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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS AS A PUSH FACTOR FOR FUTURE
MIGRATION FROM POLAND**

(THE AUTHORS HOPE THAT SOME IDEAS ARE ALSO RELEVANT FOR CERTAIN DEVELOPMENTS IN BULGARIA)

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The Polish Ministry of Education explicitly refers to the new educational reform as "an opportunity for rural areas"¹. Such an opportunity is needed more than ever now, since decades of systematic neglect on the part of the state and transformation-linked changes in the economic and social structures mean that "civilizational backwardness" and the marginalization of rural areas are perceived very keenly at the present time. At the moment, around 14.6 million people, i.e., 38.2% of Poland's total population, live in rural areas. However, they combine to make up more than 50% of the total number of unemployed.² For the rural areas

specifically, there is a substantial amount of "hidden" unemployment involved. This is estimated at around 1 million persons. This "hidden" unemployment refers to those people who, according to the statistics, work in agriculture but, from an economic viewpoint, are completely superfluous in agricultural businesses. The majority of the "hidden" unemployed are former "double job" farmer/manual workers (part-time farmers whose main job is that of a manual worker). Such people became redundant during the 1990s, as a consequence of the drop in demand for low-skilled industrial workers and were practically "absorbed" by farming businesses run by their families.³ This "absorbing" function of agriculture with regard to the redundant manpower definitely helped to alleviate the social tensions on the municipal job markets. However, the fact cannot be ignored that social and structural problems were thus simply displaced for the most part to the rural areas. The agricultural sector – weighted down with unproductive manpower – offers those employed in it no opportunity of attaining a satisfactory level

¹ Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej (MEN) (Ed.): Narodowy program rozwoju wsi polskiej. Edukacja Reforma systemu edukacji – szansa dla wsi, in: <http://www.men.waw.pl/oswiata/biezace/ar-2001-2/dok-ref/eduk-wsi/rozd3.htm>, p. 1.

² Cf. Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS): Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2002, Warszawa 2003, in: <http://stat.gov.pl> (Raport z wyników Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań/Stan i struktura demograficzna), p. 13; Kłodzinski, M.: Perspektywy wielofunkcyjnego rozwoju gmin wiejskich w Polsce, in: Instytut Ekonomiki Rolnictwa i Gospodarki Żywnościowej; Instytut Rozwoju Wsi i Rolnictwa Polskiej Akademii Nauk; Szkoła Główna Handlowa – Katedra Agrobiznesu (Ed.), Wsi i rolnictwo. Perspektywy rozwoju, Warszawa 2002, p. 62.

³ For criteria for measuring hidden unemployment, see: Kiereta, I.: Die Rolle der Agrarpolitik auf dem Weg Polens in die EU, Aachen 2001, p. 96.

of income. This fact has led to a further deterioration in the general impoverishment of rural areas. It should not be forgotten, either, that because of the high number of registered unemployed and the rudimentary social security system in Poland, poverty is one of the biggest social problems there.⁴

The specific problems of the rural areas are aggravated by the high degree of agrarization (58.2% of rural families operate agricultural businesses). Polish agriculture is, on account of historical conditions, substantially tainted with weak spots.⁵ With particular reference to Poland's integration into EU structures and its being confronted by "efficient" European agriculture, these weak spots are not only becoming visible but are also showing how necessary restructuring processes are.⁶ Relevant studies have shown that, of the 2 million agricultural businesses in Poland, only about 300-400 thousand are capable of survival in the internal market.⁷ The restructuring process inherent in these figures implies a further substantial

redundancy of agricultural workers, which would, were no counter measures to be undertaken, aggravate the social disparities in rural areas as well as the regional disparities in development between urban and rural areas.

The current situation, the restructuring processes which are imminent for rural areas and the resulting fears which emanate from them are impacting on the social climate. The popular literature is dealing increasingly with the growing frustration potential of the rural population, particularly of the younger people.⁸ As this potential is being increasingly seen as a danger to the social and political stability of Poland on the whole, the rural areas problem has been identified as a significant socio-economic one.⁹ Taking into consideration previous theory-derived elaborations and the established migratory tendency, it cannot be overlooked that rural areas in particular are a main source of Polish migratory potential. It should be pointed out that young people especially display a generally strong tendency to emigrate¹⁰ – as human capital approaches demonstrate – and are actually participating to a large degree in the current job migration processes.

