



Employment developments in childcare services for school-age children

Poland

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Introduction

In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on high quality childcare in Europe, both with respect to the sector's workforce and the changing needs of children and parents. There is a great need for measures to be introduced that support sustainable and formal job creation in care services for school-age children.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has commissioned ECOTEC Research and Consulting to carry out a study on sustainable childcare services currently available for school-age children in the 25 Member States of the European Union (EU25). The study aims to support the debate on modernisation of care systems in Europe, to review existing information on childcare services and pinpoint gaps in the level of service in the enlarged EU, and to identify measures at national, regional and local levels to create sustainable childcare services for school-age children.

This report is one of six in-depth country studies that have been conducted in order to complement the more general review of childcare systems in the EU25. It contains three examples of best practice identified from current childcare initiatives in Poland:

1. Day room programme, My place, in the Podlasie (*podlaskie*) province in northeast Poland;
2. School day room in Płock in the Masovian (*mazowieckie*) province in central Poland;
3. Integration fun club, Ikar, of a primary school in Kraków in the Lesser Poland (*małopolskie*) province in the south of Poland; the club aims to integrate children with special needs into extracurricular activities along with other children.

Information was gathered through a combination of research and 16 stakeholder interviews.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- 1 - Policy background:** This section looks at the current childcare policy developments in Poland.
- 2 - Childcare provision:** This section describes current childcare services including types of services and hours of operation.
- 3 - Childcare workers:** This section identifies the types of jobs available in childcare services as well as the image of childcare workers.
- 4 - Future employment in childcare:** This section examines the shortages and gaps in childcare employment.
- 5 - Creating sustainable childcare:** This section examines issues relating to the sustainability of childcare.
- 6 - Case studies:** Best practice studies will be outlined.

Case study 1: 'My Place' – Day room programme, Podlaskie province

Case study 2: School day room, Płock

Case study 3: Integration fun club Ikar, Kraków

Childcare policy to date

In Poland, the origins of childcare are strongly related to the Catholic church, which was responsible for childcare up to the 15th century. Since then, the state has become more involved in the delivery of childcare. Out-of-school childcare, organised by the state, emerged around the time of the National Education Commission in the 18th century, which represented one of the first ministries of education in Europe.

During the interwar period in the 20th century, childcare was formally integrated into the system of social care; this provided the basis for today's childcare activities (Kelm, 2004). Nonetheless, the welfare and childrearing system remained legally separated from the care and education structures. After the Second World War, the Ministry of Labour and Welfare's responsibilities concerning childcare for three to 18 year old children were moved to the Ministry of National Education¹. Since 1979, many attempts have been made to modify the system, resulting again in the transfer of certain responsibilities concerning childcare from the Ministry of National Education to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy².

The Education Act of 1991 separated regulations on welfare and childrearing centres, such as intervention centres for children with difficulties and orphanages, from the educational care centres, such as day rooms and community clubs. Moreover, in 1999, the reform of the national administrative structures³ also brought about a change in the provision of childcare since the 380 Polish counties (*powiats*) play a more important role in providing care with the creation of the Family Care County Centres.

In addition, the Education Act of 1991 regulates education and care establishments that aim to develop children's interests and that offer a range of activities to children in their leisure time. These include out-of-school childcare establishments, such as the sports-orientated 'Jordan gardens' and the multi-activity centres 'Youth palaces'. Major social and economic changes in Poland after 1989 limited considerably the scope of operating childcare in the form of out-of-school childcare establishments. Over the period 1990–1993, activities of these establishments were severely cut down because of budgetary restrictions in the education sector and, as a result, many establishments had to close down (Czerniachowska, 2001). The majority of these establishments, however, started their own businesses to ensure appropriate financial resources for their statutory operations. After 1993, the situation stabilised, and in 1994, the Ministry of National Education counted some 389 out-of-school childcare establishments embracing 559,895 participants under its guidance. In 1996, the number of establishments decreased to 351 with 311,350 participants and in 1997 to 342 with 257,411 participants. Since then, the number of out-of-school childcare establishments is on the increase again, amounting to 370 such facilities during the school year 2004–2005.

¹ In 2001, the Ministry of National Education changed its name to Ministry of National Education and Sport; however, since the official website refers to the ministry as 'Ministry of National Education', this reference has been used throughout the report, except when referring to legislative documents which clearly state the full name of the ministry.

² In recent years, ministries in Poland have been disbanded or merged, thus names of ministries have also changed; this report will always refer to the ministry as called at the time. This means that there will be references to the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy as well as to the current configuration of a Ministry of Economy and a Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

³ This reform established three levels of territorial administration in Poland: since 1 January 1999, the country is divided into 16 provinces (*voivodships*) which correspond to NUTS II regions and account each for a population ranging from one to five million people; 380 counties (*powiats*), corresponding to NUTS IV regions and with an average population of 103,000 people each; and 2,489 municipalities (*gminas*) with an average population of 15,000 people each.

Drivers of change

Tradition

Before the downfall of communism in 1989, Poland's childcare policy had been influenced by the tradition of an overprotective centralised state. Moreover, there were no incentives for teachers to provide care outside school hours, as is still the case in Poland today. At the time, schools were overcrowded and often operating in two shifts which made it difficult to provide for any extracurricular classes.

Transition from communism to a market economy

The transition from a communist social and economic system to a free market economy after 1989 also affected childcare policy whereby childcare for school-age children was overlooked for many years. The role of the school in the field of care and education did not keep up with the country's transformation (Ministry of National Education, 2005, p.27). At the same time, the transition generated a major increase in household poverty and a rise in families showing specific social problems, such as alcohol-abuse and mental illnesses, as well as difficulties in taking care of their children.

Demographic drivers

Since 1990, the birth rate has been declining in Poland (see Table 1) which has led to the so-called 'pro family policies'. These policies aim to support parents to care for and raise children, with an overall objective of increasing the birth rate. The national Pro Family Policy Programme 2000–2010, which was adopted in 1999, includes a series of actions.

Table 1: *Population in Poland, 1990–2004*

Age	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
3–6 years	2,560,219	2,130,623	1,738,539	1,666,004	1,607,402	1,556,456	1,511,329
7–12 years	4,014,867	3,826,196	3,204,263	3,095,971	2,977,614	2,854,222	2,725,593
Poland	38,183,160	38,609,399	38,253,955	38,242,197	38,218,531	38,190,608	38,173,835

Source: *Central Statistical Office (GUS), 2005.*

The population decline has led to a decrease in pupils, causing many primary schools to close down (see Table 2). Nevertheless, many of these former primary schools have been converted into childcare facilities. Consequently, an overall consensus exists that the available infrastructure is sufficient for childcare. In addition, amendments to the 1991 Education Act have created many incentives for teachers (in terms of their own career development) to provide extracurricular classes.

Table 2: *Number of primary schools, 1990–2005*

Year	90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95
No. of schools	20,533	20,446	20,247	20,182	20,074
Year	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00
No. of schools	19,823	19,537	19,299	19,096	17,743
Year	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05
No. of schools	16,766	15,836	15,593	15,344	14,765

Source: *GUS, 2005*

Women in the labour market

Social, economic and cultural changes have resulted in an increased female participation rate in the labour market. This trend is creating a growing demand for the provision of childcare services. The government's Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men (created in 2001) contributed to draw up pro childcare policies, which support female participation in the labour market. However, the government elected in 2005 cancelled the plenipotentiary office in November of the same year.

Rural areas

Childcare policy has been influenced by increasing inequalities in accessibility to education, care and culture between urban and rural areas. Negative trends have been observed since the downfall of communism in Poland (Ministry of National Education, 2005). For example, the number of municipal 'library points' – locations where people can order books from the closest library – decreased dramatically from 22,973 in 1980 to 1,494 in 2001. Over the same period, the number of cultural centres, clubs and day rooms have also decreased significantly in rural areas; for example, there were 2,200 cultural establishments without libraries in 2001. In addition, small rural cinemas have almost completely disappeared, with only 35 remaining in 2001. As a result, the government focuses mostly on implementing its childcare initiatives in rural areas, such as the 'Janko Muzykant' programme for children over 12 years of age, in order to provide equal educational and care opportunities for children across the country.

Educational aspirations

The post-1989 changes have led to increasing educational aspirations within society. Thus, the demand for different forms of extracurricular and out-of-school care activities has also shaped future education and care policies (Ministry of National Education, 2005).

EU policies

The development of childcare policies is supported by gender policies in Europe promoting equality between men and women. This also increases the need for more and better – public and private – childcare services in Poland.

International acts

Several international acts also influenced the current outline of Polish childcare policy programmes. In particular, the National Action Plan for Children 2004–2012 'Poland for Children' was established as a result of Poland's obligations included in the United Nation's Declaration and Action Plan, 'Children Friendly World', which was adopted in 2002.

Current policy

In recent years, public interest has turned more towards strengthening the provision of nursery schools than that of out-of-school education and care establishments for children older than five years. The need for affordable and good quality nurseries dominates the public debate to guarantee equal access for women to the labour market. In this context, the provision of care facilities for children aged six to 12 years is put aside as the supply of nurseries seems to represent a more urgent need. However, government programmes provide some indications of future childcare policy for children aged six to 12 years. Government policy concerning the childcare sector will be presented in the context of the current education system.

The following section outlines the position of six to 12 year old children in the education system.

Education system

The school year starts on 1 September and ends on 30 June. As of 2004–2005, six year old children are obliged to complete one year of compulsory preparation for primary education, called ‘0’ grade (see Table below). This is followed by a six-year primary school education for children aged seven to 12 years, a three-year lower secondary school education for children aged 13 to 15 years and an upper secondary level education up to the age of 19–20 years. Children can attend public or private schools, and both can be fee paying; however, legislation specifies pay conditions for public schools.

Table 3: *Phases of compulsory education in Poland and relative age groups*

Compulsory education phases	Age groups of children
Pre-school ‘0’ grade (<i>klasa zerowa</i>)	Six years of age
Six-year primary school (<i>szkołą podstawowa</i>)	Seven to 13 years of age Stage 1 – integrated teaching, seven to 10 years of age Stage 2 – teaching based on separate subjects, 10 to 13 years of age
Three-year lower secondary school (<i>gimnazjum</i>)	13 to 16 years of age Stage 3 – teaching based on separate subjects

Source: *Eurydice, May 2006.*

School lessons usually start at 08.00 and finish at 14.00 or 15.00 in upper grades if a school operates in one shift (they last longer if a school operates in two or three shifts). The duration of the school day also depends on the size of the school building, on the number of classrooms available and other rooms facilitating after-school activities. Pupils attend primary schools from Monday to Friday of each week.

