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EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION INCURRED BY POLISH SOCIETY IN THE PERIOD 2000-2006

Abstract

Governments of particular countries take various educational actions for living and working in a knowledge-based society. It is extremely important for educational policy to counter social exclusion which is possible thanks to providing all the citizens with a free access to work and education. Such a policy should at the same time provide the development of information society, research and innovation, and shape certain qualifications and skills of society.

Expenditure on education incurred by households is calculated on the basis of a percentage share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure. The former may be connected with both education of children and adults.

The paper aims at analyzing the share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure in Polish households in the period 2000-2006. On the one hand, this will allow for assessing the importance of education to the society, and on the other hand, for presenting the effects of educational policy pursued by the country.

In order to carry out the analysis, statistical data derived from Central Statistical Office and particularly from *Statistical Yearbooks* for certain years were used. These data allowed for determining expenditure on education both with reference to the total of households as well as with respect to five particular socio-economic groups of households, namely employees, employees running their own farms, farmers, self-employed, as well as retired persons and pensioners. Demographic forecasts of Central Statistical Office and information on the educational system in Poland collected from Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange were used as well.

Key words: households, education, expenditure, society

Introduction

Knowledge is the most precious resource in knowledge-based economy. In the 21st century, the importance of natural resources and poorly qualified labour force is declining while the role of human capital is becoming more and more prominent. Qualified employees, people who have exceptional abilities, and scientists are sought on the labour market and well-paid. Enterprises that invest in the research and qualified labour force have a possibility of a more dynamic development. More dynamic development takes place when there are strong research and scientific units, good economic background capable of absorption and commercial use of this knowledge, as well as appropriate means for financing the research. However, it is the creation of efficient mechanisms for cooperation and inflow of knowledge between main subjects of socio-economic life that is a decisive factor.

Hence, governments of particular countries take various educational actions for living

and working in a knowledge-based society. It is extremely important for educational policy to counter social exclusion which is possible thanks to providing all the citizens with a free access to work and education. Such a policy should at the same time provide the development of information society, research and innovation, and shape certain qualifications and skills of society.

Increase in the share of adults in continuing education, reduction in the percentage of young people leaving education having not gained necessary qualifications or increase in the share of people with higher education in population at productive age ought to be main objectives of state policy. In this way, the ability of a government to influence social decisions about education and interest in education is of profound importance.

The paper aims at analysing the share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure in Polish households in the period 2000-2006. On the one hand, this will allow for assessing the importance of education to the society, and on the other hand, for presenting the effects of educational policy pursued by the country.

In order to carry out the analysis, statistical data derived from Central Statistical Office and particularly from *Statistical Yearbooks* for certain years were used. These data allowed for determining expenditure on education both with reference to the total of households as well as with respect to five particular socio-economic groups of households, namely employees, employees running their own farms, farmers, self-employed, as well as retired persons and pensioners.

In the present paper, demographic forecasts of Central Statistical Office and information on the educational system in Poland collected from Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange were used as well.

Educational system in Poland[1]

Until September 1999, educational system in Poland included the eight-year primary school. After primary school, students could continue education in general lyceums, technical secondary schools or secondary vocational schools.

Educational system needed to be reformed in order to meet requirements resulting from Poland's integration in the European Union, and because of changes resulting from systemic transformation as well as population decline of children aged 6 and 7. The following reasons behind the reform could be mentioned:

- lack of adaptive abilities and compliance of old educational system with pace and scope of systemic, economic and social transformations,
- lack of equal access to education at each level,
- low index in percentage of young people receiving secondary and higher education,
- adjustment of educational system to constitutional regulations and political reform of the country,
- adjustment of vocational education to changing needs of market economy,
- need for stronger relation between school at all levels and family as well as local community.

In September 1999, reform of educational system was carried out in Poland. It introduced both changes in curricula as well as new types of schools. The following types of schools have been functioning in Poland since 1999: a six-year primary school, a three-year gymnasium (lower secondary school) and post-gymnasium schools that include a three-year specialized lyceum, a four-year technical secondary school, and a two-year or three-year vo-

[1] Information obtained from Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange (www.buwiwm.edu.pl).

cational school. Graduates of vocational schools may continue their education in a two-year complementary lyceum or a three-year complementary technical secondary school.

The total number of years from the beginning of education to completing secondary education that allows for taking maturity (secondary school leaving) examination is 12 – 15 years. Having passed this examination, graduates receive maturity (secondary school leaving) examination certificate which entitles them to apply for admission to a higher education institution.

At present, both state higher education institutions as well as non-state higher education institutions function in Poland. The latter began to be established after 1990. In order to begin their functioning, they must receive permission from the Minister of National Education and acquire a legal status once registered by this Minister.

Furthermore, state and non-state higher vocational schools have been established since 1998. In these schools, students undergo professional training (lasting 15 weeks) and hence are prepared for practicing their professions.

All higher education institutions provide students with different modes of studies, namely full-time, evening or extramural studies. Nonetheless, full-time studies are the most popular and at the same time the main system of studies.

