

Outcomes matter

Report on the State of Education in 2012

Information booklet



*Educational
Research
Institute*

The report on the State of Education in 2012 „Outcomes matter” has been prepared by:

Content editor:

Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak, PhD

Series editors:

Professor Michał Federowicz

Michał Sitek, PhD

Reviewers:

Professor Jarosław Górniak

Professor Maria Mendel

Professor Jerzy Woźnicki

Authors:

Krzysztof Biedrzycki, PhD

Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak, PhD

Professor Ewa Chmielecka

Professor Jolanta Choińska-Mika

Horacy Dębowski

Małgorzata Kłobuszewska

Martyna Kobus

Agnieszka Kopańska, PhD

Professor Andrzej Kraśniewski

Professor Zbigniew Marciniak

Barbara Ostrowska, PhD

Magdalena Rokicka, PhD

Monika Siergiejuk

Stanisław Sławiński, PhD

Wojciech Stęchły

Magdalena Tomasik

Agata Tomaszuk

Gabriela Ziewiec, PhD

Publisher:

Educational Research Institute

ul. Górczewska 8, 01-180 Warsaw

tel: +48 222 417 100, www.ibe.edu.pl

© Copyright by: *Educational Research Institute, Warsaw 2013*

Language editing:

Marketing & Communications Consultants

The complete version of this report is available on our website: www.ibe.edu.pl

This booklet is co-financed by the EU from the European Social Fund as part of the project: Quality and effectiveness of education strengthening of institutional research capabilities.

Print:

Drukarnia TINTA, Z. Szymański

ul. Żwirki i Wigury 22, 13-200 Działdowo

www.drukarniatinta.pl

Free copy

The booklet printed on ecological paper.



Dear Reader,

This information brochure presents a summary of the third edition of the “Report on the Condition of Education”. We call it “Outcomes Matter”, because for several years, we have been transforming the education system into a model where learning outcomes constitute the fundamental criterion for assessing acquired qualifications in the areas of knowledge, skills and social competence. These are not solely the outcomes of formal education, but also outcomes to be attained through non-formal or informal learning.

These transformations are the main theme of the section entitled “Modernising the qualifications system in Poland to support the policy of lifelong learning”. It was the concept of lifelong learning that spurred the introduction of learning outcomes as the main criterion of the education system’s consistency and effectiveness.

Just like its previous editions, this report opens with an analysis of the changes occurring in education, as well as the legal changes in the formal general and vocational education system and higher education. It presents quantitative data on the educational infrastructure, the participation of children and youth in the education system, the relationship between educational attainment levels and transition to the labour market, and the financing of education on various levels. The brochure also contains an analysis and comments relating mainly to the specific underlying factors driving these trends to present a versatile picture of the condition of Polish education.

Naturally, this booklet does not include all the issues presented in the in-depth report. Therefore, I wholeheartedly encourage you to read this report, which is available at www.eduentuzjasci.pl.

Agnieszka Chłoń-Domińczak

1. Trends and legal changes in the formal general and vocational education system and higher education

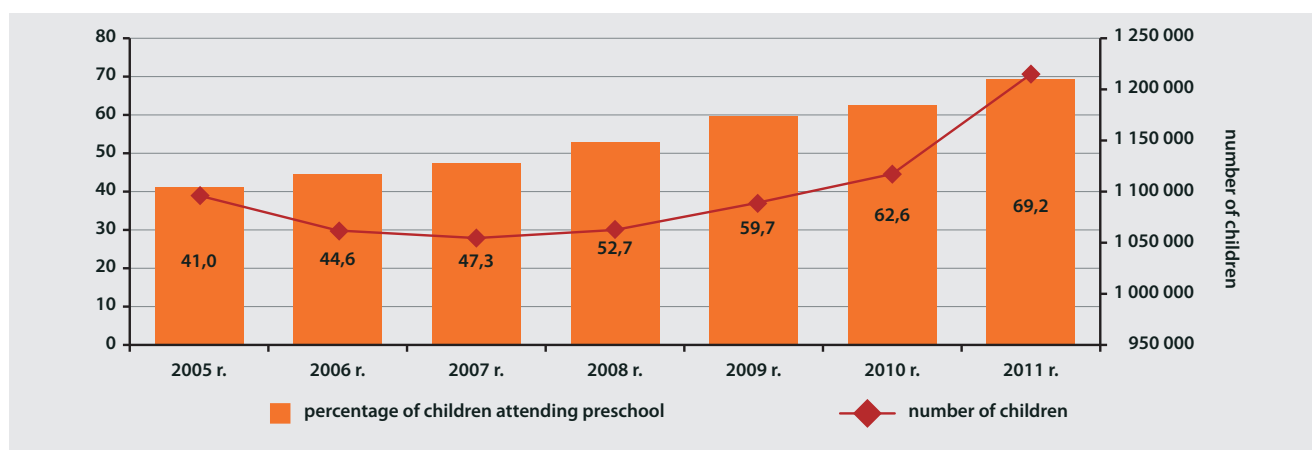
The education system is undergoing constant change, presented in the subsequent reports on the condition of education. Less than a year has passed since the report's previous edition was published and, therefore, numerous observations made at that time will be repeated. But even during such a short period, new phenomena have emerged, while trends which were merely surfacing a year ago have now become evident.