Legislative framework

Education Act

The Education Act of 1991 is the most important document regulating education and childcare in Poland. In relation to children aged six to 12 years, the act presents a framework for the responsibilities of primary schools, their role in the system and their administrative bodies, as well as their role in providing extracurricular activities. The act defines, in general, education and care establishments. According to the act, *‘the education system ensures the conditions for development of pupils’ interests through provision of extracurricular classes and out-of-school activities as well as creation of habits of spending their free time’*. One of the basic roles of the school is to provide extracurricular classes, which are assessed and accepted by its ‘Educational Council’ – a body consisting of teachers and parents of pupils.

Directive on education and care establishments

The March 2005 directive of the Minister of National Education on different forms of public childcare and youth care institutions regulates the activities of out-of-school care in public education and childcare establishments. The directive sets out the rules under which these institutions operate, the conditions of attendance of the children and youth, as well as payment principles for the parents.

A more detailed description of the directive is given in the section on the provision of childcare and its different types, notably public childcare provision.

Teachers charter

The 1982 Teachers charter is a statute regulating the rights and duties of all teaching personnel employed in the Polish education system. It is an important document because mainly primary school teachers are working in the childcare sector. The charter covers aspects such as duties of teachers, required qualifications, career development, rules governing the establishment, and possible amendments.

Strategy documents

The national childcare policy that focuses on the provision of childcare outside school hours for five to 12 year olds is contained within a diverse range of national policy and strategy documents.

National Action Plan for Children

The most important and coherent document reflecting the main directions and trends in the current and particularly future policy towards children is the **National Action Plan for Children 2004–2012 ‘Poland for Children’**⁴, which was issued by the Ministry of National Education in 2004. Various bodies, including governmental administration, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Polish National Committee of UNICEF and the Ombudsman for Children, established this action plan in a cooperative effort. It sets out objectives and directions for actions up to 2012 in four fields that are considered problematic and most important for improving the situation of children in Poland, notably:

- promoting a healthy lifestyle;
- ensuring quality of education;
- supporting the family;
- protecting children against harassment and violence.

The plan has been implemented through different actions and measures reflecting its aims and objectives, including:

- the development of examples/best practice in the sphere of extracurricular out-of-school activities and improving the dissemination of courses on offer;
- the creation of local educational councils aimed at developing the care system in conjunction with local partners (such as municipal authorities, NGOs and cultural centres).

The plan has been introduced following a schedule of actions which includes the collection of administrative information on childcare institutions by counties, training programmes for social care workers carried out by the regional administration and increasing accessibility for parents, childminders and children to family care institutions (particularly for single parents).

Education Development Strategy

The **Education Development Strategy 2007–2013**⁵ published by the Ministry of National Education in August 2005 highlights future developments of the new education system, which will also provide for a range of after-school activities

⁴ <http://www.menis.gov.pl/oswiata/istotne/npd.php#I> (in Polish)

⁵ http://www.men.waw.pl/oswiata/biezace/strategia_2007_2013.pdf (in Polish)

organised in cooperation with other educational institutions and NGOs. In terms of teacher training, the strategy emphasises the need for reviewing and developing training programmes to include out-of-school childcare and extracurricular care.

Sectoral Operational Programme – Human Resources Development

In January 2004, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy adopted the ‘Sectoral Operational Programme – Human Resources Development (SOP HRD)’ which sets out the government’s policy objectives in the field of career information and counselling services. It is a key element of the National Development Plan 2004–2006 (NDP) adopted by the Council of Ministers on 14 January 2003. The SOP HRD’s main objective is to create an ‘open, knowledge-based society which aims to ensure sufficient conditions for the development of human resources through education, training and work’. The programme’s overall goal has partly been realised by strengthening equal opportunities in the labour market – a Priority 1 objective of the NDP to ensure an active labour market policy, and a professional and social integration policy. One of the measures, aimed at the professional integration and reintegration of women, promotes equal access of both sexes to the labour market and supports strategies for lifelong learning. It also foresees the introduction of flexible forms of employment to provide for the best possible balance between a professional career and family life.

Social Policy Strategy 2007–2013

The preliminary proposals for a **Social Policy Strategy 2007–2013**⁶ emphasise the need to improve the conditions for starting a family and its functioning, as well as supporting them with childcare options and education. The strategy outlines the creation of a support system which is based on integrated, interdisciplinary actions aimed at strengthening education facilities and childrearing conditions. The government aims to implement this priority through the development of social services for children and young people, especially by strengthening public services and increasing the quality of education.

Other important government documents related to education and childcare for six to 12 year olds include the following:

- ‘Development strategy of further education up to 2010’ prepared by the Ministry of National Education and adopted by the Council of Ministers on 8 July 2003;
- ‘Sports development strategy in Poland up to 2012’ prepared by the Ministry of National Education and adopted by the Council of Ministers in February 2003;
- ‘Strategy for Youth 2003–2012’ prepared by the Ministry of National Education and adopted by the Council of Ministers in August 2003 which refers mainly to the age group of 15 to 24 year olds;
- ‘National Action Plan for Women – II Stage for 2003–2005’ prepared by the government’s Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men and adopted by the Council of Ministers on 19 August 2003;
- ‘National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2004–2006’ prepared by the Ministry of Social Policy and adopted in 2004;
- ‘National Pro Family Policy Programme 2000–2010’ adopted by the Council of Ministers on November 1999;
- in 1991, Poland also ratified the Convention on Child’s Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989.

⁶ http://www.mps.gov.pl/pliki_do_pobrania/strategiaspo.doc

Future prospects of childcare for school-age children

The Education Development Strategy 2007–2013 lists a number of challenges in the field of education and childcare, which will need to be addressed in the near future. In the area of childcare, problems which need to be addressed include:

- the threats to childcare and child rearing resulting from globalisation;
- an increasing number of children and youth requiring special, intensive and individualised care in appropriate establishments;
- increasing inequalities between children from urban and rural areas in terms of accessibility to different cultural, out-of-school facilities.

The strategy highlights that, currently, schools only offer compulsory classes and are, therefore, ineffective in terms of meeting today's wider educational and childcare needs. As a result, schools should take on the following responsibilities in the future, namely to:

- provide for homework supervision with teachers and special needs classes;
- offer access to libraries or computer laboratories in the afternoon after compulsory classes;
- propose different activities outside school hours, i.e. more extracurricular classes and out-of-school activities; these should be organised in cooperation with education establishments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and target the cultural and social development of children, with the aim to support and motivate pupils and provide advice for talented pupils;
- strengthen their role as the local centre of culture, continuing education and social activity, embracing thus the idea of 'open schools'.

Government responsibilities

The **Ministry of National Education**⁷ and the **Ministry of Labour and Social Policy**⁸ are the main government bodies responsible for childcare policy in Poland. In the latter ministry, the Department of Welfare and Social Integration determines the welfare and care policy for children within the framework of the overall social policy. In particular, the department monitors and oversees the administrative units running residential and community outreach centres for orphans and other groups of children at risk (so-called *welfare and childrearing establishments*), and creates operational standards for these establishments.

The Ministry of National Education establishes programmes and shapes future policy in the field of education and care. Different establishments provide childcare for children aged six to 12 years, including: primary schools that offer extracurricular classes according to the Education Act of 7 September 1991; education and care establishments that enable the development of individual interests and abilities through various forms of recreation. These institutions are supervised and monitored by the ministry. The structure of the ministry concerning childcare is divided into three groups:

- extracurricular activities provided by school;
- out-of-school activities;
- activities during school holidays.

The ministry's Department of Care and Social Prevention looks after all extracurricular activities which schools offer; the Youth Bureau – a special organisational unit within the ministry – is responsible for out-of-school activities and childcare during school holidays. The ministry's activities in the field of childcare are supported by the offices of the regional education administrator (kurator) in the 16 Polish provinces (*voivodships*). These offices are responsible for educational supervision of schools in their province, and they also monitor different types of schools and other education and childcare establishments.

The 16 provincial offices act as the regional level representation of the national government. Each office is responsible for the supervision of education, childcare and healthcare policies, and the implementation of those in their region. This supervision is basically formal; it generally involves the initial identification of problems, distribution of financial resources and overseeing compliance with national law.

Regional responsibilities

Regional governments in each of the 16 provinces are run by the Marshall's Offices. With regard to childcare policy, their tasks are to meet social needs in close cooperation with the self-government units at municipal, county and regional level, to initiate and implement programmes supporting local social services and to coordinate activities aimed at harmonising living standards. Overall, the self-government units perceive the support of the Marshall's Offices in the social care sector as insufficient.

⁷ <http://www.men.waw.pl>

⁸ <http://www.mps.gov.pl>

Local responsibilities

Municipality

The municipality is responsible for setting up and administering most primary schools. In this respect, the municipality approves the 'organisational sheet' which sets out the schedule of activities provided by the school including extracurricular classes funded by the running body of the school. Every year, each school develops an organisational sheet which has to be accepted by the school's running body. This document thus impacts on the range of educational and childcare activities on offer within schools, covering also the extracurricular activities. Moreover, it may add extracurricular classes to the schools timetable by providing extra financial support for this purpose.

County

Since 1 January 1999, the counties took over some of the governmental responsibilities concerning the provision of social welfare care at local level. They are responsible for developing a local strategy in relation to social issues. Since 2001, counties are responsible for running childcare and upbringing establishments such as care and adoption centres, specialist emergency institutions, and foster family care centres. The newly established County Family Support Centres (PCPR) aim to coordinate social care initiatives at county level and to supply child and family care. Some counties are also the running bodies of primary schools and ensure therefore different extracurricular activities within the school.

Types of provision

Public provision

Public provision in the childcare sector is divided into different forms: the Polish system distinguishes between extracurricular childcare and out-of-school childcare (*zajęcia pozaszkolne* or *zajęcia pozalekcyjne*). The first is provided by schools and the second by specialist establishments.

Extracurricular childcare

Public extracurricular childcare is defined as any kind of activity aimed at broadening the knowledge and skills of pupils, developing their interests and productive/healthy ways of spending their free time, as well as promoting particularly talented pupils. Every school offers extracurricular activities which are led by teachers who are employed and paid by the school.

