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# Mixed Economy of Welfare Emerging in Poland: Outplacement and Non-Governmental Employment Agencies Examples

Andrzej Klimczuk\*

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## 1. Introduction

In the early 21st century, one of the key challenges of social policy in Poland is to adapt its management on regional and local levels to the requirements of a service economy. Necessary conditions for the relationships between public, commercial, and non-governmental (NGOs) providers were already established after the country's entry into the European Union in 2004. However, the tasks and services of individual entities and institutions still lack coordination and integration. This situation leads to insufficient relevance, efficiency, and sustainability of results of activities. Thus, there is a need for further development of the activation (enabling) policy in combination with the concepts of governance and welfare mix. Such ideas are seen as a rather new practice in Poland, and they require in-depth analysis for reforming social services at the regional and local level.

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The primary goal of this paper is to present the main characteristics of the mixed economy of welfare in the Polish system of professional activation and possibilities of its development. The paper also discusses the results of the author's own research on the implementation of welfare mix solutions related to (1) outplacement, which may be defined as services for laid-off or redundant employees before they become unemployed; and (2) employment services of NGOs employment agencies for people with disabilities. Moreover, the paper includes basic descriptions of reforms of active labour market policies (ALMPs) in Poland ongoing from 2014. The paper also discusses the challenges of the implementation of the new financial perspective of the European Union for the years 2014-2020 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The summary includes practical recommendations and the possible directions for further research.

## **2. Active Labour Market Policies and Mixed Economy of Welfare in Polish Context**

The basic concept of combating unemployment is derived from the neoclassical economics model of labour market policy (LMP), which includes active and passive programs, and does not have the substitution rule for the economic policy, but is complementary and integrated with the economic policy<sup>1</sup>. In this model, it is assumed that among the causes of unemployment, there is the low activity of the unemployed and the inefficient functioning of labour offices. The primary objective of LMP is to mitigate the effects of unemployment and the temporary activation of the unemployed ones through active labour market programs. In general, labour market interventions consist of both active and passive programs that provide the protection for people who are incapable of gaining employment. While standard passive programs focus on the income support such as unemployment insurance, active programs aim to reduce unemployment by improving access to the labour market. Active instruments are used to increase the ability of unemployed ones to find jobs, increase their productivity and earnings. ALMPs may be linked with the concept of activation policies, which after A. Karwacki can be defined as the contemporary transformations in social policy associated with the shift to

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<sup>1</sup> A. Skórska, *Przeciwdziałanie bezrobociu*, in D. Kotlorz (ed.), *Ekonomia rynku pracy*, Wyd. Akademii Ekonomicznej im. Karola Adameckiego, Katowice 2007, p. 113.

investment in human capital, with promoting jobs and economic activity, and with the effects of these actions<sup>2</sup>. Activation policy can be defined as the potential practical changes, which should be reflected in the institutions (entities) covered by the new governance profile<sup>3</sup>. In this sense, this policy is an “activation stimuli present in various configurations between individuals, groups, and between institutions (social policy actors) understood as producers and service providers,” and as “guiding ideas, goals, and demands indicated, but also (primarily) the practical side of implementing these ideas in life”<sup>4</sup>.

The guiding ideas of activation policies are: (1) the denial of passive policy, guarantee of social security through the social provisions; (2) the appreciation of activating instruments directed at the unemployed able to work and then those who are unable to work; (3) often the mandatory nature of participation in the activation; (4) discontinuation of the decommodification or the creation of a system of social security guarantees in isolation from the labour market; (5) the attempt to build consensus in social policy beyond ideological divisions; (6) the reduction of the scale of “passive” social transfers conditioned by the introduction of support related to the participation of beneficiaries in activation programs (inclusion, reintegration); (7) the focus on the employment or rebuilding of employability; (8) the use of the potential of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to conduct activation programs and introduce various ALMPs instruments such as social employment of disabled people in a protected labour market, subsidized employment in the open labour market, and social entrepreneurship in the social economy<sup>5</sup>.

As for the practical side of the activation, the main challenge is to build its integrity and consistency<sup>6</sup>. Thus, it is reasonable to link actions and decisions taken at various levels of public life. This means combing the top-down and bottom-up initiatives and analysing the theoretical and practical understanding of the concepts of activity, coordination, and consistency of institutions and programs. Such solutions may be achieved by the dissemination of governance models focused on sharing and coordinating tasks between actors in a multi-level activation policy.

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<sup>2</sup> A. Karwacki, *Papierowe skrzydła. Rzecz o spójnej polityce aktywizacji*, Wyd. Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2010, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114, 120, 149-178.



According to M. Powell, the mixed economy of welfare is a provision of welfare by the state or public entities, commercial entities, the NGO sector, and the informal sector<sup>7</sup>. At the same time, he combines this concept with the concept of the social division of welfare, which refers to the public benefits, employment benefits, and tax benefits. Powell points to the possibility of applying these concepts to the analysis of (1) elements of the mixed economy of welfare and the ways in which different sectors are present in modern welfare states, the processes of their formation and alteration (for example, changes in time and space of the public sector, the commercial sector, the NGO sector, and the informal sector); and (2) three dimensions of the mixed economy of welfare (benefit sources and production processes, their funding, and forms of regulation)<sup>8</sup>.