1.1. More children in preschools

The percentage of children aged 3-5 years who attend kindergarten has been growing steadily since 2000. This trend is fuelled by a growing number of preschool places and the introduction of compulsory preschool education for six-year olds as of September 1, 2004, as well as mandatory kindergarten attendance for five-year olds as of 2011.

Figure 1. The number of children aged 3–5 years and the percentage of children attending preschool in 2005–2011

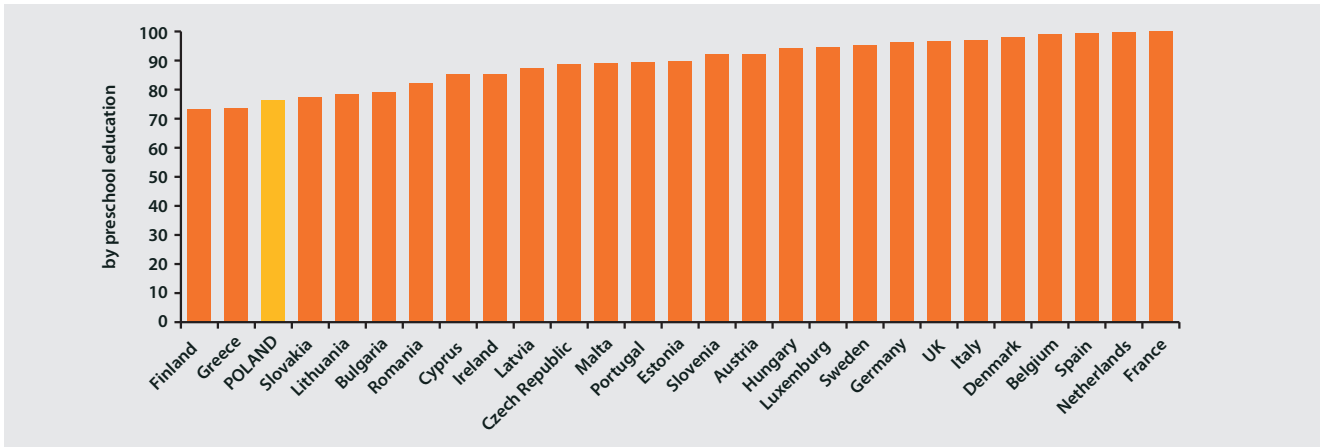


Source: own calculations based on the Local Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office (CSO)

Over 76% of 4-6 year-old children are attending kindergarten. Still, there is a lot to be done to bridge the gap between the EU average.

Moreover, steady progress has been observed since 2008/2009 in the participation of children in preschools that are located in elementary schools. Currently, 23% of children attend these preschools, mainly in cities, as a slight decline in the number of such preschools has been noted in rural areas, possibly as the result of school closings.

Figure 2. Popularity of preschool and school education in 2010 in EU countries among 4 year-olds and older preschool aged children



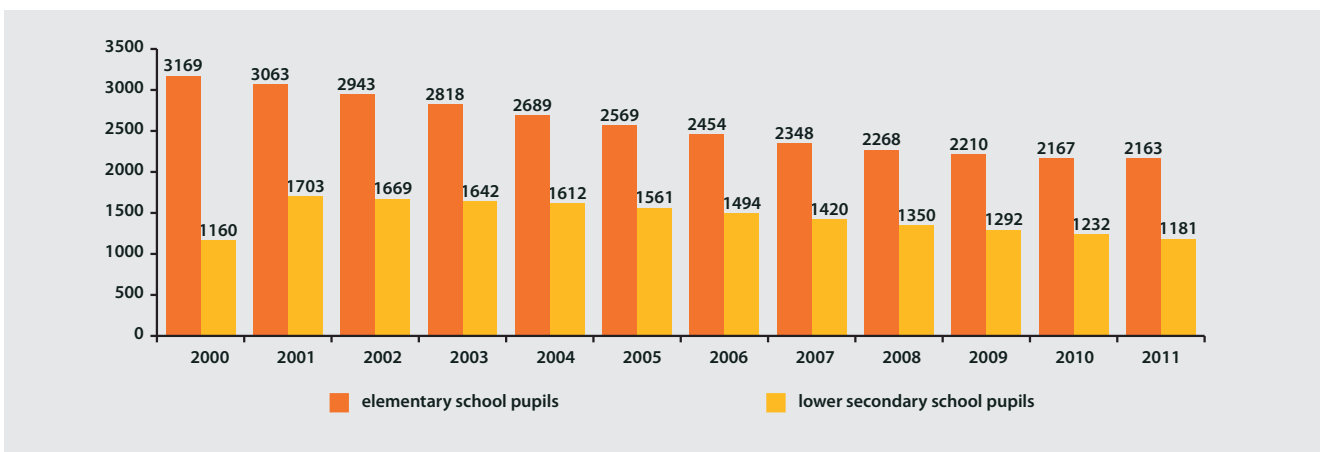
Source: Eurostat, 2012

1.2. A decline in the number of elementary and lower secondary schools

The number of children and youth attending elementary and lower secondary schools is declining. This downward trend has been visible since 2000 and accounts for 31.7%, i.e. over one million children, whereas a drop in participation in lower secondary schools has been evident since 2001 and stands at 30.6%, or 0.5 million pupils. This tendency is mainly triggered by demographic change – the dwindling number of pupils reflects declining birth rates.



