Alternative Forms of Preschool Education - Polish Experiences

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• Preschool education in rural areas in Poland

• Phases of introducing alternative forms of preschool education

  - Where There Are No Preschools Program

  - Alternative forms in the education system
Country Profile

Population: \textbf{38 135 876}
Rural population: 38,9%
Children aged 0-6: 2 588 306
in rural areas: 42,4%
Unemployment rate: 9,5% (09/10)
(02.2000 14% ; 02.2004 20%)
Fertility rate: 1,28 (2010)
Female employment rate: 43,5%
(09/10)
Preschool Education in Poland

Run by local municipalities
- no subsidy from central government
- financed from local municipalities budgets

- Children 3-6 years old
- For 3-5 year old children - not compulsory
- For 6 year old children - compulsory one year - preparation to school
- Beginning from 2012 6-year old children will start primary school and for 5 year old - compulsory one year - preparation to school
Preschool Education in Poland

In Poland there are **2156** rural municipalities

Before 2005 In **869** municipalities there are no preschools
Preschool Education in Poland

% 3-5 years old children attending preschools in rural municipalities
Preschool Education in Poland

**POLAND***

For children aged 0-5

- Nurseries
- Pre-schools

*according to law on education

**UNITED KINGDOM***

For children aged 0-5

- Day nurseries
- Combined nursery centers
- Children’s centers
- Family centers
- Nursery schools and classes
- Primary school reception classes
- Playgroups
- Creches
- Childminders
- Drop-in centers
- One o’clock clubs
- Playbuses
- Toy libraries
- And others…..

* according to „The Children Act”
Where There Are No Pre-schools Program
Where There Are No Pre-schools

Main objectives:

- To improve educational opportunities for children in areas without pre-schools by introducing alternative high quality educational schemes - Preschool Centers.

- To develop a new systemic solution - a new form of education for young children that will be available to all municipalities in Poland.

Inspiration:

„Itinerant teachers” - preschool education form in rural areas in Portugal and Polish rural preschool centers developed in the 20’s of the 20th century.
Where There Are No Pre-schools

Basic assumptions

Preschool centers accessible to majority of children
- Located in small rural localities, where children live
- Free of charge for parents

Preschool centers of maximum cost-effectiveness
- Centers located in existing buildings, already in use
- Only educational function of centers

Quality of education
- Quality maintaining and monitoring system
**Preschool Center**

- goal: education
- place: school, drop-in centre, culture house, library...
- in place where children live
- free of charge
- no meals
- **3-15** children in the group
- mix-age groups (3-5 year old)
- minimum 9 hours per week
- teacher travel to Center
- parents as teacher’s assistants

**Preschool**

- goal: education and care
- place: preschool or school
- in place where parents work
- co-financed by parents (core fee + meals)
- meals included
- **25** children in group
- age groups (3,4,5,6 separately)
- minimum **25** hours per week
- children travel to preschool
- teacher’s assistant
Where There Are No Pre-schools

Cooperation with Comenius Foundation

- Municipality council votes participation in the Program (funding guarantee)

- Cooperation agreement between CF and municipality council

- One person from municipality is responsible for program coordination and contact with Comenius Foundation
Where There Are No Pre-schools

Maintaining the Program quality

Selection of teachers
- teachers with preschool qualifications, pedagogs

Training
- initial training for teachers (100 hours)
- local training for teachers
- workshops for parents

Quality monitoring system
- Mentors supervise teachers work
- Teachers self-evaluation system

Educational support
- program (curriculum) for Centers’
- handbook for teachers
Phases of introducing alternative forms of preschool education

**PHASE I (2002 - 2004) - Comenius Foundation pilot program:**

- 20 municipalities 50 Centers 500 children
- Adaptation Portuguese solution to Polish rural conditions
- Law analysis - how municipality can run Preschool Centers.
- Selecting municipalities
- Meetings with parents in villages where Centers were planned
- Selecting and training teachers
- Evaluation

**Financing:** municipalities budgets + Bernard van Leer Foundation grant
Where There Are No Pre-schools

Effects

Increase in the number of children attending pre-schools
Where There Are No Pre-schools

Effects

• Children from Centers perform very well at school
• Disabled children adapt very well to the Centers
• Developing teachers’ pedagogic skills
• Involving parents in the activities of Centers
• Lowering the unemployment rate - 30% of teachers working in the Centers were previously unemployed
• Alternative forms of preschool education included in European Social Fund priorities
Phases of introducing alternative forms of preschool education

PHASE II (2004 - 2007) - Ministry of Education pilot program:

300 municipalities 900 Centers 11 000 children

- Program based on Comenius Foundation WTANP Programme
- Grant competition for NGOs
- 10 NGOs were developing and running Preschool Centers all over Poland
- Evaluation component
- In 2007 „other forms of preschool education” added to Law on Education

Financing:

European Social Fund + Polish government - 12 000 000 euro
municipality budgets
Phases of introducing alternative forms of preschool education

PHASE III (2007 - 2013) - Dissemination:

In 90% of municipalities there are preschool provisions

Grant competition on regional level

Preschools and Preschool Centers created and run by:

- Municipalities
- Private entities
- Non governmental organization

Financing:

European Social Fund + Polish government - 243 000 000 euro

municipality budgets
Preschool statistics today

Children 3-5 years old in preschools (in %)

2006 vs 2010

Poland

41% 59.70%

Urban

58.40% 75.90%

Rural

19.10% 37.50%

Ref. GUS, MEN
Ania from South-East Part of Poland

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