Powell also emphasizes that these concepts not only have a descriptive approach (which refers to the presence of various sectors in the social policy), but also a normative approach that relates to change in the roles and meanings of various sectors (for example, downsizing the role of the state)<sup>9</sup>. The normative approach allows the analysis of ideological assumptions, which include different configurations of the mixed economy of welfare. In general, it is noted that the left wing supports the dominant role of the state in building the welfare by limiting or preventing the market share and support the public benefits more than the employment benefits and tax benefits. These solutions help citizens by the guarantee of justice of access to benefits and services. Meanwhile, the right wing seeks to build a welfare society by supporting the solutions of the commercial entities, NGO entities, and informal entities and at the same time, it promotes the reduction of the state instruments. Thus, according to the right wing, the increased economic efficiency aims to improve the quality of services and reduced welfare dependency of people. The right wing does not attach much importance to the employee benefits and taxation, although some of their supporters are opposed to solutions such as the tax relief and consider it as negative to the market mechanism<sup>10</sup>.

A different approach to a mixed economy of welfare is suggested by M. Grewiński, who uses the terms “multisectoral social policy” or “mixed social

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<sup>7</sup> M. Powell, *Wielosektorowa gospodarka i społeczny podział dobrobytu*, in M. Powell (ed.), *Zrozumieć wielosektorową gospodarkę dobrobytu*, Elipsa, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna Towarzystwa Wiedzy Powszechnej, Warszawa 2010, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

policy”. These refer to “activities of various actors within the social activity of the public, commercial, NGO, and informal sectors, serving to satisfy the social needs of citizens, and alleviating and/or eliminating social issues by use of the potential of pluralist welfare state, civil society, and social capital in a spirit of the co-responsibility for social cohesion, inclusion, and social security”<sup>11</sup>. The researcher points out two aspects of the mixed economy of welfare: the welfare mix and the welfare pluralism. The former refers to the use of mixed forms in shaping the welfare and to the technique of decomposing tasks and social services in different sectors. The latter is understood as a discussion about the diversity of entities in various fields and sectors of the social policy<sup>12</sup>.

According to Grewiński, in Poland the pluralistic employment policy and the LMP have been developed because of the economic transformation after 1989, which revealed the issue of unemployment. This issue was absent on a large scale in the communist Poland. The laws on employment and unemployment in the 1990s tried to build the foundations of institutional policies against unemployment. At that time solutions such as passive labour market policy programs were introduced (PLMPs), the categorization of unemployed and public employment services, a system of labour offices with consulting and consultative entities (employment councils), the fund for counteracting the adverse effects of unemployment of people with disabilities, and the fund for workers laid-off due to persistent problems with the employer’s solvency<sup>13</sup>. Administrative reform, which was carried out in 1999, led to the decentralization of public employment services by the creation of the district (local) employment offices. Thus, the activity of labour offices was subordinated to the local authorities, which sometimes led to poor functioning of these offices, reducing the scope of their activities, and the weak link between their activity and the problems of local labour markets. Actually, until the introduction of the “Act of 20 April 2004 on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions” only the public sector was responsible for tackling unemployment in Poland (first central, then the local government). Although as early as in the 1990s the commercial and governmental services for the unemployed and job seekers<sup>14</sup> were already present, the multisectorality gained importance in

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<sup>11</sup> M. Grewiński, *Wielosektorowa polityka społeczna. O przeobrażeniach państwa opiekuńczego*, Wyd. Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej TWP, Warszawa 2009, p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 311-312.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 313-314.

this area only with a change in the law in 2004, which coincided with the entry of Poland into the European Union. The new Act introduced a definition of labour market institutions and specified the public employment services, the public Voluntary Labour Corps (professional activation services for youth), commercial entities, NGO entities such as employment agencies, training institutions, social dialogue institutions, and local partnerships<sup>15</sup>. Cooperation of the public providers, the commercial providers, and the NGO providers of labour market services was also stimulated by the introduction of the Act on Social Employment<sup>16</sup>, the Act on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work<sup>17</sup>, the Act on Public-Private Partnership<sup>18</sup>, and the Act on Social Cooperatives<sup>19</sup>. However, despite the significant role of commercial entities and NGOs in the development of human resources, specialized services, job placement, and counseling for entrepreneurs there are still problems with the coordination and integration of cooperation and partnership in activation projects<sup>20</sup>.

### 3. Case Studies of Multisectoral Solutions for Active Labour Market Policies in Poland

The case study is usually defined as a technique of in-depth analysis of the phenomenon, which may be a starting point for creating the theory, to modify existing ones, and to inspire further research<sup>21</sup>. This technique allows the identification of policy stakeholders, situational factors, the management, operations' areas, and primary values and principles of policy. This section includes observations and conclusions from author's own studies on innovative solutions in the field of ALMPs that were aimed at the integration of services provided by the public entities, the

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<sup>15</sup> *Act of 20 April 2004 on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions*, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw 2012.

<sup>16</sup> *Ustawa z dnia 13 czerwca 2003 r. o zatrudnieniu socjalnym*, Dz.U. 2003, nr 122 poz. 1143.

<sup>17</sup> *Ustawa z dnia 24 kwietnia 2003 r. o działalności pożytku publicznego i o wolontariacie*, Dz.U. 2003, nr 96 poz. 873.

<sup>18</sup> *Ustawa z dnia 28 lipca 2005 r. o partnerstwie publiczno-prywatnym*, Dz.U. 2005, nr 169 poz. 1420.

<sup>19</sup> *Ustawa z dnia 27 kwietnia 2006 r. o spółdzielniach socjalnych*, Dz.U. 2006, nr 94 poz. 651.

<sup>20</sup> M. Grewiński, *Wielosektorowa polityka społeczna. O przeobrażeniach państwa opiekuńczego*, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

<sup>21</sup> R.E. Stake, *Jakościowe studium przypadku*, in N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Metody badań jakościowych*. Tom 1, PWN, Warszawa 2009, pp. 623-654.

commercial entities, and the NGO entities. Two case studies focus on (1) the implementation of outplacement as a service for prevention of unemployment of laid-off employees from the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and (2) the cooperation between public employment services and NGOs employment agencies during labour activation of people with disabilities.