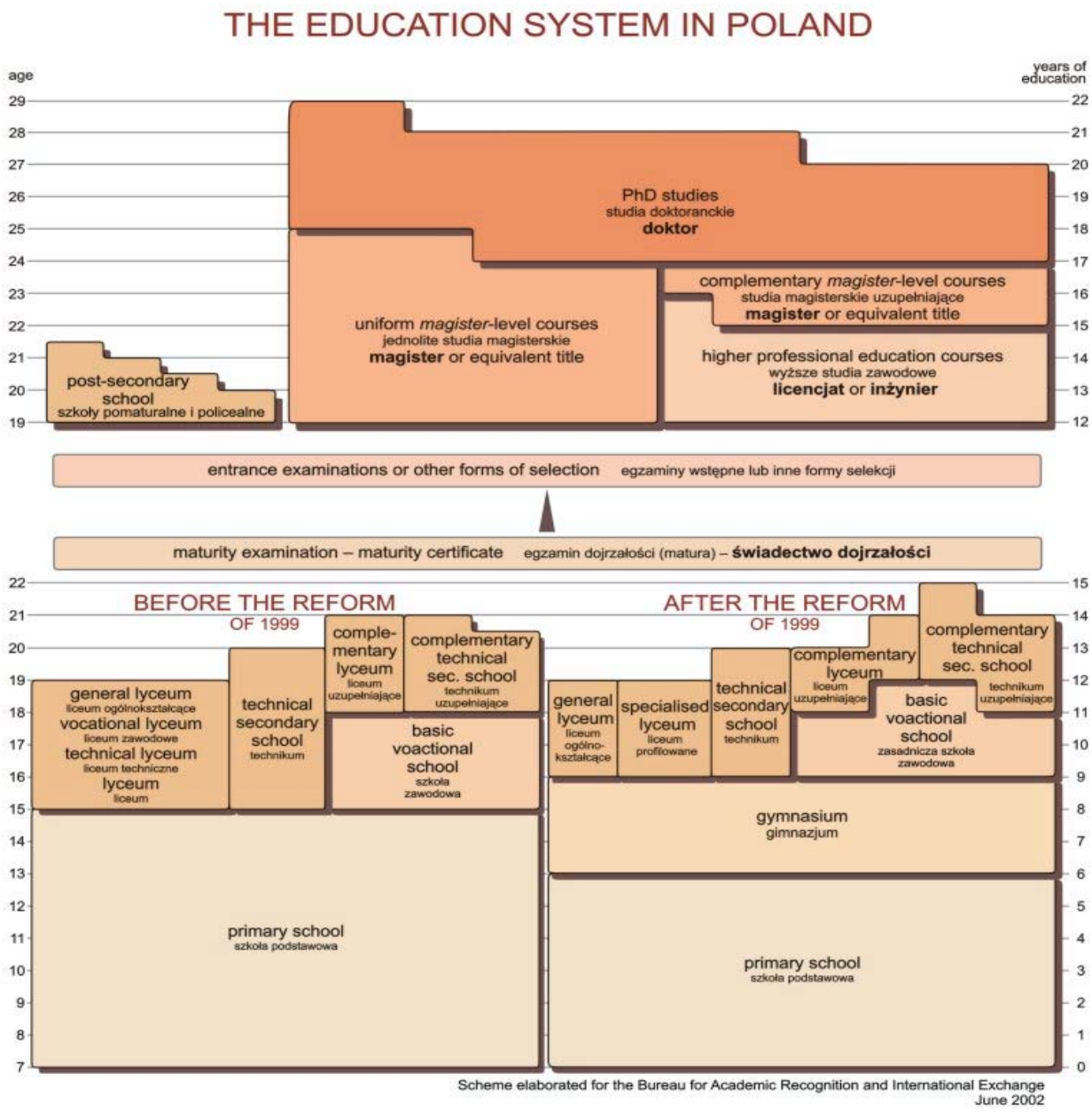
Only persons who hold the maturity certificate (*świadectwo dojrzałości*) qualify for admission to higher education institution. At present, college entrance exams have been replaced with so-called "new maturity examination". Applicants are enrolled mainly on the basis of results they have obtained (included in the maturity certificate). However, in many higher education institutions so-called interviews with applicants are made.

Graduates from higher education institutions may obtain one of the following professional titles:

- licentiate (including licentiate of nursery or licentiate of midwifery) awarded once a student had completed a 3 or 3.5-year higher professional studies;
- engineer (including engineer in the field of architecture or town-planning) awarded once a student had completed higher professional studies in technical fields, agriculture, and forestry as well as in such fields of study in which technical subjects or subjects relating to agriculture and forestry constitute at least 50% of all classes included in plan and curriculum of studies;
- master (including master in the field of fine arts, master in the field of engineering, master in the field of architecture, master in the field of medicine, master in the field of dentistry – until April 30, 2004 dental surgeon, master in the field of veterinary medicine) awarded once a student had completed a 4.5 or 6-year uniform master's studies.