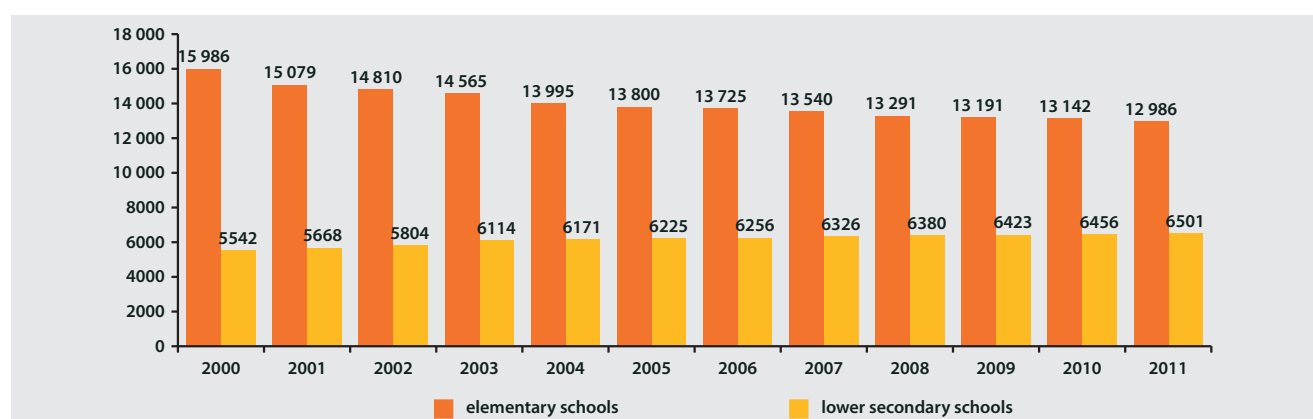
Figure 3. The number of elementary and lower secondary schools



Source: CSO Local Data Bank

Following the establishment of lower secondary schools in 2001 which incorporated the two final years of elementary school and the first year upper secondary, these trends have led to substantial changes in school infrastructure – the number of elementary schools has gone down by 3,000 since 2000, while the number of lower secondary school is up by 959.

Figure 4. The number of elementary and lower secondary schools



Source: CSO Local Data Bank

1.3. The growing number of private schools

The educational infrastructure is supplemented by private elementary and lower secondary schools, whose number has been growing steadily since 2000. In 2011, the number of private schools nearly tripled, while the number of private lower secondary schools almost doubled compared to the figure 11 years ago. Together, these schools account for 7.8% and 11.2% of total elementary and lower secondary schools, respectively.

These are usually small schools with a limited number of pupils compared to public educational institutions. Therefore, merely 3.4% of total elementary and 4.6% of lower secondary school pupils attended private schools in 2011.

Table 1. Elementary and lower secondary schools operated by private entities

	2000	2005	2010	2011	2000	2005	2010	2011
School governing authority	elementary schools				lower secondary schools			
social organisations and associations	217	483	578	650	212	293	359	378
religious organisations	42	58	62	65	70	103	105	109
other organisations	136	189	267	301	154	191	234	243
TOTAL	395	730	907	1016	436	587	698	730

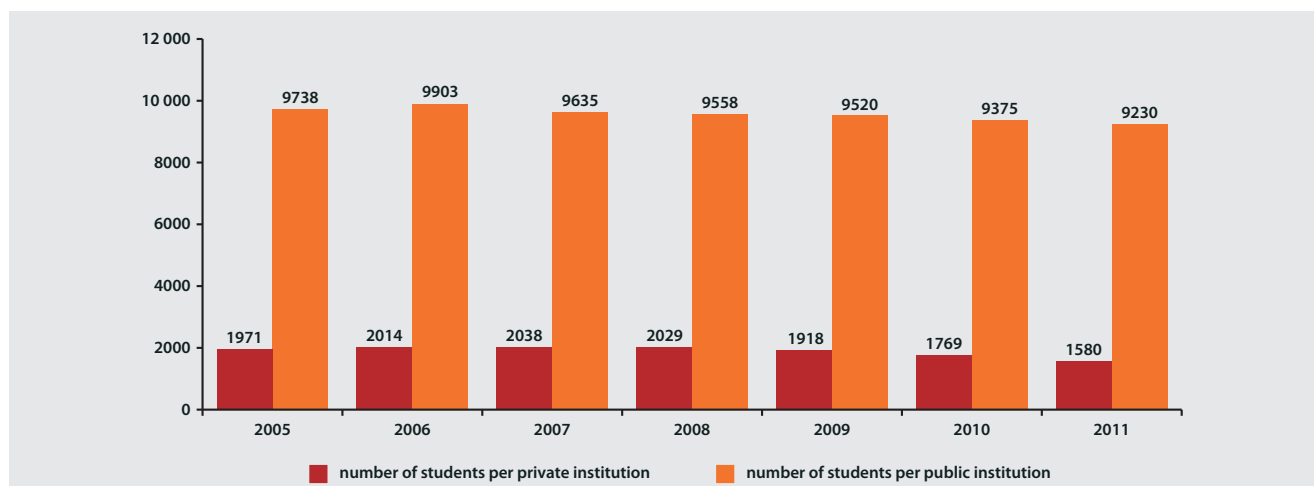
Source: own estimates based on CSO Local Data Bank

1.4. A drop in the number of higher education students

The number of students in higher education has been declining for the fifth year running, what is mainly due to demographic changes. This trend is taking its toll on both public (down by 20% compared to 2010) and private higher education institutions (a drop by almost 62%).