#### **4. Case Study: Implementation of Outplacement by Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises**

The economic crisis, which began in 2008, forced the companies to adapt to new conditions. Workers' employment was one of the fields affected by the cost cuts. Many companies assume that it will help them to survive during declining of financial resources and a reduction of interest in their offer, goods, and services. According to the KPMG's study, layoffs of employees were the most popular action undertaken by companies at the beginning of the crisis. Among 303 surveyed companies in Poland, nearly 88% entities declared that the crisis implicated changes in their human resources management<sup>22</sup>. At the end of 2010, almost 45% enterprises declared layoffs, and 1/10 of them planned to continue the reduction of employment. At the same time, 93% of companies believe that this technique is effective and brought the expected results. Meanwhile, techniques such as internal recruitment, flexible forms of employment, and outsourcing were used almost half as often as the reduction in employment. Therefore, enterprises take actions to benefit in a shorter rather than in a longer term, a move which exposes them to a number of risks associated with the negative effects of layoffs such as loss of the valuable human capital, the reduction of motivation to work among remaining employees, and worsening of the company's image.

The use of outplacement may lead to avoiding such adverse effects of layoffs. This concept was coined in the 1980s, but its history dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, and the development of employment services for soldiers dismissed from the military service. Outplacement may be defined as redundancies initiated by the employer, which include the introduction of a new job for employees that is located outside a current company. Thus, outplacement aims to reconcile economic values

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<sup>22</sup> J. Karasek, A. Emerling, P. Kwiatkowski, *Optymalizacja kosztów a utrzymanie pracowników. O reakcjach firm na trudne warunki rynkowe*, KPMG, Warszawa 2011, p. 9.

(the desire to increase the value of the company) and social values (work, social security)<sup>23</sup>. In Poland, the first outplacement programs started in the 1990s. However, the “monitored layoffs” are relatively little popular among Polish companies. Outplacement allows both employees and companies to increase their chances of maintaining competencies and of better adapting to the requirements of the market competition.

So far, three models of the implementation of outplacement were developed in Poland: classic, adapted, and environmental<sup>24</sup>. The “classic outplacement” focuses on the diagnosis of potential and needs of laid-off workers, psychological support, counseling, training, and job placement. The employer is contracting such tasks in consulting firms or employment agencies. The model of “adapted outplacement” additionally includes involvement of stakeholders such as local government, administration, business support, and NGOs in the process. These entities create the local partnerships and pacts on employment. Last model—the “environmental outplacement”—aims to prevent the effects of long-term unemployment in the situation of the collapse of local labour market. It additionally includes the development of activation centers, community-building services and self-help groups.

It should be underlined that the Polish legal regulations do not obligate employers to use any of these models. According to the “Act of 20 April 2004 on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions,” the outplacement services are mandatory only when the employer reduces the employment by 50 employees in 3 months<sup>25</sup>. However, small enterprises (10-49 employees) and medium-sized enterprises (50-249 employees) usually reduce the employment by avoiding this requirement. The services, which are consistent with the adapted outplacement and the environmental outplacement, may be used on a voluntary basis.

According to the Act, the outplacement occurs when there is a termination of employment or service relationship for reasons related to the employer. Therefore, workers who are in the period of dismissal, employment, and at risk of dismissal may receive assistance in the form of labour market services. In situations of massive job cuts, employers can count on the help from the labour office in the preparation and

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<sup>23</sup> A. Ludwiczynski, *Alokacja zasobów ludzkich organizacji*, in H. Król, A. Ludwiczynski (eds.), *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Tworzenie kapitału ludzkiego organizacji*, PWN, Warszawa 2006, pp. 222-224.

<sup>24</sup> J. Koral, *Outplacement - sposób na bezrobocie*, FISE, Warszawa 2009, pp. 6-15.

<sup>25</sup> *Act of 20 April 2004 on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions*, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw 2012.

implementation of the outplacement program. The Act requires the employer to provide the employment services for workers who will be laid off or have been already dismissed in the last 6 months. The law does not regulate the content and stages of the outplacement program. Thus, the employer may construct a program according to his or her capabilities, needs of laid-off workers, and situation in the local labour market. The Act does not provide specific guidance on the exact content of support programs for laid-off workers and how they should be carried out. Thus, employers are free to choose actions and services. This means that every time the outplacement program should be “tailored” to the financial and organizational capabilities of the employer, the individual needs of laid-off workers, and the condition in the local labour market. Typically, outplacement programs include forms of support, such as job search and job placement for program participants; the provision of psychological support; teaching of mobility in the labour market; the assistance in preparing the application documents and for job interviews; the analysis of professional aptitude; the assistance in organizing the further career path; and the participation in vocational training.

The Act allows an implementation of the outplacement program by the public employment office, by the private employment agency, by an NGO employment agency, or by the training institution. Outplacement program may be financed entirely by the employer. It can also be financed entirely or partially from public funds. The program can be carried out by the employment office, employment agencies, or training institutions. Workers who are in the period of dismissal may also ask for the support in the public employment office to start the outplacement program. Support is provided, among other things, by guidance counselors in the district labour office, or at the information and career-planning center of the regional labour office. Laid-off employee can also ask the employment office for a referral to training or request training in educational institutions if they are already carrying out an outplacement program.