Extracurricular childcare can take the following forms:

- activity groups, such as school groups of the Polish Red Cross, the Polish Tourist Society (PTTK) or the Environment Protection League, and the school sport's union;
- special units created by the school and carried out by teachers, such as activity clubs and school day rooms (see case study 2 – School day room in Płock illustrating how school day rooms should work in practice);
- thematic activities, such as choirs or musical groups.

Pupils attend extracurricular classes voluntarily once or twice a week. In addition to these regular forms of childcare, schools also offer occasional childcare activities which are made available to all pupils, such as festivals, concerts, exhibitions, sports competitions and day trips. The Ministry of National Education promotes these activities and issues annually an event guide outlining what is on offer in different schools. Extracurricular childcare is organised within the framework of the overall education policy as laid out by the Ministry of National Education.

In the school year 2004–2005, public schools carried out 109,129 different kinds of extracurricular interest groups and clubs embracing 1,907,038 participants (see Table 6, p.18). Over the same period, some 636,497 pupils participated in 8,039 day rooms provided by primary schools and 775,587 pupils ate regularly in 6,874 primary school canteens.

Out-of-school childcare

Out-of-school childcare comprises care before and after school hours and during school holidays. It is a form of care and education for children attending different schools, which is provided by various educational care establishments (Directive of the Minister of National Education of 7 March 2005). According to this directive, public childcare institutions are divided into four groups (see Figure 1):

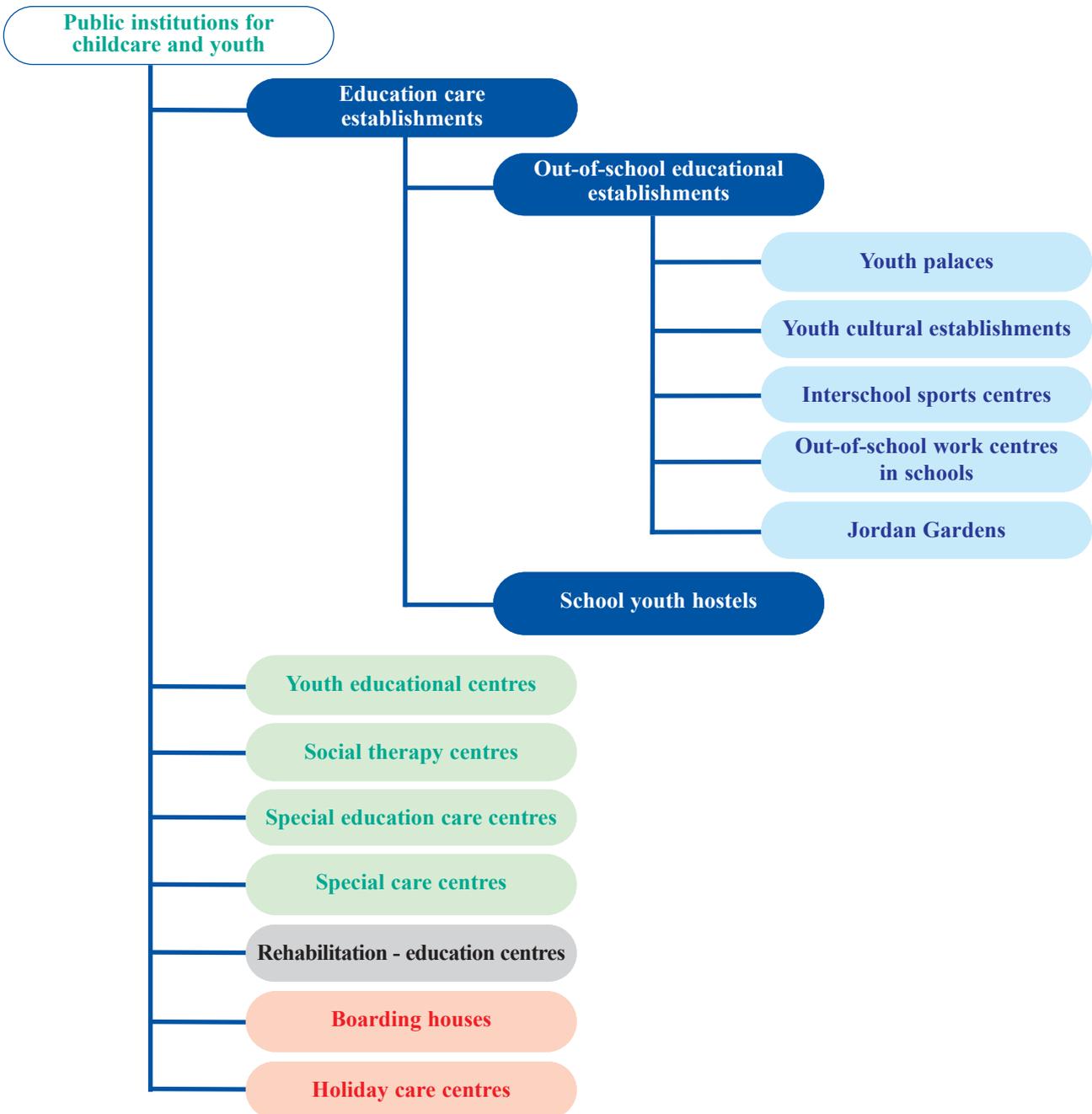
- education care establishments;
- youth education centres including social therapy centres, special education care centres and special care centres⁹;
- rehabilitation – education centres (*ośrodki rewalidacyjno-wychowawcze*);
- boarding houses (*bursy i domy*) and holiday care centres (*wczasów dziecięcych*).

The education care establishments are divided into: out-of-school education establishments and school youth hostels. Out-of-school education establishments carry out several tasks in relation to education, upbringing, culture, care, health, sport and recreation. These establishments include: youth palaces; youth cultural establishments; interschool sports centres; out-of-school work centres; Jordan gardens; and other public and non-public establishments (such as planetariums and young engineer stations). The interviews with representatives of the Ministry of National Education revealed that most of the participants of out-of-school education establishments are children of primary school age, i.e. aged from seven to 12 years old. Nonetheless, out-of-school education establishments also offer activities for teenagers.

Youth palaces are after-school care centres for children and teenagers. They provide theme-based activities, such as arts, other artistic activities and sports. Youth palaces aim to develop the scientific, artistic and social interests of children and young people and to offer them entertainment, sport and cultural facilities. According to the education act, a youth palace represents an organisational unit without a legal entity, under the control of the local authority.

⁹ These have the following names in Polish: młodzieżowe ośrodki wychowawcze; młodzieżowe ośrodki socjoterapii; specjalne ośrodki szkolno-wychowawcze; specjalne ośrodki wychowawcze dla dzieci i młodzieży wymagających stosowania specjalnej organizacji nauki, metod pracy i wychowania.

Figure 1: Public childcare provision



Source: ECOTEC, 2005

Cultural establishments are meeting points for young people aged between 10 and 18 years from all types of schools. They have a limited number of possibilities to ensure different activities as they do not have separate activity rooms as youth palaces do.

Interschool sports centres offer different sports activities for children and teenagers.

Out-of-school work centres provide informal education but belong to the educational system. Their activities are mainly for children aged six years and older in the form of interest groups of different kinds. In general, the local authority or the county run these centres.

Jordan gardens ensure classes outside in a court or gardens equipped with various games facilities for children. They provide activities like: team games, dance, rhythmic and music classes.

Other public establishments for the care of children and young people are: school youth hostels; youth education centres; social therapy centres; special care centres; and holiday centres. All of these public organisations are regulated by the directive on education; however, none of these play a role in the provision of care for six to 12 year olds.

Private provision

Extracurricular classes in non-public primary schools

The first 'social' schools appeared at the end of the 1980s. They were called 'social' or 'civic' in order to distinguish them from public schools and to stress the fact that they did not function according to the rules of private businesses, i.e. their 'owner's' (teachers and/or parents) did not make any profit. In a lot of cases, non-profit organisations run these schools.

Non-public schools may acquire the status of public schools, if they implement curricula based on the core curriculum, adopt the principles of evaluation and assessment of pupils' achievements as stipulated by the Ministry of National Education, and employ qualified teachers. Non-public schools, however, have the same legal status as a public school, and are subsidised either by local government budgets (municipality and county) or receive financial support directly from the state budget. They are eligible for a grant of up to 50% of the average current expenditure per student in a state school.

Pupils of non-public primary school pupils represent 1% of the total number of pupils at this level of education. In 2002–2003, some 453 non-public primary schools accounted for a total of 30,000 pupils according to [Eurydice](#)¹⁰, the information database on education systems in Europe. Most of these primary schools (389) were run by social organisations (for example, by associations) and thus so-called civic primary schools.

Private out-of-school activities

According to representatives of the Ministries of National Education and of Social Policy, the number of private out-of-school childcare establishments for six to 12 year olds offering regular out-of-school activities is insignificant. However, there are no statistics available concerning private sector establishments. In general, children spend their free time in public care centres, which are sometimes co-financed by private institutions, or school facilities. The small number of private establishments is related to the low level of average income, and only some parents can afford private childcare facilities, such as extra language classes or sports activities.

Overall, different specialised institutions offer private out-of-school activities for children, including: foreign language tuition; sports clubs, such as horse riding, swimming, tennis; music schools; dance schools; computer classes. Some primary school pupils also participate in foundation courses to prepare them for their selected lower secondary school (*gimnazjum*).

¹⁰ <http://www.eurydice.org/Eurybase/Application/frameset.asp?country=PL&language=EN>

Community and voluntary provision

Voluntary provision

Voluntary childcare provision is well developed in urban areas, particularly in important academic centres such as Kraków, Warsaw, Poznań, Wrocław, and Łódź.

Private tuition

Private tuition is frequently offered for free by students who participate in different programmes initiated by NGOs or university student organisations. Such initiatives focus on providing homework support for children, offering foreign language classes or enabling children to use computer laboratories or sports facilities of universities. These initiatives are also coordinated by the governmental programme 'Big Brother, Big Sister', aimed at promoting voluntary action in this field. These initiatives are mainly for children in orphanages.

Green schools

Some students also participate in organising so-called Green Schools during the summer holidays; this initiative is mainly for children from small schools in rural areas. The students prepare educational and care programmes, such as painting lessons, photography laboratories, and computer or theatre workshops, which require the agreement of the school director. This type of initiative has become increasingly popular among students.

