

MATERIAL FOR THE NATIONAL REPORT FOR UNESCO ON ADULT EDUCATION 1997-2003

1. Institutional and legal framework

An attempt at a comprehensive and innovative approach to adult education was made in the document "Long-term Policy Assumptions for Continuing Professional Education" (**February 1997**).

The following assumptions were made in the document:

- provide for a possibility of flexible movement between the school and out-of-school education settings;
- depart from the determination of curriculum frameworks determining educational contents in favour of professional qualification standards setting educational goals in terms of skills;
- introduce a professional qualification examination based on uniform criteria and taken before an independent board with the participation of employers;
- introduce an education quality control mechanism based on professional qualification standards;
- set up one or more specialized institutions to support continuing professional education by developing professional qualification standards, curricula, accreditation of curricula, schools and other establishments, and an examination board system.

In **May 1998**, the Ministry of National Education presented a proposal for a comprehensive reform of the education system. The new system encompasses the following school types at different stages of the educational process:

- the primary school
- the lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*)
- the general high school, the profiled high school, the secondary technical school, and the vocational school,
- post-secondary.

All schools also provide education to adults, and schools for adults offer the opportunity to take external examinations.

1.1 Applicable laws

The education law applicable to adult education has undergone gradual evolution during the system transformation period.

One of the many amendments to the Education System Act introduced a provision whereby educational activity that does not involve running a school or similar establishment may be undertaken in accordance with the rules laid down in regulations on economic activities. This provision needs a brief note. Until the end of 1991, the delivery of out-of-school educational services had required approval from the minister of education, who kept a register of such institutions. In 1992 those responsibilities were decentralized and devolved to school superintendents. In 1996 the MNES proposed an option to operate educational institutions under the economic law. This, however, was followed by a proposal which provided for voluntary accreditation of curricula and establishments that wanted to obtain a kind of quality certificate for their services. Unfortunately, in the course of parliamentary proceedings the latter provision was deleted, as the deputies came to the conclusion

that a free market for services would be the best regulator. In the light of a recent amendment, accreditation will be granted to establishments that have met the conditions set forth in Article 86b, based on a procedure to be laid down by Ordinance.

The educational "Constitution" is the Educational System Act of 7 September 1991. It was reviewed a number of times, also with regard to adult education. As a result of a recent amendment the Act of 27 June 2003 amending the Educational System Act and certain other Acts was adopted. It will soon be published in the Journal of Laws; work has started on draft implementing measures.

The amended Educational System Act

Adult education provisions

Article 1. In particular, the educational system ensures:

- 8) an opportunity for adults to complement their general education or to acquire or change their vocational or specialist qualifications,
- 13) the adaptation of the directions and contents of education to labour law requirements

Article 2. The education system consists of:

- 3a) continuing education establishments and practical education establishments, which make it possible to acquire and complement general knowledge, skills, and professional qualifications,

Article 3. For the purposes hereof and unless defined otherwise:

- 11d) "adult school" shall mean a school with special organization of the educational process, where persons are enrolled who are aged at least 18 or reach the age of 18 in the calendar year in which they are enrolled in school.
- 15) "continuing education" shall mean education in adult schools, as well as the acquisition and improvement of general knowledge, skills and professional qualifications.

Article 10.

- 1a. External examinations shall be held for all educational courses envisaged in the curriculum of the relevant type of adult school.

Article 22.

- 2a. The minister in charge of education may define, by Ordinance, the cases in which a person aged at least 16 can be enrolled in an adult school, taking into consideration a delay in the educational process.

Article 55

- 7. With a view to supporting the statutory activities of an adult school or continuing education establishment, the self-governing body of such school or establishment may accumulate funds from voluntary contributions and from other sources. The rules for the disbursement of such funds are laid down in the regulations mentioned in paragraph 3.

Article 62

5a. Centres for continuing education and Centre for Practical Education s can be established within school complexes only with consent of the school superintendent.

5b. The integration of a kindergarten with a primary school or with a lower secondary school; a primary school with a lower secondary school; or a kindergarten with a primary school and a lower secondary school to form a school complex shall require a favourable opinion from the school superintendent.

5c. The provision of paragraph 5b shall not apply to schools of art, schools of sport, schools with sports classes, sports championship schools, schools with "integration classes", special schools, schools with special classes, schools at health care establishments, including those at spa establishments, at social welfare homes, adults schools, bilingual schools, and national minority schools, as well as the schools referred to in Article 5 par. 3b and Article 35 par. 2a. Such schools can be combined into complexes on terms laid down by the governing body.

Article 67

1. In order to perform its statutory tasks, a public school should enable the students to use:
 - 1) instruction rooms with necessary equipment,
 - 2) a library,
 - 3) a common room,
 - 4) a preventive health care room,
 - 5) sports and recreation facilities,
 - 6) administration and amenity areas.
2. The requirements set forth in subparagraphs 3-5 of paragraph 1 need not be met at adult schools.

