

**THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE  
OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE)**

**The National Report of POLAND**

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## I. POLAND: BASIC INFORMATION

The territory of Poland amounts to 313 thousand km<sup>2</sup>. Latest estimates (from 2006) put the population at 38.1 million. Population density is 122 per 1 km<sup>2</sup>.

Changes in the reproduction process of the population that occurred in Poland in the 1990s, have led to falling fertility. At simultaneously lengthening life span and falling mortality, the share of the youngest in the population has fallen, while the respective figure for the elderly – has risen (Tab. 1.). The trend is slightly more pronounced in urban than in rural areas.

**Table 1. POPULATION IN TERMS OF GENDER / AGE (2006)**

				Urban		Rural areas	
	Total	Men	Women	total	of which women	total	of which women
	<b>IN THOUSANDS</b>						
	38132	18436	19 696	23401	12297	14731	7399
	<b>Percentages</b>						
<b>TOTAL</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>0-2 years</b>	2.8	3.0	2.7	2.7	2.4	3.1	3.0
<b>3-6 years</b>	3.8	4.1	3.6	3.5	3.2	4.4	4.2
<b>7-12 years</b>	6.7	7.1	6.3	5.9	5.5	8.0	7.8
<b>13-15 years</b>	4.1	4.3	3.9	3.6	3.4	4.8	4.7
<b>16-19 years</b>	6.0	6.3	5.7	5.7	5.3	6.5	6.3
<b>20-24 years</b>	8.7	9.1	8.2	8.7	8.2	8.6	8.2
<b>25-29 years</b>	8.2	8.6	7.8	8.5	8.1	7.6	7.2
<b>30-34 years</b>	7.3	7.7	7.0	7.6	7.2	7.0	6.8
<b>35-39 years</b>	6.3	6.6	6	6.2	5.9	6.5	6.2
<b>40-44 years</b>	6.5	6.7	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.7	6.3
<b>45-49 years</b>	7.7	7.9	7.6	8.0	8.0	7.4	6.9
<b>50-54 years</b>	7.9	7.9	7.9	8.5	8.7	6.8	6.5
<b>55-59 years</b>	6.7	6.5	6.8	7.3	7.5	5.6	5.6
<b>60-64 years</b>	4.0	3.8	4.3	4.3	4.6	3.5	3.7
<b>65-69 years</b>	4.0	3.5	4.4	4.1	4.6	3.8	4.2
<b>70-74 years</b>	3.6	3	4.2	3.7	4.2	3.6	4.3
<b>75-79 years</b>	2.9	2.2	3.6	2.8	3.4	3.1	3.9
<b>80-84 years</b>	1.8	1.2	2.4	1.7	2.3	2.0	2.7
<b>85 / above</b>	1	0.5	1.4	0.9	1.3	1	1.5

Rocznik Statystyczny GUS (Statistical Yearbook of Central Statistical Office)

Assessments of Economic Activity of Population (Badania Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności, BAEL)<sup>1</sup>, point to the most acute problem of Poland's labour market – low employment index and high percentage of persons professionally inactive (Table 2.).

**Table 2. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF POPULATION AGE 15 AND ABOVE**

	Average in 2007		
	Total	Men	Women
<b>POPULATION ('000)</b>	31392	14909	16483
<b>Professionally active</b>	16859	9234	7626
<b>Working</b>	15241	8403	6838
<b>Unemployed</b>	1619	831	788
<b>Professionally passive</b>	14533	5675	8858
<b>Professional activity coefficient in %</b>	53.7	61.9	46.3
<b>Urban</b>	53.4		
<b>Rural areas</b>	54.2		
<b>Employment indicator in %</b>	48.5	56.4	41.5
<b>Urban</b>	48.2		
<b>Rural areas</b>	49.2		

Assessments of Economic Activity of Population, 4th quarter 2007, GUS (Central Statistical Office 2008)

Most of those working are contractual workers. Since the early 1990s the number of persons working in individual farms has been continually falling (Table 3).

**Table 3. WORKING PERSONS**

	2000	2007	2000	2007
	'000		%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15489</b>	<b>15538</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
working by employment contract	9834	12001	63.49	77.24
employers and self-employed	5579	2942	36.02	18.93
of which in individual agricultural farms	4074	595	26.30	3.83

Assessments of Economic Activity of Population, 4th quarter 2007, GUS (Central Statistical Office 2008)

Among all those working, about 30% have vocational education (ISCED 3C short), the same percentage have secondary college or vocational secondary education, some 20% are university graduates (Table 4).

Attention should be called on the altering of the pattern in specific age groups. Among those working aged 25-34, the most numerous group (33%) is composed of persons with university education, due to the enormous growth in the last 15 years of the number of young people starting university studies, hence the higher proportion of university graduates in the group of „younger adults”. On the other hand, it may prove that higher education offers better chances to find jobs, especially for people beginning their professional careers.

<sup>1</sup> BAEL surveys are performed by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) by method of continuous observing in quarters, on a representative group of adults above 15 years. Surveys cover the labour market status of persons assessed in a given week. They also give information on participation in courses (complementary education) in the last 4 weeks preceding the survey.

**Table 4. STRUCTURE OF WORKING PERSONS ACCORDING TO EDUCATION AND AGE LEVELS IN 4TH QUARTER OF 2007 R. — based on BAEL**

Age	Total	with education:				
		Higher	Secondary college and secondary vocational	Secondary	Vocational	Gymnasium and primary
<b>TOTAL</b>	100	22.3	29.9	8.1	30.3	9.4
<b>15—24 years</b>	9.7	9.1	35.7	20.9	23.3	11
<b>25—34</b>	29.1	33	28.4	8.1	25.6	4.9
<b>35—44</b>	25.3	20.9	29.3	6.3	36.7	6.8
<b>45—54</b>	26.3	16.2	32.9	6	34.3	10.6
<b>55—64</b>	8	23.8	23.7	6.4	26.5	19.6
<b>65 / above</b>	1.6	20.7	12.5	3	13.8	50

Assessments of Economic Activity of Population, 4th quarter 2007, GUS (Central Statistical Office 2008)

Among older age groups, the proportion of people with university education decreases, while of workers with secondary vocational or vocational education, rises. However, among those working, persons with higher education still account for a higher proportion than in the whole age group in question (see Table 4).

The relatively high proportion of persons with university education in the working group above 55 years, results from the low employment indicator for this age group. Therefore, persons with higher education stay professionally active longer, while persons with lower education levels tend to withdraw from the labour market and take retirement (often of the early type).

**Table 5. STRUCTURE OF POPULATION (15+) ACCORDING TO EDUCATION / AGE IN 2002**

Age groups	Total	Education					
		higher	secondary college and secondary	vocational	primary	incomplete primary and no education	undetermined
		%					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>
15-19 years	100.0	-	12.3	8.5	73.6	3.6	2.0
20-24	100.0	6.1	58.4	23.4	9.5	0.5	2.1
25-29	100.0	20.6	38.2	29.3	8.9	0.4	2.4
30-34	100.0	16.2	36.1	35.0	9.8	0.4	2.5
35-39	100.0	13.7	36.8	36.4	10.2	0.4	2.5
40-44	100.0	11.8	38.3	35.3	11.8	0.5	2.3
45-49	100.0	11.4	36.2	32.0	17.7	0.5	2.2
50-54	100.0	11.3	34.2	28.6	23.4	0.6	1.9
55-59	100.0	11.6	29.8	22.1	33.7	1.1	1.8
60-64	100.0	9.9	25.7	16.1	44.3	2.3	1.7
65 / above	100.0	6.2	19.2	9.3	51.2	12.5	1.5
Age undetermined	100.0	4.7	10.0	6.2	6.3	1.0	71.9
<b>TOTAL 1988</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>

Based on GUS data and own estimates

More detailed data on age structure and education of population in Table 1A and Table 2A in Annex 1.

## **STRUCTURE OF ADMINISTRATION**

Since 1st January 1999, Poland's administration is tri-level, divided in voivodeships (provinces) (16), districts (379) and communes (2478). State (public) administration is composed of governmental units and local governments. Governmental administration is a group of administrative organs, managed by the Council of Ministers (Government). Administration of local governments (self-governments) is the administration of local and regional levels.

### **Commune (gmina)**

The commune is the smallest (basic) unit of Poland's administrative structure, a legal entity that performs public tasks on its own behalf and responsibility. The tasks of the commune cover all local public issues. Its executive bodies are the council and leader (city mayor or president). Currently there are 2478 communes in Poland.

### **District (powiat)**

The district is a local self-governing community located in the territory under its authority, it is a legal entity. The district is the basic unit of the territorial structure. District rights are attributed to cities above 100,000 inhabitants, as well as to cities that as result of the administrative reform of 1999, ceased to be voivodeship capitals. Its executive bodies are the council and management. Currently there are 379 districts in Poland, of which 65 are cities with district rights.

Starost is elected by the district council. He/she presides the district management, directs its works and represents the district. Starost acts as the first-level administrative organ, taking decisions in individual issues within the competence of local public administration.

City president acts as an executive body in cities above 100,000 inhabitants, and heads the city management.

### **Voivodeship**

The voivodeship is a governmental administration unit. It is the largest unit of the country's basic territorial structure. The voivodeship is a legal entity. It is headed by the voivode. The voivode represents the Council of Ministers (Government) in the voivodeship; he/she is the superior of combined governmental administration, and acts as the body controlling local governments.

The marshal of voivodeship is selected by the local regional parliament (sejmik) by an absolute majority of votes. As head of management, he/she organises its works, directs its current affairs, and represents the voivodeship.

The Marshal's Office is an organisational unit of the voivodeship local rule and fulfils an auxiliary role in implementing the tasks set by the marshal and the voivodeship parliament.

### **Central authorities**

Central authorities are the government, headed by the prime minister, two-chamber parliament (lower – Diet, and higher - Senate) and the President of the Republic.

Issues related to education of adults mainly pertain to the competence of ministers responsible for education, higher education, labour and social affairs, but also ministers of economy (determining qualifications), regional development (use of European Union's structural funds), finance (regulations on tax exemptions). Other ministers are also competent in issues related to education (mainly courses) for adults, especially those associated with professional qualifications (e.g. in healthcare).

## EDUCATION SYSTEM

### Education

The Polish education system is composed of kindergartens, primary schools, gymnasiums, post-gymnasium schools, artistic, and other. The system does not comprise higher education, which constitutes a separate division of governmental administration and enjoys autonomy guaranteed by the Constitution.

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland provides for the right to education for all. Education is compulsory from 7 to 18 years of age, but only the primary school and gymnasium have the status of mandatory institutions. Education in public schools is free of charge.

Education in six-year primary schools begins at the age of 7. Children of 6 years undergo a yearlong preparation to school education organised by kindergartens, or in primary schools. Since 1st September 2009, modifications to the programme are planned to be implemented, aimed at reducing the age of primary school start to 6. Public primary schools are managed by communes.

After graduating from primary school, all students have the duty to continue their education in a three-year gymnasium. Public gymnasiums are managed by communes.

