendance on the same basis as Polish citizens. The number of foreign minors placed in an educational care establishment in 2004-2008 was as follows:

- 2004 – 10 persons
- 2005 – 18 persons
- 2006 – 7 persons
- 2007 – 11 persons
- 2008 – 14 persons

Minors staying within the territory of the Republic of Poland with their statutory representatives are eligible for the social benefits under the Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to aliens within the territory of the Republic of Poland. Medical care is ensured for all children on the same basis as Polish citizens (e.g. they are subject to the vaccination scheme). Children staying in a centre are provided with accommodation, food, pocket money for small personal needs, continuous financial assistance for the purchase of cleaning and personal hygiene products. Children up to three years of age and children attending preschools, primary schools, lower or upper secondary schools receive a cash equivalent of food. Medical care is ensured for all children on the same basis as Polish citizens (e.g. they are subject to the vaccination scheme). In addition, a psychological care system is developed at centres for foreigners, which is also targeted at foreign minors.

Children of foreigners seeking the refugee status are subject to compulsory school attendance on the same basis as Polish children. According to the provisions of the above Act, the Office for Foreigners provides teaching aids to children receiving education and care at public facilities, primary schools, lower and upper secondary schools, and covers, as far as possible, the cost of children's after-school and recreational/sports activities (in fulfilling the obligation imposed by the legislature, the Office for Foreigners ensures the purchase of textbooks, school stationery and uniforms). The number of children of foreigners seeking the refugee status in the Republic of Poland, attending schools in the years 2001-2009, was as follows:

- 2001/2002 – 43 children, i.e. 10% of the children subject to compulsory school attendance
- 2002/2003 – 82 children, i.e. 17 %

- 2003/2004 – 115 children, i.e. 27 %
- 2004/2005 – 122 children, i.e. 31 %
- 2005/2006 – 372 children, i.e. 52 %
- 2006/2007 – 646 children, i.e. 87 %
- 2007/2008 – 836 children, i.e. 97 %
- 2008/2009 – 959 children, i.e. 95 %

Currently there are **1849 children** aged 0-17 staying at centres for foreigners seeking the refugee status or asylum seekers, including **61 children at the Dębak centre**. **934** of those children attend schools, including:

- primary schools – 769,
- lower secondary schools – 155,
- upper secondary schools – 10.

The remaining children are those not subject to compulsory school attendance (i.e. those attending preschools or remaining in parental custody due to age.

SCHOOL YEAR 2009/2010

CENTRE for persons seeking refugee status	PRIMARY SCHOOL	LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL	UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL
Białystok „Budowlani”	32	10	-
Białystok „Iga”	62	7	-
Lublin	37	5	3
Łomża	60	10	-
Radom	33	3	-
Linin	66	12	-
Smoszewo	36	13	-
Moszna	45	9	-
Czerwony Bór	36	2	-
Dębak	22	8	-
Puste Łąki	22	9	-
Bytom	29	9	-
Warszawa Bielany	80	24	-
Niemce/ Leonów	23	4	-
Łuków	60	1	7
Horbów	23	3	-
Bezwola	61	12	-
Grupa	42	11	-
Children’s Home	-	3	-
TOTAL	769	155	10

Drawn up on the basis of data from centres as of 07 September 2009.

In 2007-2008, the Office for Refugees, acting in collaboration with the Ministry of

National Education and the Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights, took measures that led to changes in the educational law and contributed to an improvement of the situation of foreign children under compulsory school attendance. The possibility was provided to employ in schools attended by such children, a teacher assistant from the same ethnic group as the children. A provision was introduced which enables minors seeking the refugee status to receive education in upper secondary schools on the same terms as Polish citizens. In addition, a change was proposed in the provisions concerning external examinations for foreign children. Owing to the fact that the primary school leaving examination and the lower secondary school leaving examination are of a diagnostic nature, a provision was proposed relieving of that obligation foreign children staying in Poland for less than two years.

Moreover, according to the provisions of the above-mentioned Act, foreigners are entitled to a course of the Polish language and basic materials necessary for learning the language. A free-of-charge Polish language learning programme is delivered based on the methodology of teaching Polish as a foreign language (Framework Curriculum for Teaching Polish as a Foreign Language, Instytut Kształcenia Obcokrajowców, ABC of Integrated Education Preparing for Work with a Foreign Language Speaking Child). Under a project co-financed by the European Refugee Fund ("Improvement of living conditions at centres for foreigners seeking the refugee status or asylum seekers, and social support to persons staying at the centres to facilitate their integration with the local community" – project 3/EFR/2005), the Office for Foreigners has established classrooms at the centres intended to significantly improve the effectiveness of Polish language teaching. The centres have also been provided with multimedia equipment supporting the Polish language learning process.

