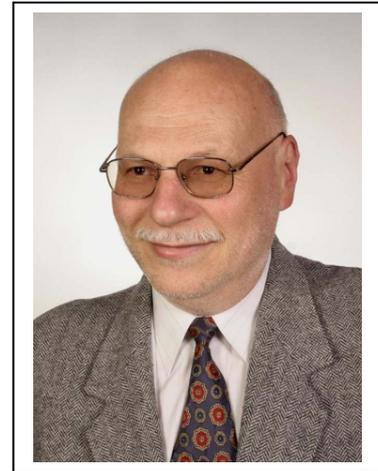


## **Ryszard Praszkiel, Ph.D.**

Dr. Ryszard Praszkiel is a researcher at the Center for Complex System and New Technologies, University of Warsaw ([www.complexsystems.edu.pl](http://www.complexsystems.edu.pl)).

Also a professor at the International Institute for Social & European Studies (ISES) based in Hungary (<http://ises.hu/en/>) and a lecturer at the Academy of Leadership ([www.biznes.edu.pl/program\\_akademia\\_wykladowcy.php](http://www.biznes.edu.pl/program_akademia_wykladowcy.php)).

A lecturer for the Academy of the Psychology of Leadership, Poland.



Coordinator of the Polish section of the international EU grant EFESIIS (*Social entrepreneurship for innovative and inclusive societies*).

Remains practically involved in the social sector as a consultant for Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, ([www.ashoka.org](http://www.ashoka.org))

### **Areas of research**

- 1) The properties of social networks that support profound, peaceful social transitions; the cases of the Polish underground Solidarity and the American Civil Rights Movement.
- 2) Researching the peace process in the Basque Country: what was the civil society's contribution to the abandonment of violence by ETA?
- 3) The social change dynamics facilitated by social entrepreneurs through the lenses of complexity theory: how creative bottom-up ideas ignite autocatalytic processes which empower people and societies, leading to the emergence of an immense impact on higher levels.

### **Additional areas of interest**

- 1) Social SYNC: how brains, individuals, groups and societies synchronize.
- 2) Social Entrepreneurship

### **Social entrepreneurship – practically**

Dr. Ryszard Praszkiel, an emeritus and consultant of Ashoka, Innovators for the Public ([www.ashoka.org](http://www.ashoka.org)), for which he worked over 16 years; joined Ashoka in 1994 as a Country Director to launch Ashoka Poland; since 2000 he has been an international staff training director, and a second opinion reviewer chairing, in many countries, the selection process to Ashoka Fellowship (Canada 7 times), Uganda (3 times), Nepal (3 times), Pakistan (5 times), USA (2 times), Bangladesh, India (3 times), Nigeria (twice), Burkina Faso, Senegal (2 times), Egypt and Indonesia, also doing 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion reviews in Hungary and Germany).

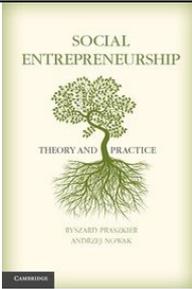
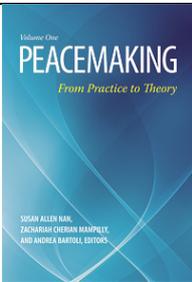
### **Before Ashoka**

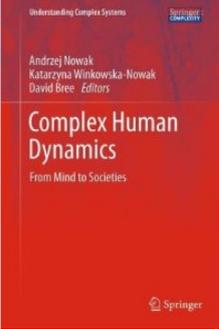
Prior to working for Ashoka, Dr. Praszkiel was a practicing family psychotherapist, Founding Director of the Community Mental Health Center for Children, and the Polish national supervisor for psychotherapy, authoring several books and articles in that field.

## Solidarity underground movement

During the 1980s, Ryszard participated in the Polish non-violent, Gandhi-like underground Solidarity Movement. Under a false name, he published an illegal manual for solidarity activists “How to survive police interrogation”. He also served as a consultant for Solidarity candidates for the first free elections in 1989 and after the transformation co-founded several grassroots NGO’s; he is still on the board of some of them.