#### Post-gymnasium schools:

- a) vocational schools  
minimum 2-year, maximum 3-year studies; graduating provides diploma certifying professional qualifications after passing examination, enabling to continue studying in complementary technical colleges or complementary secondary schools,
- b) secondary schools  
three-year; graduating provides an A-level certificate after passing school-leaving examination,
- c) profiled secondary schools  
three-year; educating in general professions profiles; graduating provides A-level certificate after passing school-leaving examination,
- d) technical colleges  
four-year; graduating provides diploma certifying professional qualifications after passing examination, also A-level certificate after passing school-leaving examination,
- e) complementary secondary schools  
two-year; for graduates of vocational schools; provide A-level certificate after passing school-leaving examination,
- f) complementary technical colleges  
three-year; for graduates of vocational schools; graduating provides diploma certifying professional qualifications after passing examination, and A-level certificate after passing school-leaving examination,
- g) post-secondary schools  
studies not exceeding 2.5 years; graduating enables persons with secondary education to obtain a diploma certifying professional qualifications after passing examination,
- h) special schools

three-year; qualifying for work students mentally disabled in a moderate or high degree, and students affected by multiple disabilities; graduating provides a certificate of qualification for work.

The same types of schools are also available for adults.

The education system also includes practical education centres (CKP), continual education centres (CKU) and professional complementary education centres (ODiDZ), providing complementary universal knowledge, acquisition of skills and professional qualifications.

CKP – provided with modern didactic equipment, enabling to conduct professional education, training courses and practices. Centres are managed by local authorities (district starosts or city mayors/presidents). The centres closely co-operate with employment agencies and with schools conducting professional education.

CKU – public education units for adults, conducting education and professional development for adults both in schools for adults, and by means of non-school activities. The centres collaborate with employment agencies, train and requalify personnel, in co-operation with employers. The centres are also guaranteed the right to perform professional counselling for adults.

Public post-gymnasium schools and units are managed by district local governments.

Pedagogic control over the functioning of schools and units is performed by schools superintendents.

**Table 6. NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN SCHOOL YEAR 2007/2008**

Schools	Students	Students in class I	Students in schools located...			Graduates from previous year
			in city above 5000	in city below 5000	in rural areas	
39 506	6 281 121	1 543 650	4 290 077	237 303	1 753 741	1 621 258
OF WHICH IN SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS						
7 670	549 135	133 047	506 311	10 870	31 954	141 811

Acc. to data from Education Information System (SIO)

### Higher education

Poland has 130 state-owned and 318 non-public universities that act under the law on universities. Studies in state universities, of the full-time type, are free of charge. Evening and extension studies are paid for by students, fees are comparable to tuition fees in private schools. State higher education entities are subsidised by the state budget.

The quality of education in universities is controlled by the State Accreditation Committee.

After 1990, the number of students has been remarkably and dynamically on the rise, and the schooling index has increased. In the academic year 1990/91 Poland had 403.8 thousand university students, whereas in 2006/07 almost five times more: 1941.4 thousand (Table 7). Less than half of those (804.2 thousand) attend free full-time studies in state universities. The remainder pay tuition fees.

**Table 7. NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN '000 (AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 2006)**

	Total	women	On full-time studies	Other than full-time studies
Total	1941.4	1095.0	950.4	991.1
State universities	1301.1	725.5	804.2	497.0
Non-public universities	604.3	369.5	146.2	494.1

„Szkoly Wyzsze i ich finanse w 2006 r.” (Higher Schools and their Finances) GUS, Warsaw 2007

## **PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

The current structure and tasks of public employment services have been determined by the law of 20th April 2004 on promoting employment and on institutions of the labour market. The law states the following public employment services:

- minister competent in labour affairs,
- voivode (regional state administration),
- marshal (regional local self-governments), to whom voivodeship employment agencies are subordinated, currently Poland has 16,
- starost (district self-government), to which district employment agencies are subordinated; currently Poland has about 340; branches of these agencies have been established, to facilitate services for the unemployed.

There is no hierarchy between those bodies.

The minister respective for labour affairs, as part of the task of co-ordinating public employment services, is responsible, among other, for:

- specifying the tools to stimulate the development of continual education (for example, by conducting social dialogue about financing the improvement of qualifications by employees),
- creating the conditions for providing high-quality training services offered by employment agencies,
- developing the tools and methods supporting the services of labour market, including determined classification of professions and specialisations (in July 2007, an order amending the classification was introduced, currently it comprises 1770 professions),
- co-ordinating the development of domestic standards of professional and modular classifications of training programmes,
- keeping specialist databases, such as the Register of Training Institutions (currently comprising about 7600 institutions), database on modular programmes of professional courses (currently for 223 scopes of work), database on professional qualifications standards (currently contains 253 standards).

The voivode is obliged to control the activities of the voivodeship and district employment agencies in terms of implementing and applying the standards of labour market services, including the training services and organising of courses for employees of employment agencies.

The marshal is obliged to determine and co-ordinate the regional policy in the labour market and development of human resources, develop analyses of the labour market, including monitoring of surplus and deficit professions, co-ordinate continual education activities, training of the unemployed and searching for jobs, conduct a register of training institutions.



The starost is obliged to organise and finance labour market services and tools, including services and tools necessary to improve the qualifications of the unemployed and searching for jobs.

Social dialogue about continual education of employees and unemployed is carried out in the forum of employment councils, active on all levels of state and local administration. Which are: the Chief Council of Employment (an opinion/advisory organ of the minister of labour), voivodeship employment councils, and district employment councils.

### **Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)**

PARP is a governmental agency subordinated to the minister respective for economy. It was established by force of law of 9th November 2000.

Its task is to manage the funds from the state budget and the European Union, allocated to supporting entrepreneurship and human resources development, with special focus on the needs of small and medium enterprises.

The purpose of the Agency is to implement programmes of economic development, especially to support the growth of small and medium companies, exports, regional development, new techniques and technologies, new jobs, development of human resources and preventing unemployment.

The Agency is responsible for performing activities aimed at improving the innovative and competitive assets of Polish enterprises.

EU funding at PARP's disposal in 2007-2013, is allocated to modernise the technologies applied in companies, support joint ventures between small and medium enterprises, initiate innovative activities, stimulate research and development operations, and develop companies. Training programmes are an important component of implemented projects. PARP promotes innovations and quality in education of adults.

PARP collaborates with business-associated institutions, organisations of entrepreneurs, offices and units of local self-governments.

### **Providers of training services for adults**

In Poland, most courses for adults are offered in the free market of training services. Even though all-Polish statistical data on the volume of the market are not available, nevertheless on basis of partial information, an approximate description of institutional providers of courses may be developed.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, for example since 2005 has been disposing of a database called the Register of Training Institutions (RIS), a compulsory register for all institutions interested in obtaining contracts for courses for the unemployed and searching for jobs. At the end of 2007, the RIS database comprised more than 7500 training institutions, of which 91% specified their status as „non-public”, while only 9% as „public”. Trainings are mainly provided by institutions managed by natural persons, as economic activity (41% of all registered) plus associations, foundations, companies and other natural persons (35% of all registered entities); other organisations, such as centres of continual and practical education, secondary schools, post-secondary schools and universities, centres of complementary education and professional development, and scientific, scientific/research and research/development units, account for 14% of all registered entities (10% are other organisational structures). The most numerous group of trainings providers, about 35%, is composed of relatively „young” institutions, created after 2001. Among all training

institutions registered in the RIS database, only less than 20% hold accreditation or another certificate confirming the high quality of their services (e.g. ISO, HCCP, PASE standards).

The most frequently offered types of non-school continual education are courses, training workshops, and seminars or conferences. The teaching personnel is composed in 80% by contractual trainers, working part-time. Slightly more than 1/3 of trainings providers dispose of their own premises – lecture rooms, workshops; other institutions resort to rented rooms. The most offered topics of courses are transport (driving courses included), computer skills, lessons of foreign languages, management and administration and so-called „soft” skills (development of personality and professional career).

## II. EDUCATION AND EDUCATION OF ADULTS

Education of adults has a long tradition in Poland, dating back to the 19th century. Remarkable progress and dynamic development in this field took place after World War II, when within several years, thanks to intensive efforts, adult illiteracy was virtually eliminated. However, in the period that followed, education of adults was practically reduced only to vocational trainings, directly related to employment. One of the main guidelines of the centralised socialist economy consisted in rapidly preparing young people for concrete professions (or even work positions), a process carried out in factory schools, that ensured employment in the state enterprises managing those schools. Continual training was reduced to incidental acquisition of new skills, associated for example with technological or organisational developments.

At the same time, the authoritarian political system importantly restricted the activities of non-governmental organisations and associations, which consequently could not expand their educational projects. Therefore, education of adults was dominated by formal education organised by enterprises.

Political and economic changes that occurred in Poland in the early 1990s brought about two developments relevant for education of adults: unemployment, officially inexistent in the previous system, and a huge educational boom (mainly the rise of the number of young people undertaking university studies).

The increasing learning activity among the young was not accompanied by the same among adults.

Current data on participation of adults in education is provided by the survey „Kształcenie Dorosłych”<sup>2</sup> (Education of Adults) carried out in 2006 on a representative group of nearly 25,000 persons aged 25-64 (13,300 households). The survey addressed participation in education activities during the 12 months preceding the survey<sup>3</sup>.

More than a third (35.8%) of those surveyed undertook any type of educational activity, 21.8% participated in formal or informal education activities, specifically in school education 5.5%, informal 18.6%, non-formal (self-learning) – 25.4%. However, those groups are not disjunctive, as some persons could have undertaken in the assessed period various types of educational activity. Women participated in trainings and other types of education more often, although differences between sexes were not that important. The place of residence at the same time had influence on deciding whether to join education activities – many more persons participate in education in urban areas rather than rural.

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<sup>2</sup> *Kształcenie dorosłych (Education of adults)*, information note, GUS, Social Research Department, Department of Labour and Living Conditions, 26 March 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Results of this survey may differ from data obtained from BAEL (Assessment of Economic Activity of Population), since it addresses only the last 4 weeks preceding the survey.

**Table 8. PERSONS AGED 25-64 ACCORDING TO PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION, GENDER AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE (%)**

	Participants				Persons not participating in education
	in any type of education	in formal education	in informal education	in non-formal education	
	%				
Total	35.8	5.5	18.6	25.4	64.2
men	35.4	4.8	18.2	24.8	64.6
women	36.2	6.2	18.9	26.0	63.8
Urban	41.8	6.7	22.6	29.6	58.2
Rural areas	25.3	3.5	11.4	18.0	74.7

Education of adults, information note, GUS, 26 March 2008

The older persons are, the less frequently they participate in education activities, what mainly applies to formal education (table 9). The group most interested in improving its qualifications and undertaking complementary learning, comprises of people between 25 and 34, and the results of BAEL show that this pattern has been continuing for several years already.

**Table 9. PERSONS AGED 25-64 ACCORDING TO PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND AGE (%)**

	Participants				Persons not participating in education
	in any type of education	in formal education	in informal education	in non-formal education	
	w %				
Total	35.8	5.5	18.6	25.4	64.2
25 – 29	50.3	18.1	26.6	32.2	49.7
30 – 34	44.4	8.1	25.4	30.4	55.6
35 – 39	42.7	6.4	24.9	29.5	57.3
40 – 44	38.3	4.6	20.8	26.8	61.7
45 – 49	33.9	2.0	18.0	24.3	66.1
50 – 54	28.3	0.9	13.4	21.8	71.7
55 – 59	22.3	0.2	8.6	18.5	77.7
60 – 64	16.0	--	3.5	14.7	84.0

Education of adults, information note, GUS, 26 March 2008

Participation of adults in educational activities strongly correlates with the level of their education. Persons with university education join these activities more often. Over a half (55.5%) of a group of persons with higher education takes part in non-formal education activities.