⁴ In 2001, a total of 9.5% of the whole Polish population was living below the poverty level. The percentage in the towns was 5.8% and in rural areas 15%. Cf. Ministerstwo Gospodarki, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (Ed.): *ibid.*, 2003, p. 36.

⁵ Cf. Kowalski, A.; Rowinski, J.: Wykształcenie jako czynnik ułatwiający lub utrudniający proces dostosowywania rolnictwa i regionów wiejskich do warunków UE, in: Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi. Biuro Nauki; Krajowe Centrum Doradztwa Rozwoju Rolnictwa i Obszarów Wiejskich. Dział Oświaty i Współpracy Naukowej (Ed.), *Rola nauki w rozwoju wsi, rolnictwa i rynków rolnych w procesie integracji Polski z Unią Europejską* (Materiały konferencyjne), Brwinów 2001, p. 127. Amongst other things that should be mentioned here: in many areas of the country, the archaic organization of Polish agriculture, dominated by smallholdings, a low standard of modernization and low productivity and, of course, over-employment. For more details, see: Kiereta, I.: *ibid.*, p. 90ff.

⁶ For problems with European agricultural policy, see: Paape, B., Kiereta, I.: *The European Common Agricultural Policy: A Function and Impact Analysis of Regulatory-Based Intervention*, in: Florjancic, J. (Ed.), *Management, Knowledge and EU*, Kranj 2004, p. 20ff.

⁷ Cf. Kowalski, A.; Rowinski, J.: *ibid.*, p. 128

⁸ As pointed out by Kolarska-Bobinska, L.; Rosner, A.; Wilkin, J.: *Przyszłość wsi polskiej*, in: Kolarska-Bobinska, L.; Rosner, A.; Wilkin, J. (Ed.), *Przyszłość wsi polskiej. Wizje, strategie, koncepcje*, Warszawa 2002, p. 18; Szafranec, K.: *Ludzie – podstawowy kapitał polskiej wsi*, in: Kolarska-Bobinska, L.; Rosner, A.; Wilkin, J. (Ed.), *Przyszłość wsi polskiej. Wizje, strategie, koncepcje*, Warszawa 2001, p. 129.

⁹ Cf. Kolarska-Bobinska, L.; Rosner, A.; Wilkins, J.: *ibid.*, p. 11, as well as Kowalski, A.; Rowinski, J.: *ibid.*, p. 128.

¹⁰ First, attention is again drawn to the fact that the former "farmer-workers" are a particularly mobile group. Second, the assumed immobility of agriculturists – on account of their traditional ties with the land and their owing property – might no longer be eligible as soon as the restructuring and concentration processes commence in agriculture.

Referring to Stark's new migratory economy, it can also be seen that the feared divergence processes are additionally aggravating the rural population's feeling of "relative impoverishment". This increases pressure to emigrate away from the rural areas and can lead to increased migratory flows.

In order to lower the current migratory pressure, the issue of improving the standard of living and life prospects for the inhabitants of rural areas – both adults and young people – gains substantial momentum. Improved life prospects are to be guaranteed by a multifunctional development of rural areas – something which has been propagated for years now.¹¹

This multifunctional development includes two components. One of these is a diversification of rural areas, i.e. expanding their previous dominating function of food producer to include non-agricultural functions. The objective here is to create additional sources of sideline income and alternative forms of employment for the inhabitants of rural areas. It is estimated that the need for non-agricultural job opportunities will have risen by 2010 to 2.0-2.5 million jobs.¹² The second component of

the multifunctional development consists of the securing or increasing of the competitiveness of Polish agriculture. Despite these upcoming restructuring processes, agriculture will actually remain one of Poland's most important economic branches.

With regard to the diversification of rural areas, it should be noted that the range of potential additional sideline jobs and non-agricultural jobs is theoretically very wide. Taking local conditions into account, these would range from developing agro-tourism¹³ and ecological cultivation, over creating new types of jobs in the upstream and downstream sectors (e.g. agricultural services, such as maintaining sophisticated agricultural machinery) right up to processing agricultural products and marketing them.

Despite these many possibilities, an insight-to-action loop exists in rural areas: A prerequisite of the creation of such opportunities is that, amongst other things, the population has a corresponding level of education or a corresponding qualification.¹⁴ The following diagram demonstrates the current structure of the level of education for the Polish population.

