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## **LOCAL INITIATIVES FOR THE UNEMPLOYMENT COUNTERACTION IN THE MAZOVIA PROVINCE**

### **Lokalne inicjatywy na rzecz przeciwdziałania bezrobociu w woj. mazowieckim**

*In the dynamically developing market economy there is a variability in the intensity of the processes associated with the occurrence of imbalances in the labor market, which leads to unemployment. Unemployment shows the inefficiency of the labour supply and labour demand adjustment. Sizes and multiple consequences of unemployment justify its recognition as a kind of twenty-first century plague.<sup>1</sup>*

*Mazovia Province is both one of the most actively developing regions and one of the largest regional labor markets in Poland. However, the region is characterized by a high degree of diversity in terms of development. On the one hand, there is highly developed capital city Warsaw and on the other - peripheral areas with worse parameters. This is why it should be aimed to perform the activities supporting local initiatives to avoid unemployment.*

*The main thesis of this paper is to show that the local initiatives aimed at counterparting unemployment and entrepreneurship promotion, are modern instruments used to monitor and predict changes in the labor market, skills of employees, creation of new jobs, gain work experience.*

### **Introduction**

The labor market is a place of workforce allocation and employment decision-making, where at the same time the economic and social consequences of the functioning of the economy become exposed. It is strongly associated with the various areas of socio-economic development, which affect both the labor supply and labor demand<sup>2</sup>. Major changes in labor supply are generated through population migrations, decrease of population or population growth, activation and deactivation of the workforce. On the demand side, however, we can distinguish factors determining the number and structure of jobs within the economy: economic growth, structural

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<sup>1</sup> Mączyńska E., Rynek pracy – kwestia preferencji (Labour market – a question of preferences) [in:] Rajkiewicz A., Orczyk J. (red.), Rynek pracy i wykorzystanie potencjału pracy w Polsce, Księga jubileuszowa z okazji 80-lecia Prof. Mieczysława Kabaja (Labour market and utilization of labour potential in Poland. A jubilee book for 80th anniversary of professor Mieczysław Kabaj – In Polish), Wyd. IPiSS, Warszawa 2014, p. 23

<sup>2</sup> Prasznic U.K., Wpływ globalizacji i integracji na zmiany rynku pracy (Influence of gobalization and integration on chan ges on labour market) [w:] Noga M., M. K. Stawicka (ed.), Rynek pracy w Polsce w dobie integracji europejskiej i globalizacji (Labour market in Poland in the period od European Integration and gobalization), Wyd. CeDeWu.pl, Warszawa 2009, pp. 7

transformation in the economy, characteristics of economic growth, availability of employees, and internal changes in enterprises, eg. labor costs<sup>3</sup>.

According to the Act on employment promotion and labor market institutions, state tasks in the promotion of employment, mitigating the effects of unemployment and occupational activation are based on National Action Plan for Employment enacted by the Council of Ministers which contains rules for the implementation of the European Employment Strategy, and is prepared on the basis of local municipalities, county, state and social partners initiatives<sup>4</sup>.

National Action Plan for Employment 2012-2014 is the starting point for searching for new, more efficient, effective and efficient instruments and solutions in the management of the labor market. It stipulates greater involvement of private social partners in the implementation of labor market policies, as well as greater involvement of the private and the third sector in activating and supporting the unemployed<sup>5</sup>.

### **Characteristics of the labor market in the Mazovia province**

In May, 2014 unemployment rate decreased both in Poland and Mazovia province. The unemployment rate in Mazovia region stood at 10.5%, while the national average was 12.5%.

The largest decrease in the ratio was observed in the Warmia and Mazury province - the unemployment in this region was 0.9 percentage points lower. Despite this, it was still located on the last position in the ranking of regions by the rate of unemployment (May 2014 - 19.6%). Still the best situation seems to be in Wielkopolska province, where the rate in May 2014 stood at 8.7%. The 2<sup>nd</sup> position was maintained by Mazovia province, the 3<sup>rd</sup> location was granted to Silesia (10.6%) and the 4<sup>th</sup> one to Małopolska province (10.8%).

Positive trend on the labor market persisted throughout the Mazovia province. The unemployment rate decreased in 42 counties of the region, the most significant decrease was noted in counties: szydłowiecki (1.3 percentage points) and gostyniński (1.1 percentage points).