Article 68a.

1. Continuing education shall be organized and delivered at:
 - 1) adult schools,
 - 2) continuing education establishments, practical education establishments, professional improvement and development centres.
2. Continuing education may be delivered on an intramural, extramural and distance basis.
3. This Act shall not apply to continuing education delivered under Article 83a(2) and in the forms and on the terms laid down elsewhere, unless stipulated otherwise by a special provision.
4. The minister in charge of education shall identify, by Ordinance, the types of establishments mentioned in paragraph 1(2), as well as detailed organization, method, conditions, and forms of delivery of continuing education by the establishments and centres mentioned in paragraph 1(2), taking particularly into account the tasks of establishments and centres adjusted to the needs of the labour market.

Article 68b.

1. The establishments and centres mentioned in Article 68a (1) (2), which provide out-of-school continuing education, may obtain accreditation, which confirms that specific requirements are met and high quality of education is ensured. Accreditation may cover all or part of such education.

2. Accreditation is granted by the school superintendent within whose jurisdiction the establishment or centre concerned is situated, by administrative decision issued upon the evaluation by a team appointed by the school superintendent of the activities of the establishment or centre concerned as set forth in paragraph 3.
3. Accreditation can be granted to an establishment or centre which:
 - 1) provides facilities equipped with teaching aids,
 - 2) employs qualified staff,
 - 3) prepares and makes available methodological and teaching materials.
4. In the accreditation process, the school superintendent shall also take into consideration the results of pedagogical supervision over the establishment or centre.
5. The school superintendent may, by administrative decision, withdraw an accreditation if the establishment or centre is found to have failed to meet accreditation conditions.
6. A party seeking accreditation shall pay a fee, which will constitute state revenue.
7. Parties which provide free-of-charge education shall be exempted from fees mentioned in paragraph 6.
8. The provisions of paragraphs 1-7 shall also apply to non-public establishments operated in accordance with the provisions of chapter 8, and to the educational activities mentioned in Article 83a (2).
9. The minister in charge of education shall lay down, by ordinance, detailed terms and procedures for the granting and withdrawal of accreditation, the composition and operating method of the team mentioned in paragraph 2, and the terms of remuneration of its members, model documents used in the accreditation process, as well as the amount and procedure for the payment of fees by parties seeking accreditation.
10. The ordinance mentioned in paragraph 9 should provide, in particular, for the implementation and dissemination by parties seeking accreditation of innovative curriculum/methodological and organisational solutions affecting the quality of education provided, the participation of in the team of representatives of the provincial or district labour office and an association of employers, and it should set the fee amount so that it does not exceed the amount of PLN 760 adjusted each year according to the average annual consumer price index laid down in the Budget Act.

Article 68c.

1. The minister in charge of education shall determine, by ordinance, the terms and procedures for the acquisition and improvement by adults of their general knowledge, professional skills and qualifications in out-of-school settings, and may also lay down the terms and procedures for qualification examinations, on the basis of which professional titles are conferred, the composition, terms of appointment and dismissal by the school superintendent of state examination boards, model certificates and diplomas, the amount of fees for qualification examinations, the terms of remuneration of board members.
2. In particular, the ordinance mentioned in paragraph 1 shall provide for:
 - 1) taking into consideration when enrolling in a adult school that provides vocational education of the results of vocational courses delivered by

- accredited public and non-public establishments and centres or by legal or natural persons carrying on the educational activities mentioned in Article 83a (2), for which they are accredited,
- 2) the method of conformation of specific professional qualifications acquired by completing the different educational courses,
 - 3) the terms and procedures for distance teaching,
 - 4) the possibility to appoint state examination boards in schools and establishments, the prerequisites for admission to a qualification examination, and the way of holding such examination;
 - 5) the amount of fees for a qualification examination, the base for such fees being the monthly wage in the enterprise sector net of profit-related bonuses, in the fourth quarter of the previous year, published by the President of the Central Statistical Office, provided that the fee amount may not exceed 30% of the base.

Article 92.

1. With the exception of students of adult schools, students shall be entitled to preventive health care.

Implementing measures

The existing implementing measures include the Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sports of [...] 2003 on the types, organization, and operating method of public continuing education establishments and public practical education establishments, including public professional development and improvement centres (not yet published) and the Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 12 October 1993 on the terms and conditions for the improvement of professional qualifications and general education of adults (Journal of Laws of 1993, No. 103, item 472, as amended). The latter measure is the effect of two delegations contained the Education System Act and in the Labour Code. It concerns, among other things, paid training leaves. Employers are obligated by the Labour Code to facilitate the improvement of professional qualifications by their employees, and implementing measures lay down detailed provisions in this respect. An employee referred for training by his/her employer is entitled to a paid leave, and an employee who undertakes training on his/her own initiative is entitled to an unpaid leave. On terms and conditions stipulated by a contract with the employer, a studying employee may also be granted other benefits: payment/recovery of education costs, travel costs, accommodation, and handbooks. In 1979 Poland ratified the Paid Educational Leave Convention of the International Labour Office.¹

Ordinances concerning issues such as continuing education establishments and practical vocational training establishments, accreditation of training schools and companies, and the methods of qualification upgrading by adults.