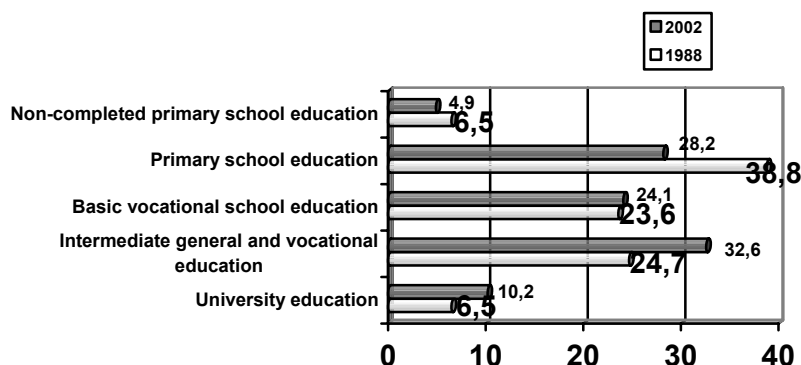
Diagram: Population aged 15 and over according to level of education in 1988 and 2002

¹¹ The problems involved in multifunctional development up to 2006 is the main focus of the "Coherent Structural Policy for the Development of Rural Areas and Agriculture", adopted by the Polish Sejm in July 1999: Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Gospodarki Żywnościowej (Ed.): *Spojna polityka strukturalna rozwoju obszarów wiejskich rolnictwa*, Warszawa 199, p. 4ff. Ref. the concept of "sustainable development", see Harborth, H.-J.: *Nachhaltigkeit – eine Herausforderung auch für Europa*, in: Dörner, K.; Meyer-Thamer, G.; Paape, B. (Ed.), *Europäische Integrationsperspektiven*, Wiesbaden 2001, p. 77ff.

¹² Cf. Kłodzinski, M.: *Wpływ ośrodków naukowych na proces wielofunkcyjnego rozwoju obszarów wiejskich*, in: Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi. Biuro Nauki; Krajowe Centrum Doradztwa Rozwoju Rolnictwa i Obszarów Wiejskich. Dział Oświaty i Współpracy Naukowej (Ed.), *Rola nauki w rozwoju wsi, rolnictwa i rynków rolnych w procesie integracji Polski z Unią Europejską (Materiały konferencyjne)*, Brwinów 2001, p. 43f; Kiereta, I.: *ibid*, p. 97.

¹³ Current studies on the tourism economy have been undertaken by, e.g. Jesenko, J.; Kiereta, I. (Ed.) *Management in Tourism*, Frankfurt 2004. For the concept of "soft" tourism, see Hammerich, K.: *Natur: Zwischen Schutz und Nutzung*, Sankt Augustin 1995, p. 61ff.

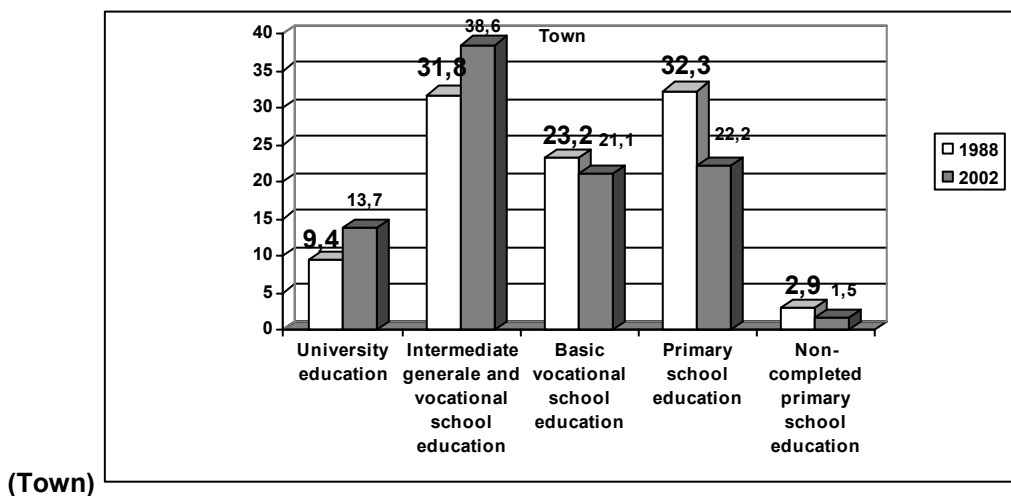
¹⁴ Multifunctional development requires further conditions which are currently not in place. Some of the most important barriers: a low level of infrastructure, low degree of urbanization and industrialization, lack of capital (in particular, investors are fundamentally not interested on account of the a.m. barriers in the primary sector), low demand of the local population, lack of intuitional infrastructure, low level of entrepreneurship amongst the rural population etc. See: Kłodzinski, M.: *ibid*, 2002, p. 49.



Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS): Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2002, Warszawa 2003, in: <http://stat.gov.pl> (Raport z wyników Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań/Struktura społeczna ludności). p. 28.

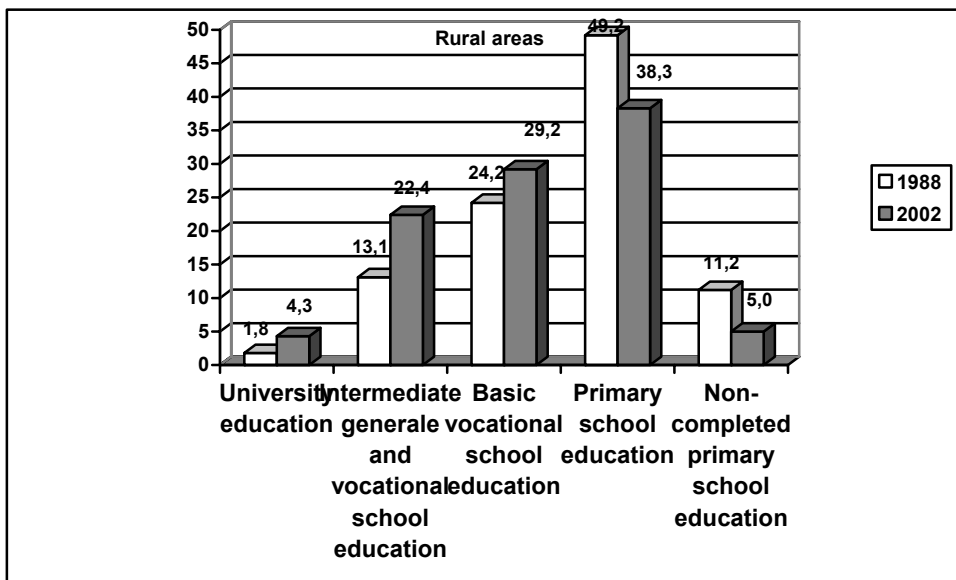
Despite the visible increase in the level of education of the Polish population since the beginning of the transformation, the current balance with regard to the rural population is sobering, however. The following two diagrams present a comparison of the education level of the urban and rural populations

Diagram: Population aged 15 and over according to level of education and place of residence in 1988 and 2002



Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS): Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2002, Warszawa 2003, in: <http://stat.gov.pl> (Raport z wyników Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań/Struktura społeczna ludności). p. 29.

Diagram: Population aged 15 and over according to level of education and place of residence in 1988 and 2002 (Rural Areas)



Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS): Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2002, Warszawa 2003, in: <http://stat.gov.pl> (Raport z wyników Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań/Struktura społeczna ludności). p. 29.

If the point of reference for an increase in the level of education of the population is taken to be the percentage of people with primary education at the most, then an improvement in the level of education in rural areas is noticeable: This percentage in urban areas fell from 35.2% to 23.7% (i.e. by 11.5%) and from 60.4% to 43.3% (i.e. by 17.1%) in rural areas. Despite this positive development, the level of education in rural areas must still be regarded as low.

The above diagrams show a higher percentage of people in rural areas with a basic vocational level of education compared with people in urban areas. In the period under observation, this tendency is also rising. First, this would indicate that the transformation –linked dequalification processes have affected primarily the rural population. Furthermore, the high percentage of people who have completed basic vocational training must be observed within the context of the currently noticeable deficits regarding vocational training. This

means, then, that younger people who have completed basic vocational training are basically not able to fulfil the requirements of the labour market.

A positive aspect is the noticeable increase in the percentage of the population who have completed the secondary level II (middle schools). The percentage here rose more dynamically in rural areas – 9.3% as opposed to 7.6% in the towns. The level of education reached in rural areas is, however, in the main due to the qualifications gained at vocational schools. Here, too, then, similar reservations as those mentioned above apply.