Economics and administration, social science and pedagogy continue to be the most popular higher education studies. Nevertheless, the number of students they attract is declining. At the same time, we are witnessing a growing demand for technical courses. In 2011, the number of students of construction and architecture, engineering and technical curricula as well as protection and security was growing. These trends reflect certain adaptations to developments in the labour market: students choose courses offering better prospects for employment and are not, contrary to the past, only interested in obtaining a university diploma.

Figure 5. The average number of students in public and private higher education institutions in 2005–2011



Source: own estimates based on CSO Local Data Bank

1.5. Spending on education

In Poland, local governments are responsible for education from preschool to the post-secondary level. They obtain funds for this purpose from three main sources:

- educational subsidies, covering over 60% of the local governments' educational spending;
- donations from both Polish and foreign sources;
- other local government revenue – derived from other elements of the general subsidy and own revenues, including a share of personal and corporate income tax.

Spending on education is a substantial item of local government budgets, well exceeding 30% and averaging almost 40% in rural municipalities. Voivodeship governments are the only exception, where the proportion totals approximately 6%. It should be stressed, however, that voivodeships are only accountable for the implementation of regional educational objectives.

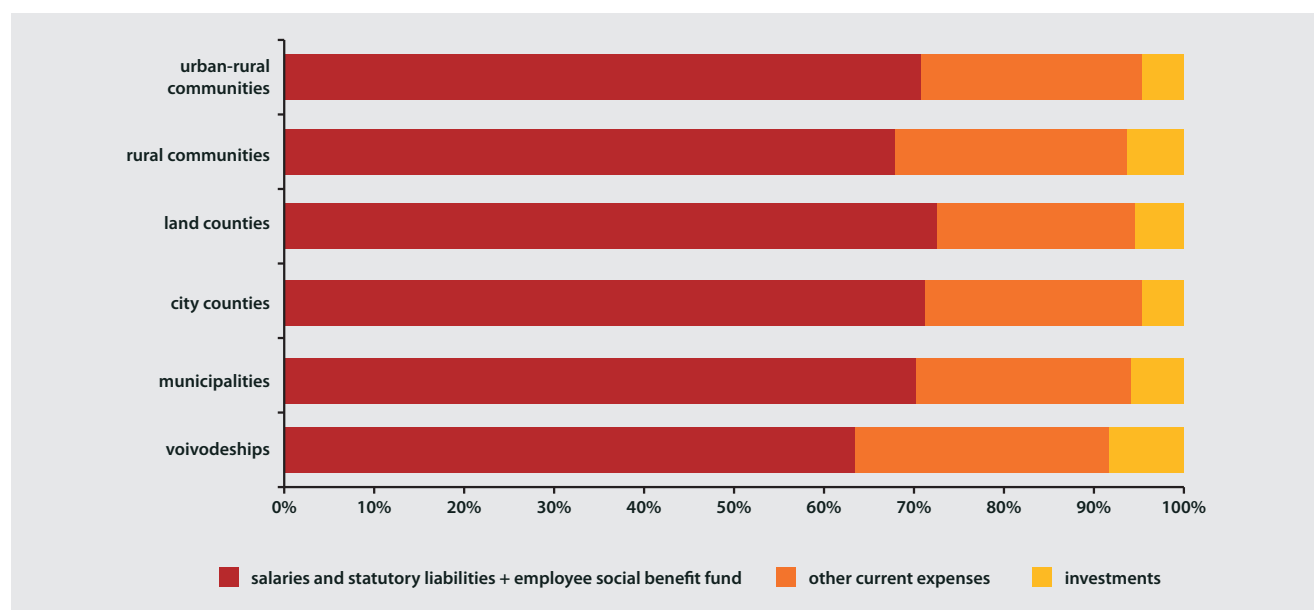
The years 2007–2010 saw a rise in real educational expenditure of local governments of 3.2–4.7%, whereas expenditures in 2011 rose by barely 0.6%.

Table 2. The share of spending on education in the budgets of local governments

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
municipalities	33,6%	34,2%	33,5%	32,7%	32,3%	33,9%
rural communities	40,0%	40,6%	39,4%	38,0%	35,2%	37,2%
urban-rural communities	38,3%	38,7%	37,5%	36,3%	34,9%	36,1%
land counties	41,2%	41,1%	38,7%	36,4%	34,4%	35,9%
city counties	32,5%	31,3%	31,1%	30,3%	30,5%	30,8%
voivodeships	9,8%	8,2%	6,8%	6,3%	6,4%	6,3%
TOTAL	37,3%	36,8%	35,8%	34,9%	33,6%	34,7%

Source: own estimates based on Ministry of Finance reports on budget spending by local territorial government units

Figure 6. The structure of spending on education by type of local government in 2011



Source: own estimates based on Ministry of Finance reports on budget spending by local territorial government units

Most of the expenditure is allocated to teachers' salaries, regulated by the Teacher's Charter. Local governments are thus bound to guarantee payment of at least an average salary across different grades of professional promotion, which in 2011 totalled 2,618.10 PLN for a trainee teacher and 4,817.30 PLN for a qualified teacher. Other factors adding to payroll costs include frequent increases in the wage base introduced at the central level, as well as a rise in the number of qualified teachers, who accounted for 32% of total teachers in 2007, increasing to 46% in 2011.