In 2012, the author conducted research in the Podlaskie Voivodship (region) as a part of the project called the “Innovation on the Cusp—Testing and Implementation of the New Methods of Outplacement” (pol. “Innowacje na zakręcie—testowanie i wdrażanie nowych metod outplacementu”)<sup>26</sup>. The project focuses on the implications of current global financial and economic crisis on the implementation of

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<sup>26</sup> M. Klimczuk-Kochańska (ed.), *Bariery i potencjały rozwoju outplacementu dla firm i pracowników*, Narodowe Forum Doradztwa Kariery, Białystok 2013.



outplacement by SMEs. It includes the Quantitative Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI survey) conducted in 2012 on a sample of exactly 200 employees and 200 companies divided into the following industries: the crafts industry; industries crucial to the regional development; the public sector; and the start-ups, the future growth industries. At this point, only some results associated with a welfare mix in the field of ALMPs will be described.

According to the study, representatives of the selected enterprises quite often have a general understanding of the outplacement concept. Nearly 31% of respondents associate it with the human resources management and labour market. A similar proportion of respondents claimed that they had a theoretical understanding of outplacement (27.5%). However, in the light of further results it should be considered that the knowledge of these programs is very general and superficial. For 38.5% respondents' outplacement is an unknown concept.

**Table 1: Individuals and Bodies Potentially in charge of Outplacement.**

	In total			Women			Men		
	Yes	No	No answer	Yes	No	No answer	Yes	No	No answer
Employer	183	13	4	117	9	4	66	4	0
<i>in %</i>	91.5%	6.5%	2.0%	90.0%	6.9%	3.1%	94.3%	5.7%	0%
Human resource department of the employer	135	62	3	95	33	2	40	29	1
<i>in %</i>	67.5%	31.0%	1.5%	73.1%	25.4%	1.5%	57.1%	41.4%	1.4%
Psychologist	100	90	10	72	51	7	28	39	3
<i>in %</i>	50.0%	45.0%	5.0%	55.4%	39.2%	5.4%	40.0%	55.7%	4.3%
The broker of the District Labour Office	138	50	12	92	31	7	46	19	5
<i>in %</i>	69.0%	25.0%	6.0%	70.8%	23.9%	5.4%	65.7%	27.1%	7.1%
Counselor/external consultant hired consulting firm	134	60	6	94	33	3	40	27	3
<i>in %</i>	67.0%	30.0%	3.0%	72.3%	25.4%	2.3%	57.1%	38.6%	4.3%
Counselor/external consultant employed by an NGO	115	71	14	80	39	11	35	32	3
<i>in %</i>	57.5%	35.5%	7.0%	61.5%	30.0%	8.5%	50.0%	45.7%	4.3%
Other (please specify)	5	7	188	5	2	123	0	5	65
<i>in %</i>	2.5%	3.5%	94.0%	3.9%	1.5%	94.6%	0%	7.1%	92.9%

Source: Own elaboration, CATI on employees, N=200.

Respondents were also asked to answer questions about the potential course of outplacement programs. From the perspective of employees, the implementation of outplacement should be mainly the task for the employer (91%) and the district labour offices (69%). Nearly 57.5% of the respondents expect NGO services, which should be considered as a good

result if we take into account the current relatively small promotion of their activation services. Relatively high responsibility for providing support to redundant workers is expected from the human resources department of the employer (67.5%) and job counselors or external consultants from consulting firms (67%). Such opinions may affect the perception of outplacement services as costly and at the same time to serve as an “excuse,” a simple explanation to avoid responsibility for helping laid-off employees, and lead to avoidance of support expectations among employees.

**Table 2: Potential Distribution of Costs for Outplacement Programs**

	In total			Women			Men		
	Yes	No	No answer	Yes	No	No answer	Yes	No	No answer
Employer	187	11	2	122	6	2	65	5	0
<i>in %</i>	93.5%	5.5%	1.0%	93.9%	4.6%	1.5%	92.9%	7.1%	0%
Laid-off employee / unemployed person	17	177	6	13	111	6	4	66	0
<i>in %</i>	8.5%	88.5%	3.0%	10.0%	85.4%	4.6%	5.7%	94.3%	0%
Public employment office	183	16	1	123	6	1	60	10	0
<i>in %</i>	91.5%	8.0%	0.5%	94.6%	4.6%	0.8%	85.7%	14.3%	0%
Sharing of costs between the employer and the labour office	65	102	33	48	59	23	17	43	10
<i>in %</i>	32.5%	51.0%	16.5%	36.9%	45.4%	17.7%	24.3%	61.4%	14.3%
Another entity (what kind?).....	10	54	136	9	30	91	1	24	45
<i>in %</i>	5.0%	27.0%	68.0%	6.9%	23.1%	70.0%	1.4%	34.3%	64.3%

Source: Own elaboration, CATT on employees, N=200.

**Table 3: Companies' Previous Efforts in times of Crisis**

	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Closing down unprofitable subsidiaries, branches	42	21.0%	158	79.0%
We limit the production	30	15.0%	170	85.0%
We save what they can	88	44.0%	112	56.0%
We are looking for cheaper suppliers, subcontractors	87	43.5%	113	56.5%
We cut administrative costs	105	52.5%	95	47.5%
We reduce employment	78	39.0%	122	61.0%
We shorten the working time of employees	33	16.5%	167	83.5%
We send employees on unpaid leaves	33	16.5%	167	83.5%
We thoroughly investigate and analyze the economic situation of the company	120	60.0%	80	40.0%
We share information and plans with the crew	63	31.5%	137	68.5%
We develop a strategy to prevent crises	85	42.5%	115	57.5%
We shift employees between positions	52	26.0%	148	74.0%
We hire an external expert / advisory firm	52	26.0%	148	74.0%
We report the problems to the Marshal's / Provincial / Municipal Office	28	14.0%	172	86.0%
We report the problems to the Provincial Labour Office / District Labour Office	23	11.5%	177	88.5%
We are looking for funding to support the modernization of the company by the European Union	63	31.5%	137	68.5%
Other, what .....?	10	5.0%	190	95.0%
The company has not yet found itself in a situation of crisis	3	1.5%	197	98.5%

Source: Own elaboration, CATI on employees, N=200.