With regard to university education, the percentage of people with a university degree rose between 1998 and 2002 by 6.5% to 10.2 % (3.7 percentage points). In urban areas, the percentage rose from 9.4% to 13.7%, i.e. by 4.3 percentage points. In contrast, in rural areas, the figures for the same period rose from 1.8% to 4.3%, i.e. by only 2.5 percentage points.

The weak growth dynamic in rural areas confirms the existing unequal opportunities regarding access to education, which serves to increase the "gap" between town and country.

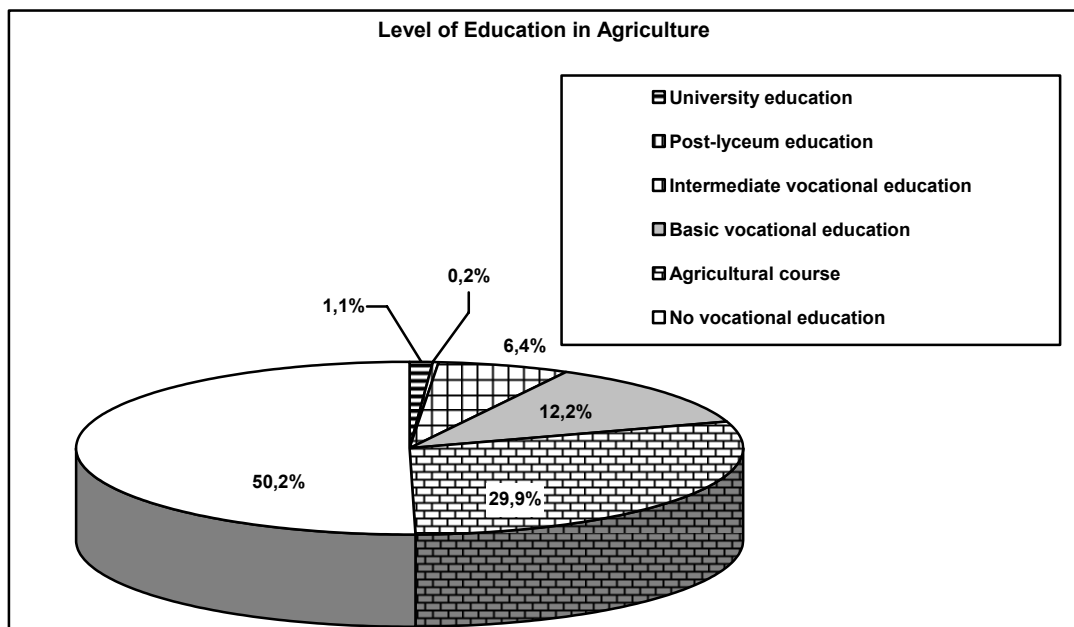
This gap is currently leading to a paradox situation: whereas highly qualified persons are increasingly affected by unemployment, there is, in the rural areas, a lack of highly qualified persons.

Another problem, which deserves separate mention, is that of the level of education of agriculturists, since the

corresponding vocational qualifications are the first prerequisite for the postulated competitiveness among agriculturists.

Despite a systematic improvement in the level of education, the level of agriculturists' vocational qualifications is very low. According to the 2002 figures of the agricultural census, only every 5th person running an agricultural business (of 1 ha and over) holds an agricultural qualification. The level of education in agriculture is shown in the following diagram:

Diagram: Level of education in agriculture in 2002



Source: Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS): Powszechny Spis Rolny 2002, Warszawa 2003, in: <http://www.stat.gov.pl> (Raport z wyników Powszechnego Spisu Rolnego (Cały dokument), p. 32.