NGO provision

Interest in NGOs as service providers in the educational and childcare sectors is growing because of their flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of communities, as well as their capacity to reach certain groups more effectively than public agencies (see case study 1 – Day room programme 'My place'). In 2004, the REGON registry recorded 45,891 associations and 7,210 foundations as NGOs (Gumkowska and Herbst, 2005). Education and care represent the most important sector of operation for 10.3% of NGOs (Herbst, 2005); some 8.5% of these NGOs operate nursery schools or pre-school care and offer education-related activities. According to the database of NGOs in Poland¹¹, there are about 370 day rooms and care centres available in the form of associations and foundations. This amount compared with 10,615 school day rooms may indicate an increasing demand for this kind of childcare provision.

Community provision

In major cities, community day rooms play an important role concerning after school care. This type of day room does not provide any organised form of activities; in community day rooms children have a place to play while waiting for their parents' arrival. Such day rooms usually operate only a few hours a day during working weeks.

Informal childcare

Informal childcare is defined as unpaid care carried out by household members such as grandparents, siblings or friends. This type of care is unregistered and not formalised through employment contracts or labour legislation. The level of informal childcare is difficult to estimate as it has not yet been researched to date. However, it should be noted that:

- in Poland, the traditional family model continues to function with the associated division of home duties into those specifically feminine (such as care for babies and elderly persons and cooking) and masculine (such as earning money, repairs, and renovation work) according to the government's Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men (2004);

¹¹ Available at: <http://bazy.ngo.pl>

- public childcare infrastructure is insufficiently developed;
- the average income of Polish households is still comparatively low, and in 2001, only 34% of parents stated that their school-age children will attend paid activities outside school hours (see Figure 2).

On this basis, it seems that informal childcare still plays a very important role in Poland.

Hours of childcare provision

In schools

Extracurricular childcare

Extracurricular classes are regular activities offered at least once or twice a week, usually in the afternoon, finishing no later than 18.00. The average weekly time spent in an extracurricular activity group is two to four hours. As teachers lead these regular activities they are usually not offered during weekends and holidays.

In primary schools, the weekly number of hours spent in extracurricular activity groups or clubs fluctuated in the school year 2000–2001 from 0 to 98 (to 82 in the school year 2001–2002), whereas in lower secondary schools this figure was from 0 to 48 (to 68 in the school year 2001–2002) (Konarzewski K., Institute of Public Affairs, 2001).

Statistical analysis indicates that, when evaluating the accessibility of extracurricular classes on the basis of the number of hours per week available, primary schools generally offer a broader range (more hours) than lower secondary schools. However, primary schools in rural areas propose a smaller number of extracurricular classes than those in urban areas.

School day rooms

The Teachers Charter specifies the amount of obligatory weekly hours that full-time employed teachers have to spend on different activities.

Table 4: *Obligatory weekly hours per full-time employed teacher*

Type of childcare worker	Min. number of hours per week/per teacher
Form teachers ¹ (<i>wychowawca</i>) providing care and education in school day rooms (except special day rooms), environmental day rooms and clubs (including preventing, therapeutic and care clubs) and youth social therapy centres	26
Form teachers providing care in boarding houses, Jordan gardens, railway station day rooms ² , all-year-round youth hostels	30
Form teachers in socialisation centres, care and health establishments for children	26
Form teachers working in holiday care centres – including learning activities for children	26 10
Form teachers in special education care centres, special school day rooms, youth education centres, extracurricular activity groups in healthcare centres, and form teachers carrying out activities in social care centres	24
Teachers in youth palaces, youth cultural establishments, out-of-school work centres, special out-of-school establishments, interschool sports centres	18
Teachers working as librarians in school libraries	30
Teachers working in psychopedagogical clinics	20

Source: *Based on the Teachers Charter, 1982*

Note: ¹ *Teachers working in care and education establishments are called 'Form teachers' according to the directive on care and upbringing establishments.* ² *These type of day rooms have almost disappeared; local authorities offered these day rooms for children who took a train or bus to get to the nearest school and had to wait for the next one.*

In general, school day rooms open from 07.00 until 16.00 and until 18.00 in major cities and are closed during weekends and school holidays.

Community provision

Community day rooms usually open only a few hours per day during working weeks, excluding holidays and weekends.

Out-of-school education establishments

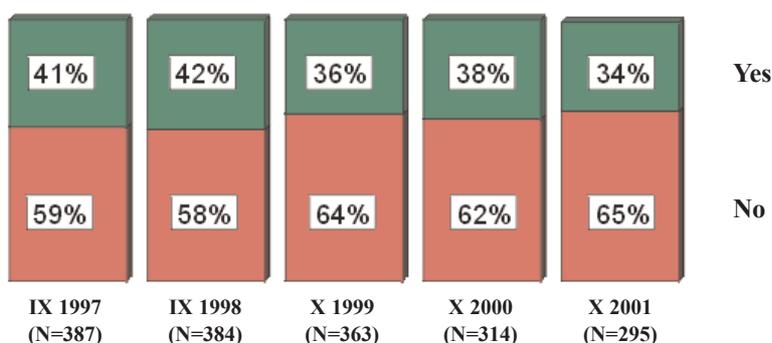
Out-of-school education establishments cover childcare in the form of interschool sports centres, youth palaces, Jordan gardens etc.; they provide regular, periodic and occasional activities in special establishments set up outside of the compulsory school. The directive on different forms of public childcare and youth care institutions specifies the minimum weekly hours of childcare provision in out-of-school education establishments. Activities are offered in units of 45 minutes.

Private provision

It seems difficult to estimate the hours of private childcare provision since a variety of institutions provide the care and operate different schedules, depending on parents' needs.

However, a survey on the expenses of parents on the education of school-age children indicates that there is a demand for private childcare provision. In 2001, one third of parents with school-age children stated that some of their children were attending or were going to attend out-of-school educational activities (Figure 2).

Figure 2: *Children in paid out-of-school educational classes, 1997–2001*



Source: *Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), October 2001*

Note: *N = responses of parents with school-age children in a survey on a representative sample of adult Poles (N=1020) over the years 1997–2001.*

Childcare costs

Government funding

In 2003, the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy allocated PLN 4.6 billion (about €1.16 billion¹²) to the implementation of different government programmes in the field of child and family care (Ministry of Economy and Labour, 2004).

Family budget

The amount of money which parents allocate to satisfy the needs of their school-age children depends on their social and financial status. It is also related to the size of the place where the family lives, the number of school-age children in a family, as well as the type of school that the children are attending (Public Opinion Research Centre, 2001). All of these factors play an important role in determining whether or not children are able to participate in after-school activities.

Extracurricular classes in schools

Funding

Mainly local governments and municipalities fund extracurricular classes in schools. Over the period 2004–2005, local government expenses on education and care (including primary schools) amounted to PLN 36 billion (about €9.45 billion) according to the Central Statistical Office (GUS, 2005). This also includes funds from the national budget.

Fees

Extracurricular classes offered by public schools are provided for free, as they are funded by municipalities.

Public out-of-school activities

The financial resources to operate out-of-school education establishments come from the national budget and the budgets of local and regional self-governments, as well as fees paid by parents. Some of these public care establishments also source funds from their business.

Regulations set out parental fees for out-of-school education establishments; these fees cover the costs for:

- meals in the canteens (equal to the costs of the ingredients of the meal);
- accommodation in boarding houses (corresponding to 50% of the overall costs of a place);
- accommodation in holiday care centres which are determined by the running body.

However, fees cannot exceed 25% of the average national monthly income according to Act No. 39/1998 on retirements and pensions of the Social Security Fund. In 2004, the average monthly income stood at PLN 2289.57 (€572.40).

Accommodation fees in school youth hostels are also defined and amount to PLN 20 (€5.25) up to a maximum of PLN 65 (€17.06), depending on the room's size.

¹² All euro equivalents in this report are calculated at the median rate of PLN 1 = €0.26259, €1 = PLN 3.80821, as at 3 June 2006.

Content of childcare provision

School provision

Extracurricular classes

In the school year 2004–2005, Poland counted 14,765 public and non-public primary schools accommodating a total of 2,723,661 pupils (Central Statistical Office, 2005). This represents an average number of 184.5 children per primary school; however, when taking into account population density levels in urban and rural areas, the average number of children stands at 402 children per primary school in urban areas and 111 children in rural areas.

Participation

In the school year 2003–2004, some 2,815,555 pupils attended primary schools and 1,640,917 of those participated in 91,912 different interest groups of extracurricular classes, which represented a participation rate of 58% of pupils. Comparing these figures with those of 2004–2005, the provision of extracurricular classes increased by 17,217 classes (18.7%) and the number of participants by 266,121 children (16.2% of pupils). Overall, about 70% of all primary school pupils participated in one or several extracurricular classes in the school year 2004–2005; Table 5 shows the number of extracurricular classes offered, as well as participation levels across the various classes.

Table 5: *Extracurricular classes and participation in schools, 2004–2005*¹³

Type of extracurricular class	Primary schools (including special primary schools)		All schools	
	Number of groups/sections	Number of participants	Number of groups/sections	Number of participants
Science (mathematics, languages etc)	35,395	551,637	78,070	1,199,025
Handicrafts and home economics	9,229	173,402	15,483	272,303
Arts	27,853	487,103	41,774	712,118
Sports	19,309	420,997	40,999	839,364
Tourism	2,952	55,440	5,947	110,969
Others	14,391	218,459	24,699	387,160
Total	109,129	1,907,038	206,972	3,520,939

Source: *Central Statistical Office (GUS), 2005*

Type of group

Schools offer a variety of extracurricular classes, covering a wide range of activities and academic subject areas. During the school year 2004–2005, the distribution was the following: science (32.4%); artistic activities (25.5%); sports and tourism (17.7%).

Size of group

Available data show that the number of pupils per group fluctuates between 10 and 22 children depending on the subject area. Popular subjects include science, handicrafts and home economics, arts, sports and tourism.

Running body

The provision of extracurricular school interest groups/clubs may be classified according to the organising body (Table 6).

¹³ If not otherwise stated, references to a yearly period cover the school year which runs from September until June of the following year.

