

Primary education – the poor neighbour on the KBA agenda

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What does pre-school education teach?

- Maths
- General social and emotional development
- **Reading**

First out-of-home experience!

- *How does the world look outside my home?*
- How to communicate and negotiate with „strangers“ >> **Bridging social capital** - life-time impact
- Kindergarten environment provides a new quality of social stimuli for children
- Children who have attended pre-school education **achieve higher results in primary school** (are more independent, open, brave, diligent in school environment) >>> DOMINO EFFECT
- Pre school education is an important factor in compensating for social disadvantages among underprivileged children

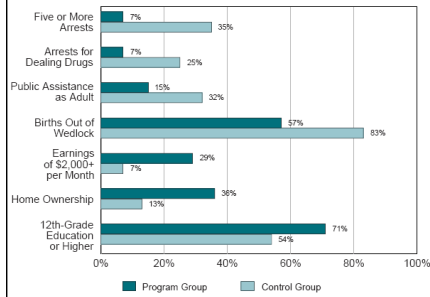
Pre-school education equals better long-term education outcomes

- Children who have participated in well-designed pre-school programmes fare better at school, are more intelligent in comparison to those who have not taken part in such programmes.

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project

- Children attended the preschool Monday to Friday for 2.5 hours per day over a 2-year period.
- A staff-to-child ratio of one adult for every five or six children enabled teachers to visit each child's family in their home for 1.5 hours each week.
- Parents participated in monthly small group meetings with other parents.

Figure 1: Major Findings of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project for Participants Followed Up at Age 27



Source: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. 1999. *High-Quality Preschool Program Found to Improve Adult Status*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. Retrieved March 13, 2000, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.highscope.org/research/Perry%20fact%20sheet.htm>. Reprinted with the permission of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

Pre-school education in Poland

- **21,7 %** - three-year olds
- **30,7 %** - four-year olds
- **42,0 %** - five-year olds

In 2003 **60 %** of children aged 3 - 5 did not participate in pre-school education

Forecasts for Poland

- It is predicted that the population of 3-6 year olds will increase by 100 000 by 2010
- ... and another 200 000 by 2005-2010
- The trend will continue until 2015

Objectives of pre-school education

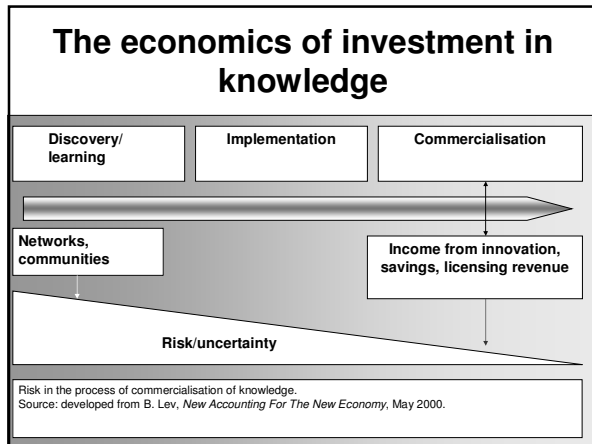
- Development of basic values: self-esteem, self-awareness, curiosity and emotional independence
- Stimulation communication skills, creativity
- General knowledge development

Polish strategy for the Development of Education 2007-2013

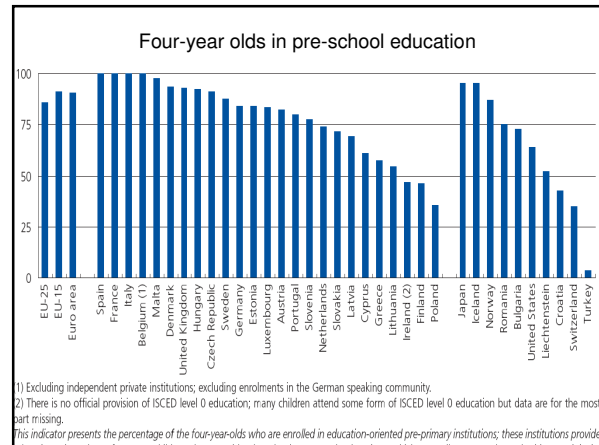
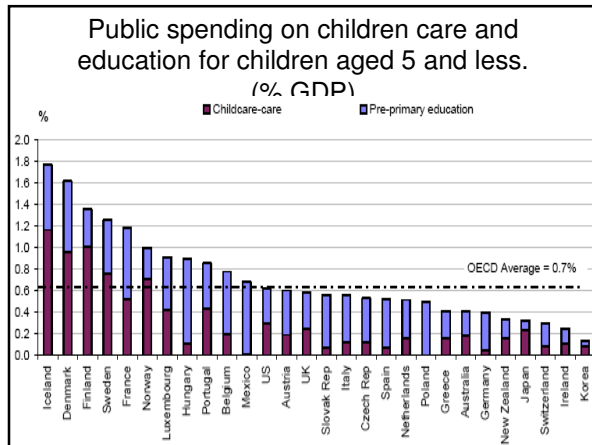
1. New kindergartens: individual care, small groups for less than 10 children.
2. Independent kindergarten groups initiated by local government and parent groups.
3. Compulsory education for 5-year olds.
4. Lowering of primary education entrance level to 6 years.

The Future of Pre-school education

- Polish Ministry of Education (MEN) plans to set up alternative kindergartens with as little as 3 children,
- Only 41% of Polish children aged 3-5 attend kindergartens,
- Only 10%-14% of children in Polish rural areas participate in pre-school education,
- The lowest attendance is reported in North East and north-west of Poland.



- ### Why 'a poor neighbour'?
- The first phase ('the fuzzy front end') is highly informal, chaotic. It acts as a filter for more mature ideas.
 - It is **experimental and chaotic**, marked by a high tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty and a willingness to consider the unreasonable.



- ### Conclusions
- Pre-school education is a high-return, long-term investment in a KBA
 - Alleviating for regional differences in Poland should focus on improving social capital *vide*: pre-school education
 - Innovative methods of financing pre-school education by business organisations >>> **IBM Hungary**

- According to the Lisbon Strategy 90% of children ages 3-5 in EU countries should attend pre-school education
- Currently 80% of children in Western Europe attend pre-school education
- In Belgium, Ireland and Hungary 100%
- Italy and France – 98%
- **The civilisational gap between urban and rural areas in Poland is deepened by unequal access to pre-school education**

- High-profile investments in R&D centres and universities (a world rank university costs up to \$1.5 billion to operate according to OECD) should not overshadow the importance of low-profile investments in pre-school education
- Pre-school should be regarded both as an investment in knowledge and social capital

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