In 2002, only 1.1% of people running agricultural businesses (of 1 ha and over) had enjoyed a university education. On the other hand, over half of them had no formal vocational qualifications at all. This makes it very clear that, in Poland, the model continues to dominate of the "autodidactic

farmer" who, on the basis of intuition and experience, gains the required knowledge.¹⁵

¹⁵ Cf. Jagielinksi, R.: Przepustka do przyszłości, in: Wprost, No. 863, 13.06.1999, p. 56. It should be emphasized here that, in the socialist planned economy, the prices of agricultural products functioned as a social instrument and were quasi guaranteed. This has further strengthened the passive approach of agricultural producers and has removed any incentives

This model in particular is, in the current situation, inadequate, since the market economy is changing traditional farming into an "agro-business" and turning farmers into "agro-economists". In this context, the agriculturist "does not only deal with biological, agrarian facts (...), but also with economic, ecological and many new technological issues".¹⁶

Running an agro-business demands a broad spectrum of specialized knowledge but also skills and proficiency in many other areas (knowledge of legal norms, marketing, management). At the moment, an agriculturist seems to be a job that demands a more multi-faceted type of training than do many urban jobs.¹⁷ This new understanding of job qualification makes the currently large need for the further qualifying of agriculturists understandable.

The low formal level of education which has been pinpointed, and the qualifications of the rural population which do not correspond to those required by the current labour market,

both form a formidable barrier which seriously hinders the postulated multifunctional development of rural areas.

The complexity of the problems involved in rural areas makes clear that the enormous tasks can only be undertaken over a long time perspective. This makes it even more interesting regarding the extent to which the new educational reform can be regarded as an "opportunity". In the "National Program for Developing Polish Villages", in particular the problem of facilitating access to

education, particularly for children and young people, is addressed.¹⁸

It is intended to achieve this by restructuring the educational system. In view of the already identified weaknesses of rural primary schools, the newly established gymnasium schools are regarded as the most significant equalizing instrument for educational opportunities. According to the "National Program for Developing Polish Villages", the effectiveness of this type of school lies in the creation of a well equipped school staffed by well-qualified teachers and based on modern didactics. The good quality of education at these gymnasium schools should be the starting point for facilitating further education at institutions providing general education and also open up access to a university education for young people from rural areas.¹⁹ However, the programmatic "equalizing function" of these gymnasium schools is already causing initial doubts, since educational inequality is already created in a child's early years, i.e. at kindergarten and primary schools.

Moreover, the postulated transformation of the traditionally bad "village schools" into modern institutions of education – which is what the gymnasium school should be – currently faces substantial barriers. The main problem is that – despite the undesirable developments of decentralization – the currently realised educational policy in Poland makes the functionality of the schools dependent on local conditions. The responsibility and thus the costs for organising and equipping the gymnasium schools with a modern technodidactic infrastructure lie with the territorial organs of self-administration. On account

towards further training or improving one's qualifications or altering anything. See: Kiereta, I.: *ibid*, p. 97.

¹⁶ Pöggeler, F.: Zum Wandel des Verhältnisses von Allgemeinbildung und Berufsbildung in Deutschland, in: Lechner, E.; Pöggeler, F. (Ed.), *Allgemeinbildung und Berufsbildung. Konkurrenz und Kongruenz der Konzepte im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main 2004, p. 214.

¹⁷ Cf. Kowalski, A.; Rowinski, J.: *ibid*, p. 134f.

¹⁸ The relevance of education for adults and, in this framework, the necessity of more tailored programmes (agro- tourism and agro-management) is recognized.

¹⁹ Cf. Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej (MEN) (Ed.): *Narodowy program rozwoju wsi polskiej. Edukacja Reforma systemu edukacji – szansa dla wsi*, in: <http://www.men.waw.pl/oswiata/biezace/ar-2001-2/dok-ref/eduk-wsi/rozdz3.htm>, p. 1.

of the substantial financial bottlenecks which many communities still have to deal with and the inadequate educational subsidies provided by the government, the implementation of the equalizing function of the rural gymnasium schools would seem highly improbable.

At the present moment, one main point of criticism against current educational policy is the fact that the reform is being fundamentally implemented "without the teachers", who are supposed to be realizing the educational reforms. In other words, in the reform structures, no system proposals were made regarding a corresponding further training of teachers in order to prepare them for their new tasks, and different objectives, contents and types of teaching.²⁰

As already shown, rural teachers are generally not so well trained, so the problem of teachers being insufficiently skilled to meet these new requirements again hits the rural areas more drastically. Against this backdrop, then, the postulated equalizing function of the gymnasium schools becomes very complicated.

