



Ministry of Family,
Labour and Social Policy



ACTIVE AGEING INDEX IN POLAND NATIONAL SEMINAR

18 June 2018

**Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy Nowogrodzka st. 1/3/5, Warsaw
the A. Bączkowski hall, No. 107**

Notes from the course of the event

On 18 June 2018 at the head office of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy a national seminar on *Active Aging Index in Poland* was organized together with European Commission and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The event was attended by representatives of ministries and governmental bodies dealing with issues of ageing, work, health, social protection, education; regional and local administration; statistical office; civil society organizations and research institutes. The objective of the seminar was to discuss in detail the results of Active Aging Index (AAI) for Poland putting them into perspective of a national context, to better understand the factors behind the results and to set policy priorities in order to improve active ageing outcomes in the country in the future. The seminar also aimed at facilitating the use and understanding of AAI, which can be also used as a monitoring tool at national and subnational levels, tracking progress in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA).

During the seminar, Ms Elżbieta Bojanowska, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy, presented on the most important aspects of social policy for older people in Poland. Next, Ms Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, Chief, Population Unit, UNECE, introduced the AAI as a tool for monitoring ageing policies. In addition, Mr Ettore Marchetti, Policy officer, DG-EMPL, European Commission, presented on the use of the AAI in the European Union. Ms Jolanta Perek-Białas, Jagiellonian University of Krakow and Warsaw School of Economics made two presentations: (1) on research results related to the differences of the AAI scores among subpopulation groups in Poland and (2) on the AAI at subnational (regional) level. During the presentations and following them, there was a vivid discussion on the possibilities of implementing and using AAI at the national and regional level, as well as existing solutions to improve the situation of older people.

The first comment was made by Prof. Gertruda Uścińska, President of the Social Insurance Institution who stressed that active ageing is an important aspect in the social security system, which is also emanates from the international policy frameworks and laws endorsed by the International Labor Organization. This is mainly about the right to social security, pensions, health care and long-term care. It is also important to adjust the working conditions for people aged 60+, as well as providing older people with access to specialist doctors, including geriatricians. Acknowledging the professional achievements of older people and their experience, the measures need to be taken to provide the opportunity to change and improve working conditions according to their age and ability. After retiring, the state of households' budgets for older people is changing significantly.

It was observed on the basis of research that in the first 5 years after the end of professional activity - seniors use their savings simultaneously and receive retirement benefits, but in this period generally noticeable deterioration of health. Therefore, it is important to conduct activities aimed at extending the period of social and professional activity as a factor of health prevention.

As the second speaker, Mr Prof. Tomasz Panek, Warsaw School of Economics, stated that research on AAI at the subnational level should be launched and conducted in regions / voivodships. The survey population samples should be sufficiently numerous to ensure that the results of the surveys carried out are as representative as possible. To carry out the research in an effective way, they should be carried out by voivodeship regional branches and one main observatory, which would collect all this information (a proposal for Statistics Poland).

In addition, he stressed that it is difficult to compare the AAI index across individual countries with a different standard of living, especially a different focus on childcare and volunteering. The index does not show effects and causes. It is an aggregate of several general indicators, so the result of the calculation is also general. The weight of indicators has been determined, and their aggregation is the (weighted) arithmetic mean. In this situation, the Professor proposed a change in the weightings of indicators and the use of geometric calculations.

The representative of the European Commission - Mr Ettore Marchetti, in response to such proposal, informed that at the subnational (regional) level the flexibility of selecting weights for indicators in the calculation of AAI is arbitrary. The index and its calculation method should be simple. The current version of the index is this way, which

allows a better understanding of the processes taking place in the countries covered by the study.

Ms Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich (UNECE), stressed a need for understanding that the AAI calculations at the local and regional level using proxy indicators and different data sources cannot be used as a tool for comparison with other countries or EU average but in turn it should be seen as a tool to monitor progress and weaknesses / deterioration of the use of potential of older people in the regions studied.

Then a series of individual remarks, conclusions and questions followed:

1. Ms Grażyna Marciniak, the Vice President of Statistics Poland, proposed standardization of indicators in the context of age groups.
2. Mr Prof. Jerzy Krzyszkowski, University of Lodz mentioned the relationship between education and income as well as the level of urbanization and health competences and the possibilities of using public and social services.
3. Mrs Małgorzata Zwiercan, Chairman of the Senior Policy Commission in the Sejm, in connection with the presentation, asked about breaking social ties, whether the weakening of social ties is greater in rural areas or in cities. It was found that it is necessary to initiate actions to restore interest in the family and create a network / circles of friends.
4. The representative of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship noted that interest in older people is growing, especially through the development of programs dedicated to seniors in the regions.
5. Ms Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich spoke about the loneliness of older people as a phenomenon typical not only for Poland. Family members often do not live in proximity and people increasingly do not visit or talk/ communicate with each other directly, only with the help of phones or Skype.
6. Ms Elżbieta Bojanowska pointed out the importance of the AAI indicator as a tool for determining activities for the benefit of seniors, which are worth strengthening and should be strengthened in the regions.
7. Mr Prof. Jerzy Krzyszkowski mentioned various approaches of regional authorities to create strategic documents in the field of social policy - currently they are developed according to different methodologies - which is why they are not comparable on a national scale.