Moreover, persons who have graduated from higher professional studies and obtained the title of licentiate (bachelor) or engineer can be awarded master's degree on the completion of a 2 or 2.5-year complementary master's studies.

Picture 1. The educational system in Poland



Source: Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange, www.buwiwm.edu.pl, state on December 30, 2007.

What is more, academic degrees such as doctor (doktor) and habilitated doctor (doktor habilitowany) in a particular academic field are conferred in Polish educational system as well. Doctor's degree is awarded to a person who has obtained master's degree or other equivalent degree, passed doctoral examinations in the scope delineated by the council of organizational unit as well as proposed and successfully defended a doctoral dissertation. A person who would like to obtain habilitated doctor degree ought to hold doctor's degree and have important academic or artistic achievements, as well as have proposed a habilitation thesis. Postdoctoral degree conferral procedures end with the resolution of the council of organizational unit on conferring the title of habilitated doctor. It should be stated that the title of

doctor and the title of habilitated doctor are awarded in organizational units of higher education institutions as well as in other higher education establishments entitled to confer these titles.

Population of pupils and students

Taking EU directives on educational system into account, increasing the share of people with higher education in the population at working age seems to be one of the most significant aspects. With reference to Polish educational system, education is compulsory until the age of 18 and one is given a possibility of free education (including higher education). Young people are more and more aware of requirements imposed by the modern labour market and continue education despite the fact that it is not obligatory once they are 18.

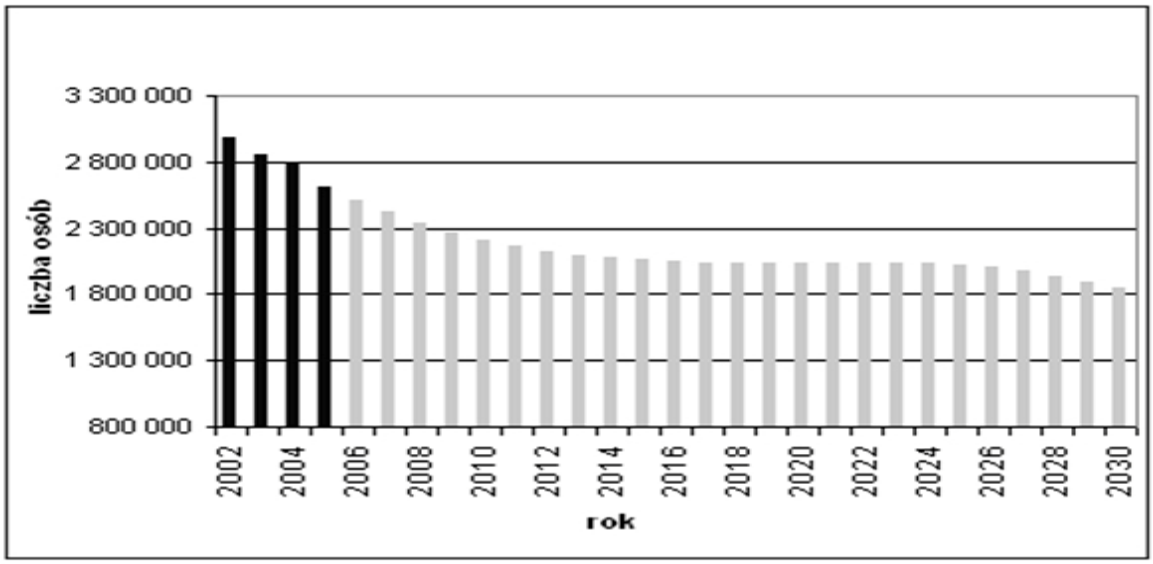
In order to define perspectives for increase in education level in Poland, analyzing the size of population of young people potentially in education, i.e. aged 7-24 seems crucial. Four groups of young people in education have been distinguished in the paper:

- children aged 7-12 – attending primary schools,
- teenagers aged 13-15 – attending lower secondary schools (gymnasia),
- young people aged 16-18 – attending upper secondary schools,
- young people aged 19-24 – students.

At present, there is a tendency in Poland toward increase in the number of young people attending post-primary education whereas the number of pupils attending primary schools is declining. At the same time, it can be noticed that the number of students attending schools for adults is increasing (non-state in particular).

According to data derived from GUS (Central Statistical Office), there were almost 2.6 million children aged 7-12 in 2005. This number declined by 12% (so by 366 thousand) compared to 2002. Demographic forecasts about population change suggest that in the period 2006-2017, the number of children attending primary schools (i.e. aged 7-12) will be dropping. This number will even decline by 22% (so by over 570 thousand persons) in 2017 compared to 2005. Only during the following six years (namely in the period 2018-2024) it will not be subject to major fluctuations (Information for Sejmowa Komisja …).