Table 6: *Extracurricular classes in schools by organising institution, 2004–2005*

Running body	No. of groups/ No. of participants	No. of classes per subject area					
		Science	Handicrafts and home economics	Arts	Sports	Tourism	Others
Ministry of Culture	20	5	2	6	4	-	3
	494	142	20	188	85	-	59
Ministry of Justice	18	6	3	3	4	-	2
	259	122	27	41	40	-	29
Municipality	102,983	33,760	8,670	25,974	18,192	2,757	13,630
	1,819,658	531,511	164,614	460,763	401,223	52,737	208,810
County	1,503	169	158	535	275	84	282
	17,661	2,142	1,697	5,809	4,018	1,053	2,942
Province (only special schools)	32	-	1	6	4	1	20
	356	-	14	80	31	1	230
Association	2,551	818	221	734	445	56	277
	37,010	9,663	3,786	10,488	8,393	822	3,858
Community organisation	36	16	2	11	4	-	3
	477	122	32	169	114	-	40
Religious organisation	641	199	49	200	126	17	50
	10,814	2,743	881	3,642	2,492	263	793
Registered individual enterprises	752	247	60	203	134	25	83
	11,766	3,038	1,155	3,238	2,654	413	1,268
Commercial law company	262	76	23	81	59	5	18
	3,459	807	566	1,028	839	42	177
Foundation	308	97	35	94	56	7	19
	4,789	1,327	551	1,565	1,008	109	229
	1,887,024						

Source: *Based on GUS data, 2005*

Municipalities (as the main administrator of primary schools) offer most of the extracurricular services with 102,983 classes, representing 94.4% of all extracurricular activities in primary schools. Associations are the second most important provider of extracurricular activities with 2,551 classes (2.3%), followed by the counties with 1,503 classes (1.4%).

School day rooms and canteens

Primary schools also run school day rooms and provide meals in the school canteen. In general, school day rooms offer a space for pupils to do their homework and to wait for their parents. In the school year 2004–2005, there were 8,039 day rooms and 6,874 canteens available in all primary schools in Poland, and 23.4% of all primary school-age children spend their free time in day rooms.

Out-of-school childcare

Different establishments (as outlined in the ‘Types of provision’ section above) offer out-of-school childcare, aimed at supporting the development of children and young people. They organise cultural events and vocational activities. Moreover, some of these establishments propose alternative activities for children and young people affected by substance abuse and social exclusion, and run educational and care programmes. These activities are usually offered to groups of a minimum of 12 children, at least twice a week. Figure 3 shows the distribution of out-of-school education establishments across the 16 provinces.

Figure 3: *Out-of-school education establishments by region, 2004–2005*



Source: *Based on GUS data, 2005*

Overall, Poland counts 370 out-of-school education establishments under the supervision of the Ministry of National Education, with a total of 968,234 participating children and young people. Most of these out-of-school education facilities are cultural establishments for children and young people (128). Furthermore, there are 84 interschool sports centres, 70 out-of-school work centres, 14 Jordan gardens and 12 youth palaces available in Poland.

Table 7: Type of activities in out-of-school education establishments, 2004–2005

Type of establishment	No. of establishments	No. of participants in regular and occasional activities					
		Overall	Arts	Handicrafts and home economics	Science	Sports	Others
Youth palaces	12	182,213	71,056	2,441	34,723	22,349	51,644
Youth cultural establishments	128	319,233	187,806	17,122	19,034	43,752	51,519
Interschool sports centres	84	254,348	101	-	132	237,750	16,365
Out-of-school work centres	70	69,766	33,598	2,946	16,161	7,981	9,080
Jordan gardens	14	34,451	7,567	2,173	1,878	8,346	14,487
Other	62	108,223	9,916	437	75,771	2,916	19,183
Total	370	968,234	310,044	25,119	147,699	323,094	162,278

Source: Based on GUS data, 2005, p. 352

Organisations associating childcare providers

Out-of-school education establishments are members of the **Polish Association of Out-of-School Establishments** which was established in 2002 on the initiative of the Secretariat of the National Council of Out-of-School Establishments. The Council was set up in 1995 and currently includes six youth palaces, 96 youth cultural centres, three Jordan gardens and six other education establishments. The association aims to popularise the activities of out-of-school education establishments and support them, especially those which are run by a local self-government body. In 2003, the association became a member of the **European Association for Leisure Time Institutions of Children and Youth (EAICY)**¹⁴ which is affiliated to the Council of Europe.

¹⁴ <http://www.eaicy.cz/>

Types of childcare workers

Primary school staff

In primary schools, teachers often provide extracurricular childcare, and are supported by educators, psychologists and, very often, speech therapists.

Out-of-school establishment staff

Staff employed in educational and care establishments providing activities for six to 12 year olds comprises usually fully-qualified teachers (as stipulated by Act No. 95/1991 on education and the Teachers Charter). According to the directive on care and upbringing establishments, teachers work as 'form teachers' or 'form tutors' in these establishments. In addition, specialists (without a teaching qualification) and administrative personnel form part of the staff. Childcare may also be provided by volunteers. In 2000, some 1,144 form teachers/tutors worked in out-of-school education and care establishments.

Educators and organisers of cultural activities

An educator and organiser of cultural activities is a person who works in an establishment with the statutory aim to provide cultural activities (Directive of the Minister of Culture and Art of 9 March 1999). These activities take place in youth cultural centres in the form of activity clubs, day rooms and workshops. Cultural centres offer activities for everyone, including children aged six to 12 years. They are run by government or self-government bodies under the direction of the Ministry of Culture. However, according to the interviews with government representatives, the provision of activities outside school hours is relatively limited for children aged six to 12 years in these centres as they provide activities mainly for older participants.

Table 8: *Qualification requirements for educators and organisers of cultural activities*

Position	Qualification required	
	Education	Working practice
Chief educator of cultural activities	Higher specialist, or Postgraduate studies in required specialisation, or Higher educational training	3 years
Senior educator of cultural activities	Higher specialist, or Postgraduate studies in required specialisation, or Higher educational training	2 years
	Higher vocational training in required specialisation	3 years
	Further education for educators and organiser of cultural activities, or Secondary specialisation and educational training	4 years
Educator of cultural activities	Higher specialist, or Higher and educational training, or Higher vocational training in required specialisation	-
	Further education for educators and organiser of cultural activities, Secondary specialisation	2 years
Junior educator of cultural activities	Further education for educators and organiser of cultural activities, or Secondary specialisation, or Secondary school level	-

Table 8: *Qualification requirements for educators and organisers of cultural activities (cont'd)*

Position	Qualification required	
	Education	Working practice
Chief artistic educator	Higher specialist and educational training Postgraduate studies in required specialisation and educational training, or Higher qualification course in teaching Higher vocational training and educational training	5 years in the position of senior artistic educator
Senior artistic educator	Post-secondary training in one specialisation Secondary education in arts and educational training Secondary education and qualifying course in teaching	1 - 0 2 – 1 year 3 – 2 years 4 - 3 years 5 – 3 years 6 – 4 years 7 – 5 years
Artistic educator	Higher qualification course in teaching Postgraduate studies in required specialisation and educational training Higher vocational training and educational training Post-secondary training in one specialisation Secondary education in arts and educational training Secondary education and qualifying course in teaching	- - 1 year 2 years 2 years 3 years
Junior artistic educator	Post-secondary training in one specialisation Secondary education in arts and educational training Secondary education and qualifying course in teaching	-
Chief educator of interest groups	Higher education and educational training Higher vocational training and educational training Secondary education and educational training	5 years in the position of Senior of the interest group
Senior of the interest group	Higher education and educational training Higher vocational training and educational training Secondary and pedagogic preparation	1 year 2 years 3 years
Educator of interest groups	Higher education and educational training Higher vocational training and educational training Secondary education and educational training	- 1 year 2 years
Junior educator of interest groups	Secondary education and educational training	-

Source: *Based on the directive on qualifications required to occupy specific professional positions in some cultural establishments run by government or self government bodies, Minister of Culture and Arts, 9 March 1999.*

Salaries of childcare workers

Salaries of teachers

The salaries of teachers are regulated by the Teachers Charter and the Minister of National Education and Sport. A teacher's salary consists of a basic pay and allowances based on different variables, such as length of service, career development, and motivational allowances. However, the annual salary for teachers of primary and lower secondary schools was at a minimum of PLN 11,501 (about €2,875) and at maximum of PLN 24,397 (about €6,099) during the school year 2002–2003.

Table 9: *Teacher salaries in primary education (per capita GDP), 2002–2003*

Country	Minimum salary (%)	Maximum salary (%)
Austria	79.06	164.99
Cyprus	134.89	295.37
Hungary	62.52	121.87
Poland	56.29	119.41
Sweden	72.08	122.27
United Kingdom (England/Wales/Northern Ireland)	117.45	181.60

Source: *Eurydice, Teacher and school head salaries in primary and secondary education* (<http://www.eurydice.org/Salaires/CompPays.asp>).

Table 10 shows monthly minimum salary levels compared to monthly average wages in Poland over the years 2000–2005.

Table 10: *Minimum and average monthly remuneration (€), 2000–2005**

Year	Remuneration (gross salary)	
	Minimum	Average
2000	174	481
2001	205	557
2002	195	552
2003	182	500
2004	183	508
2005	212**	618**

Source: *EIRO, August 2005*

Note: * *The minimum remuneration for the years 1995 though 1998 is given on the basis of average exchange rate tables made available by the National Bank of Poland.* ** *Data for the first three months of 2005.*

Comparison of salaries of childcare workers

There are no current data available to present any valid salary comparisons in this sector.

Image of a childcare sector career

The image of a career in the childcare sector is strongly connected with the image of being a teacher. Teachers belong to the professional group (with scientists and nurses) which is perceived by the Polish society as the most ‘fair and reliable’ (CBOS, 2001). This group, therefore, has a high social status. However, the relatively low remuneration compared with other professions has a negative impact on the perception of such a career by potential workers. Low incomes contribute to a reduced interest among men of working in the childcare sector, and results thus in a female dominated workforce in this sector. This fact is criticised by some NGO leaders who are involved in the provision of out-of-school activities, as they consider that the lack of men leading childcare activities impacts negatively on the quality and relevance of activities offered. They believe that these activities are mainly for girls who generally do not encounter any difficulties at school. Moreover, the lack of coherent and accessible training schemes for childcare workers also negatively affects the image of a childcare sector career in the view of young people who graduate from teacher training colleges.

Skills and training for childcare workers

Professional training

The Ministry of National Education has been introducing modular programmes of which 53 have been prepared so far. These aim to adapt education to the needs of the labour market and to increase opportunities for graduates to secure employment. The ministry also concludes agreements with employer organisations and self-government bodies in order to provide practical training opportunities for these professions.

Education and professional skills of teachers

The level of teachers' education has improved over the past 10 years. In 1994, only 63.6% of teachers held a higher education qualification but this figure has risen to 90.4% by 2002 (Ministry of National Education, August 2005) (Table 11).