The scale and inflexibility of payroll expenditures, together with the difficult economic situation on the national and local level has resulted in an 11.9% decline in local government spending on other education-related purposes in the 2010/2011 school year as compared to the previous year. This trend is particularly evident in the category of investment expenditures – an actual drop of 24.3% for the analogous period.

1.6. Education and the labour market situation

In 2011, over 5 million people, or 23.7% of the population aged 25-64 years, had a higher education degree. The percentage for the population of 25-34 year-olds was 39.2%. Two and a half times more Poles have higher education degrees than in 1996, while the number of graduates of higher education institutions has been growing by 6.6% annually since the beginning of 2000. The dynamics of change in this area is one of the highest among OECD countries. Despite numerous objections concerning the quality of this education, especially at private higher education institutions, this could be considered one of the greatest achievements of systemic transformation in Poland.

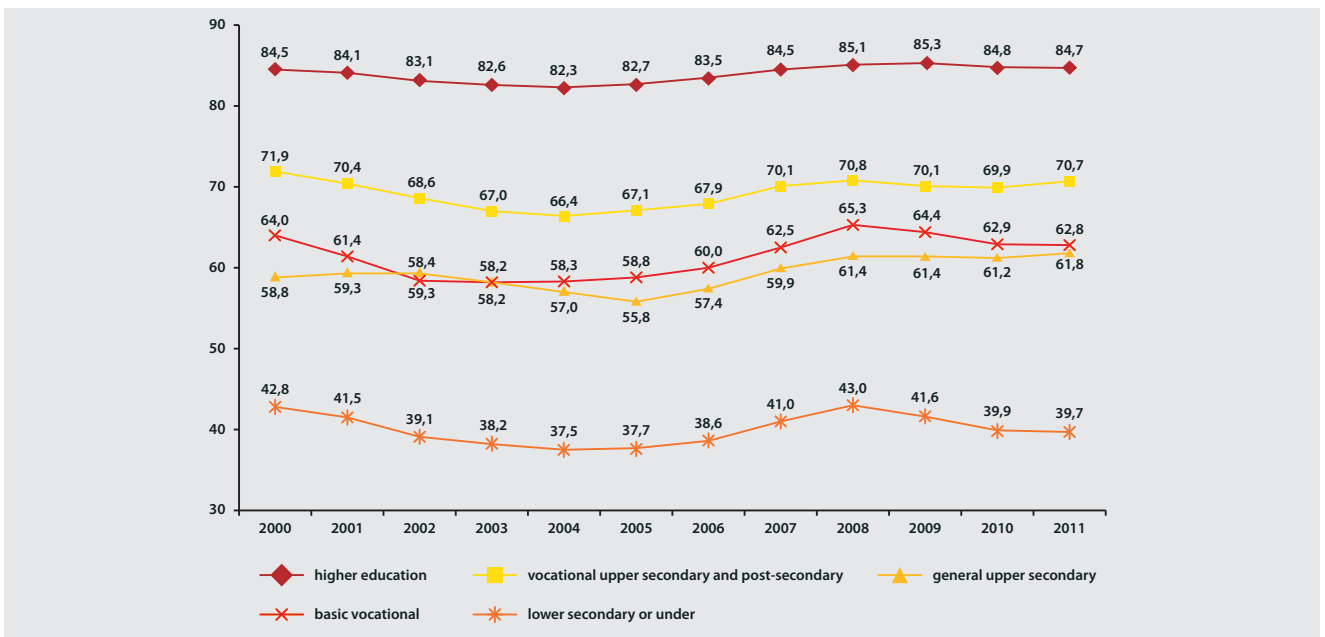
Figure 7. Population aged 25-64 years by educational attainment



Source: own estimates based on CSO Local Data Bank

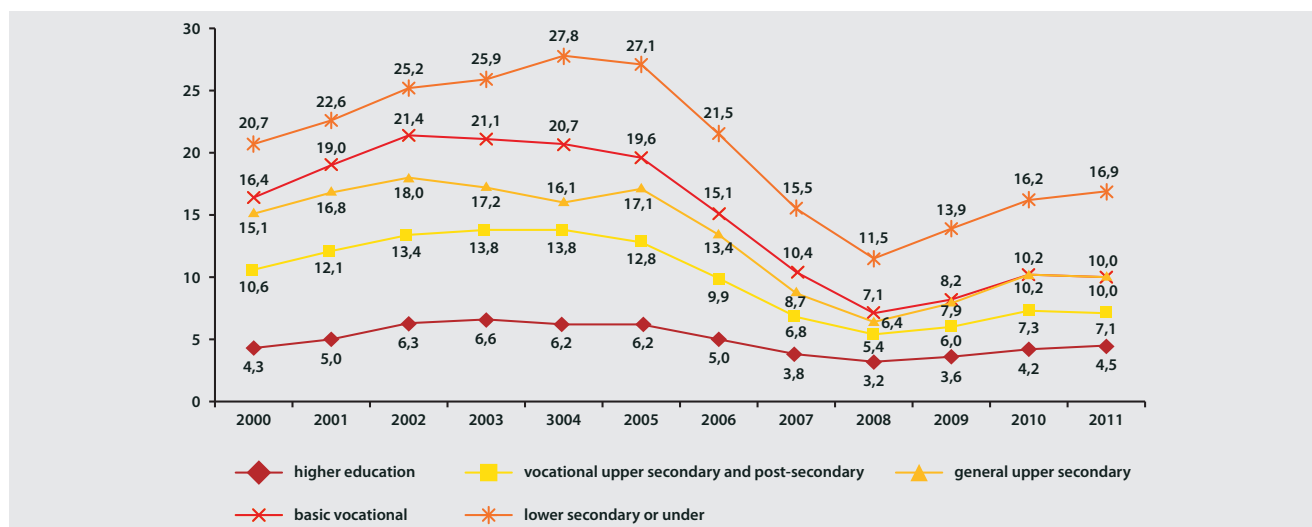
Attaining a higher level of education guarantee a better position in the labour market. In 2011, as many as 85% of higher education graduates were employed, whereas the employment rate for other groups stood at 60-70%, with the rate at barely 40% for individuals with just a lower secondary school education or under. This indicates that people with the highest and the lowest educational attainment face radically different employment prospects.