Other pieces of legislation governing qualification upgrading

Constitution of the Republic of Poland: Article 65 (5). "Public authorities shall pursue policies aiming at full, productive employment by implementing

¹ Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974, No. 140. Lists of ratifications by Convention and by Country – as of 31 December 2000. Report III Part 2. International Labour Office Geneva. International Labour Conference 89th Session 2001.

programmes to combat unemployment, including the organization of and support for occupational advice and training ...”

With regard to continuing education/training in Poland, the State assumes relatively extensive obligations:

persons who have interrupted education are guaranteed by the Constitution (Article 70 (2) education in public schools without payment. Working persons are offered paid evening and extramural studies by public and private schools of higher education (which are allowed a high degree of autonomy under the Higher Education Act). The Vocational Schools of Higher Education Act stimulates the setting up of a network of schools offering education at the baccalaureate level.

Groups of persons whose situation in the labour market is the most difficult are granted assistance on the terms laid down in the **Employment and Prevention of Unemployment Act**. Employment bodies organize unpaid training for the unemployed and those facing loss of jobs or seeking employment, grant training loans, refund training expenses to the unemployed who have been granted a loan to start a business. During training the unemployed are paid the training allowance. In the recent years the government’s programme “First Job” has also been operated, aimed to help the unemployed school leavers/ graduates to find their first job and gain professional experience.

Employers who invest in continuing training and organize practical vocational training are also given some support. Under the above-mentioned Act, the cost of training provided to employees facing loss of jobs is refunded in part, as is the cost of remuneration paid to juvenile employees employed to learn a job, and additional benefits paid to sponsors of student apprenticeships in enterprises. The Tax Acts (PIT and CIT) provide for relief granted to employers who provide employment to persons learning a job. The state supports the training of personnel of industries and sectors undergoing restructuring as well as training that is conducive to ensuring social and economic cohesion of regions. Training activities are undertaken under different projects tackled as a result of the implementation of governmental strategies and programmes. Appropriations are made in the state budget (including foreign aid) and legal frameworks have been created systematically for the management of such programmes² (e.g. the 2000 Acts on the rules of supporting regional development, on the admissibility conditions and supervision of state aid to enterprises, on the establishment of the Polish Enterprise Development Agency).

2. Increased participation

Institutions supporting continuing education, which encourage adults to improve their qualifications, are already in place in Poland: the obligation to facilitate the improvement of professional qualifications has been imposed on employers by the Labour Law; training of the unemployed and persons facing loss of job/seeking a job is financed from the resources of the Labour Fund (consisting of State budget appropriations and contributions made by enterprises).

² In the recent period the government has adopted a number of strategies and structural programmes – the restructuring of mining, metallurgy, the defence industry, railways, development of rural areas, the government’s measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises, development of internal trade, etc., as well as economic development strategies: *The Strategy of Public Finance and Economic Development of the Country to 2002; Poland 2005 – A Long-term Strategy of Sustainable Development; The National Strategy of Regional Development 2001-2006.*

However, the components do not form a cohesive whole (a system). Owing to a lack of a good diagnosis of demand for continuing education, it is impossible to assess to what extent the existing support mechanisms are effective, what barriers hinder training initiatives, and what changes should be made. The supply side of the training services market is also largely unknown, and consequently it is difficult to control the quality of the courses offered and to ensure effective spending of training funds. Education statistics cover only school education. Out-of-school education statistics are incomplete.

The number of institutions that provide training in the form of courses is estimated at about 12,000. Around 5,000 of the number are schools, and more than 2,000 non-public establishments that provide out-of-school educational services, including professional development, registered by local authorities and formally subject to pedagogical supervision of the school superintendent (provincial authority). The operations of other suppliers of training courses (institutions operating under the Economic Activity Act) are virtually neither recorded nor controlled. With a decentralized supply of training services, the curriculum content of training courses is prepared only at the educational establishment level. Courses delivered by different establishments, even if called the same name, are often incomparable. It is assumed that the market mechanism should be stimulated to service quality and force providers to adapt training profiles to the needs of the labour market. The accreditation system for establishments, mentioned above, is under preparation, which is intended to help those interested to navigate through the abundance of training offers.

The expenditure on adult education and professional improvement are also insufficient. Budget appropriations for continuing education in Poland represent about 0.6% of total education spending. Employers' spending on education, improvement and retraining of personnel in 2001 represented 0.8% of labour costs.