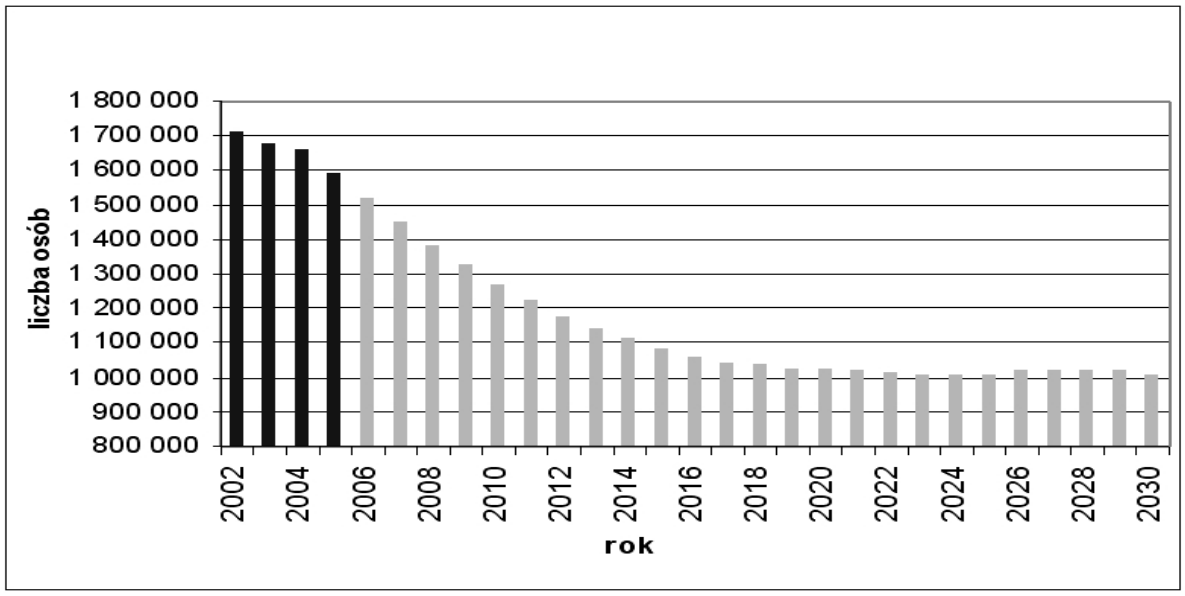
Chart 1. The number of children aged 7-12



Source: forecast made by Central Statistical Office, www.rodzina.gov.pl/zaf/f.191_1/doc, state on December 30, 2007.

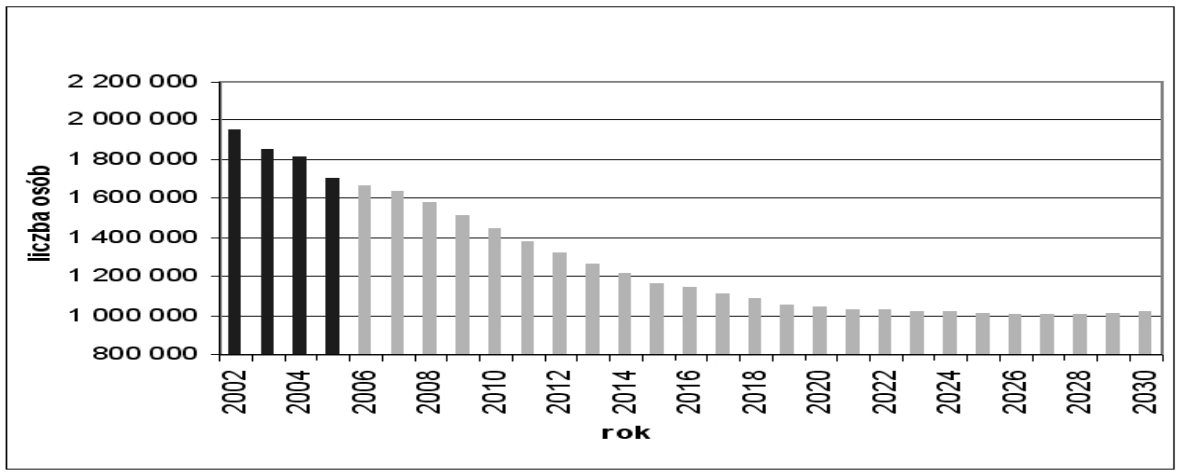
Another group distinguished are teenagers aged 13-15. There were almost 1.6 million persons from this group in 2005 which meant that this number dropped by 7% (123 thousand) compared to 2002. Since 2006 there has been a trend toward a decline in the number of teenagers attending lower secondary schools (gymnasia). This situation shall occur until 2017. Subsequently, according to forecasts issued by Central Statistical Office, this number will be stabilizing until 2030 (Information for Sejmowa Komisja …).

Chart 2. The number of teenagers aged 13-15



Source: forecast made by Central Statistical Office, www.rodzina.gov.pl/zaf/f.191_1/doc, state on December 30, 2007.