A Polish language teacher is employed at each centre. The number of class hours is adjusted to the needs of the centre concerned, with special focus on the needs of school-going children and youth. Classes are held in groups. In most of the centres, the largest group of those attending the Polish language classes consists of children under mandatory school attendance. The classes for this group of children are tailored to their needs, i.e. language learning and homework assistance (children often have difficulties in understanding instructions).

At some centres, children take advantage of the opportunity to participate in educational and integration activities conducted by NGOs. These are: Education and Artistic Work Foundation (Fundacja Edukacja i Twórczość), "For the Earth" Ecological Association (Stowarzyszenie Ekologiczne "Dla Ziemi"), "One World" Association (Stowarzyszenie "Jeden Świat", Centre for Cross-Cultural Initiatives (Centrum Inicjatyw Międzykulturowych), Polish Robert Schuman Foundation, Lublin Centre for Voluntary Work (Lubelskie Centrum Wolontariatu). Under all-year-round projects or holiday workshops children have the opportunity to foster the sense of national identity and integrate with the local community. The activities include dancing workshops, classes on Chechnya which enable children to learn their mother tongue and learn the history and culture of their home country, and classes on Poland, where the participants intensively learn Polish and are familiarised with issues concerning Poland, Polish traditions and customs. Various artistic activities are arranged, performances are held, including music, and English classes are conducted, also for adults. Under some of the projects, classes are also conducted on human rights and cultural diversity, targeted at school youth and local communities where the centres are situated, as well as specialised courses for teachers of those schools, run by experienced trainers – how to manage the classes attended by refugees. Games, pastimes and sports activities are arranged for children.

In most of the centres, there are preschools adjusted to the children's needs, which are run by the refugees themselves under the supervision of the centre staff or by voluntary workers acquired by NGOs partnering with the Office for Foreigners on a permanent basis.

There are no cases reported in the Polish refugee system of foreign minors seeking the refugee status, who were involved in armed conflicts, i.e. child soldiers. The foreign minors may include persons who have witnessed armed conflicts.

Besides, the Office for Foreigners participates in the following assistance projects for persons seeking the refugee status, including minors, in which the Office is involved as a partner or which are co-financed by the Office

1. Asylum System Quality Assurance and Evaluation Mechanism (ASQAEM)

The Asylum System Quality Assurance and Evaluation Mechanism (ASQAEM) Project - Quality Initiative is implemented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in eight countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Hungary.

The project is co-financed with the funds of the European Commission – Directorate General Justice, Freedom and Security.

In Poland, the project is carried on in cooperation with the Office for Foreigners under an agreement between the UNHCR Representative in Poland and the Head of the Office for Foreigners. The project is scheduled for implementation between 1 January 2008 and 30 November 2009.

In addition, from 1 October to 31 December 2007, the UNHCR Representation in Poland and the Department for Refugee Proceedings of the Office for Foreigners implemented the Quality Initiative pilot project.

The objective of the pilot was to: prepare and facilitate further implementation of the project; collect necessary data and information; elaborate a model of cooperation between UNHCR and the Department for Refugee Proceedings; test the instruments to be used in implementing the project.

As part of the pilot, a good cooperation model was developed between UNHCR and the Office for Foreigners. The model included not only direct contacts between UNHCR and the Management of the Office and the Department, but also with the persons in charge of the refugee status proceedings. UNHCR collected information on the employees considering refugee applications, including details of their education and experience, self-assessment of their skills and expectations about training.

The implementation of the project proper in all the participating countries started in September 2008 with a project opening conference, which was held in Budapest. The participants of the meeting exchanged information on the national procedures for granting the refugee status, with special focus on the decision-making process.

For more information on the conference please visit the page: http://www.unhcr-budapest.org/poland/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=200&Itemid=74 .