The average number of persons undertaking further education in Poland in recent years has ranged between 1.2 and 1.5 million per year, i.e. between 8% and 10% of those employed in the economy. By comparison, in the EU member states this form of enhancing one's employment opportunities is used by about 20% of the working population. It is estimated that in Poland each worker spends an average of 2 hours a year in training, compared with about 50-70 hours in developed countries.

In analysing the composition of the unemployed in terms of education, it should be noted that during the 1990-2001 period:

- the number of unemployed graduates of schools above the primary level increased by 70,000 (i.e. 63.2%);
- the percentage of graduates with higher education increased from 8.3% at the end of 1999 (12,500) to 15.1% at the end of 2001 (27,300), i.e. by 6.8%;
- a decrease was reported in the proportion of general high school graduates - from 11.9% at the end of 1999 (17,800) to 11.2% (20,200); and vocational school leavers: from 40.7% at the end of 1999 (61,000) to 32.3% at the end of 2001 (58,400);
- the proportion of post-secondary and vocational secondary school graduates did not change and remained at 39.7%.

The substantial increase in the proportion of unemployed graduates with the highest education levels are believed to be one of the most disturbing developments in the labour market in the recent period. Among other things, this is due to a mismatch between the educational offer of the public education system and the needs of the labour market. This means that the responsibility for adjusting the skills of young people to the requirements of Poland's economy rests on the public employment service.

It should be made clear that staying without a job is particularly disadvantageous to the situation of graduates. In the face of unemployment, not only do they miss the opportunity to gain professional experience, but also – due to the lack of such experience – their employability is diminishing faster. This means that consequently the society is losing vast resources of human capital. Therefore it is necessary to tackle complex measures with a view to improving the educational profile of graduates and expanding the scale of professional activity of this group of the unemployed.

Institutions of the adult education system

In addition to traditional employment services, a highly significant role in the development of labour market policies is played by institutions which are geared directly to improve the quality of human capital, forming a complementary part of the entire institutional system of the labour market. In 2001, the following institutions were involved in the education and training of adults:

- 3127 establishments providing primary, lower secondary, basic and secondary vocational education,
- 2625 post-secondary schools,
- 344 schools of higher education, offering undergraduate and postgraduate studies (including courses for working students),
- 245 public Centres for continuing education and public Centre for Practical Education s,
- about 10-12 thousand non-public training institutions and training organizers (associations, foundations, co-operatives, companies, partnerships, sole proprietorships).

The number of primary schools is decreasing in the adult education system, while the number of lower secondary schools is increasing (there are five times more than in 1999/2000), as is the number of general high schools (in the school year 2001/2002 there were more than three times as many as in the school year 1995/1996). The period between the school year 1995/1996 and 2001/2002 also saw the development of adult vocational education: the number of basic vocational schools increased by more than 50% and the number of secondary vocational schools increased by 30%. Over the same period, the number of post-secondary schools increased by 83%, the most popular being those which allow education to be reconciled with work. The number of students in those schools more than doubled during the period. Between the academic year 1995/1996 and 2000/2001, the number of schools of higher education doubled.

The adult education system contains a network of 124 Centres for continuing education (CCEs) and 121 Centre for Practical Education s (CPE s), being public continuing education establishments. The CCEs provide training to adults in both school and out-of-school and intramural and extramural settings, adjusting their educational offer to the needs of the regional labour market. The CCE curricula have

been predominated in recent years by courses in business, finance, commerce, administration, services. In the farmers' Centres for continuing education, typically agricultural courses have been supplemented by courses in processing, food technology, and agribusiness. The CPE s provide practical classes for vocational school students and organize apprenticeship examinations. The CPE s are also involved in teacher improvement programmes in modern technical secondary schools, as well as the development of employee skills and retraining of the unemployed.

In the education market there are also non-public continuing education establishments founded by legal and natural persons. Those establishments provide a variety of out-of-school educational services and operate either under the Education System Act or under the provisions on economic activities, which makes it difficult to keep track of them and ensure pedagogical supervision.

Education system and its changes

Over the last few decades Poland has seen a considerable progress in terms of the education level of the population. The number of people with primary or lower education has decreased and the number of those with secondary and higher education has grown. In 1970 half of Poland's population had primary or lower education; in 1997 their proportion dropped to about 30%. The percentage of people with higher education increased during the period from 2% to about 11%. The increase in education level followed a different pattern for men and for women. Most men chose vocational and technical education, while women opted for general secondary education. Consequently, 57% of working women now have at least general secondary education, while 43% of men hold only vocational level of training. The favourable developments in the education process are illustrated by the education ratios shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Gross education ratio*

Description	Age groups	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001
Primary schools	7 – 14	99.9	100.1***	100.4****
Secondary schools	15 – 18	64.5	67.2	70.1
Basic vocational schools	15 – 18	23.4	21.4	20.0
Schools of higher education	19 – 24	33.5	36.9	40.7

* gross education ratio was calculated as the ratio of children and youth schooled at a given education level (irrespective of age) to the population in the age group corresponding to the education level concerned; the in primary and secondary education ratios exclude those studying in adult schools

** general high schools and secondary vocational schools

*** including lower secondary school grade 1 students

**** including lower secondary school grade 1 and 2 students

Source: GUS

The youth education ratios at the secondary and tertiary levels appear optimistic. Unfortunately, for the next 10-15 years the education level of the whole society in statistical terms will be determined by adults who have already completed school education. Therefore adult education and continuing education should play a key role.