Chart 3. The number of young people aged 16-18



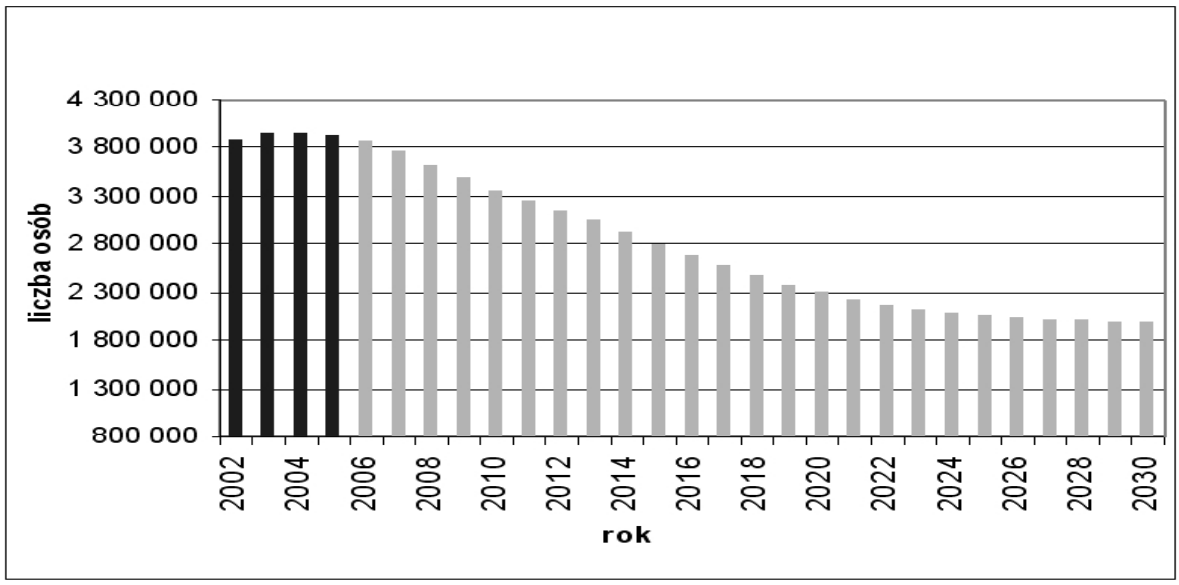
Source: forecast made by Central Statistical Office, www.rodzina.gov.pl/zaf/f.191_1/doc, state on December 30, 2007.

Young people aged 16-18 form the third group distinguished. The number of persons is declining here as well. It has been dropping since 2002. In 2005, young people aged 16-18 amounted to 1.7 million which indicated that this number declined by 13% (120 thousand) compared to 2002. According to forecasts, this trend will continue until 2019 and then it will

be steady. In fact, this tendency is very much similar to tendency observed in the case of teenagers aged 13-15 (Information for Sejmowa Komisja …).

As far as forecasts about population are concerned, young people aged 19-24 form the fourth group. According to data derived from Central Statistical Office, this group amounted to almost 3.9 million in 2005. Hence, it might be noticed that this number increased by 0.9% (38 thousand) compared to 2002. Furthermore, this number was increasing until 2005. Nevertheless, decline in this number has been observed since 2006. This situation is expected to last. The decline shall continue until 2025 when (as forecasted by Central Statistical Office) the number of young people aged 19-24 will amount to c.a. 2 million. In the following years, this number shall remain at a relatively fixed level (Information for Sejmowa Komisja …).

Chart 4. The number of young people aged 19-24



Source: forecast made by Central Statistical Office, www.rodzina.gov.pl/zaf/f.191_1/doc, state on December 30, 2007.

Summing up, the number of children and teenagers attending primary schools as well as lower and upper secondary schools shall drop during next several years. This is a challenge mainly to the educational system. For, on the one hand, it is a chance for better education received by children and teenagers in smaller classes. However, on the other hand, it could be a threat to schools (particularly in case of small towns) which might even result in their liquidation. As far as the educational system is concerned, declining number of children and teenagers will allow for using a part of educational potential to develop continuing education.

Expenditure on education incurred by Polish households

On the basis of the structure of household expenses, these expenses may be divided into basic expenses and expenses of free choice. The former satisfy fundamental needs and include expenses incurred on food, clothes and footwear, living expenses and expenses connected with furnishings, personal hygiene as well as health care. Expenses of free choice are those incurred on goods and services that satisfy non-elementary needs such as expenditure on education, recreation, transport and communication as well as other expenditure (Grzega U., 2000).

Expenditure on education incurred by households is assessed on the basis of a percentage share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure. The expenditure

may connected with both education of children as well as adults.

In order to assess expenditure on education covered by Polish society in the period 2000-2006, it seems necessary to carry out the analysis of the level of income earned and expenses incurred by all the households.