The main activities undertaken so far by UNHCR under the project in Poland include:

- five-day training for employees in charge of refugee proceedings “*Understanding Victims of Violence*” dedicated to refugee status proceedings concerning persons who have fallen victim of violence;
- monitoring decisions issued in refugee status proceedings in Poland,
- monitoring interviews in the course of refugee status proceedings in Poland,

- organising two-day training in cooperation with the Nobody's Children Foundation dedicated to issues related to conducting refugee status proceedings involving minors. The issue of unattended minors is one of the subjects on which special focus is placed under the project.

For more information on the subject please visit the page: <http://www.unhcr.org/4a27ea676.html>

- drafting recommendations on the conduct of interviews and the drawing up of decisions in refugee proceedings, and discussing them with the employees considering refugee applications,

- delivery of training for employees in charge of refugee proceedings, covering the following issues: decisions in refugee status proceedings from the court's perspective, analysis of grounds for the provision of international protection, the burden of proof in refugee cases, credibility assessment, drawing up a correct justification,

- supporting the Office through the provision of guidelines and materials related to international protection.

In May 2009, a conference was held in Vienna, summing up the measures taken so far under the project. During the conference, the achievements of the project in the different countries were presented, as well as the experiences of asylum authorities in Austria, Germany and the UK with regard to the implementation of quality control systems for decisions issued in refugee status proceedings. The meeting was attended by representatives of the asylum authorities from all the countries participating in the project, as well as representatives of the UNHCR national Offices and the Regional Office, and invited guests.

For more details on the conference please visit:

http://www.unhcr-budapest.org/poland/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=208&Itemid=74

2. The European Refugee Fund (ERF)

CO-FINANCED PROJECTS:

1) Improvement of accommodation and social assistance for persons seeking the refugee status and recognised refugees in Poland – European Refugee Fund (8/ERF/2004);

2) Creating the IT application „Refugee” monitoring issues related to the social aspect of foreigners' stay within the territory of Poland - European Refugee Fund (9/ERF/2005);

3) Improvement of accommodation standards at centres for foreigners seeking the refugee status or asylum seekers and social assistance for persons staying the centres to facilitate their integration into the local community - European Refugee Fund (3/ERF/2005);

4) Building a professional database of information on the countries of origin of refugees seeking the refugee status in Poland, used in asylum procedures - European Refugee Fund (7/ERF/2006);

5) Expansion of the reception infrastructure for asylum seekers in Biała Podlaska - European Refugee Fund (8/ERF/2006);

6) Expansion of the migration/asylum infrastructure in Biała Podlaska - European Refugee Fund (2/ERF/2007).

Project in progress:

- 1) Equipment of three centres of the Office for Foreigners with playgrounds and sports fields (2/2/2008/ERF);
- 2) Language and technical training for employees of the Office for Foreigners (3/2/2008/ERF);
- 3) Study visits (4/2/2008/ERF);
- 4) Research missions to countries of origin (5/2/2008/ERF);
- 5) Expansion of the library of the Department of Information on Countries of Origin of the Office for Foreigners (6/2/2008/ERF);
- 6) Upgrade of the electronic register in the Stay System (7/2/2008/ERF).

3. The Office for Foreigners participates in two partnerships established under the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme, which partnerships are aimed at initial integration of persons seeking the refugee status in Poland.

- **MUR Partnership** – You Can Learn to Understand. Partners: Polish Humanitarian Organisation (*Polska Akcja Humanitarna*), Polish Association for Legal Education (*Polskie Stowarzyszenie Edukacji Prawnej*), Mazovian Voivodeship Authority (*Mazowiecki Urząd Wojewódzki*), IOM, Halina Nieć Association for Human Rights (*Stowarzyszenie Praw Człowieka im. Haliny Nieć*), Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw.
- **@lterCamp Partnership** – Partners – Polish Red Cross, Polish Scouting Association, Proxenia Association, “Ocalenie” Foundation, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Social Policy Institute of the University of Warsaw.