8. The representative of the Małopolska Voivodship reminded that non-governmental organizations conduct activities in the field of pro-health education and include seniors in activities. There is also cooperation between research centers and local authorities, for example in the field of monitoring data on social assistance.
9. The representative of the Pomorskie Voivodeship informed about the activity of non-governmental seniors in this region. The Voivode of Pomerania is the Chairman of the Pomeranian Council for Social Dialogue and actively works to improve the situation of older people. There are 12 Universities of the Third Age in the voivodship - positive effects of the classes are; 89 communal senior councils - inter-municipal activation; there is a grandparent volunteer service that takes care of children even when they do not have their grandchildren.
10. The Representative of the Małopolska Region observed, on the basis of the implementation of *Multi-Annual Programme Senior+ for 2015–2020*, that the motivation for undertaking activities for the benefit of seniors in the local environment is the success of one gmina / powiat in the implementation of a specific action, then the subsequent units try to change something better, take the same or similar actions to improve the quality of life of your local community, including seniors.
11. Ms Krystyna Lasek, a representative of the Universities of the Third Age Federation from the Silesia Voivodship, mentioned the important activity that is the implementation of projects in the field of education to old age.
12. Ms Urszula Jarosz Head of Caritas Kielce Institution in Proszowice noted that there are huge differences in the implemented senior policy in large cities compared to smaller towns.
13. The representative of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship presented the main assumptions of the activity implemented under the Regional Operational Program, ie the Green Care Program. Farmers in their farms provide care for dependent persons and for people aged 65+ on the basis of daytime support facilities (education and physical activity). The program is implemented by Agricultural Advisory Centers. Care facilities are prepared for the needs of the elderly and care continuity.

14. Ms Lidia Ułanowska, Director of the Senior Policy Department at the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy, pointed out that agritourism farms were not used in the off-season, so it became a good practice to transform them into nursing homes similar to the Netherlands.
15. Ms Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich pointed out that the welfare farms cannot provide all services, however, the positive experiences of their operation is becoming known in Europe. Lifelong learning and third-century universities are focused on urban areas. In rural areas, for example, teachers could share their knowledge with seniors.
16. The voice of the representative of the Society of Friends of Disabled in Łódź also resounded in the discussion, which cooperates with the local government to create various forms of residential stay for people with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, and dementia. Project participants will have access to such forms of assistance as: psychological support, extension of the services of a disabled person's personal assistant, assisted housing, a family home for help, care services in the place of residence, rental or care equipment rental. The effect of the project will be to increase independence and the ability to participate in social, professional and educational life of dependents or dependents, in the end allowing their carers to return to the labor market.
17. Ms Jolanta Perek-Białas made reference to the problem of the so-called "prisoners of the fourth floor" and neighbourly help. Many seniors and people with disabilities live in apartments where there are no elevators, which makes them "prisoners" in their own apartments. In addition to the natural neighbourly help, which is generally observed in the local communities in many regions of the country, projects in the field of neighbourly support for seniors are implemented. Usually, the social welfare center connects people who need support with those who want to provide it in return for remuneration. This form of care is more effective and cheaper than social welfare homes.
18. The representative of the Pomorskie Voivodeship added that social workers are involved in helping, for example, during natural disasters, for example storms, which in 2017 passed through Kashubia, then neighbourly help and support was provided by residents also to single older people.

19. The representative of the Małopolska Voivodship presented information about the Availability+ Program (*Program Dostępność+*). Program aims to improve the quality of life and ensure the independence of life for all citizens, including older persons and people with permanent or temporary limitations. Programme foresees improvement of the accessibility of public space, products and services in the area of architecture, information and communication. The program requires the involvement of local governments, entrepreneurs, social organizations and residents.
20. Mrs Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, mentioned a good practice in Israel, where the community identified a group of people who can do some minor household tasks for the seniors, such as changing a light bulb, checking the malfunctioning household items and while doing that spending soome time together (conversation).
21. The representative of the Pomorskie Voivodeship pointed to Gdańsk as an example of solving the problem of " prisoners of the fourth floor " - Chełm presented a plan to start the superstructure 4 or 5th floor (additional) in blocks, so as to finance the cost of installing the elevator and solving housing problems at the same time. Purchasers of flats superstructed by purchasing them will finance the purchase and assembly costs of lifts in blocks.
22. Ms Jolanta Wolanin, Deputy Head of the Social Policy Department, Katowice City Hall presented the joint action of the Senior Council with the Labor Office, consisting in joint search for job offers that may be performed by older people and the Office of career counseling and job placement.
23. Discussion, an example of a number of widely available initiatives - the representative of the Pomeranian Province concluded - mentioned the well-functioning District Councils, which implement a number of events for seniors, including festivities, local projects and activities carried out by numerous non-governmental organizations. For example, the Association for the Propagation of the History of Scouts organizes in Gdańsk in 2018 the Rally of The Polish Scouting and Guiding Association, which is held to commemorate the centenary of regaining independence by Poland and the centenary of The Polish Scouting and Guiding Association. Seniors' scouts are the guests of honor of this event.