Figure 8. Employment rate for the population aged 25-64 years by educational attainment



Source: own estimates based on CSO Local Data Bank

Figure 9. Unemployment rate for the population aged 25-64 years by educational attainment

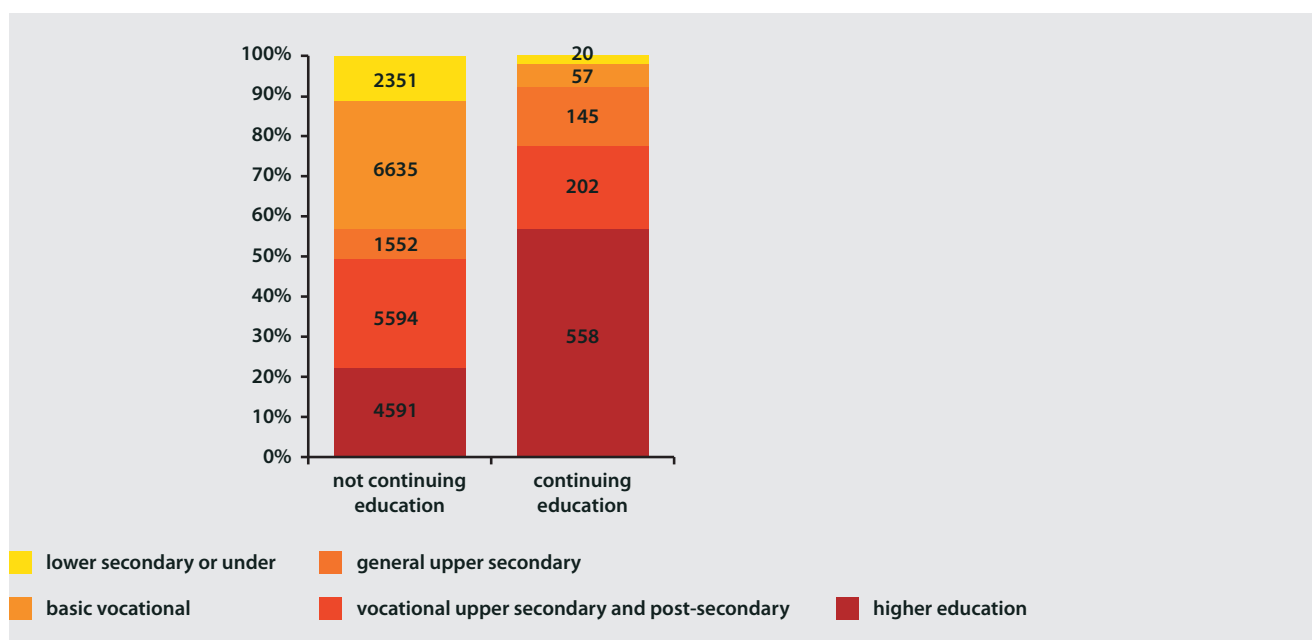


Source: own estimates based on CSO Local Data Bank

1.7. Adults rarely continue their education

Individuals aged 25-64 years rarely continue their education, either within the framework of the formal education system or outside of it (for example, courses, training workshops, participation in conferences). Moreover, the majority of learner adults are individuals with the highest qualifications, especially those with higher education degrees (almost 57%). Approximately 20% of adult learners are individuals with vocational secondary or post-secondary education. The lower the level of educational attainment, the lower the level of actively continuing education. Only every twentieth person 25-64 years of age continues his/her education in Poland and this rate has been stable for many years, despite the fact that major funds, including those from EU sources, are allocated to training and education. The concept of lifelong learning is still not very popular in Poland.

Figure 10. The structure of the population aged 25-64 years by educational attainment and continuing education



Source: own estimates based on CSO Local Data Bank

1.8. Legal acts on education issued in 2012

2012 saw a continuation of legislative initiatives on behalf of modernising the educational system. Three acts were amended, 31 resolutions were issued, of which eight were from the Minister of National Education, two were issued by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and one by the Council of Ministers. Key changes covered:

- extending the date of enforcing the compulsory education of six year-olds to 2014 – the amended School Education Act extended to 2014 the right of parents to choose whether or not to send their six-year-old children to school;
- higher anonymity of records on psychological and pedagogical assistance provided to pupils, collected in the Education information System (EIS);
- principles for financing schools with funds from local government budgets;
- vocational and continuing education – 12 resolutions and the amended School Education Act on adult education to reinforce reforms initiated by the Ministry of National Education in previous years.