The activities involved in the implementation of EQUAL CI Theme I have attracted great interest from the Office from the very beginning. The activities of public interest organisations and other entities involved in the implementation of the projects have provided a high value added to the facilities at Czerwony Bór and Linin, where the @lterCamp and MUR projects are underway. As already mentioned, the projects pursued represent a new value in the operation of centres for foreigners, despite the fact that major problems are known to exist, mainly related to financial aspects of project implementation. What deserve a special note are the activities undertaken at centres for foreigners, aimed directly at final beneficiaries. Good practices can be mentioned here, such as:

- Foreigner mentor care provided to foreigners seeking the refugee status. In the intent of the project, the persons are to support foreigners, share experiences with them, motivate and encourage them to actively join the Polish society,
- Intensive Polish language courses conducted by a specialised entity. Such activities directly contribute to increasing the effectiveness of Polish language teaching. Combination of Polish language teaching with the delivery of information on Poland, history, culture, etc., is an interesting solution.
- Vocational training in the course of the refugee procedure. This type of activity makes it easier for foreigners to “settle” in the Polish labour market. This allows them undergo retraining or acquire skills that are in greatest demand in the Polish labour market,
- Work placements and traineeships. This component is closely connected with vocational training and, combined with it, facilitates adaptation in the receiving community,

- Psychological assistance in response to one of the most urgent needs reported by foreigners. Psychological support has a therapeutic and motivating value for persons who have only recently found themselves in a new reality.
- Legal assistance and building legal awareness among the final beneficiaries of the projects. Activities of this type are necessary for persons who are new to a completely different legal system. Owing to the purchasing power available to foreigners, it is important that legal assistance should be provided free of charge to the final beneficiaries. Legal support should be provided in plain language comprehensible to the foreigner and it should be comprehensive (in this area, the activities under the EDI project deserve special recognition).
- Courses, training events and post-graduate studies for people interested in migration policy issues and measures for the integration of foreigners.

What became an interesting deliverable of the project carried out under EQUAL CIP (Cross-cultural Centre for Vocational Adaptation), was a helpline for foreigners, aimed to provide essential information, psychological support together with motivation elements.

The basic objective of the projects undertaken is to stimulate the vocational and social activity of foreigners seeking the refugee status. **The programmes provide for organising legal and psychological assistance, delivery of vocational and computer courses, language classes and classes providing knowledge about the Polish society.**

4. European Asylum Curriculum

The European Asylum Curriculum (EAC) is an initiative of the immigration authorities from Sweden, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Spain and the Odysseus Academic Network, carried out under the auspices of the General Directors' Immigration Services Conference (GDISC), aimed to develop the rules, methods and institutional bases for the harmonisation of training to employees of immigration authorities considering refugee status applications.

The EAC is to be based on the *acquis communautaire* and best practices of the Member States, using the e-learning system, which may provide a common training platform. Ultimately, the EAC is to become a complete and harmonised training tool for the development of both the knowledge and skills of the persons in charge of the status proceedings.

The thematic coverage of the EAC includes:

- concepts of international protection, especially the Geneva Convention on the status of refugees,
- human rights, sources and jurisprudence,
- *acquis communautaire*,
- status procedures,
- preparation of interviews,
- interview methods,
- evaluation of evidence and analysis of information on countries of origin,
- **work with minors and persons who have suffered traumatic experiences**,
- technical activities related to decision-making.

The project is carried out in 3 stages. The first stage of the EAC, which was initiated at the GDISC in Madrid in June 2006, provided for the comparison of training programmes of the different Member States and their requirements concerning employees dealing with status matters, as well as working out the scope, methods and ways of project implementation.

In Stage 1, the pilot training module was also developed concerning the European refugee law (EU Law). The module was tested at the Department for Refugee Proceedings of the Office for Foreigners. The tests took the form of a several weeks' e-learning course, followed by one-day face-to-face training. In addition, a test of the Interview Techniques module was carried out at the Department for Refugee Proceedings.

Stage 2 of the EAC involves the preparation by the project and Member States' experts of teaching materials in the form of texts, textbooks, audio-visual and IT materials, and refining the training modules.

In Stage 3, local trainers will be selected, who will be trained using the methods and materials developed. This will be followed by the EAC adaptation to local needs – translation into national languages, creation of a network for experience and information exchange.

According to the EAC initiators, the common and uniform training system can be developed and expanded by adding new components. It can also support the institutional development of units responsible for employee training.

Cooperation of the Office for Foreigners with public interest organisations in activities for refugee children

Education and Artistic Work Foundation

The Foundation is carrying in the **project entitled “Dancing – Learning - Playing – holiday workshops for Chechen children”**. The main objective of the project is to foster the sense of national identity and support the integration into the local community among Chechen children living in Białystok. The project encompasses dancing workshops, activities “About Chechnya in Chechen” – which allow the children learn their mother tongue and acquire knowledge about the history and culture of their country, and “About Poland in Polish” – where the participants intensively learn Polish and are familiarised with issues concerning Poland, Polish traditions and customs..

