



KAPITAŁ LUDZKI
NARODOWA STRATEGIA SPÓJNOŚCI



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MEDIA NOTE PRESENTING CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY :
"Diagnosis of the situation of women remaining outside the labour market in Podlaskie province"

What is the situation of women remaining outside the labour market in the Podlaskie province?

*The situation of women in the labour market is difficult. According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for the fourth quarter of 2011 in the province of Podlaskie women constituted slightly more than half (50.9%) of the total number of the unemployed, whereas among all of the economically inactive individuals women constituted as much as 60.3%. All this results in the fact that in Podlaskie province, as well as across the country, there is a problem of unused social capital at women's disposal, even though, on average, they are better educated than men (among those with higher education women constitute 58% of the whole population). These results have appeared after carrying out the study "Diagnosis of the situation of women remaining outside the labour market in Podlaskie province" conducted by **General Projekt Ltd.** from **Olsztyn** on request of the **Regional Labour Office in Białystok**, under the system project Podlaskie Social Policy Observatory co-funded by the European Union, under the European Social Fund.*

The primary objective of the study was to diagnose the situation of women remaining outside the labour market in Podlaskie province.

The main purpose of the study was achieved through the application of methods, techniques and research studies, such as the analysis of secondary data (desk research), Paper and Pencil Interviews, indirect computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI), individual in-depth interviews (IDI) and comparative analysis of women's situation.

The survey was conducted between June and July 2012, on a sample of 662 women remaining outside the labour market, 398 employers and 11 institutions affiliated with the issue of women without employment.

As demonstrated by the results of the study, the economic situation of women outside the labour market is difficult. Average monthly income per respondent's household was 721.85 PLN. Women assess the economic situation of their families negatively. It is induced by the necessity of use of various forms of assistance for some women remaining outside the labour market (increasing number of children dependent on respondents generate more frequent use of the forms of assistance). The forms of support used by women outside the labour market are especially: financial assistance, counselling and training in job search. However, the greatest difficulty in the labour market is a long, fruitless search for employment, especially for women over the age of 50 (the higher the age, the higher the percentage of women for whom the main reason for remaining outside labour market is the feeling of discouragement because of the fruitless and time-consuming search of employment).

At the same time, the gathered data showed that young women who have to fulfil the responsibilities of parenting are in equally disadvantageous position in the labour market. As demonstrated by the results of the study, the necessity of childcare / caring for dependent person is the greatest difficulty in the labour market for women under 25 years of age (the lower the age, the higher the percentage of women for whom the main reason for remaining outside the labour market is the need to care for the child / dependent person).

In the conducted research, the factors that are most important in helping women return to the labour market are: participation in vocational training, increasing the involvement of husbands / partners in the household responsibilities, including caring for children and the ability to work under flexible forms of employment.

Women remaining outside the labour market, especially those who are economically inactive and accounted for the majority of the studied population, are primarily interested in forms of immediate aid, mainly financial and material, and are interested in going back to work to a much lesser extent .

Despite the difficulties experienced by women in the labour market it should be noted that only a few employers in this study acknowledged that they have objections against employing women. In the course of employer surveys it was revealed that most entrepreneurs do not have anything against the employment of women above 50 years of age or under 25 years of age. However, it could be due to the desire to give the "right" sounding answers by the employers. The analysis of the data obtained from the study of women, respondents with small children and women over 50 years of age have real difficulty in finding employment. Therefore, age is a major barrier to women in the labour market.

What's important, most of economically inactive women in Podlaskie do not want to take up any job at the moment. They motivate their decision mainly by the fact that they like to have a lot of free time for themselves and they like to look after home / children. Women who are currently registered as unemployed are far more susceptible to be employed.

Most women who want to change their job situation have acknowledged that they are currently looking for work. This search is often conducted by means of an internet jobs database, newspaper advertisements and family help. These women search for employment usually two or three times a month, less often once a week. It can be concluded that the search is unsystematic and rather random, suggesting reduced motivation to seek employment by women excluded from the labour market. Decrease in the motivation may be the result of insufficient job search skills, as the largest group of women assessed them as low.

The analysis of the data shows that women remaining outside the market usually possess secondary education (general or vocational education) and post-secondary. Women also assess their own professional qualifications negatively. Although according to the available statistical data the share of people with higher education is increasing in resources of unemployment, it should be noted that very often it is not adequate to the needs of the labour market.

Most of surveyed women are not interested in further education, while nearly one fifth of the respondents would be interested in participating in vocational training designed to improve or supplement professional qualifications. The scope of trainings interesting the women includes especially : accounting, health, tourism, as well as trade and customer service.

Nearly one quarter of the respondents would be interested in flexible forms of employment. The most popular among them are civil law contracts and part-time work. A significant proportion of women

share the opinion that the use of flexible forms of employment could help them return into the labour market. Benefits obtained through this form of employment are in particular opportunity to combine work with parental and household responsibilities, as well as the freedom to choose workplace

The use of flexible forms of employment in the companies of Podlasie is hardly popular. More than half of studied workplaces do not apply these forms of employment. Among these operators, who do not present flexible approach to recruitment, the most popular forms are: temporary employment, part-time work and civil-law employment. These employers were of the opinion that the flexible forms of employment give them benefits, especially in the form of better planning of staff use, increased employee motivation and commitment of workers to whom a flexible approach was applied, as well as keeping valuable employees in a company, for example, those who return after maternity leave.

According to the quality study, the number of institution initiatives targeted at economically inactive women is still insufficient. Women often do not have sufficient information about the forms of support they can use. With regard to the unemployed women, the respondents pay special attention to the need of matching the trainings to the current trends in the labour market. This is possible only with long-term cooperation with employers and continuous monitoring and analysis of economic trends present in the region and the country.

An important issue raised by the respondents with respect to economically inactive women in particular, is the need for support from specialists such as psychologists, job counsellors, or even an animators of free time. Economically inactive women are often characterized by the withdrawal from social life, so it would be desirable to pay special attention to the analysis of the reasons for the apparent lack of their activity.

On this basis, and based on the results of studies carried out among women, it can be said that support for women remaining outside the labour market is not provided sufficiently. It is limited mainly to support unemployed women (benefits, training, job placement, etc.), whereas there is a lack of specialized tools for restoring economically inactive women into the labour market.

Women are largely sceptical when it comes to aid given to them in order to return to the labour market. They evaluate negatively the real usefulness of the support received. However, the adaptation of forms of support to their needs has been assessed moderately.

The vast majority of employers in this study declared that they don't refer to the gender of employees during the recruitment process. What's more, a large proportion admitted that they willingly employ women. The survey shows that employers don't have objections against employing women, and if there are any, it happens only to a small extent, and in those few cases it is mainly connected to women's less flexibility, longer deployment duties after returning from maternity leave and women's demanding attitude. Moreover, the employers greatly appreciate the quality of women's work. In their opinion, women are slightly better qualified than men occupying the same posts.

*More detailed information about the study and its results can be found on the website of the
Regional Labour Office in Białystok - Podlaskie Social Policy Observatory
<http://www.pops.up.podlasie.pl/>*

*This report is the final result of the performed study "Diagnosis of the situation of women
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