**Table 10. PERSONS AGED 25-64 ACCORDING TO PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND LEVEL ACHIEVED AT TIME OF ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION LEVEL (%)**

	Participants				Persons not participating in education
	in any type of education	in formal education	in informal education	in non-formal education	
	w %				
Total	35.8	5.5	18.6	25.4	64.2
Higher	73.7	16.1	46.4	55.5	26.3
Post-secondary	50.9	7.3	23.9	35.3	26.3
Secondary vocational	37.8	4.2	18.0	25.9	62.2
Secondary	37.8	9.8	16.6	26.3	62.2
Vocational	20.2	1.0	8.4	13.4	79.8
Gymnasium or lower	11.1	0.8	4.0	7.7	88.9

Education of adults, information note, GUS, 26 March 2008

Data on educational activity of unemployed persons should be considered disturbing. They participate in trainings or courses much less often than working people. In addition, they undertake self-education less frequently.

**Table 11. PERSONS AGED 25-64 ACCORDING TO PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND STATUS ON LABOUR MARKET (%)**

	Participants				Persons not participating in education
	in any type of education	in formal education	in informal education	in non-formal education	
	w %				
Total	35.8	5.5	18.6	25.4	64.2
Working	45.3	6.9	26.3	31.0	54.7
Unemployed	27.0	6.2	8.8	19.5	73.0
Professionally passive	16.0	2.1	3.0	14.0	84.0

Education of adults, information note, GUS, 26 March 2008

The group of those who did not participate in any type of education within the 12 months preceding the survey accounts for 60% of the adult population aged 25-64. Among urban inhabitants it is 58.2%, and of rural areas 74.7%.

Almost 70% of those who did not participate in any type of education did not undertake education activity, because they felt no need to do so (lack of will). Of whom 45% motivated it by lack of own interests, 43% by the lack of need related to their jobs, 33% by excessive prices of courses, a similar proportion quoted health problems or old age as the reason.

Additional information on participation of adults in any type of activity associated with developing skills or improving professional qualifications is provided by research

performed by Irena E. Kotowska and Izabela Grabowska, as part of the Social Diagnosis 2007 (Diagnoza Społeczna 2007) <sup>4</sup>.

The results shows table 12. Only about 12 percent of persons aged 25 and above, participated during the two years preceding the survey (2005 – 2007) in any types of activities aimed at improving professional qualifications, or other skills. Most of them were women (about 57 percent). Half of the group of persons who complement their education had higher education completed, almost 21 percent secondary vocational, and 12 percent vocational. The less numerous group among persons improving their qualifications had secondary general education – about 12 percent, and primary education at best (about 2 percent).

**Table 12. PERSONS AGED 25 AND ABOVE, PARTICIPATING DURING 2005–2007 IN ANY TYPE OF ACTIVITY RELATED TO IMPROVING THEIR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OR OTHER SKILLS**

<b>Total</b>	11.7
<b>Sex</b>	
Women	56.8
Men	43.2
<b>Education</b>	
Higher	49.9
Secondary vocational	21.3
Secondary general/post-secondary	11.8
Vocational	14.8
Primary and below	2.2
<b>Class of locality</b>	
Cities above 500,000	23.6
Cities 200 – 500,000	17
Cities 100 – 200,000	8.4
Cities 20 – 100,000	19.6
Cities below 20,000	11.8
Rural areas	19.6
<b>Age</b>	
25–29 years	25.8
30–34 years	20.9
35–39 years	14.3
40–44 years	12.8
45–49 years	10.4
50–54 years	9.3
55 years and above	6.4

„Diagnoza Społeczna 2007” (Social Diagnosis 2007), Warsaw 2007

Only every fifth person that improved its qualifications lived in rural areas. Among city inhabitants complementing their education, a half were persons originating from cities above 200,000 inhabitants, about 35 percent from medium cities (20 – 200,000 inhabitants), and about 15 percent lived in cities below 20,000 inhabitants.

Persons complementing their education were mainly the young; about 47 percent was aged 25–34. Persons from the 35–44 age group accounted for about 27 percent of persons

<sup>4</sup> *Diagnoza społeczna 2007. Warunki i jakość życia Polaków. Raport (Social Diagnosis 2007. Conditions and Quality of Life of Poles)*; edit.: Janusz Czapiński, Tomasz Panek, Rada Monitoringu Społecznego (Social Monitoring Council), Warsaw 2007.

complementing their education, and persons aged 45–54 years – about 21 percent. The proportion of persons above 55 years among persons improving their qualifications is a mere 6 percent.

## POLICY, LEGAL AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

### Policy

In the second half of the 1990s, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conducted the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). Poland joined the survey. The results, published in 1995, made evident the very low level of competence among adults, far below the results of other developed countries covered by the survey. It triggered a debate on the quality of education in Poland, starting with the initial level that insufficiently provided young people with the key competence of ability to use written information. On the other hand, the IALS also revealed profound deficiencies of education for adults that did not offer the opportunity to complement lacking competence. Furthermore, the survey indicated that adult Poles almost did not participate in continual education. Another finding was that as in other countries, also in Poland the higher the level of completed education, the more probable was a given person's participation in any type of education.

Annex 2 presents a somewhat more extensive analysis of IALS results. At this point, we shall only assess the most important results.

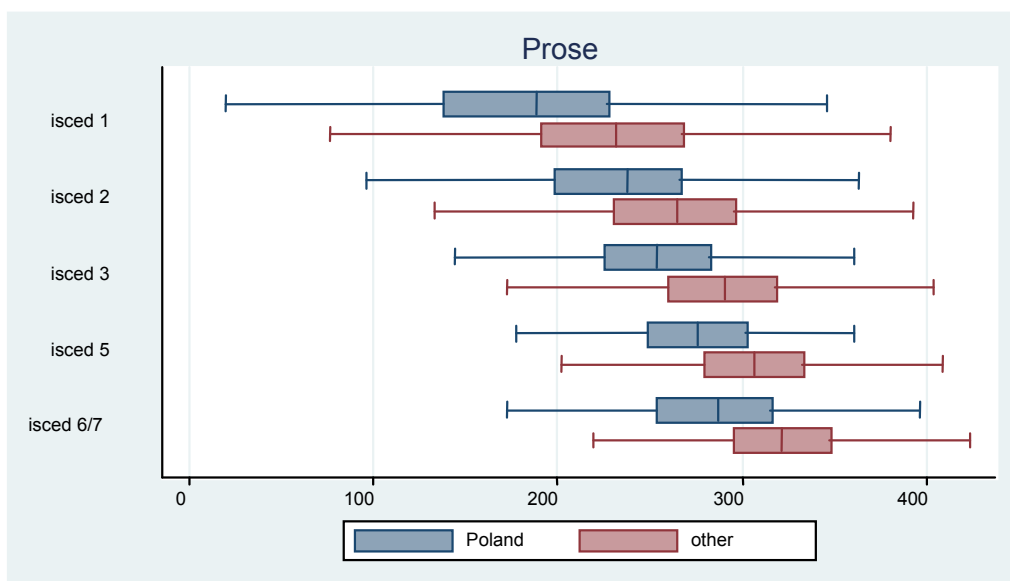
The results of tests were translated to 3 standardised scales: *prose*, *document*, *quantitative*. Results are presented in a scale of average about 250 points, and recoded to ordinal scales, specifying the competence levels from 1 (lowest) to 5. Competences below level 3, in practice render impossible good functioning in society and coping with problems on the labour market.

**Table 13. AVERAGE RESULTS OF POLAND AND SELECTED COUNTRIES IN IALS SURVEY**

	Average result		
	<i>prose</i>	<i>document</i>	<i>quantitative</i>
Germany	275.6	285.2	293.4
USA	272.8	267.1	273.9
Ireland	266.0	259.2	264.5
<b>POLAND</b>	<b>229.6</b>	<b>223.5</b>	<b>234.9</b>
Sweden	289.2	294.8	296.4
<b>Other countries</b>	<b>270.5</b>	<b>272.1</b>	<b>276.4</b>

Additionally deeply disturbing were the results showing how many points on the scale were achieved by Polish participants, depending on their level of education. The following chart 1 presents the distribution for only one scale (*prose*), but due to strong correlation, results may be generalised.

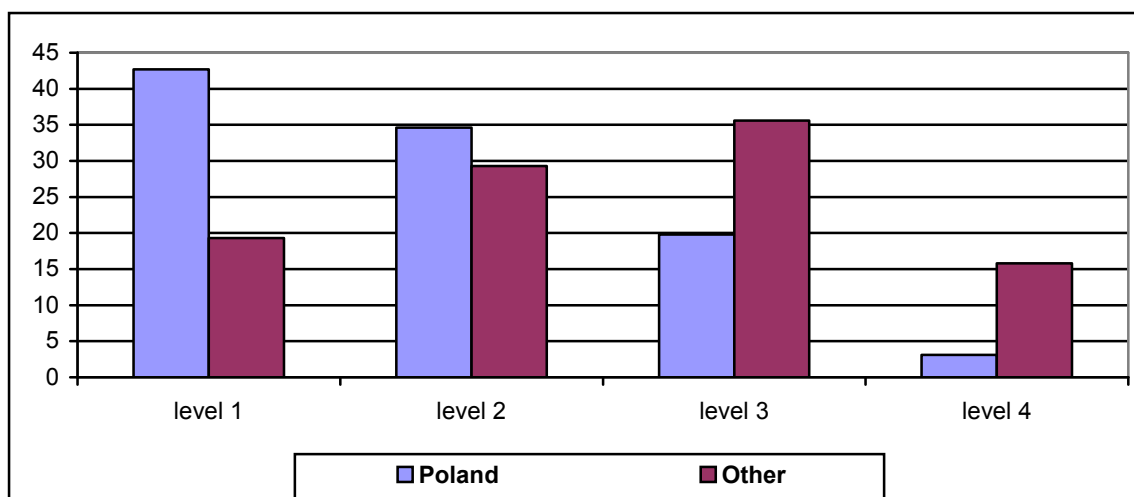
**Chart 1. Distribution of results (in points) depending on level of education**



The chart indicates that the competences of Poles with completed post-graduate or doctoral studies (ISCED 6/7), were equivalent to the achievements of persons with secondary education from other countries, that took part in the survey.

Equally alarming was the distribution (chart 2) of the results between individual levels of competence. In Poland, most persons were attributed to the 1st and 2nd levels of competence (what is practically tantamount to functional illiteracy). In other countries covered by the survey, the largest proportion of adults was attributed to level 3.

**Chart 2. Distribution to individual levels of competence of the results of Poland and other countries covered by IALS (in percentages)**



Regrettably, there were no further surveys enabling to certify whether and to what degree the competence of adults improved. The latter one might expect, as the level of education of society has risen and the education system was reformed, hence subsequent better results achieved by Polish students in the PISA test.



## Reform of the education system

In 1999, the education system was reformed, to achieve the following objectives:

1. To achieve the improvement of the society level of education, by disseminating secondary and higher education.
2. Providing equal education opportunities for children and the young, by expanding the system of scholarships, promoting access to and use of computer and information technological achievements (Internet in particular) and teaching of foreign languages, balancing disproportions in quality of education, i.a. in between schools in rural and urban areas.
3. Improving the quality of education, including modified teaching programmes, better preparation of graduates to permanent, continual further education.

The reform covered virtually all the crucial aspects of operations of the education system:

- structural change: the two-level (8-year primary school and 3-5-year secondary) was replaced by a three-level: 6-year primary school, 3-year gymnasium and post-gymnasium schools from 2- to 4-year types (general education [3 years], technical college [4 years], vocational [2 or 3 years] and post-secondary [1-2 years]),
- change of teaching programmes: the so-called programme basics were introduced, determining overall objectives of teaching in specific phases of education, leaving to schools and teachers the selection of detailed contents, methods and tools,
- introduction of state tests and examinations, covering all pupils completing successive phases of education (primary school, gymnasium, secondary school / school-leaving examination); the school-leaving examination is the basic criterion for selecting candidates to university studies, some higher education entities conduct additional examinations, the new school-leaving examination replaced the university entrance examination,
- transfer of responsibility for schools to the local governments of communes and districts, simultaneously introducing the principle of calculating subsidies from the state budget on basis of the number of pupils,
- upgrading the importance of the schools superintendent as the organ responsible for pedagogical control over the functioning of schools and education units.