The Foundation coordinates the activities of a group of **European voluntary workers** at two refugee centres in Białystok. **The project is implemented in partnership with the Office for Foreigners.** Voluntary workers from France, Italy, Germany and the UK run preschools at the two centres, arrange activities for children, youth and adults (foreign languages, arts, sports and computer activities). They also visit schools in the Podlasie voivodeship, conducting workshops and discussions on refugee issues.

Through the **Mentoring and Voluntary Work Centre**, voluntary workers help children who need support (Elder Brother – Elder Sister Programme), refugees and foreigners (at centres for foreigners). For more please visit <http://www.mentoring.pl/>

“For the Earth” Ecological Association in partnership with the Office for Foreigners

The **“ALIEN? Getting Closer”** project is targeted at the children and youth living at the centres for foreigners in Niemce- Leonów and Łuków. As part of the project, various artistic activities are arranged, performances are held, including music, and English classes are conducted, also for adults. Under the project, classes are also conducted on human rights and cultural diversity, targeted at school youth and local communities where the centres are situated, as well as specialised training for teachers of those schools, run by experienced trainers – how to manage the classes attended by refugees. Games, pastimes and sports activities are arranged for.

For more please visit <http://www.dlaziemi.org/>

“One World” Association in cooperation with the Office for Foreigners

The Association organises **two short-term voluntary work projects**, called work camps, in cooperation with refugee centres.

CENTRE FOR FOREIGNERS, Kolonia Horbów, 09- 23 July 2009,

The work of eight voluntary workers involved **organising games, artistic activities and sports events** for children and youth from the centre for foreigners and for the youngest inhabitants of the neighbourhood, including pupils from the Zalesie school complex,

The study part of the project concerned refugee issues in Poland and worldwide.

CENTRE FOR FOREIGNERS, Linin, 25 July - 08 August 2009,

The work at the work camp involved **arranging games, artistic activities and sports events** for children and youth from the centre, and teaching English to the inhabitants.

The study part of the project concerned refugee issues in Poland and worldwide.

For more please visit <http://www.jedenswiat.org.pl/>

Centre for Cross-Cultural Initiatives in cooperation with the Office for Foreigners

The Centre is carrying on the “Integration and Cultural Education Club” project at the **Bielany centre for foreigners**. A **teacher** and a **sociotherapist** are employed at the Club, who **conduct educational activities** with the assistance of voluntary workers for children aged 6-12 living at the refugee centre in the Warsaw district of Bielany. The project aims at providing them with equal educational opportunities and solving psychological problems arising from their difficult life situation.

As part of **integration activities, workshops with elements of the Polish and Chechen culture** take place once on month, e.g. **cooking together** Chechen and Polish dishes. During **trips to cultural centres** or outside Warsaw, the children have the opportunity become familiar with the city they live in and other places. Once a week, **swimming lessons** are provided at a swimming pool.

For more please visit <http://www.cim.org.pl/>

Polish Robert Schuman Foundation in partnership with the Office for Foreigners

The Foundation participates in the European Commission’s programme “**Youth in Action**”

Łomża Centre for Foreigners – under the project, two voluntary workers (France, Portugal) organise free time for children and youth. They conduct games, pastimes, organise trips. The voluntary workers will stay at the centre until 30 June 2010.

For more please visit <http://www.schuman.org.pl/>

Lublin Voluntary Work Centre

Voluntary work with refugees – running an integration day-care centre at the Centre for Foreigners in Lublin.

Daily **activities for children**, organising games, helping children of school age with study and homework. Once a week, voluntary workers conduct **Polish language classes for adults**. **Sports tournaments, excursions and outings to the Philharmonic are arranged, and to other places where foreigners' children can become familiar with Polish and international culture.**

For more please visit <http://www.wolontariat.org.pl/>

10. Please indicate whether the State party is engaged in any activity of regional and/or international cooperation related to implementation of the Optional Protocol.

This year, as part of the Polish Foreign Aid of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a project has been implemented, addressed to a target group closely associated to the above, „Support to Social Reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons – Therapeutical and Recreation Workshops for Children IDPs from Armenia and Azerbaijan”.

