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European Map of Intergenerational Learning. National Profile: Poland

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European Map of Intergenerational Learning

National Profile: Poland (Andrzej Klimczuk)

2 Key trends involving intergenerational practice/learning (IP/IL) in member countries:

1. Demographic change. Political, social and economic transformation in Poland was accompanied by an increase in the number of older people. Between 1988-2011, the number of people over 65 age increased from 3.7 million (9.8% of the total population) to 5.3 million (13.8%). Older people in cities increased from 1.9 million (8.6% of urban population) to 3.3 million (14.4%). The total number of people in retirement age has increased over the same period from 4.7 million (12.4% of the total population) to 6.6 million (17.3%). This has created a burden for the working age - for every 100 people in working age there were 21.6 people of retirement age in 1988 and 26.9 people in 2011. According to the demographic forecast of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, the number of people aged 65+ may rise to 8.3 million in 2035 (23.2% of the total population). For every 100 people of working age, there will be 46 persons of retirement age. Ageing population will be intensively proceed in cities, where will lead to the 24.3% population over 65 age compared to 21.7% in rural areas. Ageing of the population will be accompanied by its decreasing (“depopulation”), which in 90% will affect cities. The urban population will fall from 23.3 million to 21.2 million of people.

2. Raising awareness and main actions towards demographic change.

Intergenerational practice and learning are not at the centre of public discourse in Poland. However, our ageing population has been slowly highlighted by projects supported by European Social Found during: EQUAL Community Initiative Programme 2000-2006 (results database), Human Capital Programme 2007-2013 and will be continued in upcoming Knowledge - Education - Development Operational Programme 2014-2020. Projects included in those programmes are implemented by different entities on national, regional and local levels aimed at increasing older workers (50+) employability, intermentoring (mentoring of older workers for young employees) and promoting age management in organisations.

Important in raising awareness are government actions on population ageing planned and described first in “Solidarity across generations. Measures aiming at increasing the economic activity of people over 50” Programme which was adopted by Council of Ministers in 2008. Its main goal is to achieve the employment rate for people aged 55-64 set by the Lisbon Strategy by 2020. Programme includes an intergenerational approach by designed measures related to the promotion of access to employment during the whole period of working life. One of programme aims was to start retirement age reform by gradual rising it to 67 years as well as it's equalizing for men and women. Other important document was government “Report on Intellectual Capital of Poland” published in 2008. It describes resources of intellectual capital in different age groups and promotes intergenerational approach. This report was a basis to next report “Poland 2030. Development challenges” which further describes demographic challenges and to build “Long-term National Development Strategy 2030” which was adopted by Council of Ministers in 2013. Intergenerational solidarity remains one of three main rules of strategy.

Moreover in 2011-2012 national senior policy centers emerged. In 2011 the Ombudsman called Commission of Experts on Ageing; and Parliamentary Group on University of the Third Age were established; as well as separate Parliamentary Group on Ageing. In August 2012 Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy published the “Government Programme for Senior Citizens Social Activity” for the years 2012-2013 and in December 2013 its version for years 2014-2020 along with “Long-term Conceptual Assumptions of the Seniority Policy for 2014-2020”. Both policy documents support creating conditions for integration of intra- and intergenerational relations by using existing social infrastructure. Government programmes from 2012 popularised intergenerational organisations and projects. However thorough research on this topic is still lacking.

It is also important to highlight some intergenerational actions are undertaken in Poland by Universities of the Third Age movement. Such organizations started networking by creating the National Federation of U3A in 2007 and 2009. According to the Polish U3A National Agreement in 2011 there were about 320 such facilities with more than 100 thousand members. In 2012 there were already 385 centers and about 90,000 listeners. In 2009 First National Convention of U3A took place, while in 2012 (the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations), the Senate of Poland established also a University of the Third Age year, while Government Population Council convened the Second Demographic Congress which took place throughout the whole year. The Poland National Action Plan for European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations included a number of initiatives for support, and from initiatives of the U3As.

Key (practice based) Initiatives/Programmes that exemplify experimental and innovative character in IP/IL in member countries:

1. [Digital Poland of Equal Opportunities Project](#) (pol. Polska Cyfrowa Równych Szans) has run from 2010 as a partnership between the Ministry of Administration and Digitization and the “Cities on Internet” Association with the main goal of encouraging the 50+ people to make this first step into the digital world because from 38 million Poles nearly 10 million adults aged 50+ have never used the Internet. The novel approach of PCRS rests on locality, as adults are willing to participate in events in familiar surroundings: community centers, local fire station, social spaces and private homes. For that reason, PCRS requires involvement of local digital champions (called Lighthouse Keepers) that are trusted by the community, creative, skilled in mobilizing support for local actions. Project is being realized with the involvement of 2600 such persons from all age groups. PCRS is the largest ever education volunteering endeavor in Poland. Each digital champion goes on to create a concept of his/her own initiative, realized in cooperation with NGOs and local authorities, to encourage adults to enter the digital world in their own community. Moreover 200 Lighthouse Keepers are being awarded with 200 grants to launch their ideas which they described in Local Digital Education Plans. Work of Lighthouse Keepers is supported by the National Competence Centre - social portal devoted to digital training of adults, equipped with corresponding technical infrastructure and a research team and experts providing lighthouse keepers with support in their daily work with the digitally excluded.