Computer education and its role in the development of the information society

Computer education, in school and university levels, as well as continuing settings, is becoming an increasingly important component of the preparation of young people for effective functioning in the labour market. It should provide them

with essential skills enabling them to search, process and use information, however this is subject to availability of technical facilities (equipment of schools with computers and software, Internet access), competence of teaching staff.

The availability of computer equipment in households is improving steadily. In 2000 personal computers were used by 14.3% of households *compared with 11.5% in 1999), and roughly every twentieth household had access to the Internet (5.1%). Recently published data show that Poland ranks in the middle among the EU candidate countries in terms of ratios describing the scale of Internet use³.

Table 16 shows that the computerisation process in the school system started to become a mass phenomenon as late as mid nineties. Over such a short period, the country has managed to partly catch up on the delay, which is demonstrated by the ratio comparing the number of computers in schools in 2000 and at the beginning of the previous decade. However, it should be borne in mind that the data quoted do not allow for the quality and age of the computer equipment in schools. More than 50% of the computers, mainly in high schools and secondary vocational schools, are outdated and physically depreciated, which often makes it impossible to use many applications. Schools have been equipped with computers based on central budget appropriations (45%), purchases made directly by schools (29%), or financed by local authorities (9%), or by sponsors.

Table 16. The number of computers in schools in 1990-2001⁴.

Type of school	1990	1994	1997	2001	2001/1990 (in %)
Primary schools	3485	14937	25592	70041	2009.8
Lower secondary schools	-	-	-	60975	-
General high schools	7492	12676	17440	36314	484.7
Secondary vocational schools	10259	19551	28029	44378	432.6
Total	21236	47264	71061	211708	980.3

* Lower secondary schools have existed since 1999

Source: MNES

Other projects of the MNES have been carried out in the recent years: *Internet Room in Each Commune* (1998-2000), *Internet Room in Each Lower Secondary School* (1999-2002), *Internet Room in Each School* (started in 2001). The results of the projects are clear and have greatly contributed to the improvement of access to computers in schools. According to MNES data for 2002, of the overall number of 29,492 schools for children and youth, 18,781 have computer rooms, which represents 63.7% of all schools.

One measure indicating the availability of computers in schools is the number of students per computer. This ratio provides a basis for comparison of the availability of computers in Polish schools with the situation in the EU member states.

³ The ratios concerned the number of Internet hosts, i.e. computers connected directly to the Web (having their own IP address) per 100 inhabitants and the number of Internet users per 100 inhabitants. In the case of the first ratio, Poland was preceded by countries such as Estonia, Malta, and the Czech Republic, and in the case of the other one by Estonia, Cyprus, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Malta (Deiss R., *Information Society Statistics – Data for Candidate Countries*, Statistics in focus, Theme 4 “Industry, trade and services” – 27/2001, Eurostat 2001).

⁴ The data presented refer to public schools for children and youth and do not allow for special schools.

Table 17. Availability of computers in schools in 2002 (for the EU – 2001)

Description	Poland	EU
Number of students per computer:		
Primary schools	44.0	13.2
Secondary schools (lower secondary schools, high schools and secondary vocational schools)	22.6	8.6
Number of students per computer connected to the Internet:		
Primary schools	79.0	32.0
Secondary schools (lower secondary schools, high schools and secondary vocational schools)	26.1	14.9

Source: MNES

An analysis of the data in Table 17 confirms that despite substantial progress (especially in terms of student access to the Internet), there is still a great distance to catch up. The achievement of a number of students per computer of about 20 (in the EU countries it is now about 13 and keeps improving), will require the number of computers in schools to more than double (to 450,000 from 210,000 in 2001).

The success of all projects involving the implementation of information technologies and computer education in schools is also dependent of the competence of teachers. Different forms of computer education are involved, such as teaching computer subjects, using information and communication technologies during classes in different subjects, as well as after-school computer classes for students interested in computer science and information technology. The delivery of such education requires the preparation of a very large number of teachers, especially those with non-IT background. A number of positive changes have been reported in this respect over the recent years, but teacher competence in applying information and communication technologies in teaching remains clearly insufficient.