Table 1. Average monthly per capita disposable income in households by socio-economic groups in the period 2000-2006 (in Zlotys)

SPECIFICATION Households:	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
In total (indices of income)	610.51 (100)	644.48 (105.6)	664.21 (108.8)	680.50 (111.5)	735.40 (120.5)	761.46 (124.7)	834,68 (136,7)
Employees (indices of income)	657.27 (100)	683.07 (103.9)	698.09 (106.2)	729.87 (110.0)	742.45 (113.0)	770.00 (117.2)	829,18 (126,1)
Employees who run their own farms (indices of income)	483.58 (100)	508.10 (105.1)	511.12 (105.7)	521.25 (107.8)	lack of data	lack of data	lack of data
Farmers (indices of income)	455.99 (100)	497.54 (109.1)	571.83 (125.4)	474.31 (104.0)	539.93 (118.4)	606.17 (132.9)	689,75 (151,3)
Self-employed (indices of income)	794.67 (100)	808.22 (101.7)	843.24 (106.1)	860.20 (108.3)	935.12 (117.7)	977.10 (123.0)	1102,63 (138,8)
Retired persons and pensioners (indices of income)	617.27 (100)	673.89 (109.2)	699.02 (113.2)	720.00 (116.6)	779.22 (126.2)	800.25 (129.6)	872,86 (141,4)

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2001, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2001, p. 187; Statistical Yearbook 2002, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2002, p. 188; Statistical Yearbook 2003, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2003, p. 201; Statistical Yearbook 2004, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2004, p. 288; Statistical Yearbook 2005, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2005, p. 289; Statistical Yearbook 2006, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2006, p. 291, Household budget surveys in 2006, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2007, p. 50; own compilation.

In the period 2000-2006, income increased by almost 37% (on average) in the case of all households. Taken particular socio-economic groups of households into account, the highest income was generated by households managed by self-employed. In 2000, income earned in these households increased by 30% compared to income generated by the total of households. With reference to the following years, this income rose by 25% in 2001, by 27% in 2002, by 26% in 2003, by 27% in 2004, by 28% in 2005,and by 32% in 2006. Indices of income generated by these households from 2000 to 2006 amounted to 138,8 (the year 2000=100, that is 794.67=100).

As far as the full period analyzed is concerned, the lowest income was earned by households managed by farmers. Nonetheless, indices of income generated by these households were the highest as they amounted to 151,3 in the period 2000-2006 (the year 2000=100, that is 455.99=100). This income was always higher than income earned by the total of households. Taken the period under examination into consideration, the differences

amounted to 25%, 22.8%, 13.9%, 30.3%, 26.6%, 20.4%, 17,4% (on average, this income dropped by 20,3% each year in the period analyzed).

Households run by employees were characterized by the lowest indices of income.

Table 2. Average monthly per capita expenses in households by socio-economic groups in the period 2000-2006 (in Zlotys)

SPECIFICATION Households:	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
In total (indices of expenses)	599.49 (100)	609.72 (101.7)	624.99 (104.3)	643.84 (107.4)	694.70 (115.9)	690.30 (115.1)	744,81 (124,2)
Employees (indices of expenses)	657.27 (100)	628.50 (95.6)	641.29 (97.6)	673.15 (102.4)	717.90 (109.2)	684.41 (104.1)	732,02 (111,4)
Employees running their own farms (indices of expenses)	483.58 (100)	478.72 (99.0)	478.78 (99.0)	484.70 (100.2)	515.46 (106.6)	lack of data	Lack of data
Farmers (indices of expenses)	455.99 (100)	458.60 (100.6)	487.19 (106.8)	461.20 (101.1)	507.33 (111.3)	533.91 (117.1)	573,76 (117,9)
Self-employed (indices of expenses)	794.67 (100)	762.15 (95.9)	797.57 (100.4)	817.24 (102.8)	854.74 (107.6)	869.80 (109.5)	955,26 (120,2)
Retired persons and pensioners (indices of expenses)	617.27 (100)	663.09 (107.4)	683.14 (110.7)	697.67 (113.0)	761.44 (123.4)	746.05 (120.9)	800,36 (129,7)

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2001, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2001, p. 187; Statistical Yearbook 2002, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2002, p. 188; Statistical Yearbook 2003, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2003, p. 201; Statistical Yearbook 2004, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2004, p. 288; Statistical Yearbook 2005, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2005, p. 289; Statistical Yearbook 2006, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2006, p. 291, Household budget surveys in 2006, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2007, p. 60; own compilation.

In the period under analysis (i.e. 2000-2006), indices expressing change in household expenses were considerably lower than indices expressing change in income. Indices expressing change in household expenses amounted to 124,2 (the year 2000=100, that is 599.49=100).

As far as particular years are concerned, the highest expenses were incurred by households managed by self-employed. Households run by retired persons and pensioners occupied the second position. Indices of expenses incurred by households managed by self-employed in the period 2000-2006 amounted to 120,2, whereas in the case of households run by retired persons and pensioners these indices were higher than the average and amounted to 129,7.

The lowest expenses were reported in the case of households managed by farmers. Although indices of these expenses amounted to 117.9 during 7 years, and hence were similar to average indices of expenses calculated for all Polish households, annual expenses incurred by these households dropped by 23,9% (on average). Considerable differences between expenses calculated for the total of households and expenses incurred by households could be noticed each year. In 2000, expenses incurred by households managed by farmers fell by

23.9% compared to the total of household expenses, by 24.8% in 2001, by 22% in 2002, by 28.4% in 2003, by 27.4% in 2004, by 22.7% in 2005,and by 23% in 2006.