Concerning the distribution of costs for providing support to redundant workers, even more employees mainly pay attention to the responsibility of employers (93.5%) and local labour offices (91.5%). The possibility of combining the funding by these entities is allowed by 32.5% of employees. Only 8.5% of workers consider that such costs should be borne by the laid-off or unemployed person. Thus, it is expected that the employers will accept the responsibility for the negative effects of layoffs in financial terms. Such approach is not conducive to the governance of adapted outplacement and environmental outplacement programs. This perspective is inconsistent with the declared permission to split the organizational dimension of the support and expectation of combining the benefits and services of specialists from public and private employment services, training institutions, and social dialogue institutions.

At the same time, these findings are limited. It is difficult to argue on this basis that the respondents share the principles of “buy and deliver,” according to which the employer should pay and implement the outplacement services for laid-off persons. Therefore, future studies may also include a shift from a two-dimensional approach (the production of benefits and services as well as financing of benefits and services) towards a three-dimensional approach (addition of the dimension of regulation of activities of the public entities, commercial entities, NGO entities, and informal entities)<sup>27</sup>. Such approach needs more emphasis on the current legal restrictions on usage of outplacement by SMEs.

Representatives of companies were asked a series of questions about their preparation for the implementation of outplacement programs. About 82.5% of companies do not develop professional competence profiles and other tools for assessment and skills’ diagnosis. Approximately 88% of businesses do not have a development strategy, which would include a description of potential organizational changes and actions that should be undertaken in response to the crisis. Moreover, 92% of companies do not have a methodology and tools to build the company’s growth strategy. About 66% of companies do not survey training needs of their employees and even more—87% of them do not have the methodology of transferring employees’ knowledge and skills within the organization. In this situation, both the distribution of costs and organizational dimension, which focus on contracting the outplacement to public and NGO entities, seem to be necessary. The main challenge is, therefore, to promote among the companies applying stakeholder analysis and boosting their governing ability during the process of employment restructuring. Such solutions would also meet the expectations towards outplacement declared by employees.

According to company declarations they responded in the past to the crisis primarily through undertaking research and analysis of the economic situation of the company (60.0%), the reduction of administrative costs (52.5%), “saving on what they can” (44.0%), and by the search for cheaper suppliers and subcontractors (43.5%). Only a few companies reported problems to local government (14%) and public employment services (11.5%). These declarations of firms are significantly different from actions expected of the employees in the field of dealing with the crisis.

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<sup>27</sup> M. Powell, *Wielosektorowa gospodarka i społeczny podział dobrobytu*, op. cit., p. 32-36.

Thus, both sides of the employment relationship are rather complementary. Employers do not feel the responsibility for the negative effects of redundancies while employees' expectations are limited to acquiring financial support and additional help from public labour offices. This situation creates unfavorable conditions for the implementation of the adapted outplacement and the environment outplacement, in which employers should demonstrate greater commitment to improve the situation of laid-off employees and co-workers that are in similar circumstances. NGOs can clearly organize the outplacement, promote the corporate social responsibility, and encourage the governance during restructuring processes. The collected data justifies further research on the financial and organizational dimension of outplacement, and on the regulatory roles of the different sectors that are acting in diversified conditions at a local and regional level.

The new impetus for the promotion of outplacement services is the reform of ALMPs in Poland, which started in 2014. New version of the Act on the Promotion of Employment and Labour Market Institutions implies, in particular, an increase of pressure on the efficiency by the profiling of services provided to unemployed persons and by commissioning the activation services by the public employment offices to the selected external entities<sup>28</sup>. Among others the reform includes goals such as contracting activation services for selected groups of unemployed in the private and NGOs employment agencies; the improvement of governance and social dialogue in local LMPs through the transformation of the Labour Market Councils consisting of representatives of trade unions, employers' organizations, representatives of local governments, and community organizations to manage the Labour Fund's resources and to programme and monitor LMPs; reducing the bureaucracy of labour office services; the integration of counseling, career information, and assistance in job search; grants for telework; awards for employment agencies if they manage to find a job for the unemployed; the tripartite training agreements between unemployed, labour offices, and training institutions; the subsidy for hiring of unemployed aged 50+; vouchers for the young unemployed to spend on the training, relocation, and

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<sup>28</sup> *Projekt założeń projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy oraz niektórych innych ustaw*, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 13.02.2013, [www.mpips.gov.pl/bip/projekty-aktow-prawnych/projekty-ustaw/rynek-pracy/ustawa-o-zmianie-ustawy-o-promocji-zatrudnienia-i-instytucjach-rynku-pracy-oraz-niektorych-innych-ustaw-/](http://www.mpips.gov.pl/bip/projekty-aktow-prawnych/projekty-ustaw/rynek-pracy/ustawa-o-zmianie-ustawy-o-promocji-zatrudnienia-i-instytucjach-rynku-pracy-oraz-niektorych-innych-ustaw-/), accessed 15.03.2013; J. Męcina, *Niewykorzystane zasoby. Nowa polityka rynku pracy*, ASPRA-JR, Warszawa 2013.



internship; establishment of a National Training Fund, which will cover entrepreneurs' costs of employees' training.