Even at the present time, several facts indicate that the enormous expectations placed on the equalising function of the schools are not being fulfilled. This is confirmed by the results of the final examinations of the first school leavers from the gymnasium schools. These results are pertinent to admittance to higher education (implemented in 2002): The worst results

came from school leavers in the poorest rural areas of northeast Poland.²¹

It is also necessary to point out the continuing insufficient saturation of rural areas with educational facilities. In this context, it is emphasized that the newly founded gymnasium schools are irregularly distributed over the country. In particular, poorer rural areas have a smaller network of schools, long travelling distances to schools and poorer public transport.

Bearing in mind the low incomes of the rural or agricultural families and the insufficient state support that they receive, this situation leads to misgivings that many children will complete their education at the level of the 6th grade primary school. This then, implies that the realized educational reform, instead of evening out educational opportunities, will on the contrary serve to further aggravate the town/country gap.²²

The example of the gymnasium schools provided here clearly shows where the problems lie in acquiring an education in rural areas. Inadequate state spending on education cannot – with a view to the low incomes of the rural populations – be compensated by these. On account of the high costs of education and the increasing impoverishment of the rural population, there continues to be a substantial regional barrier to young people in rural areas gaining an education – particularly with regard to tertiary education. Owing to the existing exogenous barriers, the low standard of education will continue to be a barrier to the multifunctional development in rural areas.²³ It is not surprising then, that

²⁰ Cf. Szlosek, F.: Zalozenia reformy systemu ksztalcenia zawodowego – nadzieje i obawy, in: Gerlach, R. (Ed.), Kształcenie prozawodowe i zawodowe w kontekście integracji Europy, Bydgoszcz 2002, p. 185; Kłodzinski, M.: *ibid*, 2002, p. 54. The planned computer offensive offers an example, whereby only 6% of the teachers have the necessary skills. Cf. Steier-Jordan, S.: Bildungsreformentwicklung in Polen / Stand und Perspektiven (Working Paper "Internationale Beziehungen im Bildungswesen" der Gesellschaft für Vergleichende Pädagogik e.V., Working Paper No. 4), Dresden 2000, p. 20f.

²¹ Cf. Gesicki, J.: Przemiany w edukacji, in: Marody, M. (Ed.), Wymiary życia społecznego. Polska na przełomie XXiXXI wieku, Warszawa 2002, p. 106.

²² Cf. Ostrowski, L.: Wykształcenie jako czynnik awansu społecznego w rodzinach chłopskich, in: Polityka Społeczna, Jg 26 (305), No. 7, Warszawa 1999, p. 8; Paciorek, A.: Bilans osiągnięć i porażek, in: Kolarska-Bobinska, L., Cztery reformy. Od koncepcji do realizacji, Warszawa 2000, p. 239.

people in rural areas, and particularly young people, are increasingly associating rural life with a lack of life opportunities and a lack of perspectives. It should be emphasized here that wishes, aspirations and the concept of a "good life" mean practically the same to a rural young person as to a young person in the town. As there is a lack of opportunity to fulfil these wishes locally, an increased tendency towards migration can – with recourse to the findings of the world community – be expected.

In actual fact, various studies have shown that young people are no longer prepared to spend their life in the country. According to Szafranec, only around 40% of them envisage their future in the country.²⁴

Against this backdrop, the identified high educational aspirations of the rural young people can be interpreted as a form of migration to the cities. A further study shows²⁵ shown that over 50% of young people who continued their general education at a lyceum school had no intention of returning to the country. According to the theory of cumulative causation, this type of brain drain is associated with a self-boosting effect. Against this backdrop, the creation of a "waiting option" and individual development opportunities via "on-the-spot educational measures" gain substantial significance in preventing potential migratory streams of young people out of the rural areas.

²³ Preparation for new functions requires the corresponding support from the specialists in the area of rural development. In this context, Kłodzinski refers to the existence of university chairs for "rural development" in EU countries. In Poland, on the other hand, at agricultural universities, specialists are not trained in this direction. Thus, only a few researchers can deal with this complex issue. Advisory centres for agriculture currently fulfill the advisory function, whereby the majority of the staff is not sufficiently trained; Kłodzinski, M.: *ibid*, p. 2001, p. 45f.

²⁴ Cf. Szafranec, K.: *ibid*, p. 126.

²⁵ This is a study which was commissioned by MENIS in 2003. See: Pendel, Z.: 37 Procent młodzieży wiejskiej wybiera naukę w LO, in: <http://www.gimnazjum.pl/opinie/37procmlodziezywiejskiejwybieralo.phtml>.

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