Analyzing income and expenses, it might be noticed that economic situation of households run by self-employed was good. By contrast, economic situation of households managed by farmers was definitely the worst.

Table 3. Average monthly per capita expenditure on education in households by socio-economic groups in the period 2000-2006 (in Zlotys)

SPECIFICATION Households:	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
In total (indices of expenditure)	8.61 (100)	9.02 (104.8)	10.06 (116.8)	10.47 (121.6)	10.51 (122.1)	9.07 (105.3)	10,44 (121,3)
Employees (indices of expenditure)	11.98 (100)	12.69 (105.9)	14.02 (117.0)	15.11 (126.1)	15.61 (130.3)	12.37 (103.3)	13,70 (114,4)
Employees running their own farms (indices of expenditure)	6.91 (100)	7.16 (103.6)	8.73 (126.3)	7.42 (107.4)	8.12 (117.5)	lack of data	lack of data
Farmers (indices of expenditure)	4.86 (100)	4.98 (102.5)	5.17 (106.4)	5.45 (112.1)	4.89 (100.6)	5.10 (104.9)	6,34 (130,5)
Self-employed (indices of expenditure)	16.89 (100)	16.90 (100.0)	17.72 (104.9)	18.55 (109.8)	17.82 (105.5)	15.57 (92.2)	17,65 (104,5)
Retired persons and pensioners (indices of expenditure)	2.80 (100)	3.06 (109.3)	3.99 (142.5)	3.87 (138.2)	3.57 (127.5)	2.82 (100.7)	3,58 (127,9)

Source: Statistical Yearbook 2001, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2001, pp. 193, 196; Statistical Yearbook 2002, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2002, pp. 194, 197; Statistical Yearbook 2003, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2003, pp. 207, 210; Statistical Yearbook 2004, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2004, pp. 294, 297; Statistical Yearbook 2005, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2005, pp. 295, 298; Statistical Yearbook 2006, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2006, pp. 297, 300, Household budget surveys in 2006, Central Statistical Office, Warsaw 2007, p. 74; own compilation.

As a result of its activity, a household should use its spending power in optimum way. Common structure of consumption as well as its pattern dominating in society influence the functioning of particular individuals. Actions taken by individuals aim at satisfying both biological needs of a human being as well as non-elementary needs. Fulfilling the latter is reinforced with motivating effects which is reflected in aspiration of individuals to increase the standard of living and education level as well as to intellectual development, which, in turn results in increase in their professional and physical activity.

Thus, education of society plays a crucial role in economic development. That is why expenditure on education incurred by Polish households in the period 2000-2006 will be pre-

sented below.

According to approximate data derived from Central Statistical Office, expenditure on education incurred by Polish households increased slightly in the period 2000-2006. This expenditure increased from 8.61 Zlotys (per head) in 2000 to 10.44 Zlotys (per head) in 2006. Indices expressing change in this period amounted to +21,3%. Nevertheless, it should be noticed that expenditure on education of Polish society was the highest in 2003 and 2004 (increased by over 20% compared to the expenditure incurred in 2000).

The highest expenditure on education was incurred by household managed by self-employed. In 2000, the expenditure in these households increased by almost 100% compared to total expenditure calculated for all the households. Taken the following years into consideration, the aforementioned expenditure rose by 87% in 2001, by 76% in 2002, by 77% in 2003, by 70% in 2004, by 72% in 2005,and by 69% in 2006. However, indices expressing change in expenditure on education in households managed by self-employed are surprising. In comparison with 2000, this expenditure increased by 10% in 2003, whereas in 2005 it fell by as many as 8%.

The other group of households in which expenditure on education was higher than in the average household were households managed by employees. With respect to the period under analysis, education expenditure in these households increased by 36% (on average). Taken the following years into account, in 2000 expenditure on education in the aforementioned households were 39% higher compared to expenditure incurred by the average Polish household, 41% higher in 2001, 39% higher in 2002, 44% higher in 2003, 48.5% higher in 2004, 36.4% higher in 2005, and 31% higher in 2006. Nonetheless, expenditure in these households increased only a bit in comparison with 2000 by 14,4% during 7 years. The highest expenditure was reported in households run by employees as it rose by 30.3% in 2004 compared to 2000 and by 26.1% in 2003.

The lowest expenditure was incurred by households managed by retired persons and pensioners. However, in this case the analysis of the problem is clear because there are many members of these households. Households run by farmers formed the other socio-economic group of households in which expenditure on education in the period 2000-2006 was the lowest one. Expenditure on education incurred by these households were lower than expenditure calculated for the total of households (on average, by 47%). With reference to particular years under consideration, expenditure incurred by the aforementioned households dropped by 43.6% in 2000 compared to expenditure incurred by the total of households, by 44.8% in 2001, by 48.6% in 2002, by 48.1% in 2003, by as many as 53.5% in 2004, by 43.8% in 2005, and by 39,3% in 2006. Indices expressing change in expenditure on education incurred by households managed by farmers and the total of households differed considerably. These indices were similar only in 2001 and in 2005.