MNES data indicate that only about 45% of teachers are computer literate at basic level (relatively the most, 65%, in secondary vocational schools; the least, in 41%, in primary schools). Not all teachers who teach computer subjects have a relevant formal background. An EWIKAN study shows that only 76.2% of teachers who teach computer science as their primary subject have relevant qualifications, and among teachers of computer science as an additional subject the percentage is even lower at just 57.5%. In addition, about a half of teachers who are capable to use information and communication technologies in teaching their subjects do not use computers in their classes. The percentage in Polish schools is about 26% (about 36% for secondary vocational schools). The possible reasons are insufficient availability of computers in schools and a lack of good hardware and educational software.

Adult education

Continuing education forms an integral part of the Polish educational system, and hence there is no separate regulation⁵. It is delivered at all levels of general education (from primary school to secondary school with final examinations) and vocational education (at the high-school and post-secondary levels) in both school and out-of-school settings. CPE s and CCEs (practical and continuous education centres) have an important role to play in this area.

⁵ Basic regulatory provisions on adult education are contained in the Ordinances: on continuous education centers; on the terms and conditions for the improvement of professional qualifications and general education of adults; on the terms and conditions for extramural examinations. It is also possible to undertake and carry on educational activities on the terms laid down in provisions on economic activity, which is not subject to pedagogical supervision by the school superintendent.

The scale of the educational offer for adults is illustrated by the data provided in the Table below:

Table 18. Adult schools of all types in the school year 2001/2002

Education level*	Number of schools	Number of students	Adult school students as a percentage of economically active population aged 19-64 in Q3 2001
Low	103	8,716	0.05
Medium	4,902	485,945	2.85
TOTAL	5,005	494,661	2.90

* Education level in accordance with the ISCO classification; the low level includes schools at primary and lower secondary levels; the medium level – basic vocational schools, general secondary schools, vocational secondary schools, and post-secondary schools.

Source: GUS

The growing demand for educational services for adults is reflected by the increased number of vocational secondary schools for adults, and in particular post-secondary schools and general high schools. The structure of participants of continuing education in 1990 shows that 8% of the working population is studying in adult schools, and 5.6% of population of working age (18-59/64) attend courses organized by registered training institutions⁶.

Table 19. Basic ratios concerning education and scale of continuing education in Poland vis a vis OECD countries

Ratios	Poland 1998	OECD average 1999
Proportion of persons with at least secondary education in the population aged 25 – 64	54%	62%
Proportion of persons with university education in the population aged 25 – 64	11.3%	14%
Percentage of participants of continuing education	13%	31%
Points in the OECD survey	230*	269

* Poland ranked 17 (among 18 countries tested)

Source: *Education at a glance, OECD indicators 2001; National Education Development Strategy, Warsaw 2001*

The data in the table above indicate that the greatest differences in terms of the scale of education between Poland and the European Union were reported with regard to the scale of continuous education. The employee training system also requires considerable changes. Increased activity of employers in this regard could result in an expanded scale of training and its improved effectiveness. Relevant data are shown in Table 20.

Continuing education offered to employees by enterprises	Poland (1999)	EU candidate countries (1999)	EU member states (1993)
Percentage of firms co-financing personnel training	39%	11% - 69%	18% - 96%

⁶ *Education in the school year 2000/2001, GUS 2001.*

Percentage of employees to whom training courses are offered	3%	20% - 53%	32% - 63%
Average training time per participant (in h)	28	24 – 42	26 – 42
Percentage share of training costs in labour costs	0.8%	0.5% - 1.9%	0.9% - 3.6%

Source: K. Nestler, E. Kailis, First survey of continuing training in enterprises in candidate countries (CVTS2). Statistic in Focus, European Communities 2002; Continuing Training in Enterprises, Facts and Figures, A report of the results of the CVTS, European Commission, 1994

The creation of a modern and effective continuing education system is prerequisite not only for the adjustment of the Polish labour force to the needs of the labour market, but also to fill a certain civilization gap. The activities undertaken should focus on:

- differentiation of the educational offer resulting from changing social and economic needs;
- customisation of educational paths owing to different education levels, special educational needs, and occupational experience of the participants;
- improvement of the education level in further education establishments by enhancing their operation with the use of advanced technologies and innovative solutions;
- improvement of the teaching facilities of schools and establishments with a view to using and introducing new technologies and innovative solutions;
- introduction of distance education and modular education.

Quality management is important for the entire education and improvement process, especially in out-of-school settings. This requires the preparation of teaching staff, the development of quality standards form educational programmes and examinations, and the definition of terms and conditions for the accreditation of programmes and establishments. Education, further education, and improvement programmes should be prepared on the basis of professional qualification standards. It also seems advisable to create a base of programmes prepared on the basis of profession skill modules. This would provide an opportunity to prepare an educational offer meeting diverse needs of persons who want to supplement, acquire or improve the professional skills.

3. Autonomy of adult students

Basic school education programmes for youth and for adults have the same contents. This issue is governed by the Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 26 February 2002 on the basic programme for pre-school education and for general education in different school types (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 51, item 458).