Table 11: *Education of teachers (no.), 2002*

Higher		Further education/ Colleges (<i>Collegiums</i>)		Teacher Training Colleges (SN)		Secondary		Total
662,492	90.4%	4,750	0.6%	40,832	5.6%	24,740	3.4%	732,814

Source: *Ministry of National Education, August 2005, p.13.*

Qualifications required by childcare workers

Primary school teachers

Most out-of-school childcare provision as well as a lot of vacation care and education activities for six to 12 year olds is offered by primary school teachers who must have a higher education qualification. The type of training required depends on the teaching level. At primary level, teachers are required to complete higher education (of three or five years' duration, where teachers are awarded the titles of Bachelor or Master), or a non-university type higher education (of three years' duration, where they receive a diploma). Lower secondary education level teachers need to have a Bachelor's or Master's degree. All teachers must also complete a course covering skills in the fields of psychology, education and specific didactics in teaching. This course has a minimum duration of 279 hours and also requires practical work experience of at least 150 hours.

The amended Teachers Charter, adopted on 18 February 2000, introduced four categories in the teaching career: trainee teacher, contract teacher, appointed teacher and chartered teacher. Chartered teachers with an outstanding record may also be awarded the title of honorary school education professor. In the school year 2002–2003, there were 556,760 full-time teachers in Poland (embracing all school levels), of whom 31,930 were trainee teachers (5.7%), 78,030 contract teachers (14.0%), 403,200 appointed teachers (72.4%), 40,950 chartered teachers (7.4%) and 2,650 other teachers (0.5%).

Childminders

Childminders, as defined in the January 2005 directive of the Minister of Education, are people working mainly with younger children in kindergartens. They also provide childcare for small children in other forms which generally do not include children aged seven to 12 years.

Training and qualifications available

The **National In-Service Teacher Training Centre (CODN)**¹⁵ supports the development of a national system of teacher training in line with a state educational policy. The CODN is a state-funded agency of the Ministry of National Education and Sport which was established in 1991.

According to CODN data on all public and non-public teacher training centres in the 16 provinces and their respective training, 421 non-public and 141 public teacher training centres exist in Poland; some 81 of the 141 public teacher training centres are run by the county or municipality and 60 of those are run by provinces. In addition, some psycho-pedagogical advice centres provide education qualification courses for childcare workers. There are 621 centres of this type in Poland.

However, these higher education institutions propose very few qualification programmes for childcare workers providing out-of-school childcare, namely:

- some training programmes in the organisation and education of social and cultural activities (educator and organiser of cultural activities for children);
- seven forms of training in the management of school trips and outings;
- 24 training courses in welfare and childrearing education (including one training programme on extracurricular classes activities);
- 22 training courses for class tutors of summer camps.

Consequently, the offer of training programmes for childcare workers is very poor. Nevertheless, interviews with government representatives showed that the demand for good quality training in teaching and education is very high. The lack of adequate qualification programmes was given as one of the major factors which inhibits a satisfactory provision of childcare establishments outside the school system. This may be due to the fact that most of these qualification programmes are funded by the administering organisation of the establishment or school – usually municipalities with restricted financial resources.

¹⁵ <http://www.codn.edu.pl/struktura/gb/>

Future employment in childcare

4

Shortages in employment

The supply of childcare workers, especially of teachers, is much higher in Poland than actual demand. This is mainly due to demographic changes which also lead to a decreasing number of primary school-age children. Thus, no shortages exist in employment in the childcare sector, and the number of students who graduate from teaching and education qualification centres remains high. The education system and governmental programmes do not provide any specific solutions in tackling shortages in employment.

Gaps in employment

One important employment gap concerns the provision of childcare services for six to 12 year olds in urban areas. The number of children has been decreasing, primary schools have been closing and there is a lack of fully qualified staff to provide childcare services. On the other hand, the infrastructure seems sufficient as buildings of closed schools could be adapted to provide out-of-school childcare facilities.

Another gap relates to the female dominated workforce in the childcare sector which may be due to the relatively low level of remuneration compared to the average salary in other sectors.

5

Creating sustainable childcare

Affordability

Participation in activities outside school hours is closely linked to the social and financial status of the parents which depends on their level of education, professional qualifications, as well as the overall financial situation of the household. The 2001 survey by the Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS) concludes that the higher the socioeconomic status of the family, the greater the opportunities on offer to school-age children. Parents in large cities can more often afford extra classes (45%–55%) for their children than parents from smaller towns (15%), and only 24% of parents from rural areas pay for activities outside school hours.

Furthermore, it seems that the greater the number of school-age children in a family, the less they participate in paid activities outside school hours. Some 23% of families with one school-age child pay for activities outside school hours, compared to 17% of families with two school-age children paying for extra classes for both children. In families of three or more children, only 4% of families pay for extra activities outside school hours for all children, 13% of families pay for two children, and 12% of families for one child. In 2001, the average monthly expenses of parents amounted to PLN 247 (€62.29) for paid activities outside school hours for all children per family (Table 12). This amount has increased by PLN 35 (€3.28) (17%) compared to the previous year. Average monthly expenses for one child attending activities outside school hours stood at PLN 193 (€48.67) in 2001, which represents an increase of 14% which means a cost of PLN 23 (€5.80) more per child than in 2000. These changes, taking the inflation index of 4.3% into account, indicate a significant growth in expenses for paid activities outside school hours.

Table 12: Average monthly expenses for activities outside school hours of school-age children (in PLN), 2001

	1997 (N=158)	1998 (N=162)	1999 (N=130)	2000 (N=120)	2001 (N=101)	Changes 2000–2001
On all school-age children attending extra activities	147	265	194	212	247	Increase of 17%
On one school-age child attending extra activities	123	223	143	170	193	Increase of 14%

Source: CBOS, October 2001.

Note: N = responses of parents declaring that some of their school-age children attend or will attend additional paid activities outside school hours (Survey on a representative sample of adult Poles (N=1020) over the years 1997–2001).

The results of this 2001 survey, as well as the interviews with government representatives and NGOs, show that the average monthly expenses per child for paid out-of-school activities do not exceed PLN 200 (about €50).

Moreover, the interviewees were concerned about fees in the public provision of childcare services. Several representatives of NGOs and of the ministries considered that it may be useful to introduce a small fee for activities outside school hours provided by public out-of-school education establishments, such as youth palaces. It should not exceed a monthly fee of PLN 10 (€2.52) per child to access the establishment's offer. Such a measure may have a positive influence on the parents' involvement in children's out-of-school activities and the quality of provision.

Quality

Out-of-school education establishments

The 2004 directive of the Ministry of National Education on detailed principles of conducting educational supervision clearly defines quality standards for out-of-school education establishments. The school's administrative body (i.e. generally local authorities in the case of primary and lower secondary schools) has to ensure that the quality standards are met. Schools and other public and non-public out-of-school education establishments are inspected approximately once every five years. Quality standard indicators have been developed as a result of these inspections and are presented in Table 13 below.

Table 13: *Quality standard indicators for out-of-school education establishments*

Area	Quality standard indicators
CONCEPT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT	
Strategic management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment has its development programme which clearly outlines projects, aimed at improving the quality of work of the establishment, and their objectives Staff, parents and children participate in the planning process of activities and in implementing these; an evaluation process for all activities is established
Internal quality guarantee system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment has its internal measures of the quality of work and teachers are informed about the rules of pedagogic supervision of the director in the establishment Comprehensive organisation of the internal quality evaluation: the establishment's educational council assesses the results and elaborates thus directions for future changes Teachers are involved in the design of an internal quality guarantee system and the established quality criteria are systematically applied
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment carries out promotional activities (with the support of teachers) and seeks financial support for that purpose
MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION	
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment needs are systematically analysed, qualification requirements are followed, and tasks and scope of duties clearly defined Educational council responsibilities include to present an opinion on suggestions of the establishment's director concerning assignments of teachers
Vocational development of teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of staff and the educational council are identified and individual plans of the professional development of teachers are developed Equal opportunities for the professional development of teachers are provided and teachers' assessments influence their professional development
Operational conditions of the establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation facilities and equipment are provided in optimal quantity and quality and are regularly adjusted Children and staff have free access to the facilities and equipment
Health, hygiene and safety of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety and hygiene requirements are ensured, as well as appropriate care for the children
Management of establishment and circulation of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statute of establishment and different internal acts are in line with legislative regulations and accessible for staff and parents Effective decision implementation ensured by director and effective system to circulate and gather information Director cooperates with teachers, parents and children concerning the management and organisation of the establishment's work System of collecting, examining and processing statistical data in establishment is performed
EDUCATION	
Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes concerning activities provided, which are in line with children interests, are properly developed for each workshop and improved on a continuous basis
Organisation of education process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programmes concerning provided activities develop children's interests Weekly timetable is in accordance with the annual organisational sheet of the establishment Activities, which are analysed and assessed regularly, support an effective learning and teaching process in the school
Course of process of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content of childcare provision is regularly analysed by staff who are well qualified to provide activities and apply methods of education and care Parents are well informed about the achievements of children
Results of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children participate in competitions, championships etc. and their achievements are properly analysed and presented

Table 13: *Quality standard indicators for out-of-school education establishments (cont'd)*

Area	Quality standard indicators
CARE AND UPBRINGING	
Equal opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admission criteria of children are in line with the statute and the care offered; the education programme meets criteria of tolerance, equity and universal values Establishment ensures equal opportunities for the development of all children (including talented persons as well as those with special education and care needs)
Upbringing and prevention work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities are coherent and include developing skills of spending free time, respecting legacy of cultural region, country and different cultures Upbringing and prevention schedule of establishment is carried out with participation of parents and is in line with the legislative regulations and parent's values
Care work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers identify education and care needs of children, and the establishment cooperates with institutions providing social welfare care
Results of care, upbringing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment prepares documents highlighting the results of the educational and prevention work Actions taken towards children showing education problems are followed up by expected results

Source: *Based on the directive on detailed principles of conducting educational supervision, list of professions requiring teaching qualifications, qualifications necessary for providing educational supervision, and qualifications of persons who may carry out studies, Ministry of National Education, 23 April 2004*

Extracurricular childcare

According to the interviews, good quality extracurricular activities provided by primary schools should be carried out by teachers with teaching qualifications who continue to regularly attend (minimum twice a year) further training programmes. The number of children in a group with one tutor should not exceed 10–15 persons. Children, parents and local authorities (which fund these activities) should be able to influence the offers of the school in this respect. Each extracurricular activity should be provided regularly and at least once a week.