The second source of a future welfare mix in the Polish ALMPs, which is related to the outplacement, may be the programming of the European Union's new financial perspective for the years 2014-2020, which includes the services co-financed by the European Social Fund. The 2007-2013 Human Capital Operational Programme coordinated by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development allowed the implementation of the comprehensive outplacement projects. In 2014-2020, the outplacement will be financed under the Knowledge—Education—Development Operational Programme as a part of the action to support the development of competence and qualifications of employees and enterprises to adapt to the economic changes<sup>29</sup>. Projects in these programs are selected in the regional competitions from the proposals submitted by commercial entities and NGOs, which mainly run the training institutions and employment agencies.

## 5. Case Study: Employment Agencies for People with Disabilities

In this case, the need to construct rules of the welfare mix and governance is even more complicated and demanding. In Poland, various departments, entities, and bodies currently provide services for people with disabilities. In reference to the analysis of M. Rymśa we may note that in Poland, there is a need for a “reintegration of integration,” which is, the cooperation of different departments, organizations, and institutions that mainly fulfill their statutory tasks without particular attention to the effects of their activities<sup>30</sup>. This leads to the phenomenon of four parallel and uncoordinated sectoral policies for people with disabilities: (1) the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities (including the occupational therapy workshops and social enterprises); (2) the social assistance; (3) the employment and labour market services (public employment offices, commercial employment agencies, and NGOs employment agencies); (4) the social employment (including centers and clubs for social integration). Each of these subsystems provides activation services, which are different, but with not well coordinated, synonymous,

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<sup>29</sup> *Program Operacyjny Wiedza Edukacja Rozwój 2014-2020*, Ministry of Infrastructure and Development, Warszawa 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. M. Rymśa, *Aktywizacja w polityce społecznej. W stronę rekonstrukcji europejskich welfare states?*, IFiS PAN, Warszawa 2013, pp. 352-354.

and overlapping objectives. Successively these are: (1) the vocational activation, social activation, and health rehabilitation; (2) the empowerment; (3) the employment; and (4) the social integration.

In 2013, the author conducted research on employment agencies for people with disabilities, which was as part of a national project “Non-Governmental Employment Agencies for Disabled People. Opportunities and Dilemmas of Development in the Non-Governmental Sector” (pol. “Niepubliczne agencje zatrudnienia osób niepełnosprawnych. Możliwości i dylematy rozwoju w sektorze pozarządowym”)<sup>31</sup>. The primary objective of the study was to formulate answers to the question of what the most important factors are determining the role of employment agencies for people with disabilities run by NGOs in Poland and what their main needs and the barriers to the development are. The basic premises of the study were current and expected changes in the NGOs employment agencies. So far, such detailed analysis on a national scale has not been carried out. Meanwhile, in recent years these entities used the European funds for the development of the innovative activation projects and sought professionalization, specialization, and standardization of their services. The analysis included a qualitative critical review of secondary sources (theoretical publications, the recommendations of the international and national social policies, and reports of employment agencies) and the quantitative research—individual telephone interviews with NGOs leading employment agencies for people with disabilities. Research includes 31 interviews from the sample of all 95 such entities run in Poland. Exactly 11 agencies were located in and around Warsaw. While other important cities were Lublin (3 agencies) and Łódź (2 agencies). Thus, nearly 35.5% of agencies of the total sample are located in the Mazowieckie Voivodship. Regarding the territorial scope of activities, approximately 29.8% agencies focus only on the local level, 38.8% on a regional level, while 29.3% on a domestic level, and 0.9% on an international level. At the same time, agencies employ an average of about 30 employees such as guidance counselors, coaches, and lawyers. An employment agency for people with disabilities operates in the field of vocational guidance (32.1%), employment in the country (29.8%), and personal counseling (27.4%). These agencies occasionally engaged in temporary employment services and abroad job offers.

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<sup>31</sup> A. Klimczuk, M. Siedlecki, P. Sadowska, M. Sydow, *Niepubliczne agencje zatrudnienia osób niepełnosprawnych. Możliwości i dylematy rozwoju w sektorze pozarządowym*, FPMiNR, Fundacja SocLab, Warszawa-Białystok 2013.

The main challenge of the NGO employment agency sector for persons with disabilities is its high internal diversity in terms of the capacity, a scale of operation, and the number of customers, which is not conducive to integration and joint actions with public employment services. The average agency registers during the year 374 persons with disabilities that are seeking work (ranging from several thousands of people to several people), acquires 6 jobs offers per month (74 in the year), and through their services 5 customers per month (61 per year) find employees. Currently, slightly more clients of job agencies are women. At the same time, clients of agencies are predominantly people aged 50+ (58.0%) and persons aged 25+ (48.4%). Thus, there is a need to adjust the agency services to their characteristics and create alliances with partners specializing in an aging society, such as training institutions, which are conducting programs in the field of lifelong learning. It should also be noted that, in the opinion of the respondents, agencies have to deal with difficult customers who are usually demanding the fundamental information on occupations, employment, training opportunities, and education (70.0%). So far, most of the job offers (36%) came from the other social entities, NGOs, and social enterprises. Similar shares of 11.6% are applications from the construction companies, trade industry, and hospitality industry. Deficits of offers are observed mainly in the case of the public administration, agriculture, real estate activities, culture, entertainment, and recreation. There are no job offers for people with disabilities in management positions, administrative positions, technical positions, and the positions that require high availability and mobility.