In the case of the latter, the custodian function of the school has been obviously reduced. This is reflected by the new framework syllabuses, which do not provided for the so-called “educational hours” and the “educator” function in adult schools (Ordinance of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 12 February 2002 on framework syllabuses for public schools – Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 15, item 142,

as amended). The framework syllabuses also provided for a reduced number of lessons, which implies a higher degree of independence and continuous self-study. Adult students may also complete education in an extramural or external system (Ordinance of the Minister of National Education of 24 September 2001 on the detailed rules and procedures for external examinations and detailed rules of payment for such examinations). These arrangements are intended to make it easier to working persons to complete their education.

4. Examples of good practices

Information on selected continuing education establishments

A) Centre for Continuing Education in Bytom

ul. Powstańców 1-szych 10
41-902 Bytom
tel. (0-32) 281 60 76, fax (0-32) 281 27 84
e-mail: ckubytom@ka.onet.pl
www.cku.bytom.pl

Participant of international programmes:

1. PHARE Multi Country Programme for Distance Education
2. SEARA Project - Strategy for Adult Education in Rural Areas under the SOCRATES Programme, Grundtvig Action.

B. Centre for Continuing Education in Kołobrzeg

78-100 Kołobrzeg, ul. Głuskiego 13
tel. (0-94) 35 22 231
cku@partner.com.pl
www.cku-kolobrzeg.ipartner.com.pl

The CCE is a modern educational establishment owned by:

- European Association of Hotel and Tourism Schools (AEHT) based in Luxembourg
- Polish Association of Hotel, Catering and Tourism Schools based in Kołobrzeg
- Kołobrzeg Spa Association
- Polish Economic Society

The school co-operates with a number of establishments in Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg, France, Germany, Slovenia, Finland, the Czech Republic, and Kazakhstan. Our youth participate in various practical training programmes in different regions of Europe and on Polska - Egipt Bałtycka ferries.

The CCE has successfully participated in several editions of the Leonardo da Vinci programme (currently taking part in the project "Evolution of corporate management procedures in the context of European integration").

C. Centre for Continuing Education in Kielce

Al. 1000-lecia P.P. 7, 25-315 Kielce
tel. (0-41) 34 24 333
fax (0-41) 34 24 331
e-mail: cku@cku.tu.kielce.pl
www.cku.tu.kielce.pl

Participating in the following international programmes:

1. SOCRATES – *“VINE – Virtual Interactive Nice Education”*
2. SOCRATES – ADIS – *“integration OF adults with Disabilities into Labour Market Through Open and Distance Learning”*
3. LEONADRO DA VINCI – *“EuroRecord Extension – Multiplier Project”*.
4. LEONADRO DA VINCI – *“SAMBITE – Small and Medium Business Information Technology Education”*.
5. PHARE Multi Country Programme for Distance Education

D) Centre for Continuing Education in Tczew

Address: 30 Stycznia 1, 83-110 Tczew
tel. (0-58) 531 69 50, 532 13 97, 777 52 75
fax (0-58) 531 40 04
e-mail: ecti@wpomorskie.com.pl; ecti@tczew.com.pl
website: www.ced.tczew.com.pl

Participation in European Union programmes and bilateral assistance programmes:

- Management Unit – TESSA
- Phare Management Box – Fiesta II
- Phare Leonardo da Vinci – Manager 2000
- Leonardo da Vinci – “Active Woman”
- SCI-TECH Reform Programme for Science and Technology
- INCO-COPERNICUS Programme Femirc in Poland
- 5FP – Fifth Framework Programme of the European Community for Research and Technology Development

E) Centre for Continuing Development in Tarnów

Tarnowskie Centrum Edukacji im. Ks. Prymasa Stefana Wyszyńskiego in Tarnów
33-101 Tarnów, ul. Zbylitowska 9
tel/fax (0-14) 663 01 24; 633 09 15; 63 06 87
www.cku.tarnow.pl

Please treat the above-mentioned establishments as potential good practice candidates

5. Measures up to 2009

Under the **National Strategy for Increased Employment and Development of Human Resources for the years 2000 – 2006**, the percentage of people with secondary education should reach the level of 65-70%, and the ratio tertiary

education for population aged over 29 should reach 18-23%. The measures taken so far to achieve those plans have focused on the education of children and youth. Now, out-of-school adult education will play an increasing role.

In the opinion of the Ministry of National Education and Sport, conditions have to be urgently created conducive to broader participation in vocational education of persons who have left the school system. In order to implement the idea of **lifelong learning** (adopted in the Lisbon Strategy in the year 2000), it is intended to:

- strengthen the system of incentives to employers investing in employee development and expand the system of motivating people to improve their professional qualifications,
- promote vocational training as an effective instrument in combating unemployment
- improve the quality of the training services offered.