Day rooms

The interviews also revealed that some representatives of NGOs acting in the childcare sector consider it important to separate the newly created day rooms from the primary schools. Running day rooms should not be linked to additional payment for teachers of the school since they often lack the relevant competences but cannot be replaced. Good quality day rooms should be run in a way that is attractive for children who are tired of compulsory lessons, for example, in the form of discovery clubs.

An overall assessment for Poland of the quality of services provided by out-of-school education establishments is difficult to present. This is due to the fact that the Ministry of National Education does not collect any data on the quality of services provided. The interviews with representatives of the ministry revealed that the administrative body running the schools of each region develops its own quality standards based on the principles outlined in the directive of April 2004. Therefore, it may be useful to commission a study aimed at assessing the quality of out-of-school education establishments in Poland in the future.

Current needs for affordable and high quality childcare

The County Family Support Centres (PCPR) in their function of coordinating childcare activities should establish an expert group – including educators and teaching personnel, psychologists, social workers, doctors, lawyers – to regularly analyse childcare needs in each region.

Needs for specific childcare provision

Currently, there is a trend for an increasing demand of activities outside school hours as more parents tend to pay for specific activities for their children. Classes in foreign languages and additional sports activities show the highest interest rates (see Table 14).

Table 14: Paid activities outside schools hours that parents declare their children will attend in the next school year (%)

	Responses of parents with school -age children					Responses of parents declaring that some of their school-age children attend or will attend additional paid classes				
	1997 (N=387)	1998 (N=384)	1999 (N=363)	2000 (N=314)	2001 (N=295)	1997 (N=158)	1998 (N=162)	1999 (N=130)	2000 (N=120)	2001 (N=101)
Foreign languages classes	28*	30	26	30	24	67	72	71	79	69
Sports activities e.g. swimming, ball, tennis, martial arts, chess club, horse riding	8	13	11	13	14	20	32	30	34	39
Private tuition, foundation courses	9	9	8	10	9	21	21	21	26	25
Artistic activities, e.g. music, playing instruments, dance etc.	6	7	6	6	6	16	16	18	17	18
Computer courses	3	5	4	6	5	6	12	12	16	13
Others	1	2	1	3	2	3	5	2	7	5
Do not attend any extra classes	59	58	64	62	65					

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre (CBOS), October 2001

Note: *Percentages do not sum up as respondents could suggest different number of activities.

N = responses of parents in a survey on a representative sample of adult Poles (N=1020) over the years 1997–2001.

There is also great demand for activities related to so-called ‘European education’ which allows familiarisation of structures in the European Union (EU), as well as activities aimed at strengthening the local identity of regions and counties. In the interviews, ministerial representatives emphasised that extra activities outside school hours are for children who want to improve their knowledge of the local environment.

Future needs for affordable and high quality childcare

Although the number of primary school-age children has been falling in Poland over the last decade, the demand for affordable and high quality childcare continues to be high since the supply, especially in terms of its quality, is currently insufficient. The high number of teachers in combination with a lack of private childcare provision may in future result in the creation of new childcare establishments. The following factors influence a growing demand for high quality childcare in Poland, namely:

- an increasing participation of women in the labour market;
- subsidies of EU funds for different family-friendly employment initiatives (such as the EQUAL programme) generate a positive approach among local communities to create better quality childcare in their environment;
- a great demand for good quality qualification and training programmes for childcare workers as graduates from teaching and education training centres are not well prepared for providing this kind of care. The ministry plans to change this situation by improving the qualification programmes in teaching and education at universities;
- changing parents' attitudes as they put more pressure on the provision of additional education and care of children; parents consider extra classes and activities outside school hours as a means to support the education and future professional career of their children.

It is also worth mentioning the **White Booklet – Youth Cooperation in Europe**¹⁶, a document created by 23 European countries, including Poland, which lists the needs of children and young people in the field of relevant childcare activities, including the:

- need for financial support for existing and future out-of-school childcare establishments in smaller towns and villages, and particularly in areas which are faced with changing needs;
- demand for studies to identify children's interests and to design childcare establishments which really address children's needs;
- need for initiatives to disseminate cultural heritage through organising different events, such as festivals, competitions, courses, information programmes, exhibitions;
- necessity to support a better cooperation of programmes for children and young people of out-of-school establishments and schools from twinning towns;
- request for initiatives which aim at integrating children with specific social problems into the activity programme of schools providing extracurricular care. The Integration fun club IKAR is a good practice example of how children with special needs have been integrated into extracurricular care and thus benefited from safe and stimulating activities along with other children (see case study 3 – Integration fun club IKAR).

¹⁶ <http://www.pswp.pl/bk/BK-en.doc>

Case study 1: 'My place' – day room programme

Organisational background

The day room programme 'My place' is for children aged between eight and 13 years who live in the *Podlaskie* province in northeast Poland. In 2005, the Polish Children Youth Foundation (PCYF) launched this programme with the financial support of the **PZU (Polish insurance company) Foundation**¹⁷ which covers 13 existing day rooms in the *Podlaskie* province. The programme aims to develop and create accessible, good quality day rooms for children in small urban areas. The total budget for the programme amounts to €75,000.

PCYF – a non-profit organisation established in May 1992 with the support of the International Youth Foundation – designed this initiative with the aim of fostering the overall development of children and young people. Its objective is to raise a generation of responsible and creative individuals, actively shaping their private lives, as well as local communities and the future of the country. The financial resources of PCYF come from grants and donations provided by institutions and individuals.

Description of the initiative

The day room programme 'My place' focuses on the following objectives, to:

- establish good quality day rooms for children aged eight to 13 years, concentrating particularly on the arrangement of space and equipment as well as the scheduling of activities outside school hours, and ensuring the involvement of parents and staff in this process;
- offer good conditions for the harmonious development of children in attendance, meeting their needs and aspirations, and developing their talents;
- create awareness among parents and day room staff of activities carried out by urban day rooms, as well as encouraging their participation in these activities;
- carry out and promote good practice in the provision of childcare in day rooms.

The programme covers 200–240 children in 12–14 day rooms; each day room holds approximately 20 children accompanied by five parents and is led by 12–14 day room workers. The 'My place' initiative started in July 2005 with a selection of 13 day rooms, and this first stage of the programme will last for one year. The overall duration of the programme is planned for several years. It also involves other partners including: local housing cooperatives, urban day rooms, locally acting NGOs and voluntary fire brigades.

The concept of childcare provision in day rooms has been established in preparatory training sessions. Each day room has been adapted to the age group of participating children and to the availability of local staff, including parents as potential organisers of activities. The day rooms offer discovery clubs where children have the opportunity, for example, to carry out experiments in physics, chemistry or biology, to breed small animals in order to develop responsible behaviour, to organise activities which teach first aid, and to do handicraft activities such as modelling.

¹⁷ <http://www.pzu.pl/?nodeid=438>

Parents' involvement in leading different activities plays a key role in this programme, for example: some mothers working as nurses provide first aid courses; fathers who are carpenters offer activities on timber processing in their workshop; some parents organise table tennis competitions; others offer cooking classes for both boys and girls; history students arrange for children 'ghosts discovery paths' tracing the history of the region where they live; and local herbalists involve children in preparing guides on local medicinal herbs.

A person qualified in education and/or teaching supervises the overall functioning of the activities offered by different people who are involved in the programme. This ensures that all activities are maintained as well as the children's safety.

The programme's expected results during the first year of implementation are the following:

- development of about 12–14 good quality, innovative day room programmes – open to cooperation with the local environment;
- design and development of an innovative formula for day room programmes;
- prepare parents to participate actively in the provision of activities in urban day rooms;
- create new employment opportunities for local inhabitants.

Development of the initiative

Since 2005, the programme has been implemented following several stages, namely:

1. selection of distinct places and region in the country,
2. a series of workshops for running bodies of the selected day rooms looking at the performance of and space arrangement in day rooms,
3. selection of 12–14 day rooms, followed by consultations with an interior designer and psychologist,
4. provision of a day room and cooperation with parents and organisation of training programmes in order to prepare everybody to participate actively in the day room activities.

The selection for the *Podlaskie* province has been carried out on the basis of the following criteria:

- average income per inhabitant;
- number of potential organisations interested in running a day room project;
- previous experience of initiatives in this region.

Against this background, three towns were selected in the province showing an insufficient provision of day rooms for children; the attitude of actors in the local community, such as schools, municipal authorities, the parents' council and the local housing cooperative's council, was also considered in the selection process. Moreover, the day rooms had to be close to schools and children's homes.

In order to be selected, existing day rooms had to apply to participate in the programme by describing their day room operation, covering the following aspects: the type of activities offered; its infrastructure and operation (days/hours); ways of informing people about its activities in the local environment; participation of parents and volunteers in the provision of its activities; educational care; the capacity to adapt rooms and to carry out the programme; and a plan for

the future continuation of the initiative. The project description also had to provide a cost estimate, including the amount of financial resources available for the programme.

Currently, 13 projects have been implemented and the first phase of the programme ended on 30 March 2006. Most of the selected day rooms received about €4,750 for one year of operation, covering two areas: direct work with children and adaptation of spaces with adequate equipment.

Two technical training sessions form part of the programme which offer the possibility to get advice from the programme's consultants or from those who developed the programme. In each training session, up to two people (e.g. teacher/tutor, parents, volunteers) from each day room may participate.

The first training session, aimed at designing the projects' content and thus ensuring its good quality, took place at the start of the programme. It covered the following subject areas: how to work with parents; how to avoid creating activities only for 'well-behaved girls'; ways of engaging with children to design the space and plan different activities; to coordinate activities of different activity groups; developmental psychology of children in the given age group; and how to promote day rooms in the local community. The training session also covered examples of programmes for children of the given age group, which may be adapted for each day room.

The second training session was to be carried out after the first five months of the programme and aimed at providing suggestions of possible modifications based on the experience to date and at preparing plans to continue the activities. This training also deals with developmental psychology of children and ways of day room cooperation in the local environment.

Additional meetings for persons working in these day rooms were planned to offer the opportunity for people to exchange experiences, to create a network of programme leaders and to seek the advice of psychologists and educators. In addition, these meetings were meant to elaborate new concepts for day rooms, which could be applied in the future.