In order to fulfill the objective of the present paper, it seems important to present a percentage share of expenditure on education incurred by particular types of households in the total expenditure.

In the period 2000-2006, expenditure on education constituted c.a. 1.5% of the total consumer expenditure incurred by Polish households. Index measuring the share of expenditure on education in the consumption structure fluctuated between 1.3% and 1.6%. The highest percentage was reached in 2002 and in 2003.

Taken the total of households into consideration, index measuring the share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure was higher in the case of households managed by employees as well as self-employed. On the contrary, it was lower in households run by farmers as well as retired persons and pensioners, whereas in the case of households managed by employees running their own farms, indices were similar.

Table 4. The share of average monthly expenditure per capita on education in the total consumer expenditure in households by socio-economic groups in the period 2000-2006 (in %)

SPECIFCATION Households:	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
In total	1.44	1.47	1.61	1.63	1.51	1.31	1.40
Employees	1.82	2.01	2.19	2.24	2.17	1.81	1.87
Employees running their own farms	1.43	1.50	1.82	1.53	1.56	-	-
Farmers	1.07	1.09	1.06	1.18	0.96	0.96	1.10
Self-employed	2.13	2.22	2.22	2.27	2.08	1.79	1. 85
Retired persons and pensioners	0.45	0.46	0.58	0.55	0.47	0.38	0.45

Source: own compilation

The smallest share of expenditure on education was reported by households run by retired persons and pensioners. This index fluctuated round 0.5% each year, and was the lowest in 2005 (namely 0.38%). Needless to say, the fact that expenditure on education was the lowest in this socio-professional group of households is not surprising particularly because of age of members of these households.

The index was low in the case of households managed by farmers as well. On average, the share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure amounted to 1.1% in the period under analysis.

Households run by employees incurred higher expenditure on education than the average household. This expenditure constituted c.a. 2% (on average) of the total consumer expenditure each year. The largest share of expenditure on education was reported in households managed by self-employed (on average, 2.1% in the period examined).

Analyzing the share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure, some other regularities with reference to all socio-professional groups of households may be noticed. In the period 2000-2003, expenditure on education increased, while during the following two years (2004-2005) the percentage share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure dropped and in 2006 expenditure on education increased. Furthermore, the largest share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure was observed in 2002 or 2003 both in the case of the total of households as well as in particular socio-professional groups of Polish society.

Conclusion

In the period analyzed, i.e. 2000-2006, income increased in the case of all socio-professional groups of Polish households. This situation was accompanied by increase in expenses incurred by particular types of households. Only in 2001, consumer expenditure in households managed by employees, employees running their own farms, and self-employed fell slightly.

Expenditure on education, which was the main focus of the analysis made in the pres-

ent paper, constituted a small percentage in the total consumer expenditure. The share of education expenditure fluctuated between 0.48% and 2.1%. Taking seven years examined into consideration, the average share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure amounted to 1.48%. On average, expenditure on education incurred by households run by retired persons and pensioners was the lowest (0.48%), whereas expenditure incurred by households managed by self-employed was the highest (2.1%) in the full period analyzed.

Expenditure on education tended to increase in all types of households in the period 2000-2003. Nevertheless, in 2003 households run by retired persons and pensioners incurred the lowest expenditure on education, and in 2004 similar situation occurred with respect to households managed by farmers and by self-employed. Moreover, expenditure on education incurred by households run by employees dropped in 2005. Despite this tendency, expenditure on education increased in households managed by farmers in 2005. In 2006 the percentage share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure increased in all types of households. What was interesting was the fact that expenditure on education increased each year of the period analyzed only in the case of households managed by persons running their own farms.

Therefore, it may be noticed that, despite the fact that the educational system in Poland has undergone major changes, society is becoming more and more aware of the fact that nowadays everyone has to receive education. A small share of expenditure on education in the total consumer expenditure might result from the fact that Polish society treats free education as something natural. At the same time, growing number of persons with post-primary education is a positive phenomenon that has been occurring since the beginning of economic changes in Poland and the reform of the educational system. In 1998, persons with post-primary education constituted c.a. 55% and increased to c.a. 67% in 2002. In 2002, 10.2% of population aged over 15 had higher education, while in 1998 these persons constituted only 6.5%[2]. In the academic year 2004-2005, the number of students amounted to 1.9 million and there were over 400 higher education institutions. Furthermore, it ought to be stated that the percentage of students attending all types of higher education institutions in the aforementioned academic year increased by 3.6% compared to the previous year, and by 1 522.3 thousand persons (that is by 377%) compared to the academic year 1990-1991(www.stat.gov.pl).

Data that has just been presented, derived from National Census taken in 2002 as well as publications made by Central Statistical Office, indicates that the importance of education in social life is more and more profound. Nevertheless, a subjective assessment of education quality and determining one's ability to use qualification acquired in practice seem to be a significant aspect of the new research on population (and not only determining education level). Such research would be a source of information necessary to shape further educational policy of a government.

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[2] In EU Member States, persons aged over 15 with higher education constituted 16% then (Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2002, 2003) (UE – Statistics in focus, 2003).

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