The implementing entity was the Migration Policy Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, whilst partners: Foundation “Ocalenie” (“Salvation”), Migration Agency of Armenia, Society of Poles in Armenia „Polonia”, Department for the Refugees Issue, Internally Displaced Persons, Migration and Contracts with International Organisations at the Office of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Community Polonia Azerbaijan. The project was implemented in Poland, it lasted 2 weeks and its beneficiaries were children aged 10-13, from internally displaced families from Armenia and Azerbaijan (16 children in total).

Responding to the demand reported by Armenian and Azerbaijani partners, the project focused on the psychological aspect of the consequences of hostilities for children from IDPs families, aiming at their efficient social reintegration in the Armenian and Azerbaijani societies.

11. Has the State party provided financial support or any other assistance through multilateral, bilateral or other programmes or activities specifically to promote the implementation of the Optional Protocol and address the needs of children involved in situations of armed conflict?

The main idea of the activity of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) involves implementation of long-term investments and projects aiming at improvement of life conditions of Afghanistan inhabitants. This purpose is being achieved by the implementation of aid projects that in the case of the Polish part of PRT are financed from the funds of Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Polish team of specialists under PRT Ghazni started its activity on 28 June 2008 during the 3rd rotation of the Polish Military Contingent in Afghanistan. **In 2008, 3 million zlotys were spent** on that purpose. **In 2009 these resources were increased to 23,5 million zlotys.** In the structure of the Team there are civil specialist (specialist in education, specialist in social issues, specialist in infrastructure, specialist in the construction of roads and bridges, specialist in legal issues, specialist in contacts with local media), two officers from the Central Assistance Group of Civil-Military Cooperation (including the Head of Team of Specialists, deputy commander of PRT Ghazni) and a protection group from 6 Air Assault Battalion. The Heads of Team were:

Polish aid programs or activities addressing the needs of children involved in situation of armed conflict consist *inter alia* of providing assistance and support to people exposed to long-term crises caused by war conflicts, carrying out short-term projects linked to post-war

and post-crisis reconstruction, co-operation with local institutions, overcoming difficulties associated with migrations provoked by wars.

- Funds for aid programmes or other activities are sourced from the state budget target reserve administered by the Development Co-operation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Polish aid programs are provided, mainly in the form of contributions to international institutions and humanitarian funds and in the form of co-financing actions of the humanitarian NGOs, above all in Sudan, Chad and Iraq where the humanitarian situation provoked by armed conflicts is the most difficult. Humanitarian agencies and organizations operate with permanent, extensive aid distribution networks, which enables them to act more swiftly than governmental and state institutions. Moreover, Polish Embassies also play an active role in humanitarian aid projects.

In 2007 the Polish aid projects (addressed for people, including children, living in post-conflict regions) **were implemented in:**

Sudan - Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation received a grant to implement a humanitarian aid project amounting to PLN 1 million (USD 360,000), The project's beneficiaries were in particular the refugees in camps of Western Darfur. Twenty deep wells were constructed in Kulbus district as part of the project. The wells facilitated access to potable water for approximately 15,000 people, 50 per cent of whom are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Polish Humanitarian Organization implemented this project in collaboration with a local organization, SUDO.

Lebanon - Although the armed conflict between Lebanon and Hezbollah lasted just over 1 month, it managed to generate formidable losses and long-term consequences in the region. This is why Poland allocated PLN 1 million (USD 360,000) to the purchase of emergency goods for the people of Lebanon: tents, blankets and power generators to produce electricity in refugee camps. Humanitarian aid was transported to Beirut and Damascus in collaboration with the Ministry of National Defense. Subsequently, Polish Embassies transferred the aid to the Lebanese High Commission for Support and the Syrian National Red Crescent Movement, which later distributed it among those in the most severe need. At Donors Conference for Lebanon (August/September 2006), Poland declared further engagement in assistance activities in the region. The most significant part of the allocated amount, (PLN 4 million, USD 1.43 million) was expended in 2007. The resources were utilized to purchase, inter alia, 55 portakabins equipped with bathrooms and kitchen areas for the people of Tebnine in southern Lebanon. The MFA also co-financed two assistance projects which won the Minister's call for proposals "Humanitarian aid to Lebanon": Polish Humanitarian Organisation's project: "Improvement of water supply system in Tiri and Rmaich" – amounting to PLN 250,000 PLN (USD 90,000); Polish Medical Mission's project: "A healthy impulse – medical aid to local clinics in southern Lebanon and hospitals in Tebnine and Zahle" – amounting to over PLN 190,000 (USD 68,000).