According to the spatial order of the region, there were no changes in the intensity of unemployment. Consistently, the best situation is observed in a district of the City of Warsaw - 4.6%. In the group of counties with an unemployment rate below 10% there were also warszawski zachodni (Warsaw West - 6.6%), grojecki (7.3%), grodziski (7.7%), piaseczyński (8.3%), pruszkowski (8, 4%), otwocki (9.1%). The highest unemployment rates were registered in the following counties: szydłowiecki (36.4%), radomski (28.8%), przysuski (25.9%) and makowski (24.4%).<sup>6</sup>

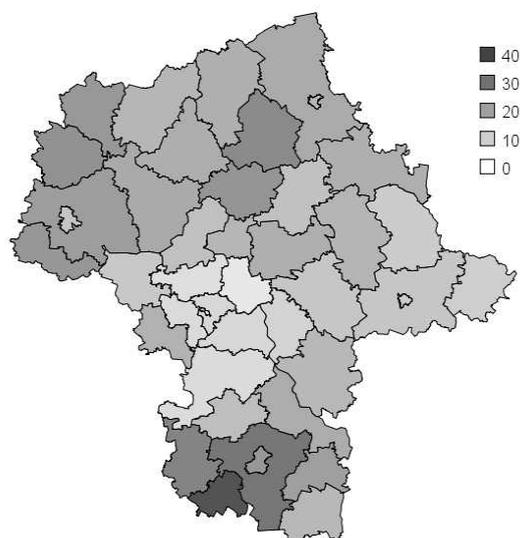
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<sup>3</sup> Witkowski J., Przebudowa statystyki rynku pracy w okresie transformacji (Reconstruction of labour market statistics)[w:] Wiadomości Statystyczne nr 9/2008, s. 4-7

<sup>4</sup> Act on employment promotion and labor market institutions

<sup>5</sup> National Action Plan for Employment 2012-2014

<sup>6</sup> Bezrobocie w województwie mazowieckim (Unemployment in Mazovia Province), maj 2014, nr 5 [w:] <http://wup.mazowsze.pl> [Access: 2014.06.29]



Map 1. The intensity of the unemployment rate in the counties of Mazovia province at the end of May 2014.

Source: Lotocka M. The labor market in the Mazovia region in May 2014 [in:] obserwatorium.mazowsze.pl [access: 2014.07.03]

At the end of May, the number of registered unemployed in the labor offices Mazovia labor offices reached 268.3 thousands persons and decreased by 8.5 thousand (ca. 3.1%), and during the year by 19.3 thousand. (ca. 6.7%). In the reported month labor offices registered 19.9 thousands unemployed, which was 2.3% less than in April 2014 and 4.7% than in May 2013. Those registering again were still the largest group of unemployed, and their share in the total number of newly registered increased during the year (by 2.2 percentage points and reached 71.9% of newly registered).

In the structure of registered unemployed share of women at the end of May 2014 increased by 0.3 percentage points to 46.9% comparing to the same month a year before. Despite the noted deterioration, the situation of women on Mazovian labour market is better than on the Polish scale, where the share of women in the total amount of registered unemployed in May 2014 reached 50.4%. In the analyzed period labor offices gained 12.3 thousands offers of employment (4.6 thousands less than in April 2014). At the end of the month the number of persons per 1 job offer was 36 (a month before - 35, and the year before - 65)<sup>7</sup>. The largest share of unemployed women characterized mainly cities: Płock - 54.1% and Ostrołęka - 51.3%, and the counties: płocki - 53.0%, sierpecki - 52.7%, ostrowski - 52.4% and mławski - 50, 2%<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Lotocka M., Rynek pracy na Mazowszu w maju 2014r (Labour market in Mazovia province in May 2014[w:] obserwatorium.mazowsze.pl [Access: 2014.07.03]

<sup>8</sup> Bezrobocie w województwie mazowieckim (Unemployment in Mazovia Province), maj 2014, nr 5 [w:] <http://wup.mazowsze.pl> [Access: 2014.06.29]

At the end of May 2014, 113 961 unemployed (42.5% of all unemployed people) including 52,693 women lived in rural areas. Compared to April 2014, the number of unemployed living in rural areas decreased by 4,101 persons (3.5%). Unemployed living in rural areas dominated in 29 counties, while in 13 counties they accounted for 70.0% and more. Outside the cities with county rights share of unemployed persons living in rural areas in the total number of unemployed ranged from 33.9% in Otwock County to 96.5% in Siedlce district<sup>9</sup>.