An evaluation of the programme is foreseen which should result in an overview report, and thematic and financial reports. Furthermore, the activities in each day room are monitored with the participation of representatives of the PZU Foundation, an interior designer, a childcare expert and a representative of the day room. This should guarantee the provision of adequate information to assess the programme from different points of views.

The programme will be carried out over several years (with a minimum of three years) in order to ensure the benefits of its results. The day rooms selected in the first year of operation will receive less financial support in the following years; nonetheless, the persons running the day rooms and the staff will have the opportunity to participate in training sessions and meetings offered by the foundation every year. The idea of the programme is to teach day room managers how to involve the local community in the initiative and how to seek additional funds. The managers will learn how to create action plans for day rooms covering several years and how to cooperate with other local organisations, local authorities, parents and teachers. Children will also attend these meetings to present their views and comparisons with other day rooms and out-of-school education establishments.

Good practice

This programme is a unique example of a coherent, comprehensive and well designed initiative for childcare providers of day rooms, as well as for local organisations, teachers, parents and other interested actors. The programme clearly states its aims, objectives and implementation tools. Although it is difficult to assess good practices while the programme is being implemented, one example of good practice to date is the NGOs' support for existing day rooms through financial assistance, training schemes and advisory services. This is reflected in the design of the programme and the

interviews with PCYF's director. Moreover, the fact that the programme currently exists only for day rooms of one province may generate interesting comparative data to analyse in the future.

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Case study 2: School day room

Organisational background

The day room is run by the primary school no. 23 in Płock in the Masovian (*Mazowieckie*) province in central Poland. This primary school was set up in 1989, and currently consists of four buildings, two gym rooms and one sports hall. The school is a member of the Association of Creative Schools and started international cooperation within the EU programme for school education 'Comenius' which is part of the 'Socrates' programme. The school responds to the needs of children and parents and provides many extracurricular activities in different subject areas, such as mathematics, music, art and languages. Since 2000, the school has launched a 'European Club' which promotes knowledge relating to the EU.

Description of the initiative

Overall, the activities offered by the school day room aim to:

- develop children's interests;
- build up various creative activities;
- promote initiatives for children to spend their free time according to their developmental skills;
- introduce the notion of national traditions and learn how to foster these, with the aim of strengthening national and family ties;
- shape social behaviour in children's groups;
- support children with a low self-esteem and/or those experiencing problems in education to adapt to life in the school community.

The care and education activities of the day room focus on the following objectives:

- safety, first aid and preventing accidents (road traffic, maintenance of different appliances);
- promoting a healthy lifestyle;
- self-image (recognising and understanding causes of emotions and cultural behaviour);
- social and school adaptation, such as integration with other children, teamwork, school representation in competitions, developing artistic skills, supporting the education process, developing critical attitudes towards information provided by mass media, protection of the environment, strengthening family ties;
- promoting national and regional traditions, as well as those of the school.

The activities are divided into the following thematic fields: literature and drama, arts and crafts, ecology, music, health, regional culture, EU integration. The day room offers a variety of activities, including: the theatre group *Babelek* (Bubble), the musical team *Nutki* (Notes) and the artistic group *Odkrywcy Barw* (Discoverers of Colours). A qualified teacher looks after each group. Besides the care and educational activities, the Day Room also organises conferences for teachers from the entire region, which focuses on didactic aspects of education.

The day room runs from 07.00 to 17.00 and from Monday to Friday during term-time, but it does not offer any activities during weekends. Since 1993, the day room has been managed by two chief leaders (one up to 1993 and a second up to now) and employed 16 day room tutors. Currently, the day room employs three tutors.

Development of the initiative

The day room was set up in 1989 and was situated on the first floor of the primary school sharing the space with the school canteen. After one year of operation it received a new room. The current layout of the day room was developed in 1994 when a new manager, Elżbieta Pędraszewska, was employed with a post graduate qualification. She designed the original education and care programme based on the idea of ‘interest centres’ as promoted by the educator Ovide Decroly (1871–1932).

Good practice

The school day room in Płock was well covered in the local and national press (for example in *Wychowanie na co dzień*, *Kaganek* and the educational bulletin *Szkoła bez Granic*). Moreover, the school day room has been part of many field observations of students from the public Higher Vocational School (teacher training college) and the Paweł Włodkowic Higher School in Płock, as well as from the Karol Wielki Bydgoszcz Academy (Higher Educational School in Bydgoszcz). All observations have been carried out under the coordination of the students’ tutors, Elżbieta Pędraszewska and Bożena Kowalska.

The day room also cooperates with other institutions in the childcare sector in Poland, and with the public nursery school no. 25 in Płock, as part of the education project ‘My region’, coordinated by Elżbieta Pędraszewska. The exchange of children’s paintings, which was part of a promotional activity in the ‘Get to know my city’ programme, initiated cooperation with a school day room in the primary school no. 75 in Poznań in the Łódź (*Łódzkie*) province in central Poland.

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Case study 3: Integration fun club IKAR

Organisational background

Integration fun club Ikar was set up in one of the biggest primary schools in Kraków in the Lesser Poland (*Małopolskie*) province in the south of Poland. The Marshal J. Piłsudski primary school no. 149 operates the integration fun club for seven years which means that it is highly sustainable. It provides extracurricular activities and aims to integrate children with special needs into the education programme of the public school. Its objective is to create an integration-friendly environment and to support teachers in overcoming fears when working with disabled children. At the same time, the

club aims to teach school staff how to deal with and solve new problems, and to prepare children to cope with a new situation, by involving parents, local authorities and the administrative body of the school to support such initiatives.

Description of the initiative

The Integration fun club Ikar acts on a voluntary basis and brings together both primary school children aged from six to 12 years and children with special needs from the nearest local areas in Kraków.

In its operation, the club involves teachers, pupils, parents and inhabitants of the town. In its set-up phase, the club started with a staff of three persons who were trained to lead activities in a mixed group of children, including children requiring special needs.

The club aims to:

- develop sensitivity among children and adults concerning the needs of disabled children;
- provide opportunities for children with special needs to meet other pupils;
- direct energy excess of overactive and difficult pupils towards helping children with special needs;
- create opportunities for parents of disabled children to exchange experiences.

The club provides after-school activities free of charge for a few hours per week from Monday to Friday. Activities are organised in groups of three to 10 children in the building of the primary school. Most activities focus on playing different team games, taking day trips, reading books, participating in computer classes, painting and handicraft activities.

Development of the initiative

The club operates in the primary school and thus the acceptance and cooperation of the school director was needed in order to set up and run the club. The organisers also welcomed the cooperation of the educational and parents' councils and the pupils. In the next phase, the school's infrastructure had to be adapted to provide easy access for wheelchairs. In the meantime, the organisers gathered information and carried out interviews to identify families with disabled children and to present the idea of the club to them. This was followed by dissemination activities to promote the club on local radio and in the press, and meetings with parents of disabled children. After this preliminary phase, a series of meetings followed with parents of the children. The organisers also contacted NGOs acting in Kraków. Soon after, the first opening event took place where all persons involved participated. The organisers adopted a leading theme for this event, *Meeting with Winnie the Pooh*, following which the club started its operation.

Good practice

Experiences in running the club revealed that it is a great initiative for all children with varying abilities to work together in harmony and to develop an awareness and sensitivity among children and adults of the needs of disabled children. The club not only functions as a centre for extracurricular activities for children but also creates the feeling of being useful for the local community among the children. Moreover, the club supports children with special needs in their integration into the local community. The Integration fun club Ikar is frequently mentioned in meetings of the Education Initiatives Forum as an example of a good practice.

Further information

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Minister of Social Policy, Directive on care and upbringing establishments, 14 February 2005

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Websites

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Education Bureau of Warsaw, <http://www.edukacja.warszawa.pl/>

European Association for Leisure Time Institutions of Children and Youth, <http://www.eaicy.cz/>

National Agency for Solving Alcohol Problems, <http://www.parpa.pl>

National In-Service Teacher Training Centre (CODN), <http://www.codn.edu.pl>

Polish Association of Out-of-School Establishments, <http://www.pswp.pl>

Polish Children and Youth Foundation (PCYF), <http://www.pcyf.org.pl>

Server on Education Affairs in Podkarpackie Region, http://www.karpaty.edu.pl/mdk/html/mdk_w_krpwp.htm

List of interviewees

Name	Organisation/ Responsibilities	Interview type
Roman Ponczek	Ministry of National Education, Department of Education and Social Prevention, Responsible for pedagogical and psychological care in schools	Face-to-face interview
Ewa Repsch	Ministry of National Education, Department of Education and Social Prevention, Responsible for extracurricular care provided by schools	Face-to-face interview
Krystyna Stańczak-Pałyga	Ministry of National Education, Youth Bureau, Responsible for out-of-school childcare provided by out-of-school establishments	Phone interview
Agnieszka Dybowska	Ministry of National Education, Youth Bureau, Director	Phone interview
Ewa Zalewska-Steć	Ministry of National Education, Youth Bureau, Responsible for holiday care	Face-to-face interview
Mikolaj Kruszewski	Ministry of Economy and Labour, European Social Fund (ESF) Implementation Department	Phone interview
Agata Wolnicka	Ministry of Economy and Labour, Department of Regional Development Programmes (ZPORR) Implementation – ESF Division	Phone interview
Marta Czartoryska	Ministry of Economy and Labour, Department of Regional Development Programmes (ZPORR) Implementation – Monitoring Division	Phone interview
Anita Sobańska	Institute of Public Affairs, Education Programme Project, Researcher	Phone interview
Kamila Hernik	Institute of Public Affairs, Social Policy Programme Project, Researcher	Phone interview
Grażyna Ożarek	Warsaw Education Bureau (part of the Warsaw City Office), Director	Face-to-face interview
Elzbieta Wojciechowska	Sejm (lower house of parliament) Commission of Education, Science and Youth, Secretary	Face-to-face interview
Bożena Kołaczek	Institute of Labour and Social Studies, Researcher responsible for the employment of women, conditions of family life and education problems	Phone interview
Marzena Bartoszewicz	Ministry of Social Policy, Social care and Integration Department, Division for childcare and family care	Phone interview
Teacher	Primary School No. 23	Phone interview
Teacher	Primary School No. 149	Phone interview
Maria Holzer	Polish Children and Youth Foundation (PCYF), Director	Face-to-face interview
Teresa Ogrodzińska	Comenius Foundation for Child Development, Founder and President of the Board	Phone interview