This will make it necessary to:

- create a database and provide continuous monitoring of the existing schools and continuing education establishments in terms of their ability to flexibly respond to changes in the labour market, resulting from economic changes,
- conduct studies and analyses making it possible to assess the opportunities for acquiring specific professional qualifications,
- improve the effectiveness of continuing professional education and ensure the comparability of professional achievements by introducing external examinations to confirm professional qualifications,
- create a system supporting the preparation of teachers and lecturers for the performance of tasks related to the education, further education and improvement aimed at developing the information society, by introducing innovative solutions, including advanced techniques and technologies,
- create an accreditation system for establishments providing continuous professional education,
- support measures aimed at developing the interest of young people in the issues and achievements of modern technology.

In addition to the above-mentioned measures regarding regulatory provisions, there is a governmental document elaborated at the Ministry of National Education and Sport, entitled “**Development Strategy for Continuing Education to the year 2010**” (attached hereto). The document was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 8 July 2002, thus becoming a governmental document.

In view of unavailability of detailed data on the volume of continuous education financing in Poland, the strategy implementation financing forecast will be based on estimated data from different studies. According to those estimates, Poland spends approximately 0.6% of all its education expenditure on adult education. In 2001, the education expenditure (on the school education system and tertiary education system) amounted to PLN 30,549,816,000, which means that the amount appropriated for adult education was about PLN 183 million.

The factor that is bound to determine the activities in the field of continuing education for the years to come is **Poland's accession to the European Union**. This means the need to increase the number of persons participating in training, as well as opportunities related to the use of EU aid funds.

Under the, co-financed with the European Social Fund, the Ministry of National Education and Sport will have at its disposal funds of EUR 527.4 million in the years 2004-2006 (i.e. EUR 395.55 million from the European Social Fund and EUR 131.85 million will be a national public contribution). The amounts will be appropriated for the implementation of the first two measures under Priority 2 – *Development of a knowledge-based society*. This means that, on average, the amount available each year will be about EUR 175.8 million (including about EUR 43.95 million in national public contribution).

An analysis of the provisions of the DHR Sectoral Operating Programme and the Continuing Education Development Strategy to the year 2010 shows that the tasks defined in the two documents are mutually compatible, which means that the implementation of most tasks under the Strategy can be financed from the funds of the DHR Sectoral Operating Programme.

This is not to say that these are all funds available for the development of continuous education. Other measures under the Sectoral Operating Programme "Development of Human Resources" and the Integrated Operating Programme for Regional Development, as well as other operating programmes, e.g. the SOP "Restructuring and Modernisation of the Food Sector and the Development of Rural Areas", provide for tasks related to continuing education, and hence it will be possible to acquire additional funds.

Public expenditure can be incurred in the amount laid down in the Budget Act, and therefore the amounts appropriated for the execution of the tasks mentioned in the Strategy will depend on the capabilities of the State budget and decisions of Parliament in the successive years. It should also be noted that many of the tasks mentioned in the Strategy will be continued ones, which means that their performance will not involve any additional budgetary appropriations – they will be financed from budgetary parts of relevant fund administrators. Most of the funds appropriated by local government units for the implementation of tasks under the Strategy will depend on the budgetary capabilities of those units.

Financial planning of the development of continuing education should also take into account the amounts spent by employer on such projects and disclosed in labour cost statistics. In 2000, spending on improvement, further education and retraining in the private sector represented 0.8% of labour costs. There is not much information available on the share of individuals in the cost of their professional training – it is estimated that 39% adult participants of training courses pay directly for their education.

Thus, in view of the above considerations, the total expenditure on continuing education, even with effective use of funds derived from those sources, may increase significantly, and with regard to budgetary expenditure on adult education the increase can even reach 2.5% compared with the current level of 0.6%.

After 2006, the Strategy will be financed in a similar way, and the measures provided for in the different sectoral operating programmes will be defined based on the provisions of this document.

Assuming that the measures provided for in the “*Development Strategy for Continuing Education to the year 2010*” will be continued, a long-term strategy can be built on this basis, allowing also for the acquisition of resources from the structural funds in successive EU budgetary periods.

To sum up, the period of the nineties was a time of gradual emergence of priorities for adult education. In the light of programme declarations and the legislation adopted it can be concluded that:

- the education of adults in public schools is financed by the state;
- out-of-school education is financed mostly by the recipient of the educational service (one example being training organized by employers and financed from the Labour Fund);
- a network of continuing education establishments (CCEs and CPEs) has been established, which are, however, focused on school-based programmes;
- legislative measures are taken to ensure control of educational services (external examinations and accreditation system);
- standards of examination requirements are developed, which allow for professional qualification examinations irrespective of the education formula.

Sources:

Development Strategy for Continuing Education to the year 2010, MNES 2003.

Report: “Modernisation of continuing education and adult education in Poland as an integral part of lifelong learning”, prepared FOR THE ministry of National Education and Sport.

www.menis.gov.pl

Sectoral Operating Programme “Development of Human Resources”

www.mpips.gov.pl/praca