Thanks to the reform of labor offices, since May 2014 unemployed can benefit from new forms of support. These include: vouchers for training and internships, financial aid for people who change residence due to the employment, or loans and grants to start a business. They are available for job seekers throughout the country. The new law also supports entrepreneurs who employ parents returning on the labour market or persons at the age over 50 years.

### **Local partnership and its impact on the labor market**

Local partnership institutions are institutions implementing initiatives of labour market partners, established in order to fulfill the tasks defined by law and supported by the local government. Their objective is to activate all local communities and encourage them to cooperate in defining local problems and solving them at the level of the commune or district. The experience of different countries prove that public authorities are not able to plan by themselves and implement development programs, due to their complicated characteristics. Good preparation of programs followed by their implementation require a combination of knowledge and experiences collected by different social groups and institutions<sup>10</sup>.

On one hand, creating local partnerships we can reduce the negative effects of change and increase the capacity of members of local communities to adapt and flexibly respond to changes. On the other hand, the partnership can create the conditions for the existence of a socially inclusive labor market, that is, one that would ensure professional development opportunities for all citizens, regardless of their condition of life, employment history and ability to perform certain work<sup>11</sup>.

Activities undertaken include partnerships lead to reintegrate long-term unemployed, improving the skills of workers and adapt them to the requirements of the local labor market, increasing the employability of local workers, the prevention of threats faced by low-skilled workers to improve work efficiency<sup>12</sup>. Local partnerships have been focused on the promotion of social cohesion and building local identity

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<sup>9</sup> As above

<sup>10</sup> Arendt Ł., Hryniewicka A., Kukulak-Dolata I., Rokicki B., Bezrobocie – między diagnozą a działaniem. Poradnik dla pracowników służb społecznych. Publikacja powstała w ramach projektu „Koordynacja na rzecz aktywnej integracji” w ramach Działania 1.2 „Wsparcie systemowe instytucji pomocy i integracji społecznej” Program Operacyjny Kapitał Ludzki, współfinansowany przez Unię Europejską ze środków Europejskiego Funduszu Społecznego, p. 66

<sup>11</sup> Arendt Ł., Kukulak-Dolata I., Działania instytucji rynku pracy na rzecz łagodzenia skutków bezrobocia [w:] Bezrobocie i bezrobotni – pomoc społeczna – urzędy pracy, Raport w ramach projektu „Modelowy system na rzecz integracji społecznej”, Warszawa 2011, p. 88

<sup>12</sup> Arendt Ł., Hryniewicka A., Kukulak-Dolata I., Rokicki B., Bezrobocie – między diagnozą a działaniem ... op. cit., s. 66

among the members of local communities, while the principle of partnership has become one of the key rules governing the implementation of pro-development initiatives supported by the EU<sup>13</sup>.

According to the OECD definition, local development is a process in which both the institutions and citizens mobilize each other in order to strengthen their communities through the use of owned resources; it is a grassroots attempt at improving the availability of gaining income, employment opportunities and quality of life<sup>14</sup>. The role of the partnership is to redeem problems arising from changes in the labor market; currently employer must quickly obtain a number of skills that change the way organizations work and the need for competition<sup>15</sup>.

### **Implementing initiatives for the local community**

Nowadays more and more frequently and intensively new solutions to support the labor market, which will offset the economic and social problems are searched. These new ways of acting arise from the exploration of new forms of support for people at risk of unemployment and who can not effectively compete in the open labor market. One of such initiatives implemented by the Center for Human Resources Development is the project: ***Complex forms of socio-professional reintegration in the local environment***<sup>16</sup>. *The main objective* of the project is to achieve synergies of the institutions responsible for the tasks of social and professional reintegration of socially excluded groups in the municipalities, enhancing the quality and efficiency of services provided, through the creation of the Model of Local Cooperation (MLW) and Certification System KIS (SC). *Detailed objectives* are based on three main pillars:

- Increase of the services coordination, socio-professional reintegration and raise of the level of cooperation between the entities responsible for assistance and social reintegration and public employment services in the municipal area, by creating MLW with the formation of Regional Cooperation Platform (RPW), which would become partners (consultants) for local governments at district and province level in fulfilling the tasks connected with issues of socio-professional reintegration.
- Empowering KIS system of socio-professional reintegration, to ensure high quality services addressed to people at risk of social exclusion, through the development of a system of certification.
- Increase of public awareness of the synergistic action of all institutions responsible for social and professional activation in the area of the commune, district and province by promoting best practices, activities of Group on RPW,

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<sup>13</sup> Przez współpracę do sukcesu. Partnerstwo lokalne na rynku pracy, Praca zbiorowa. Departament Rynku Pracy, Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Warszawa 2007, s. 10

<sup>14</sup> Best Practices in Local Development, OECD LEED, s. 22

<sup>15</sup> Arendt Ł., Hryniewicka A., Kukulak-Dolata I., Rokicki B., Bezrobocie – między diagnozą a działaniem. Poradnik dla pracowników służb społecznych. Publikacja powstała w ramach projektu „Koordynacja na rzecz aktywnej integracji” w ramach Działania 1.2 „Wsparcie systemowe instytucji pomocy i integracji społecznej” Program Operacyjny Kapitał Ludzki, współfinansowany przez Unię Europejską ze środków Europejskiego Funduszu Społecznego, p. 66

<sup>16</sup> Realizacja i wdrażanie projektów przez Centrum Rozwoju Zasobów Ludzkich w Priorytecie I POKL. Przegląd projektów (stan na koniec 2013 roku).

Consulting and Certification Team, and the organization of the promotion and information campaign.

Target groups of the project: 500 officials employed in public administration (the level of province, district and commune); 200 NGO workers, 500 key employees of assistance and social integration. Expected duration of this project is: 01.08.2009-31.12.2014.

Another very interesting example is a system project ***Together for Mazowsze - Education in action***. The project is implemented under the Operational Programme Human Capital 2007-2013, Priority VII Promotion of social integration, Measure 7.1 Development and dissemination of active integration, Measure 7.1.3 Raising the qualifications of social assistance and integration<sup>17</sup>.

The executor of the project is the Mazovia Centre of Social Policy. The project was being implemented since 2007 until 31.12.2013. The supported project covered 4576 employees and volunteers of social assistance and social integration directly involved in the process of active integration of the Mazovia province.

The main objective of the project is to strengthen and improve the personnel of social assistance and social integration for the development of active forms of support for people at risk of social exclusion. Project activities are focused on the following aspects<sup>18</sup>:

- **training courses** for the staff of social assistance and social integration,
- **professional consultancy** for social welfare centers and district centers of support for family,
- **development of dialogue, partnership and cooperation** in order to avoid social exclusion. The purpose of this task is to ensure the exchange of knowledge and examined solutions in the field of counteracting social exclusion, which would be favourable to the implementation of joint projects in this area in the context of local and regional partnerships,
- **promotional and information campaign titled. "The child and the family in the active integration - the role of social worker, family assistant and foster care coordinator in counteracting social exclusion"**. The aim of the campaign is to strengthen child and family in order to avoid social exclusion and to activate through this action JOPS employees, including a family assistant, foster care coordinator and local communities, as well as promotion of the project, promotion of good practices on Active Inclusion in Mazovia and education on measures of social assistance.
- **research and analysis of social policy** in the region,
- **development of social economy**. The aim of the task is the preparation, implementation and coordination of the "Development Plan for Social Economy in the Mazovia region for 2013-2020", monitoring of the social economy in Mazovia.

The project area covers the Mazovia Province, project participants are employees and volunteers of social assistance and social integration involved in implementing activities

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<sup>17</sup> Informacje o projekcie [w:] <http://www.mcps-efs.pl/pl> [dostęp 2014.06.30]

<sup>18</sup> Informacje o projekcie [w:] <http://www.mcps-efs.pl/pl> [dostęp 2014.06.30]

in the field of active integration, employees of public services for employment (OPS cooperation and PCPRs of the PLO and the tasks of cooperation and building partnerships to solve social problems), representatives of other social services in the region (in terms of skills needed for providing comprehensive support to people facing social exclusion to their professional activation and the tasks of cooperation and building partnerships for solving social problems). Duration of the project: 01.01.2013. - 31.12.2014.