2. Modernising the Polish qualifications framework to support the policy of lifelong learning

Today's economy, driven by knowledge and information, requires instruments supporting human resources development and the ability to effectively react to labour market needs that are quickly changing in reaction to technological advances. In the age of globalisation, these instruments should also facilitate international comparisons of employee qualifications obtained within different educational and professional training systems. One of such tools is the standardisation of professional qualifications.

2.1. The qualifications framework as a lifelong learning policy tool



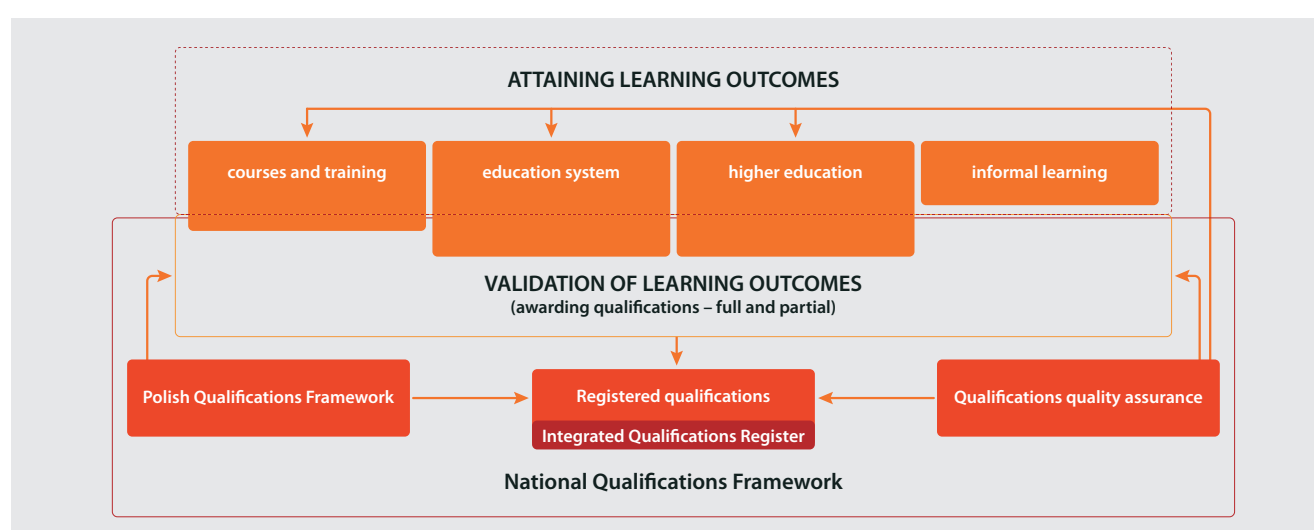
Just as in 135 countries worldwide and all the other European Union states, Poland is giving priority to learning outcomes and the tools of this policy, among which is the national qualifications framework. Section Three of the Report on the Condition of Education highlights the importance of shaping the right attitude to lifelong learning and shows the development in other European Union countries of this approach, which today has become one of the most important underlying principles of education. The section contains an overview of consecutive transnational arrangements, the development of a common universal “translator” of qualifications known as the European Qualifications Framework, as

well as the involvement of EU states in establishing qualifications systems in their own countries. The section summarises successive EU legal acts and documents, and explains the aims and benefits to European countries of engaging in this process. Also presented here is a descrip-

tion of activities launched in Poland in 2006 to develop a new approach to qualifications, its subsequent phases and parallel initiatives consistent with this policy that relate to the National Qualifications Framework in higher education and the new general education core curriculum.

The section describes the Polish Qualifications Framework developed as part of the systemic project implemented by IBE “The development of terms of reference for the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Register for lifelong learning” and the vision for a coherent national qualifications system. The final part of the section focuses on the benefits to employers, employees, learners and the labour market stemming from the introduction of the National Qualifications Register and the National Qualifications Framework.

Figure 11. General diagram of the Polish national qualifications system



Source: IBE

2.2. The general education core curriculum and the Polish Qualifications Framework

A separate section of the report is dedicated to the relationship between the learning outcomes specified in the required general education core curriculum and the Polish Qualifications Framework. This is illustrated by using the examples of selected subjects.

The Polish Qualifications Framework describes the qualifications awarded to individuals who meet the criteria indicated in successive levels, whereas the core curriculum identifies the requirements to be met in order to be awarded a qualification. This makes both documents coherent. The chapter describes the required learning outcomes for four subjects in the categories of knowledge, skills and social competencies at the first level of the Polish Qualifications Framework, which corresponds to the completion of the second stage of education (completion of primary