The primary opportunity for the development of employment agencies for people with disabilities is their inner potential. In general, respondents highly appreciate their NGOs, an average of 4 points in a 6-point scale (where 1 is unsatisfactory, and 6 is perfect). At 4.6 points, they evaluate various aspects of the organization's infrastructure (office, accessibility for clients, and lack of architectural barriers), skills, and resources. The agency marketing, business consulting, quality management and general aspects of the management, are also positively evaluated. The biggest challenge is the financial management. While acquiring the external resources is evaluated as good (4.1), the quality of competencies of fundraising staff is insufficient (3.9), the financial stability of the entity is rather low (3.5), and the ability to use NGO's financial resources is low (3.2). The agencies point out that the activation of their customers is often possible only with external funding, which leads to the strong competition for grants without concern for the quality of submitted projects. At the same time when their fundraising departments are weak, the agencies are dependent on the

European and domestic public funds. The main problems in raising the external funds are the complicated procedures and low subsidies (both 32.3%) and the lack of support from the local authorities (29.0%). In the standardization of their services, agencies perceive the continuous improvement of services (4.4), an increase of requirements for their employees and their contacts with the environment (4.3), and the promotion of agency through the creation of the best practices (4.3). Respondents were also asked to assess the barriers to the development of agencies. The highest scores were obtained on the side of the public employment service deficits: lack of interest in cooperation, lack of studies of the best practices in employment of people with disabilities, lack of contacts developed between agencies, and lack of measures to support employment agencies such as training and joint projects with local authorities.

Regarding employment agencies' cooperation with other institutions, the study evaluated their relationships with 30 types of broadly defined labour market institutions, social institutions, and business environment. The analysis shows that agencies have virtually no contact with entities such as technology transfer centers and investment funds. Their relations are neutral with entities such as technology parks, institutions of social dialogue, scientific, research and development entities, and higher education. While the cooperation focuses on the district family assistance centers, public employment services, support centers run by NGOs, and therapy workshops. The actual competitors of agencies are social integration clubs, volunteer work camps, training institutions, local partnerships, and support centers run by NGOs. The analyzed employment agencies mostly have had experience of cooperation with public employment services such as the project partner (67.7%). They have also taken part in a project funded by the European funds (64.5%) and partaken in the joint information and publicity (61.3%).

Forms of cooperation that have not been used in the relations of NGOs employment agencies and public employment services include: the use of integrated databases of beneficiaries of labour market institutions and social assistance (93.5%); the financial support from the Labour Fund (80.6%); and the transfer of data recorded by the office about the unemployed ones and job seekers (77.4%). Most organizations reminded that actions such as the exchange of knowledge about unemployed persons are currently not possible due to the Act on Personal Data Protection. Some public employment services have opined that the public labour offices only hide their inactivity behind the protection of personal data, as they can shape the cooperation with other entities to exchange

necessary information with agencies including, for example, job offers. However, they do not do it either from the lack of desire or due to the treatment of employment agencies as competition. There are also voices that problems will be solved by the full privatization of employment services so that all agencies will work under the same conditions. Respondents recognize that the cooperation could bring benefits in the form of social activation of the unemployed and excluded persons and their comprehensive support. The barriers are the lack of will (11%), the formalism, the lack of tradition of cooperation (8.5%), and the lack of finance (8.5%).

**Table 4: Assessment of the Employment Agency Relationship with Labour Market Actors and Social Institutions (Part 1).**

	No contacts	Indifference - neither competition nor cooperation	Competition	Cooperation	Do not know/no opinion
Local and regional development agencies	7	11	0	11	2
%	22.6%	35.5%	0%	35.5%	6.5%
Social integration centers	6	10	0	12	3
%	19.4%	32.3%	0%	38.7%	9.7%
Lifelong learning training centers	5	12	1	10	3
%	16.1%	38.7%	3.2%	32.3%	9.7%
Technology transfer centers	10	12	0	5	4
%	32.3%	38.7%	0%	16.1%	12.9%
Investment funds	8	15	1	4	3
%	25.8%	48.4%	3.2%	12.9%	9.7%
Business incubators	4	14	1	10	2
%	12.9%	45.2%	3.2%	32.3%	6.5%

Other employment agencies	4	9	1	17	0
%	12.9%	29.0%	3.2%	54.8%	0%
The institutions of social dialogue (trade unions, employers' unions, unemployed unions)	1	15	0	15	0
%	3.2%	48.4%	0%	48.4%	0%
Financial institutions	3	13	0	13	2
%	9.7%	41.9%	0%	41.9%	6.5%
Academic institutions, research and development institutions, higher education	1	15	0	15	0
%	3.2%	48.4%	0%	48.4%	0%
Institutions of local partnership	1	12	2	16	0
%	3.2%	38.7%	6.5%	51.6%	0%
Training institutions	3	13	2	12	1
%	9.7%	41.9%	6.5%	38.7%	3.2%
Chambers of commerce and industry	6	12	0	11	2
%	19.4%	38.7%	0%	35.5%	6.5%

Source: Own research, ITI on NGO employment agencies, N=31.



**Table 4: Assessment of the Employment Agency Relationship with Labour Market Actors and Social Institutions (Part 2).**

	No contacts	Indifference - neither competition nor cooperation	Competition	Cooperation	Do not know/no opinion
Chambers of crafts	4	13	0	13	1
%	12.9%	41.9%	0%	41.9%	3.2%
Clubs of social inclusion	1	15	7	7	1
%	3.2%	48.4%	22.6%	22.6%	3.2%
Commercial consultancies	4	13	1	13	0
%	12.9%	41.9%	3.2%	41.9%	0%
Voluntary labour corps	2	8	3	18	0
%	6.5%	25.8%	9.7%	58.1%	0%
Non-governmental organizations working in the field of vocational activation	0	11	1	19	0
%	0%	35.5%	3.2%	61.3%	0%
Social welfare centers	4	11	0	15	1
%	12.9%	35.5%	0%	48.4%	3.2%
Technology parks	3	15	0	13	0
%	9.7%	48.4%	0%	41.9%	0%
District family assistance centers	1	5	0	25	0
%	3.2%	16.1%	0%	80.6%	0%
NGOs support centers	1	9	2	19	0
%	3.2%	29.0%	6.5%	61.3%	0%
Public employment services (regional, district)	6	5	1	19	0
%	19.4%	16.1%	3.2%	61.3%	0%
Regional center of social policy	5	9	0	16	1
%	16.1%	29.0%	0%	51.6%	3.2%
Independent positions, departments in local government units	7	5	0	18	1