Another project "Warsaw the capital of ambitious business", concerns the promotion of entrepreneurship and self-employment among the inhabitants of Warsaw. It was addressed to individuals planning to start a business. Project activities included two modular scopes:

- **support for those aimed at starting ambitious economic activities** through training, individual and group counseling as well as granting funds for the development of entrepreneurship and bridging support,
- **promotion of entrepreneurship and self-employment** by carrying out two information points where inhabitants could obtain free-of-charge information about starting and running a business, as well as by conducting two promotion campaigns.

The training on setting up and running the company was attended by more than 357 people. But to get something more, participants had to reveal creativity and innovation and the ability to design a dynamic business. The authors of 72 best business ideas, besides the 40 000 PLN grants for start up, were receiving bridging support 1 100 PLN granted for a period of 6 or 12 months. In addition, to verify progress in the development of businesses specialized tool - called My Business Barometer has been prepared. It allowed the company to monitor start-up phase until it reaches the level of maturity in key functional areas called stable business platform (ie. products, market leadership and customer relationships). Project implementation period: 04.05.2009 - 30.06.2011.

Project which fits in local support was also the project "*Entrepreneurship in the creative industries*". Development of industries based on the exploitation of copyright is an important goal of the European Commission, it was also recognized as one of the strategic directions of development of Mazovia region. The "Entrepreneurship in the creative industries", implemented by ALK<sup>19</sup> was addressed to people who have not led business so far, were living in the Metropolitan Area of Warsaw (capital city of Warsaw and 71 surrounding municipalities) and who wanted to start business in the creative industries, such as architecture, antiques, art market, computer games, handicraft, industrial design, fashion design, film and video, music, theater, publishing. Factor that distinguishes a project from the other is people who have proven that the real recipe for success is not training, counseling and receiving a grant, but the passion, commitment and friendship. The project participants have accessed nearly 3,000 hours of workshops, seminars, individual and group meetings, during which they were developing knowledge and skills in the field of copyright, patent and tax law regulations, finance, marketing, strategy, entrepreneurship, business contacts (networking), coaching

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<sup>19</sup> Akademia Leona Koźmińskiego

on advertising in the social media and business self-training. Among project beneficiaries, 81 ones received both 40 000 PLN grants devoted to the foundation of the company, as well as bridge support for the first year of its operations<sup>20</sup>.

The most important achievement of the project was the creation of the great companies cooperating with each other, business and artists community very knitted together who have founded a ProKreatywni association in order to continue the work began in the project. What is important - the association also includes the companies founded by project beneficiaries who have completed training, but did not receive grants. A kind of cluster combining talents, knowledge and skills has been established by people involved in the project who have a chance to meet. An additional outcome of the project was the creation of excellent team of experts specialized in supporting the development of businesses in this sector. On the basis of their experience there was a handbook of creative entrepreneurship titled "Faces of creativity" prepared and illustrated by one of the participants of the project. Project implementation period: 01.09.2011 - 31.08.2013<sup>21</sup>.

## Summary

In order to ensure effective functioning on today's labour market and skillful implementation of projects the real problems and needs of the local community have to be recognized. Effectively working partnership has a significant impact on the local labor market and socio-economic environment by creating new networks and channels of communication, innovative projects and models of work, as well as on the activities directly addressed to the inhabitants of the region. Developed ideas can be used for other projects implemented in the region or even nationwide.

European funds allow direct investment so as to be productive and contributive to smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Objectives on which the EU funds are allocated are as follows:

- more work places and their improving quality,
- development of new technologies,
- innovative research,
- common access to broadband Internet,
- intelligent transport and energy infrastructure,
- energy efficiency and renewable energy sources,
- development of entrepreneurship,
- training and skills.

Projects presented in the following paper fitting into local initiatives to counterpart unemployment and promote entrepreneurship, are modern instruments useful for monitoring and predicting changes in the labor market, skills of employees, creation of new jobs, as well as gain work experience.

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<sup>20</sup> Przedsiębiorczość w sektorach kreatywnych [w:] <http://www.kozminski.edu.pl/> [dostęp 2014.06.30]

<sup>21</sup> Zaprojektować sukces, Wyd. Mazowiecka Jednostka Wdrażania Programów Unijnych, Warszawa 2013.

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