One may notice that the reform covered mainly the education and the education system for children and the young. Certain solutions, as the examination system or strengthening the position of school superintendents, could also contribute as well to the development and higher quality of education for adults, but it was not the specifically determined priority of the reform.

Only in 2003 did the government adopt the „**Strategy of development of continual education until the year 2010**”. The objective of the strategy was stated as creating „an efficient system of continual education, enabling every citizen to fulfil his ambitions and personal educational needs in optimum conditions, regardless of age, gender, family situation, disability, place of residence, social status and wealth, completed education, or nationality.”<sup>5</sup>

The Strategy set the following six priorities:

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<sup>5</sup> *Strategia rozwoju kształcenia ustawicznego do roku 2010*, MENiS, Warsaw 2003. Document adopted by the Government on 8 July 2003.

1. An increase of the access to continual education.
2. The improvement of the quality of continual education.
3. Co-operation and partnership.
4. More investment in human resources.
5. Creating information resources for continual education, and developing consulting services.
6. Promoting awareness of the importance of continual education.

The first two priorities met the declared objectives of the reform of the education system, implemented in 1999.

Tasks that are more detailed were attributed to each priority of the Strategy.

#### 1. Increased availability of continual education:

- broader access to information on education and trainings;
- ensured diversity of education offer;
- elimination of social and psychological barriers in access to education;
- creating mechanisms to ensure efficiency of education processes;
- creating the conditions for developing new types of education, information technologies included (education at distance, also e-learning);
- creating favourable conditions for improving professional qualifications of individuals employed in specific sectors of the national economy;
- optimising the network of institutions performing educational activities in order to facilitate convenient, direct access to educational services by engaging the centres (already managed by local and regional authorities), organisations and associations connected with the local community;
- monitoring changes in availability and diversity of continual education offers.

#### 2. Improved quality of continual education:

- improving the competences of the teaching personnel, including those which enable to fulfil the idea of learning all life;
- systematic updating of education contents and adjusting them to social/economic requirements and individual expectations;
- disseminating information technologies and culture, teaching of foreign languages, shaping basic competences, entrepreneurial attitudes and principles of functioning in society, also among adults;
- implementing innovative teaching and learning methods, also those that take advantage of modern data communication technologies;
- promoting didactic measures to increase teaching efficiency and stimulate listeners' interest;
- developing systems of examination, certifying and recognising qualifications acquired in school and out-of-school types of education, and also in non-formal ways considering self-learning and experience gained in the process of working;

- establishing standards of professional qualifications as one of the elements to ensure high quality of continual education;
- implementing educational standards (programme, base, personnel) resulting from the standards of professional qualifications;
- creating a system of accrediting institutions that perform continual trainings of the out-of-school types, providing voluntary subjection to accreditation procedure;
- improving the efficiency of pedagogic control over education units performing continual education;
- conducting scientific research activities to improve the quality of continual education.

### 3. Co-operation and partnership:

- increasing the role of state, local governments, organisations of employers and other social partners in implementing a common policy in the field of programming, organising, and financing continual education;
- enhancing the participation of local authorities in generating changes in the labour market, and adjusting education initiatives to local needs;
- engaging the scientific and education communities in the process of continual training, with special focus on teaching at distance and co-operating with respective communities and institutions of other countries (international agreements) as well as in countries of the European Union.

### 4. More investment in human resources:

- creating a system of incentives to encourage continual education activities, with special focus on inhabitants of rural areas, regions affected by structural unemployment, and individuals threatened by social exclusion;
- creating effective legal/organisational solutions, offering incentive for higher participation of employers in continual training for employees;
- improving management in the system of continual education, to enhance the efficiency of investment in human capital.

Tasks related to priorities 5 and 6 are more technical and apply to specific organisational solutions (creating databases, networks of available consulting services) or individual types and target groups of promotional activities. In addition, continuous monitoring of the process of strategy implementation has been planned.

On developing the Strategy, the Ministry of National Education and Sports took into account the option of financing its implementation with EU structural funds (in particular, the European Social Fund), that have been available for Poland ever since it joined the European Union in 2004.

The first phase of implementation of the Strategy has been largely accomplished within the framework of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme (2004-2006). Currently, as part of a successive programme period in 2007-2013, the implementation of the Human Capital Operational Programme is in progress.

The use of structural funds, in addition to evident financial benefits, also had another advantage. Planning, programming, and selection of projects for implementation were based on tough, measurable criteria. The programmes provide for the achievement of very specific results as well as concrete implementation indicators. Simultaneously a whole monitoring and

evaluation system was developed, which contributes to proper use of resources and effective achievement of adopted targets.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Law on the education system**

By the act on the education system, continual education is defined as „educating in schools for adults, also achieving and complementing general knowledge, skills and professional qualifications by individuals who fulfilled their school duty”.

The school duty begins in the year when a child turns seven years old<sup>6</sup> and continues until completing gymnasium, whereas learning is compulsory until the age of eighteen. The learning duty after leaving gymnasium one may continue in school, in out-of-school types of education, or by employment with the purpose of professional preparation.

### **Labour Code**

The basic document regulating the process of supporting the development of professional qualifications of working individuals, is the Labour Code (law of 26 June 1974 with later amendments), that compels the employer to provide his employees with assistance in improving their professional qualifications. On its basis executive provisions were issued, determining the scope and terms on which employer assists his employees in improving their professional qualifications. The Labour Code does not oblige employers to train his employees, but employer should help them improve their professional qualifications, if they are willing to do that on their own initiative. Neither does the Code contain provisions about education contents; the decision in this regard pertains to the employee.

Improving professional qualifications may be performed on basis of employer's referral, or without such referral. The decision, to issue the referral to employee in order to undertake education activity with the purpose of improving professional qualifications, takes by employer who considers various factors, such as company's need for properly qualified employees, or company's financial resources.

The employee, who undertakes learning in school on basis of employer's referral, is entitled to an education leave and leave from a part of the working day not exceeding 5 hours per week, payable according to the rules in force for calculating remuneration for the annual vacation leave. Moreover, employer may grant to a referred employee additional benefits, in particular:

- return costs of transportation, accommodation and meals, on principles in force for business travels throughout national territory, provided learning takes place in a locality other than the employee's place of residence and work,
- cover costs of manuals and other training materials,
- cover education fees charged by school,
- grant additional training leave.

The employee improving his/her professional qualifications in out-of-school types of education on basis of employer's referral is entitled to:

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<sup>6</sup> It is planned to reduce the starting age of education duty from 7 years to 6, beginning in 2009.

- return of participation costs, accommodation, meals and transport included,
- training leave to join additional courses and leave from part of workday, both payable according to principles of calculating remuneration for annual vacation leave.

In addition, other benefits may be granted by force of the provisions of agreement concluded between the interested parties.

The employee, who undertakes learning in school without employer's referral, may be granted an unpaid leave and a leave from part of the workday, without keeping the right to remuneration, in hours determined by agreement between employer and employee. Employer may also cover the costs of employee's learning, namely transfers, accommodation and meals, costs of manuals and other education materials, education fees charged by school. The period of unpaid leave, granted to employee in such case, is included in the employment period at employer in question, as regards all rights provided for by the Labour Code.

Whereas employee undertaking education of out-of-school types without referral, may be granted unpaid leave and leave from part of the workday without keeping the right to remuneration, in hours determined by agreement between employer and employee.

### **Trainings as type of professional activating of unemployed**

The tasks of supporting the education of the unemployed, searching for jobs and threatened by job loss, are implemented under the provisions of the law of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and on labour market institutions (with later amendments). The regulations applying to employment and preventing unemployment in the section regarding the basic principles of organising trainings for unemployed, since 1997 have not undergone any major changes (although in 1999 the structure of public employment agencies was altered dramatically: the National Employment Agency was liquidated, and the district/local and voivodeship/regional employment agencies were subordinated to local governments).

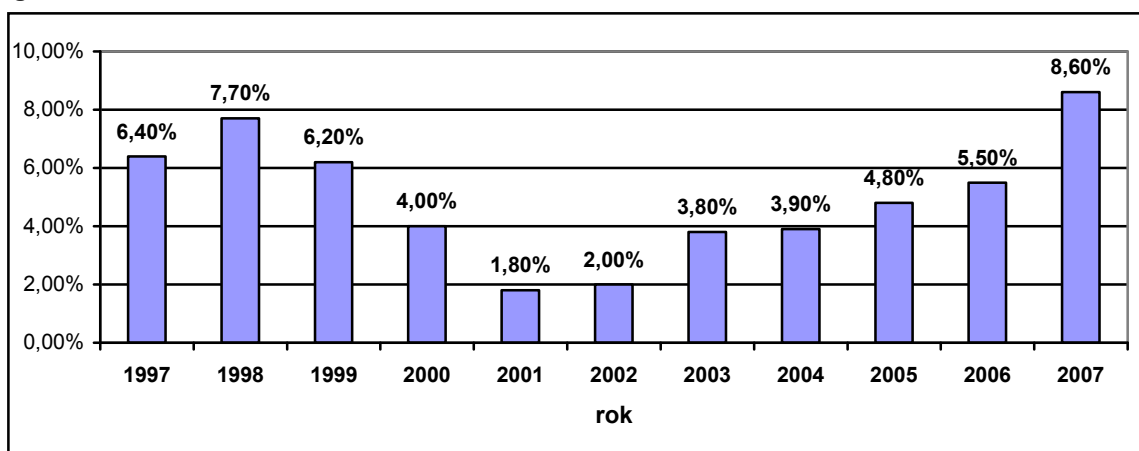
Since the 1990s, regulations guarantee the unemployed, the laid off and the searching for jobs, the following opportunities: free trainings (contracted by employment agencies), education benefit for trained unemployed, education loans, refunding of 80% of education costs to unemployed who were granted a loan to start economic activity, financing education for farmers laid off to undertake employment, financing examinations enabling to obtain specific professional rights, certificates or titles. The also provide for assistance to employers: refunding half of the costs of trainings aimed at adapting employees' qualifications to new requirements of their job positions, and refunding remunerations for junior workers – individuals learning in the dual system.

Changes in regulations introduced mainly in 2004:

- enabled to organise longer courses (up to 24 months) for the unemployed without professional qualifications,
- facilitated the participation in trainings of single parents, raising child up to 7 years of age (the option to return costs of raising child was introduced, up to a half of benefit),
- enabled to cover up to 75% of the cost of post-graduate studies,
- introduced incentives (scholarships) for the young from poor communities, to continue their education in the school system,
- set a new type of activation: placement organised at employer (for the young up to 12 months, for other persons from the handicapped group – up to 6 months; participants receive scholarship),
- introduced incentives for employers to create an education Fund for the trainings of employees: employers who create education funds may, i.a. apply for public resources to finance the costs of training employees partly.

Unfortunately, participation of registered unemployed in trainings organised by employments agencies in Poland, is low. In the last 11 years, it did not surpass 10% of all the jobless.