2. “[Seniors in action](#)” is a national grant competition carried out by the Association of Creative Initiatives „ę”, with funding from the Polish-American Freedom Foundation since 2008. Funds from the grant contest are for the implementation of initiatives that engage senior citizens in community activism and promote intergenerational cooperation and volunteer work among senior citizens. In order to receive financial support, projects need to be headed by an individual 55 or older, in cooperation with a non-profit organization or local institution. Contestants may submit their entries alone or in cooperation with a person aged 30 or younger. Projects have included: family projects, designed by teams composed of a grandmother and granddaughter, mother and daughter, or father and son, theatre and music projects, work with children based

on recording the personal narratives of the oldest local residents, and the revitalization of neglected neighbourhoods. 167 projects have been funded so far.

Key Policy and/or Research documents produced in member countries:

1. Important strategic documents that include intergenerational issues:

- “Solidarity across generations. Measures aiming at increasing the economic activity of people over 50” Programme (2008; „[Program Solidarność pokoleń. Działania dla zwiększenia aktywności zawodowej osób w wieku 50+](#)”)
- “[Report on Intellectual Capital of Poland](#)” (2008)
- Report “Poland 2030. Development challenges” (2009; pol. „[Raport Polska 2030. Wyzwania rozwojowe](#)”)
- “[National Action Plan for the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations \(2012\) in Poland](#)” (2012; pol. „Krajowy Plan Działania na rzecz Europejskiego Roku Aktywności Osób Starszych i Solidarności Międzypokoleniowej 2012 w Polsce”)
- “[The National Development Strategy 2020 Active society, competitive economy, efficient state](#)” (2012; pol. „Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2020”)
- “Long-term National Development Strategy 2030” (2013; pol. „[Długookresowa Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2030](#)”)
- “Social Capital Development Strategy” (2013; pol. „[Strategia Rozwoju Kapitału Społecznego](#)”)

2. Important research publications on intergenerational issues:

- P. Szukalski, *Solidarność pokoleń. Dylematy relacji międzypokoleniowych (Solidarity Between Generations. Dilemmas of Intergenerational Relations)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2012.
- B. Szatur-Jaworska (ed.), *Strategie działania w starzejącym się społeczeństwie. Tezy i rekomendacje (Strategies in an Ageing Society. Theses and Recommendations)*, Biuro Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich, Warszawa 2012.
- M. Komorska (ed.), *Seniorzy dla młodości – młodość dla seniorów. Seniorzy i młodzi we wspólnej przestrzeni społecznej (Seniors for Youth - Youth for Seniors. Seniors and Young in a Common Social Space)*, Regionalny Ośrodek Polityki Społecznej w Lublinie, Uniwersytet Marii Curie Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2012.
- M. Rosochacka-Gmitrzak, A. Chabiera (eds.), *Dialog Międzypokoleniowy. Między idea a praktyką. Inspiracje (Intergenerational Dialogue. Between the Idea and Practice. Inspirations)*, Biuro Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich, Warszawa 2013.

More publications on intergenerational learning and practice in Poland are available on websites of projects listed in [European Shared Treasure](#).

Overall, what is the status of IP/IL in your country?

Intergenerational practice and learning in Poland are concepts related mainly to promoting age management in companies and organizations (including mentoring), promoting more intergenerational activities in Universities of the Third Age (as part of lifelong learning), and with digital literacy and e-inclusion projects. However, these actions are relatively - starting at the beginning of 21st century. More research about the intergenerational practice and intergenerational learning is needed.

Many strategic documents underline intergenerational challenges in Poland but they are mainly focused on labour market and social security. Other topics related to intergenerational field such

as environment, architecture or healthcare still needs more attention. For example there are no common age-friendly or intergenerational cities and communities' national strategies and standards. At the same time, a lot of cities are beginning to create such policies themselves by focusing mainly on social assistance and support for elderly but still avoid intergenerational learning and other intergenerational topics.

Please provide examples of ways in which IP/IL and in your country is connected to wider EU intergenerational practices, research, and policies?

Organizations from Poland are mainly involved into projects in Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013 from sup-programmes Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig ([listed in European Shared Treasure](#)). There are also examples of intergenerational projects in which partners from Poland were involved in Europe for Citizens Programme such as "[InterGenerationes](#)" project implemented in 2011 and 2013. Some organizations from Poland are also members or partners in European lifelong learning or older people networks such as:

- AFE-INNOVNET (member: Warsaw City);
- AGE Platform Europe (member: Fundacja na Rzecz Kobiet JA KOBIEȒA);
- European InfoNet Adult Education (member: The University School of Philosophy and Education "Ignatianum");