	%	22.6%	16.1%	0%	58.1%	3.2%
Social cooperatives		6	9	0	14	2
	%	19.4%	29.0%	0%	45.2%	6.5%
Business associations		7	11	0	11	2
	%	22.6%	35.5%	0%	35.5%	6.5%
Professional associations (for example, Polish Engineering Association)		5	8	0	16	2
	%	16.1%	25.8%	0%	51.6%	6.5%
Therapy workshops		4	8	0	19	0
	%	12.9%	25.8%	0%	61.3%	0%
Professional activity workshops		6	8	0	17	0
	%	19.4%	25.8%	0%	54.8%	0%

Source: Own research, ITI on NGO employment agencies, N=31.

The study shows that in Poland an important issue is the cooperation of NGOs employment agencies for people with disabilities with not only the public employment services, but also with the social assistance institutions, educational institutions, scientific institutions, and business environment. Most of them do not maintain regular contact with each other or are indifferent to each other. Moreover, the public employment services are present in the dual role—as both collaborators and competitors in the exchange of job offers and in the implementation of projects involving the European funds.

In this context, the source of a future mixed economy of welfare in Polish ALMPs may be the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) that was ratified by Poland in 2012<sup>32</sup>. This Convention imposes on the country the obligation to remove barriers to access by persons with disabilities in using their rights also in terms of labour and employment, in monitoring the implementation of these rights, and the dissemination of knowledge about the Convention among citizens. It should be noted that the ratification will influence in the coming years the integration of social policy in the

<sup>32</sup> *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 2006.

fields of: equality before the law, universal design, equal access to education, digital inclusion, participation of people with disabilities in elections, and their access to justice<sup>33</sup>. According to the early international examinations of the CRPD in the context of social inclusion, there have been noted problems with its application to domestic law, domestic policy, and domestic courts and at the same time there are still the gaps in their consistency with the CRPD. Among the observed obstacles are: the need for more detailed domestic legislation, the lack of awareness of the rights of people with disabilities, the lack of accessibility, the old and current public policies, and the current national budget systems<sup>34</sup>.

## 6. Conclusions

This section focuses on the practical recommendations and directions for further research. Outplacement programs should take into account the best practices in communicating redundancy decisions to affected employees. It is reasonable to maintain employees' employability and to support their ability to remain on standby for the possibility of redundancies. Outplacement programs should include activities not only for workers affected by redundancies, but also for those remaining in the company. The benefits for laid-off workers may be generated by the outplacement programs in forms of temporary employment, employment in NGOs and social enterprises, and in the coordination of these programs with employment agencies. It should be underlined that NGOs may also be animators and actors of outplacement by the management of such programs and by the coordination of their own activities and activities of other entities. It is reasonable to promote and strengthen local partnerships as entities that can serve the adapted outplacement and the environmental outplacement and thus improve the strategic management of LMPs at the local and regional level. It is reasonable to break the stereotype of the high cost of outplacement through the promotion of best practices of NGOs employment agencies. Also, important is the promotion of outplacement as part of the corporate social responsibility. Attention should be paid to promoting the outplacement as part of stakeholder governance by companies, which may contribute to the

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<sup>33</sup> A. Błaszczak (ed.), *Najważniejsze wyzwania po ratyfikacji przez Polskę Konwencji ONZ o Prawach Osób Niepełnosprawnych*, Biuro Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich, Warszawa 2012.

<sup>34</sup> A. Rimmerman, *Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities: National and International Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2013, pp. 135-137.

creation of economic and social values. It is necessary to collect and disseminate the best practices of outplacement programs for SMEs. However, the literature on the subject consists mainly of studies carried out in large companies. An undertaken analysis allows identifying the following directions for further research: the deepening of research on the possibilities of outplacement management of NGOs; research on the opportunities and barriers of outplacement from the perspective of NGOs and social economy entities operating in the labour market; and three-dimensional welfare mix approach to the use of outplacement by SMEs in the cooperation with private employment services (service provision, finance, and regulation).

There are also many recommendations in the case of cooperation between public employment services and NGOs employment agencies in activation of people with disabilities in the labour market. There is a need for the dissemination of governance models in the relations between these entities based on a dialogue, which can lead to a better allocation of tasks, resources, access to information, to the emergence of new solutions, and can solve problems in a horizontal manner—taking into account all their aspects. Agencies should adapt their services to the needs of people aged 50+ by cooperation with lifelong learning institutions. There is a need to conduct the research on the effectiveness of agency services, agency financing, and coordination models, including links between employment agencies and the social economy. An analysis of the environment of people with disabilities and disability culture in Poland is still needed, including the attitudes, opinions, and service relationships with entities of social policy. Another field of studies may focus on practices in which people with disabilities are perceived not only as recipients or as consumers of services, but also as citizens and co-producers. Moreover, the internal diversity of the environment of people with disabilities needs more emphasis on the processes of self-organization to defend and exercise their rights. There is also a need to focus on the disability in the life cycle perspective—study of biographies, taking into account the different stages of life and areas of the relationship of people with disabilities with the entities of social policy and ALMPs. Another topic is the analysis of the multiple discrimination and ways to prevent its occurrence, particularly in the public entities. It is also possible to develop a collection of the best practices in employment of people with disabilities in the labour market, including employers' attitudes and solutions for disabled employees and the occupancy of higher management positions by persons with disabilities.





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