Afghanistan - is a priority country of Polish aid programme. Humanitarian situation in the country deteriorated significantly in the third quarter of 2007 in connection with difficult weather conditions and the war activities. Enabling displaced refugees to return to their homes is a very urgent problem in the region. Polish humanitarian aid, transferred through the National Red Crescent Society in Afghanistan, amounted to PLN 419,000 (USD 150,000).

2008

The Polish assistance programmes implemented in 2008 were the continuation of previous Polish activities in particular countries. The Polish aid amounted to 110 MLN PLN (USD 37 MLN.) was allotted to Georgia, Afghanistan, Angola, the Palestinian Autonomy, Sudan, Kenya Ghana, Tanzania, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Uganda, Togo, Ethiopia and Iraq.

The following programmes were implemented in the above mentioned countries in order to address the needs of people living in post war regions, taking into account in particular the needs of women and children:

Georgia

Applicant / implementing entity	Project title
Foundation of Managerial Initiatives	Governance, participation, education - a new way for Georgian local government
Social-Educational Association "Edukator"	Community kindergarten as an accelerator of rural development
International Initiatives Bureau	Active Georgia. Women's Local Government Academy
Polish Medical Mission	Rehabilitation and assistance for the disabled at St.Camil House in Georgia
Project title	
The impact of agricultural advisory services on agricultural development and entrepreneurship in the rural areas of Georgia	
Strengthening the Georgian migration management system in the area of reception and detention of foreigners	
Combating organized drug crime. Production and international routes of trafficking of drugs and precursors	
Applicant/implementing entity	Project title
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tbilisi	"The road to independence - assisting Chechen refugees in Georgia in integration with the local community"
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tbilisi	Description of recommendations for the development of language policy and the protection of the rights of linguistic minorities - experiences of Poland and Georgia
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tbilisi	Support for a small dairy in the village Kizbawara (south-eastern Georgia)
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tbilisi	Equipment for computer rooms at Caritas Centres
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Tbilisi	Support for non-governmental organization Women's Club PEONI and preparation of an anti-drug campaign

Afghanistan

Applicant / implementing entity	Project title
Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation	Ensuring access to drinking water to the vulnerable groups in the province of Kapisa in Afghanistan
Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation	Improvement of the access and quality of education in the province of Panjshir in Afghanistan
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Renovation of the orphanage in Ghazni
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Reconstruction of the bazaar in Gelan
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Green areas in Ghazni
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Modernization of the roof of the Cultural Centre in Gelan

Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Construction of school playgrounds in Makhur
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Wells at the Refugee Centre in Ghazni
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Renovation of the Delivery Ward at the Provincial Hospital in Ghazni
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Equipment for Dehkadah Radio station in Ghazni
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Purchase of school accessories and materials for the Department of Education in Ghazni province
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Renovation of facilities of Governor's Guest House in Ghazni
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Winter clothing for the inhabitants of Ghazni province
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Power Supply System in Ghazni Provincial Hospital
CIMIC Support Group	Purchase of basic household goods
CIMIC Support Group	Basic agricultural tools for a household
CIMIC Support Group	Supply of firewood for the local population of Ghazni province
Polish PRT Ghazni Team	Playground at Sayed Ahmad Makai primary school;
Project title	
Construction of an innovative, educational "experimentarium" in MMCC Centre in Kabul	
Medical equipment for medical institutions in the provinces of Parwan, Panjshir, Kapisa	
Equipping the Teacher Training Centre of Panjshir province with furniture and computer hardware	
Laboratory for Panjshir - Equipment for Teacher Training Centre in Panjshir province	
Support for SOPWC (Supportive Organization for Poor Women and Children) - shelter for widows and children in Kabul	

Palestinian Autonomy

Applicant / implementing entity	Project title
Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation	Improving water and sanitation conditions in three educational institutions in the Bethlehem District, 2008
Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation	Development of women's entrepreneurship - Small Animals, Big Value: Animal husbandry and production of milk products by women of the Palestinian Autonomy, 2008

Angola

Applicant / implementing entity	Project title
Divine Word Mission Animation Centre	Saving health and lives of Angolan patients with HIV/AIDS and/or tuberculosis. Expert assistance of Polish physicians to the Angolan population. Education and health promotion – intensification of activities
Applicant / implementing entity	Project title
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Luanda	Construction of the roof above the entrance to the nursery (Saurimo, Lunda-Sul Province)

Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Luanda	Constructing and equipping two educational classrooms (Nzeto, Zaire province)
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Luanda	Development of agriculture in Kukulama
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Luanda	Follow-up of medical assistance for Moma commune
Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Luanda	Mine clearing as support for the programme "Water for all" (Tchilunge, Lunda-Sul province)

Tanzania

Applicant / implementing entity	Project title
Salesian Missionary Voluntary Service - Youth For The World	Supporting primary education development programme in Biharamulo, Tanzania
The Society of African Missions, Charity and Voluntary Centre "SOLIDARNI"	"Math for life" - education of teachers and students in BUGISI MISSION in Tanzania

Africa and the Middle East

Applicant / implementing entity	Project title	Beneficiary country
Development Co-operation Centre	Life and Hope Village Training Center	Ghana
Polish Green Network	Technical support and assistance in kind for the development of the rural area of Tafi-Todzi in Ghana	Ghana
Poland - East Africa Economic Foundation, PEAEF	Renovation and expansion of the Primary School in Kawangware slums in Nairobi	Kenya
Poland - East Africa Economic Foundation, PEAEF	Construction of a water tank and water supply in Uuni, Machakos in Kenya	Kenya
Simba Friends Foundation	Maji moto - construction of an education institution and the promotion of the protection of women's rights on the Massai land	Kenya
Sue Ryder Foundation	Medical rehabilitation in the rural areas of Malawi	Malawi
Polish Centre for International Aid	Medical assistance and vocational training for women with obstetric fistula in South Sudan	Sudan
Polish Centre for International Aid	Model Vocational Training Centre in Juba, South Sudan	Sudan
Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation	Ensuring access to the drinking water for IDPs camps and local communities in West Darfur* *IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) – persons displaced within the country	Sudan
Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation	Humanitarian aid for residents of northern counties of Jonglei State in South Sudan - ensuring access to drinking water in Uror county	Sudan
Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation	Development of women's entrepreneurship through the promotion of new income-generating activities in Kolnyang Payam, South Sudan	Sudan
Polish Centre for International Aid	Construction of the Primary School in Mpunde	Zambia

Salesian Missionary Voluntary Service - Youth For The World	Promotion of youth through sports activities in Kabwe	Zambia
Salesian Missionary Voluntary Service - Youth For The World	Infrastructural and training support for education in Mansa	Zambia
Salesian Missionary Voluntary Service - Youth For The World	Voluntary Service: therapists in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Ethiopia
Salesian Missionary Voluntary Service - Youth For The World	Voluntary service – managing the Salesian Home for Street Children in Sunyani	Ghana
Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation	Diagnosis of the problem of access to potable water in Douala	Cameroon
Salesian Missionary Voluntary Service - Youth For The World	Voluntary Service in Educational Centre Nkhotakota, Malawi: a teacher-pedagogue	Malawi
Development Co-operation Centre	Improving accessibility to modern information technologies in Rwanda	Rwanda
The Society of African Missions, Charity and Voluntary Centre "SOLIDARNI"	Educational and Library Centre for Children of John Paul II" in Tchébébé - Togo	Togo
Polish Humanitarian Organization Foundation	Evaluation of programmes for children - IDPs in Lira district in Uganda *IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) – persons displaced within the country	Uganda
Salesian Mission Centre in Warsaw	Intercultural education with elements of socio-therapy, art and sports (Uganda)	Uganda
Salesian Mission Centre in Warsaw	Analysis of market opportunities for products manufactured in the "City of Hope." Organizing and running courses in the area of management and organization of work and computer courses at Salesian Schools in Lusaka, Zambia	Zambia
Salesian Mission Centre in Warsaw	Voluntary service at Don Bosco oratory: a child animator in Hwange, Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
Applicant / implementing entity	Project title	Beneficiary country
Polish Border Guard Headquarters	Strengthening the capacity of the Border Service in Sierra Leone in the field of border security	Sierra Leone
Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology	Raphaelion Project. The museum of two cultures at Banganarti (Northern Sudan)	Sudan
Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology	Support for the development of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums and the local community of el-Ghaddar, Northern Province, Sudan	Sudan

In 2009 the specialists prepared 35 approved project proposals some of which are already finished, other are being implemented in the field, part of them is at the stage of granting financial resources. All these actions allow, really and tangibly, contributing to the improvement of life conditions of Ghazni province inhabitants.