## Recent academic publications

Book	<p>Praszkier, R., Nowak, A. (2012). <i>Social Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice</i>. New York: Cambridge University Press</p>	<p>Details how social entrepreneurs solve pressing and seemingly insurmountable social problems. The narrative is around the questions: how to create durable, irreversible, systemic social change? How do social capital and social networks contribute? There are presented in-depth case studies from around the globe drawn from various disciplines. The authors demonstrate how social entrepreneurship is a powerful strategy for empowering people to transform society and its institutions - or create new ones. They outline the specific personality traits of social entrepreneurs and introduce the new leadership models of the 21st century.</p>	
Book chapter	<p>Praszkier, R., Nowak, A. (2012). Social Entrepreneurship: paving the way for peace. In: Bartoli, A., Mampilly, Z., Nan, S. A. (Eds.): <i>Peacemaking: A Comprehensive Theory and Practice Reference</i>, pp 159 -167. Santa Barbara, Ca: Praeger Publishers.</p>	<p>Social entrepreneurs usually address pressing and protracted social problems, which over time generate tensions and enforce imminent conflicts. This chapter presents how social entrepreneurs pursue their social mission in a way that builds social capital and empowers groups and societies in a bottom-up process, creating clusters (“bubbles”) of new prospects, cooperativeness and hope. Conflicts produce their specific socio-psychological environment, which in a feedback loop reinforces the conflict. On the other hand, circumventing the potential conflicts through creating bubbles of cooperation and trust leads to building a new socio-psychological environment, which over time renders the potential conflicts irrelevant. This sort of preventive approach is proposed as a potential educational program for peace-making activists.</p>	

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Book chapter</p>	<p>Praszkier, R. (2012). Social entrepreneurs open closed worlds: the transformative influence of weak ties. In: Nowak A., Bree, D. and Nowak-Winkowska, K (Eds.) <i>Complex Human Dynamics. From Mind to Societies</i>, pp 111-129. New York: Springer.</p>	<p>The concept of weak vs. strong social ties is introduced, including the classical and contemporary definitions as well as the ambiguities related to the operationalization of the definitions. Furthermore, a concept is presented of social entrepreneurship and the way social entrepreneurs build and enhance weak ties in disenfranchised groups and communities. Analogies to chemical processes (using a static as well as a dynamic model) provide a gateway for further research and for modeling the dynamics that measure the strength of social ties. One of the conclusions is that for a harmonious development of groups, communities and societies, a balance between strong and weak ties should be sustained.</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Article</p>	<p>Praszkier, R., Nowak, A., Coleman, P. (2010). Social Entrepreneurs and Constructive Change: The Wisdom of Circumventing Conflict. <i>Peace and Conflict</i>, 16: 153–174. Listed as one of the 5 most frequently downloaded in 2010, see: <a href="http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/pdf/top10/HPCNdown.pdf">www.tandf.co.uk/journals/pdf/top10/HPCNdown.pdf</a></p>	<p>Article presents the strategies social entrepreneurs employ, such as building new positive attractors (i.e., social capital) outside the field of influence of the conflict attractors; as a next step, they build a feedback loop between the success of their initiatives and reinforcement of social capital. Through subsequent positive experiences, they introduce constructive change outside of the field of conflict in a manner that modifies the societal balance based on higher levels of trust and tendencies to cooperate. Through this strategy, they make conflict less relevant and less salient. Several case studies are presented as illustrations of this approach, and general principles are identified.</p>	

Article	Praszkier, R., Nowak, A., & Zablocka-Bursa, A. (2009). Social Capital built by Social Entrepreneurs and the specific Personality Traits that Facilitate the Process. <i>Social Psychology [Psychologia Społeczna]</i> , 4(1-2), 42–54.	Reports the research verifying the hypothesis that in pursuing their goals, social entrepreneurs are building social capital and, further, that they exhibit specific personality traits that help facilitate those methods. Seven personality traits deemed critical to building social capital were identified and their prevalence in society at large compared to their prevalence among leading social entrepreneurs and activists.	Published
Article	Praszkier, R. The properties of social networks that support profound, peaceful social transitions: The case of Solidarity, the Polish underground movement (in process).		Submitted
Article	Praszkier, R. & Bartoli, A. The role of civil society in the peace process of the Basque Country (in process).		Submitter
Article	Empathy, mirror neurons and SYNC		Submitted

Hobby: Underwater pictures (snorkeling)

Family: Wife, 2 children (Kate, 30, art historian and Tom, 36, geologist).