**Chart 3. Percentage of unemployed participating in trainings organised by employment agencies**<sup>7</sup>



The lowest participation in trainings is for individuals with low education levels, older, long jobless. A small number of persons also take advantage of other options of supporting the improvement of qualifications, provided for by the law on promoting employment. Contrastingly, placements for young unemployed are more successful, in 2007 40% of individuals up to 25 years of age registered as unemployed, were referred to this type of activation. Within 3 months from completing the activation programme in 2007, 42% of training participants and 48% of placement participants found jobs.

The currently prepared amendment to the law on promoting employment and labour market institutions provides i.a. for expanding the list of target groups of education services

<sup>7</sup> Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy data, based on statistics provided by employment agencies

organised by employment agencies, new incentives to join training courses, and adding new types of activation (it is planned to introduce trainings at employer, completed by an examination certifying acquired qualifications).

### **Continual education for disabled persons**

In Poland, the number of disabled people is as many as 12 of every 100 individuals above 15 years<sup>8</sup>. As regards the population in productive age (18 - 59/64 years), disabled persons account for 9.6%<sup>9</sup>. The group has a low level of education. Average yearly data for 2006<sup>10</sup> indicate that 40.3% of disabled persons above 15 years have completed gymnasium, primary school, incomplete primary education, or have no education. Vocational school graduates are 26.6%, general secondary schools 7.0%, and post-secondary schools and secondary vocational 18.6%. Higher education is attributed to 5.5% of disabled persons, while among the able-bodied the proportion is three times higher (15%). The structure of education, highly deviating from the education of the able-bodied, is one of the reasons of the high unemployment in this group. Among all disabled adults living in Poland, only 22.1% are professionally active, while the employment indicator is 18.2%<sup>11</sup>.

The law of 27 August 1997 on professional and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled individuals regulate issues relative to disabled persons.

Trainings are financed in two ways:

- for disabled persons registered as unemployed, from the resources of the Labour Fund,
- for disabled persons searching for jobs, not employed by means of the State Fund for Rehabilitation of the Disabled (PFRON).

Since 2003, with the adoption by the Polish Parliament on 13 June 2003 of the law on social employment, new institutions, centres and clubs of social integration have been emerging, rendering services in the area of social and professional reintegration. Starting in 2006, social co-operatives have been appearing, operating on basis of the law of 27 April 2006 on social co-operatives.

All these new entities of the social economy have launched efforts to support persons threatened by social marginalisation, in terms of education, trainings and professional requalifying of those individuals. The process is compatible with the new direction of social policies, based on a reevaluation of the hitherto implemented concept of „welfare state” (state activities based on guarantee of social welfare by a system of cash or material benefits, have been considered ineffective). The broad range of operations within the concept of „active social policy” enabled to direct education not only to disabled persons, included in the category of threatened by social exclusion, but also to institutions offering active assistance to those persons, as well as to state and local administration.

By common effort of local governments (communes, districts, voivodeships) and non-governmental organisations, as well as with the assistance of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, in 2007 active were 55 social integration centres, more than 300 social integration clubs, and 134 social co-operatives.

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<sup>8</sup> Source: BAEL GUS, average yearly data for 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

## Trainings as a type of business activity

Courses may be also performed by firms and individuals under the law on free economic activity. The law does not regulate in any way the scope or manner of trainings. Nor does it set any conditions as regards the qualification of personnel. Economic activity is subjected to registration, during which information is provided about the scope and area of planned activity. However, data on actual trainings, courses or other types of education are not collected systematically; therefore, it is difficult to assess the actual dimension of this segment of education for adults.

## FINANCES

### Subventions

Local governments (communes and districts) receive subventions from the state budget, designed to enable them to implement the tasks for which they are accountable. The largest share of the subvention falls to the educational part. Its volume is calculated for every local government on basis of a formula (algorithm), that includes the number of pupils and types of schools. The algorithm also takes account of the students of schools for adults, whereas the coefficient (weight) respective to them is 0.7 for students of public schools, and 0.35 for those of non-public schools. No other types of education of adults are included at calculating the subvention amount. It does not mean local governments cannot finance such activity. As they can allocate the amounts received by subventions, to any purposes not necessarily associated with education.

### Labour Fund

The Labour Fund is a special state fund, composed of compulsory contributions from employers, and subsidies from the state budget. The fund is at disposal of the minister of labour. The resources of the Fund are dedicated to support the unemployed or threatened by layoffs.

**Table 14. EXPENDITURE FROM LABOUR FUND IN 2002-2007 IN PLN MILLION**

Expenses of Labour Fund	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total	9,972.6	10,609.8	9,180.2	5,550.8	7,200.4	6,963.3
Benefits	8,879.2	8,761.6	7,258.5	2,997.7	2,763.1	2,267.8
Active types, including:	539.4	1,357.6	1,323.5	1,905.3	2,218.7	2,709.6
Trainings	50.8	113.9	125.9	181.8	186.7	266.4
Placements	X	x	X	607.3	671.9	693.4
Professional preparation at workplace	X	X	X	193.6	203.1	214.7

### Education Fund

The law on promoting employment and labour market institutions (of April 2004) introduced new instruments supporting continual education of employees. Among other, it enabled to establish the Educational Fund by employers.

The Fund is optional. Interested employers may establish it, by contributing payments of value not less than 0.25% of the payroll. Employers, who established the Educational Fund, may receive support from the resources of the Labour Fund, for the following purposes:



- returning costs of specialist courses for employees threatened by layoffs (associated with reorganising, change of profile, etc.),
- refunding costs of paid leave for employee directed to training, if an unemployed was hired in his/her place under so-called *job rotation*. In such event, employer may also expect the return (limit: 40% of average salary) of remuneration and social insurance costs of employees hired under *job rotation*.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy monitor the introduction of new regulations. As part of the process, the practical use of the Education Fund was assessed. As a result, it was concluded that 85% of enterprises did not create it, while as many as 55% of those surveyed were unaware of the rules of its establishing. In overall terms, employers give a negative assessment of public support for continual education.

Surveys carried out for the Ministry of National Education, titled „Continual Education 2005”<sup>12</sup> show that 33.4% of the costs of courses in assessed institutions is covered by students, 27.9% by the European Social Fund, 11.4% is contributed by employment agencies, and only 4.6% by employers. 22.7% of costs were covered from other sources.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION OF ADULTS

Simultaneously with the development of a market economy in Poland in the 1990s, the market of educational services began expanding.

It also should be mentioned that to improve the quality and effectiveness of courses for the unemployed, in 2007 regulations were introduced, compelling employment agencies to observe the standards and proper terms of executing labour market services, education included. At applying tender procedures for contracting educational services, employment agencies must take into account the quality certificate held by the organiser of training. They must also analyse training offers in terms of their compatibility with the requirements of employers, and assess the progress and efficiency of trainings as well.

Now it is worthy to quote a fragment of an assessment on the education market, developed in 2001 for the Ministry of National Education by an external expert<sup>13</sup>:

*The general rule adopted for the education policy states that the needs of the labour market are best met by a fully free market of education services. The state, by creating for adults the opportunity to complement their education in school types of training, practically does not intervene in the scope of the non-school offer. The followed guideline is that the ordering party – by paying for the service – will effectively force the adjustment of training offer to its needs. An additional factor encouraging the development of offers adequate to demand, is ordering trainings financed from public resources by way of tenders.*

*The market of education services is mostly composed of institutions offering courses tailored to professions/specialisations, but many courses are also performed by centres organised according to sectors.*

*Institutions offering education for adults in professions/specialisations (including professional training, preparation for extension examinations, training for a specific profession, professional improvement, achievement of professional certificates) are mainly the centres closely associated with the formal school system or with tradition of disseminating knowledge, not only of the professional type: schools and universities, public continual and practical education entities, some education*

<sup>12</sup> *Edukacja ustawiczna 2005. Raport o stanie edukacji ustawicznej w Polsce w roku 2005 (Continual Education 2005. Report on Continual Education in Poland in 2005)*, Ministry of National Education, Warsaw 2005.

<sup>13</sup> *Modernizacja kształcenia ustawicznego i kształcenia dorosłych w Polsce, jako integralnych części uczenia się przez całe życie (Modernisation of Continual Education and Education of Adults in Poland, as Integral Part of Learning All Life)*, Ministry of National Education, Stockholm University

associations (i.a. the Professional Improvement Centres, the Polish Craft Association, units of the Universal Education Society, the so-called Peoples' Universities, etc.). Professional courses or improving universal qualifications are also conducted by numerous small education firms.

Courses organised under the sectoral system are mainly performed by professional associations, such as specific sections and branches of the Polish Engineering Association NOT (every branch has its department in charge of trainings for its needs), Scientific Association of Organisation and Management, Accountants Association in Poland, Polish Psychologists' Association, Post-Graduate Education Centre for Physicians, National School of Public Administration, etc. Furthermore, specialist courses are organised by enterprises themselves, mainly large companies, mostly with foreign capital, in the banking and industrial sectors.

## Accreditation

To ensure better quality of education services and consequently improve the quality of continual education, in 2004, the Ministry of Education introduced a mechanism of voluntary accreditation of units and centres performing continual education of non-school types, as well as of entities performing this type of activity under the law on free economic activity<sup>14</sup>. Accreditation is granted by a team appointed by the school superintendent. A unit performing educational activity for at least a year, may apply for accreditation. The unit may be granted accreditation if it ensures:

- specific didactic resources,
- qualified personnel,
- the personnel's performance is subjected to regular appraisal,
- conditions are in place for steady professional improvement of staff,
- methodical/didactic materials are developed and made available (including teaching programmes for conducted course, updated in terms of new techniques and technologies),
- educational activity in progress is evaluated, and results are used to modify teaching programmes and organisation.

The school superintendent issues the decision to grant or refuse accreditation to a unit, considering the assessment and results of pedagogic control exerted over the unit.

If the school superintendent concludes that the unit holding accreditation has ceased fulfilling any of the terms specified by respective regulations, then he/she notifies accordingly the supervising body and sets the unit a deadline for eliminating the failures, no shorter than 14 days. If the unit fails to eliminate failures within the deadline set by the school superintendent, then the school superintendent may revoke the accreditation. The unit, whose accreditation had been revoked by the school superintendent, may again apply for its granting not sooner than a year after the day accreditation was revoked. The school superintendent keeps and makes available the list of units holding accreditation.

As part of monitoring the process and effects of learning by adults, a project called „Monitoring of the activities of accredited institutions” is carried out, co-financed from the resources of the European Social Fund, and should be completed until 30th June 2008. The evaluation report developed under the project will enable to gain information on the process

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<sup>14</sup> Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sports of 20 December 2003, on accreditation for units and centres performing continual education of non-school types.

of implementation and the results of the current accreditation system in Poland. Conclusions of the report will be the guidelines for continuing or changing the system of accreditation of units performing education activities of non-school types.

Non-governmental organisations are also engaged in the process of ensuring high quality of education. A major entity among them is the Association of Trainers of Non-Governmental Organisations, that operates its own school of trainers and holds its own system of trainer certificates.

The Polish Chamber of Education Firms grants community accreditation based on the Code of Good Practices. The Chamber was founded in December 2004 with the main purpose of representing the community, developing the market of education services, and propagating the concept of learning throughout one's life. According to its articles of association, it actively creates partnerships with governmental and non-governmental institutions, business organisations, and other entities of the education market environment. By building up the potential of education firms, it ensures steadily rising quality and diversity of the education offer. The Chamber initiates and participates in the process of creating new legal solutions, favouring the growth of the education market. The Chamber comprises 253 social and private entities.