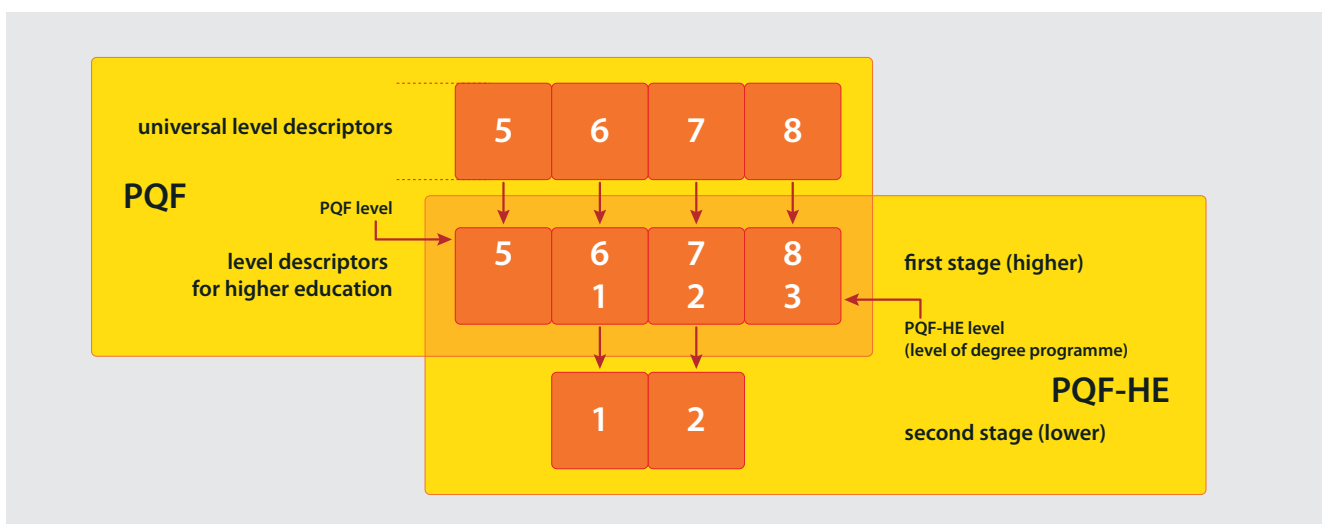
school); at the second PQF level – the end of the third stage of education (lower secondary school); at the third PQF level – completion of basic vocational school; and, at the fourth level – matura (upper secondary school leaving certificate). This section provides teachers and educational experts with an explanation of the relationship between the core curriculum and the new qualifications system, especially its primary tool – the qualifications framework.

2.3. The National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education

The 2011 report discusses the changes in international and Polish higher education since World War II until the adoption of the amended Act – Law on Higher Education. The 2012 report focuses on the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The chapter reveals the origins of this new approach to higher education and the reasons behind its introduction set in the European context. It also presents the course of the work undertaken to develop the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education since 2006.

Three levels of the Polish Qualifications Framework corresponding to higher education are described in detail – levels six (licentiate), seven (master’s) and eight (doctoral). Also presented are the benefits and obligations of higher education institutions related to the introduction of the Polish Qualifications Framework. The most important benefit is the greater autonomy of higher education institutions in developing areas of study and curricula. Other benefits include the ability to compare the qualifications awarded at Polish higher education institutions with those granted in other countries, the prospects of developing greater diversity in courses of study and their better adaptation to labour market demands and a fast-changing economy. It will also better respond to the needs of learners, who want to be guaranteed of achieving specific learning outcomes.

Figure 12. The two-stage structure of the description of learning outcomes within the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (KRK-SW)



Source: *Self-certification Report of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education*, see: Marciniak ed. (2013)

The section also describes the criteria met by the Self-certification Report of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. This document was approved in May 2013 by the Committee for European Affairs of the Council of Ministers and later presented and approved on the European forum.

2.4. Modernising vocational education to meet lifelong learning policy aims

Section six on vocational education can be treated as a follow-up to its predecessor in the 2011 report. The 2011 edition focused on developments in vocational education from the changes introduced after systemic transformation to implementation of the new vocational education core curriculum. The current report thoroughly explains the changes taking place in vocational education triggered by the new lifelong learning policy and the introduction of the qualifications framework in Poland. A new method has emerged of describing professions as an entity comprised of one, two or three vocational qualifications and components of general education. The new classification covers a total of 200 professions, with 252 distinct qualifications distinguished in these professions.

98 professions are made up of only one qualification, 72 professions have two distinct qualifications, while 23 professions have three qualifications.



Such solution facilitates career change, the validation of learning outcomes attained outside of school, for example, as the result of various types of training courses or autonomous learning.

The new vocational education core curriculum also created the grounds to introduce elements of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) to Poland. The system aims to enable and facilitate the accumulation and transfer of confirmed learning outcomes attained within various qualifications systems and in different learning environments, including the workplace. It enables the content of qualifications to be compared among various national systems.



The Educational Research Institute

The Institute conducts basic and applied research in education. The mission of the Institute is to strengthen the evidence-based education and practice in Poland.

The Institute employs more than 150 researchers specialising in education: sociologists, psychologists, educationalists, economists, political scientists and representatives of other scientific disciplines – outstanding specialists in their respective fields who have a wide spectrum of experience, including scientific research as well as teaching, public administration and non-profit organisations.

The Institute conducts in Poland major large-scale international assessments including the PIAAC, PISA, TALIS, ESLC and SHARE. The Educational Research Institute's projects include large scale European Social Fund projects: "The development of terms of reference for the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Register for lifelong learning", "Quality and effectiveness of education – strengthening of institutional research capabilities", "Development of methodology for education value-added assessment" (EVA), "Conditions for differentiation of external examinations results".

www.ibe.edu.pl

Educational Research Institute

ul. Górczewska 8, 01-180 Warsaw | Tel. +48 22 241 71 00
ibe@ibe.edu.pl | www.ibe.edu.pl

This booklet is co-financed by the EU
from the European Social Fund.