Surveys carried out in 2005 at request of the Ministry of National Education<sup>15</sup>, indicated that accreditation from the respective school superintendent was held by 9.1% of assessed units of continual training. Certificate of didactic personnel was applied by 6.6% of units. Tools for evaluation of didactic staff were used by 37.7% of units. Units that hold the quality system management certificate for education/training (certificate issued under international standards ISO series 9000, certificate for language schools PASE, and other), account for 16.4%.

### **Culture of Evaluation – ESF**

As mentioned before, the European Social Fund (ESF) is hugely important for promoting the „culture of evaluation”. Firstly, all programmes and projects must have determined, measurable implementation indicators, which are verified in the process of the preceding assessment - *ex ante*. In the process of implementation, projects are scrupulously monitored and are all subjected to assessment *ex post*.

Additionally, EFS resources served to finance various surveys and studies also associated with education of adults. Those were surveys carried out at request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (for example, assessment of new instruments of active employment policy), the Ministry of National Education (diagnosis of continual education), as well as surveys performed by the Central Statistical Office.

At request of the Ministry of Regional Development, an evaluation survey assessed education activities and trainings performed within the framework of the European Social Fund in 2004 - 2006.

The report developed under this assessment, states that projects implemented as part of the Operational Programme Development of Human Resources enabled to achieve remarkable progress in implementing the *Strategy of Development of Continual Education until the year 2010*. Equipment at disposal of units performing education activities for adults, considerably improved. Large resources were invested in computer systems, enabling not only

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<sup>15</sup> *Edukacja ustawiczna 2005. Raport o stanie edukacji ustawicznej w Polsce w roku 2005*, MEN, Warszawa 2005.

to teach modern information technologies, but also to deliver a better, more effective organisation of the didactic process and application of innovative methods. What is more, important investment was allocated in tools and equipment necessary to prepare students and carry out professional examinations.

Resources of the ESF triggered accreditation procedures for institutions of continual education. A manual was developed and distributed for persons responsible for accreditations in education offices. These persons were also included in the system of trainings.

The evaluation report gives distinctively positive assessment to the set of co-ordinated efforts aimed at developing education at distance.

*In the context of developing education, support directed to the area of education at distance, is correct. Comprehensive assistance within the framework of EFS should be given a specially positive assessment, as it promotes and expands this field of education. The comprehensive and coherent features of support in this case consist in implementing various types of assistance, such as the creation of an all-Polish network of education at distance centres, developing adequate methodology and teaching programmes, and proper preparation of personnel to manage the units. This approach enables to expect the scope of influence exerted by specific types of support to be complemented and enhanced, thus contributing to achieving the target, which is to provide access to the process of learning, improve education of members of local communities, consequently contributing to the improvement of their situation on local and regional job markets. Education at distance is especially addressed to the disabled, persons with difficult access to education, individuals from rural areas and small towns, who are in a precarious financial situation.*<sup>16</sup>

## **INNOVATIONS, GOOD PRACTICES**

### **Universities of the Third Age in Poland**

Due to the rising number of elderly people – both in absolute numbers and in percentage of population – the importance of education courses for people in post-productive age, is increasing (Central Statistical Office’s data indicate that in 2030 this age group will constitute 27% of Poland’s population<sup>17</sup>). Attention should be called on the fact that despite having ended their professional careers, members of this group still demonstrate very strong educational and development needs. Which is made evident by, among other factors, the rapid expansion of Universities of the Third Age.

In Poland, there are three types of Universities of the Third Age:

- operating within the structure or under the patronage of a regular university, most often managed by the plenipotentiary of the given school’s rector,
- founded by associations disseminating scientific knowledge,

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<sup>16</sup> *Raport końcowy: Badanie ewaluacyjne działań na rzecz kształcenia i szkolenia w ramach Europejskiego Funduszu Społecznego (End Report: Evaluation of Education and Training Activities under the European Social Fund)*, Konsorcjum Projektowe Agrotec Polska Sp. z o.o., Polish Sociological Society, Warsaw 2008.

<sup>17</sup> *Przejście na emeryturę (Taking Retirement)*, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2007.

- other, active at cultural centres, libraries, daytime accommodation homes, social welfare units, etc.

The following units are denominated Universities of the Third Age (UTAs):

- education units or learning centres, mainly for elderly people in retirement age,
- offering diversified classes, from systematic lectures and seminars in semestral academic-type cycles, to active recreational activities, work in various hobby groups and artistic teams, and informal meetings;
- aimed at improving in broad terms the quality of life of the elderly, and stimulating their mental and physical activity.

Currently in Poland there are about 110 UTAs functioning, gathering in total more than 25 thousand participants<sup>18</sup>.

Despite the dynamic development of UTAs in Poland, some limits of their expansion should be noted. Above all, most UTAs are situated in major cities, where assistance from regular universities is available. It is much more difficult to organise a UTA in smaller localities, distant from cultural/education centres. Furthermore, the group of UTA students is heavily dominated by women, who sometimes account for over 90%.<sup>19</sup>

UTAs' activities are usually based on lectures performed 1-2 times a week (mostly in medicine, history, literature, arts, geography, followed by philosophy, sociology, and environment). In addition, theme cycles are prepared, for example in history of architecture, culture, universal history, musicology, astronomy, theology, etc. Very important are seminars and sections or groups of interests:

- literary sections (within which memories, biographies, chronicles are sometimes written),
- arts and music sections,
- cultural sections (organising occasional meetings),
- tourist sections (organising domestic and foreign travels, vacations, camps and strolls),
- friendly assistance sections (providing help to the ill and lonely in forms of visits, shopping, informal contacts),
- active recreation, for example gymnastics (often rehabilitating, tailored to students' individual needs), swimming, dance, yoga,
- other – photography, herbalism, allotment holders, bridge players, or filmgoers.

Courses of foreign languages are highly popular as well.

UTAs functioning at regular universities are usually financed from their resources. Normally a membership fee is introduced too, financing either additional classes – sports or foreign language – or informal social meetings.

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<sup>18</sup> Acc. to data from Programme „Universities of Third Age” of Polish-American Liberty Foundation, [www.utw.pl](http://www.utw.pl) (of 12 April 2008).

<sup>19</sup> 92% of women joined the UTA Halina Szwarz in Warsaw in 2004/2005. See: S. Bachurzevska, *Sluchacze Uniwersytetu Trzeciego Wieku im. Haliny Szwarz w Warszawie w liczbach*, [w]: *XXX lat działalności Uniwersytetu Trzeciego Wieku im. Haliny Szwarz w Warszawie*, edit. K. Bilowska, UTA Halina Szwarz at the Post-Graduate Medical Education Centre in Warsaw, Warsaw 2005.

Whereas in case of associations, membership fee is the basic source of financing. Associations also often apply to local governments for aid, either in form of subsidies or in kind (like providing rooms for lectures). This group is also the most active in applying for various types of grants and subsidies.

Universities functioning at organisational units of local governments – social welfare centres, cultural centres etc. – are financed from the resources of a given centre.

The UTAs are very important in the process of activating and integrating the elderly. Most classes are conducted by participants-volunteers. They are sometimes in charge of courses and sections, too. Moreover, the UTAs undertake various external actions, like participation in different types of performances, contests, ceremonies and other initiatives of the local community. Especially worthy of mentioning is the importance of the project of intergenerational collaboration, joined by the elderly and the children and young people of a given locality.

### **Education at Distance Centres in Rural Areas**

Among various projects to educate adults, implemented within the framework of the Operational Programme „Human Resources Development”, that have given positive assessments, at least one is worthy of mentioning, due to its remarkable potential: Education at Distance Centre in Rural Areas. The project is designed to create about 1150 centres throughout the country. It is planned to locate them in rural areas only. Thus, they will contribute to reducing the disproportion between villages and cities. The centres appear mainly in localities where due to demographic changes, small schools are liquidated or threatened by closure. The centres are provided with computer equipment enabling to use the Internet, adequate software (educational programmes included). The project also provides for support from competent instructors, both in form of remote consultations, and short-term, direct instructions. For inhabitants of small localities, the centres may become a true chance of non-formal education and improvement of qualifications. Thus, the centres can contribute to promoting the concept of learning throughout one’s life, by increasing access to knowledge on all levels of education, from post-gymnasium to continual education of adults. The project is now nearing completion.

### **LITERACY OF ADULTS**

Apart from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) performed in 1994 (see Annex 2), no extensive assessment of basic competences of adults has been carried out in Poland. The currently prepared governmental programme „Intergenerational Solidarity 50+”, which is designed to prolong the period of professional activity of the elderly, also provides for education programmes, including the addressed to individuals with low level of competences.

### **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

In the process of developing this report, a special seminar was organised at the Ministry of National Education, to which invited were representatives of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Regional Development, Central Statistical Office, trade unions, organisations of employers, the Association of Professional Improvement Units, the

Polish Craft Association, Polish Education Chamber, Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, Central Examination Board, National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education, researchers and practitioners – experienced trainers.

Discussion focused on education of adults of low education levels and competences, aged above 50 years.

Answers to the following questions were sought:

- Is a universal programme for improving competences of „older” adults necessary?
- Who should co-ordinate education of adults?
- What is the added value of suprasectoral co-operation? What do partners contribute to co-operation? What benefits a common programme of operations may offer them?
- How should a universal programme for improving competences of adults be managed and financed?

Additionally during the debate, the question was posed, why at such high participation in initial education on secondary and higher levels, did education of adults fail to develop equally rapidly?

Obviously, during a brief seminar it was impossible to give full answers to all questions. Nevertheless, discussion did enable to formulate several important conclusions and recommendations:

- a programme addressed to adults with low competences is essential,
- development of new projects and programmes should be preceded by assessment of the *Strategy of the development of continual education until 2010* and its implementation to date, and recommendations of completed evaluation of activities carried out under operational programmes financed by European Union’s structural funds, should be taken into account,
- co-operation of all entities engaged in the development of education for adults, is extremely important: state and local administration, social partners, public and private education institutions, scientists and experts-practicians. Co-operation could be enhanced by an internet platform of communication, as well as meetings held on a regular basis,
- programming, organisational and methodological solutions must meet the needs of a knowledge society. Education of adults must be based on the principle of active participation, learning from experience, creating conditions for learning and self-education, instead of passive participation in lectures. It is purposeful to take advantage of the experience of education firms, that effectively introduce programmes improving competences in enterprises and organisations,
- modern communication technologies should be applied, in order to facilitate access to education,
- it is necessary to introduce effective mechanisms of evaluating and ensuring high quality of trainings and training institutions. The evaluations should be based on standardised and clearly defined effects of courses,
- solutions should be put in place enabling to evaluate and recognise in Poland the results of informal and non-formal learning.

The recommendations formulated during the seminar, will be applied in the process of developing the *Strategy of learning for life*, currently prepared by the Government of the Republic of Poland.

Education and improvement of competences are key elements of the governmental programme „Intergenerational Solidarity 50+”, designed to prevent early loss of professional activity of this social group. The introduction of the programme by force of the law, is planned for the end of 2008. The programme provides for several solutions addressed to employers, organisers of courses, employment services. However, the programme will not be successful without a new approach of those interested.



**TABLE 1A. POPULATION AGED 15 AND ABOVE IN GENDER AND EDUCATION**

Education level		Total			Urban			Rural areas		
		total	men	women	total	men	women	total	men	women
In absolute numbers										
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>28269112</b>	<b>13554038</b>	<b>14715074</b>	<b>17481591</b>	<b>8210956</b>	<b>9270635</b>	<b>10787521</b>	<b>5434082</b>	<b>5444439</b>
	<b>2002</b>	<b>31288428</b>	<b>14962106</b>	<b>16326322</b>	<b>19776134</b>	<b>9269818</b>	<b>10506316</b>	<b>11512294</b>	<b>5692288</b>	<b>5820006</b>
Higher	1988	1838360	975015	863345	1640786	875077	765709	197574	99938	97636
	2002	3203566	1448060	1755506	2704760	1245400	1459360	498806	202660	296146
Post-secondary and secondary	1988	6979678	2793695	4185983	5564397	2235968	3328429	1415281	557727	857554
	2002	10208389	4289988	5918401	7627985	3213717	4414268	2580404	1076271	1504133
Vocational	1988	6665843	4274256	2391587	4060113	2577305	1482808	2605730	1696951	908779
	2002	7539787	4678915	2860872	4174551	2566295	1608256	3365236	2112620	1252616
Completed primary	1988	10961500	4859324	6102176	5652310	2337253	3315057	5309190	2522071	2787119
	2002	8808487	3922279	4886208	4397862	1864479	2533383	4410625	2057800	2352825
Primary incomplete/ no education	1988	1823731	651748	1171983	563985	185353	378632	1259746	466395	793351
	2002	1528199	622846	905335	870976	379927	491049	657223	242937	414286
Percentages (vertical structure)										
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>2002</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Higher	1988	6.5	7.2	5.9	9.4	10.7	8.3	1.8	1.8	1.8
	2002	10.2	9.7	10.8	13.7	13.4	13.9	4.3	3.6	5.1
Post-secondary and secondary	1988	24.7	20.6	28.4	31.8	27.2	35.9	13.1	10.3	15.8
	2002	32.6	28.7	36.3	38.6	34.7	42.0	22.4	18.9	25.8
Vocational	1988	23.6	31.5	16.3	23.2	31.4	16.0	24.2	31.2	16.7
	2002	24.1	31.3	17.5	21.1	27.7	15.3	29.2	37.1	21.5
Completed primary	1988	38.8	35.9	41.5	32.3	28.5	35.8	49.2	46.4	51.2
	2002	28.2	26.2	29.9	22.2	20.1	24.1	38.3	36.2	40.4
Primary incomplete/ no education	1988	6.5	4.8	8.0	3.2	2.3	4.1	11.7	8.6	14.6
	2002	4.9	4.2	5.5	4.4	4.1	4.7	5.7	4.3	7.1
1988 = 100										
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110.7</b>	<b>110.4</b>	<b>110.9</b>	<b>113.1</b>	<b>112.9</b>	<b>113.3</b>	<b>106.7</b>	<b>104.8</b>	<b>106.9</b>
Higher		174.3	148.5	203.3	164.8	142.3	190.6	252.5	202.8	303.3
Post-secondary and secondary		146.3	153.6	141.4	137.1	143.7	132.6	182.3	193.0	175.4
Vocational		113.1	109.5	119.6	102.8	99.6	108.5	129.1	124.5	137.8
Completed primary		80.4	80.7	80.1	77.8	79.8	76.4	83.1	81.6	84.4
Primary incomplete/ no education		83.8	95.6	77.2	154.4	205.0	129.7	52.2	52.1	52.2

**TABLE 2A. STRUCTURE OF POPULATION (15+) IN EDUCATION LEVEL AND AGE GROUPS**

Age groups		Total	Education level					undetermined
			higher	post-secondary and secondary	vocational	completed primary	incomplete primary / no education	
		%						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>
	<b>2002</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>
15-19 years	1988	100.0	-	5.2	17.5	73.6	2.8	0.8
	2002	100.0	-	12.3	8.5	73.6	3.6	2.0
20-24	1988	100.0	1.1	40.1	41.8	16.2	0.6	0.3
	2002	100.0	6.1	58.4	23.4	9.5	0.5	2.1
25-29	1988	100.0	7.9	37.6	39.9	13.9	0.5	0.1
	2002	100.0	20.6	38.2	29.3	8.9	0.4	2.4
30-34	1988	100.0	9.8	34.7	35.9	18.9	0.6	0.1
	2002	100.0	16.2	36.1	35.0	9.8	0.4	2.5
35-39	1988	100.0	10.3	32.2	32.0	24.6	0.7	0.1
	2002	100.0	13.7	36.8	36.4	10.2	0.4	2.5
40-44	1988	100.0	10.9	29.4	26.2	32.4	1.0	0.1
	2002	100.0	11.8	38.3	35.3	11.8	0.5	2.3
45-49	1988	100.0	10.0	23.3	18.3	46.4	1.9	0.1
	2002	100.0	11.4	36.2	32.0	17.7	0.5	2.2
50-54	1988	100.0	8.3	22.4	15.6	49.2	4.5	0.1
	2002	100.0	11.3	34.2	28.6	23.4	0.6	1.9
55-59	1988	100.0	6.6	18.4	11.2	53.0	10.6	0.2
	2002	100.0	11.6	29.8	22.1	33.7	1.1	1.8
60-64	1988	100.0	4.9	14.4	7.6	59.0	13.7	0.3
	2002	100.0	9.9	25.7	16.1	44.3	2.3	1.7
65 years / above	1988	100.0	2.8	10.8	4.9	54.5	25.9	1.0
	2002	100.0	6.2	19.2	9.3	51.2	12.5	1.5
Age undetermined	1988	100.0	5.8	20.1	18.7	28.1	6.8	20.5
	2002	100.0	4.7	10.0	6.2	6.3	1.0	71.9

## Annex 2.

### *Analysis of the results of IALS<sup>20</sup>*

In the second half of the 1990s, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) completed an International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), in which Poland participated.

The results of tests performed on a representative group of adults aged 15 – 64 years, were converted to 3 scales: *prose*, *document*, *quantitative*. Scales were standardised to an average result on each one of 250 points. Results were recoded also to ordinal scales, specifying levels of skills from 1 to 5, and then converted to approximately equinumerous levels 1, 2, 3, 4/5, that may constitute the basis for analyses. The prose scale was used as material for analysis as follows. Three scales are strongly correlated with each other (above 0.8).

We are interested in four features of respondents: gender, level of formal education, place of residence, and age. Poland and the other countries were singled out from the group of countries. Specific countries fall out of some analyses, due to lack of information (e.g. of age variable for Canada). However, considering that, results for other countries are quite coherent, and those for Poland deviate remarkably from the same, then possible changes in sample composition have less importance.

Below we present a table of the average result and its standard deviation, estimated for the population of each country in each of the 3 scales. As point of reference, also the same statistics were estimated for all countries apart from Poland (category „other”). Combined results for other countries were estimated considering weights, but rescaled to provide equal total weights for every country, by which this statistics constitutes an unweighed mean from averages estimated for the population of each country.

Table 1

Country	prose		doc		quant		N
	mean	sd	Mean	sd	mean	sd	
Canada (English)	275.0	67.9	274.2	74.6	277.5	68.2	3951
Canada (French)	254.7	65.3	253.7	76.5	256.8	65.0	1709
Switzerland (German)	263.0	55.5	269.2	67.0	278.4	59.3	1398
Switzerland (French)	265.1	56.6	274.4	58.2	280.5	60.2	1440
Germany	275.6	46.8	285.2	46.6	293.4	45.0	2062
USA	272.8	68.0	267.1	70.6	273.9	69.1	3045
Ireland	266.0	59.1	259.2	60.5	264.5	65.4	2423
Netherlands	278.3	47.8	281.9	50.7	283.4	51.5	3090
<b>Poland</b>	<b>229.6</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>223.5</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>234.9</b>	<b>70.8</b>	<b>3000</b>
Sweden	289.2	59.2	294.8	59.8	296.4	60.2	3038
New Zealand	275.4	59.1	269.4	61.9	271.0	60.7	4223
Great Britain	266.5	62.8	267.4	68.4	267.1	67.4	3811
Northern Ireland	263.5	63.6	262.7	67.2	268.5	68.4	2907
Belgium (Flanders)	271.8	56.6	278.2	55.9	281.9	62.5	2261
<b>Other</b>	<b>270.5</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>272.1</b>	<b>64.4</b>	<b>276.4</b>	<b>63.0</b>	<b>35358</b>

<sup>20</sup> Analysis done by Dr Maciej Jakubowski of the Faculty of Economics of Warsaw University based on data IALS (OECD, Stats Canada).

The below table presents the percentage of individuals who achieved a given level of skills in Poland and on average in other countries (unweighed mean of representative data from each country). Levels 4/5 were connected due to the small number of individuals who achieved them. Evidently, while in Poland slightly more than 20% of adults achieve level 3 or above, in other countries such individuals constitute more than a half of the population.

Table 2.

	PROSE				
	level 1	level 2	level 3	level 4/5	Total
Poland	42.7%	34.6%	19.8%	3.1%	100.0%
Other	19.3%	29.3%	35.6%	15.8%	100.0%

Further tables show similar dependences, but split into gender (Table 3), urban and rural areas (Table 4), education level (Table 5) and age categories (Table 6). While in almost all cases Poles less frequently achieve the high level of skills than individuals from other countries do, a certain diversification between groups of individuals is evident. Obviously, the different proportion of population in specific categories in Poland and other countries should be taken into account.

Table 3

Gender		PROSE				
		level 1	level 2	level 3	level 4/5	Total
Poland	men	21.4%	17.6%	9.3%	1.3%	49.6%
	women	21.2%	17.0%	10.5%	1.8%	50.4%
Other	men	9.8%	14.3%	17.9%	7.4%	49.3%
	women	9.6%	15.0%	17.7%	8.4%	50.7%

Table 4

Urban / rural areas		PROSE				
		level 1	level 2	level 3	level 4/5	Total
Poland	rural	20.1%	11.8%	4.0%	0.4%	36.3%
	urban	22.6%	22.8%	15.8%	2.6%	63.8%
Other	rural	6.5%	10.0%	10.9%	5.0%	32.3%
	urban	12.9%	19.3%	24.7%	10.9%	67.8%

Table 5

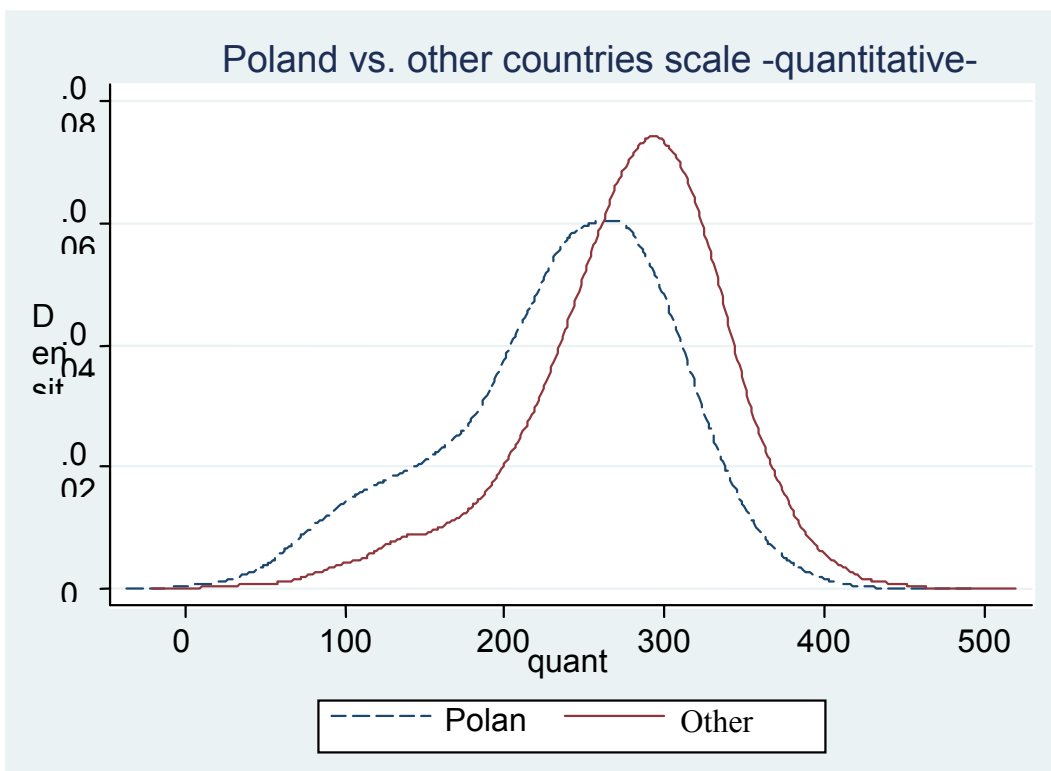
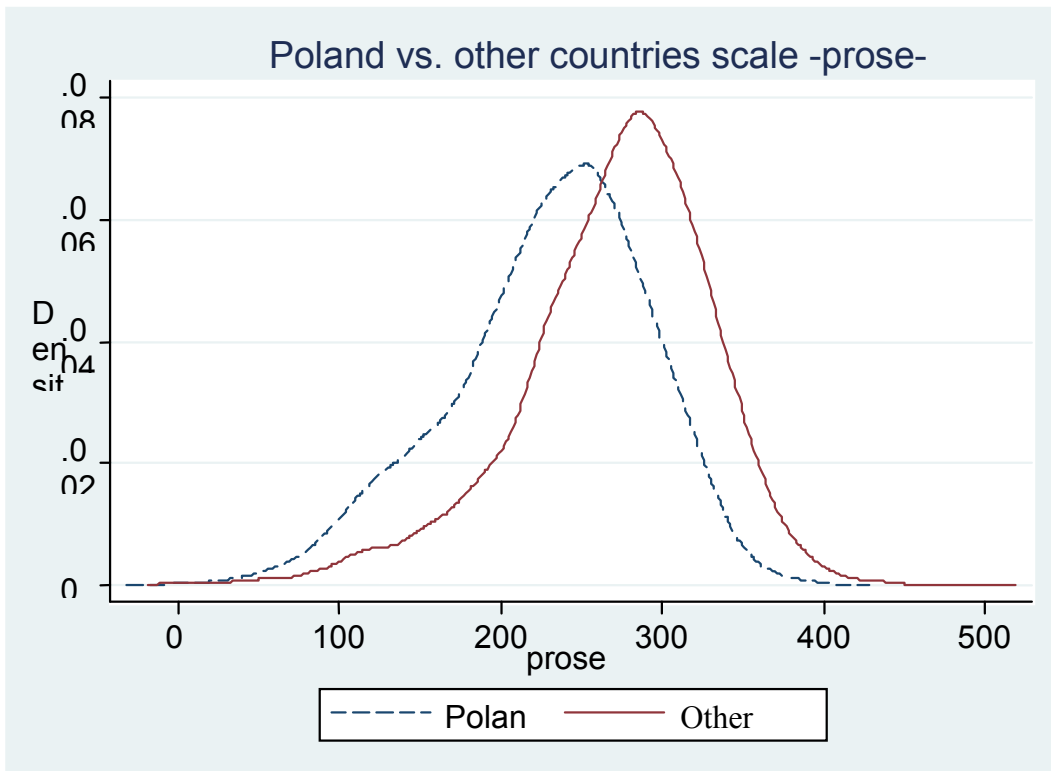
Education level		PROSE				
		level 1	level 2	level 3	level 4/5	Total
Poland	no/iscd 0-1	19.7%	5.0%	1.5%	0.1%	26.2%
	iscd 221	15.7%	14.7%	5.9%	0.7%	36.9%
	iscd 3	5.6%	10.0%	6.4%	0.5%	22.5%
	iscd 5	0.8%	2.8%	2.9%	0.6%	7.1%
	iscd 6/7	0.8%	2.2%	3.1%	1.2%	7.3%
Other	no/iscd 0-1	7.0%	3.6%	1.6%	0.3%	12.4%
	iscd 2	7.4%	11.3%	9.3%	2.3%	30.3%
	iscd 3	3.6%	10.7%	14.8%	5.5%	34.6%
	iscd 5	0.6%	2.2%	5.1%	2.7%	10.7%
	iscd 6/7	0.4%	1.5%	4.9%	5.3%	12.1%

Table 6

Age		PROSE				
		level 1	level 2	level 3	level 4/5	Total
Poland	16 - 25	5.9%	8.5%	6.4%	1.3%	22.1%
	26 - 35	8.1%	9.1%	5.2%	0.9%	23.2%
	36 - 45	10.7%	9.7%	4.4%	0.7%	25.4%
	46 - 55	8.1%	4.5%	2.4%	0.2%	15.1%
	56 - 65	9.9%	2.9%	1.4%	0.0%	14.2%
	66 or older	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	16 - 25	2.5%	5.2%	8.0%	3.7%	19.5%
	26 - 35	3.2%	6.4%	9.1%	4.6%	23.3%
	36 - 45	3.8%	5.9%	8.0%	4.0%	21.7%
	46 - 55	3.6%	5.7%	6.0%	2.4%	17.6%
	56 - 65	4.2%	4.8%	3.6%	1.0%	13.5%
	66 or older	2.1%	1.3%	0.8%	0.1%	4.4%

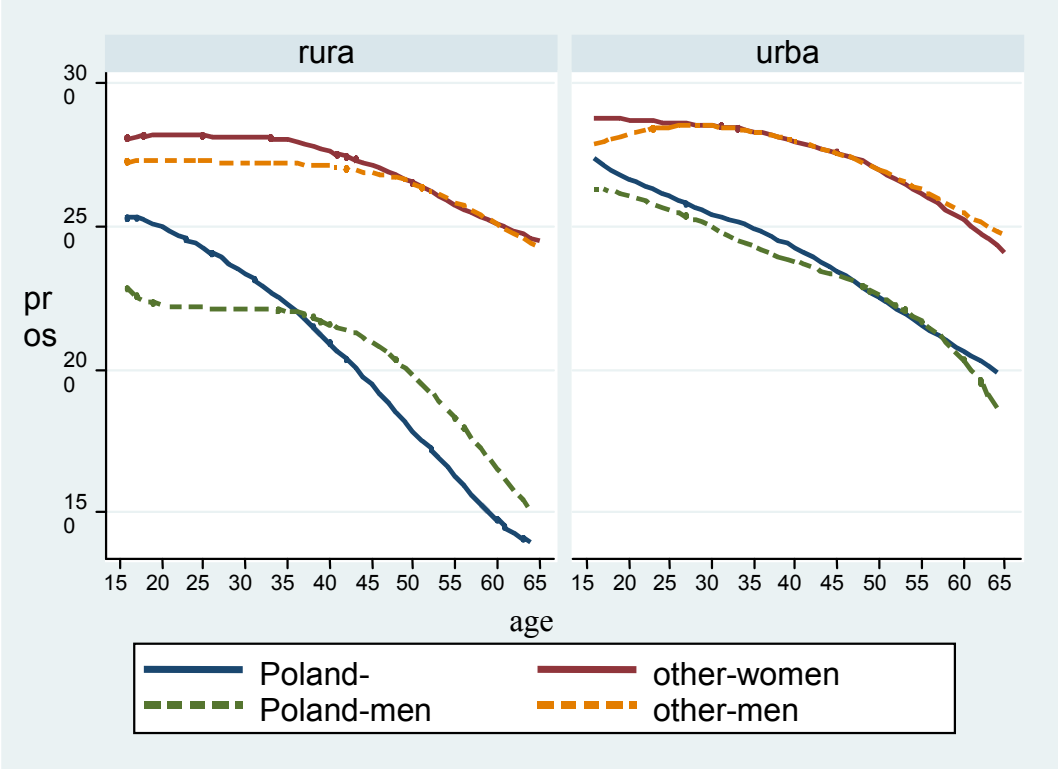
Important differences in achievements are evident on the lists of results for Poland and other countries. Results of Poland were overbalanced on weights provided by organisers of the IALS. Results of other countries were considered jointly, and overbalanced on weights similar to those of the above table, consequently these results are representative internally for the countries, but every country has a similar weight in the whole sample. The structure of results for the whole population, applying to the use of text (prose) and quantities (quant.) are presented below.

<sup>21</sup> In the category ISCED 2 vocational schools were included, that did not provide full secondary education.

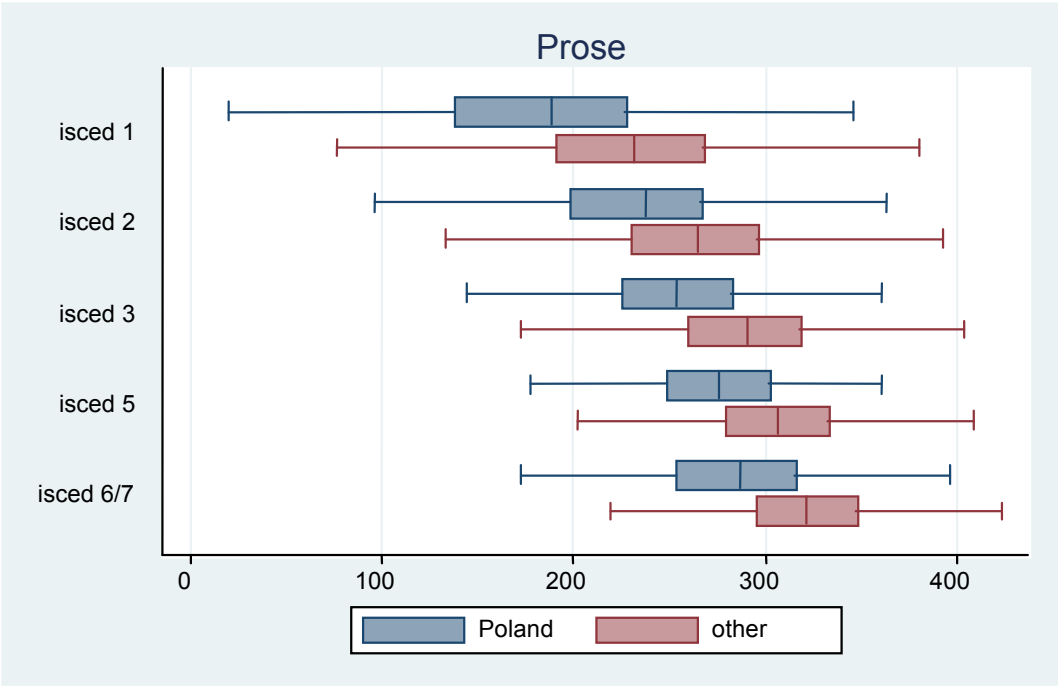


Another chart shows similar dependences split into urban/rural. Evidently, differences described above are proper for rural areas. In rural areas, the gap between Poland and other countries grows with age, in urban areas the difference is still remarkable, however, only

slightly higher for older cohorts than for younger. The relatively small difference for the youngest individuals is interesting, in rural areas, it applies mainly to women.



Another chart depicts the structure of results in scale prose, depending on education level.



We explain that ISCED 1 applies to primary school, ISCED 2 – gymnasium, ISCED 3 – secondary school (post-gymnasium), ISCED 5 – higher studies, while ISCED 6/7 are post-graduate or doctoral studies.

Evidently, the results of individuals with the highest level of education, in Poland were equivalent to the achievements of adults with secondary education in other countries participating in the survey.