

Youth unemployment in Poland

1. Read the text about the Youth Unemployment in Poland and do the exercises below.

Unemployment is a recent but increasingly severe problem in Poland. It appeared in the 19th century, during the process of [Industrialization](#). After Poland's transition to a market economy the unemployment rate sharply increased, peaking at above 16% in 1993. Another period of high unemployment occurred in the early 2000s when the rate reached 20%. As Poland entered [European Union](#) in 2004 due to mass emigration unemployment the figure. Since then the rate had fallen until the onset of the [2008–2012 global recession](#). Recent years have seen an increase in the unemployment rate from below 8% to above 10% (Eurostat) or from below 10% to 13% ([Główny Urząd Statystyczny](#) -Central Statistical Office- GUS). The rate began dropping again in late 2013. Polish government (GUS) reported 11.5% registered unemployment in September 2014 while European Union's [Eurostat](#) gave 8.7%. The global [Great Recession](#) following the international [financial crisis of 2008](#) contributed to the rise of unemployment in Poland. One of the elements behind high unemployment are inefficient [labor laws](#) making [job creation](#) difficult, and unduly protected senior employees (aged over 56). Another problem is related to certain forms of temporary contracts, known as "junk contracts" (*umowy śmieciowe*) which allow employees to bypass labor laws, offer substandard wages, and little or no stability or social security. In 2010 it was estimated that as many as 27% of those employed in Poland may be working on short-term "junk contracts".

Unemployment in Poland is high among the youth. One of the consequences of unemployment being particularly high among the young has been a relatively high rate of youth emigration to other European countries, estimated in 2014 as 2 million (out of Poland's approximately 40 million population). Unemployment remains one of the most serious issues facing the Polish economy. The unemployed are a group at particular risk of being affected by [poverty](#). To get [unemployment benefits](#) in Poland, one has to register with the appropriate government office and demonstrate "the lack of the possibility to be employed or to be professionally activated within the field of activities proposed by the said office, have worked for a total of at least 365 days in the period of 18 months before registering with the said government office. In March 2014 it was reported that 13.6% of the registered unemployed were eligible for the unemployment benefits.

Different social groups experience the effects of unemployment to different degrees. The group with the highest level of unemployment at present is the 25-34 year old age group. They fall into the category that adult education specialists call "young adults". The Ministry of Labour has launched an innovative pilot programme for people up to the age of 30. It covers 23 powiats. Young people are required to get support from the very first week they register as unemployed. If there are no job offers available to them, they are immediately covered by one of the schemes for getting them into the jobs market. The project includes amongst others training vouchers which allow the person and his/her adviser to find a training institute or an employer who will employ them when they complete their training. Another important element in the programme is the support given to employers who decide to take on a young unemployed person. The programme also provides relocation support for people who find jobs 80 km or more from their current residence.

The labour market institutions involved in getting young people on to the jobs market and promoting employment are: public employment services, the Volunteer Labour Corps, employment agencies, training institutes, social dialogue institutions and local partnership institutions. The **Volunteer Labour Corps** plays a special role with regard to young unemployed people. They are a government body which focuses on young people threatened by social exclusion and unemployed under-25s. The structure of the Volunteer Labour Corps includes organisations which are employment agents, give occupational advice and information and offer occupational training. The Volunteer Labour Corps can play an important role in getting young people into work due to the fact that one persistent negative trait of unemployment is the low level of education of the unemployed. The largest group of registered unemployed people are those with an elementary vocational education and high school and post-high school education. At the end of 2012 unemployed people with elementary vocational education made up 28.3% of the total unemployed, while those with high school and post-high school education were 27.3%.

Another major institution responsible for youth employment initiatives and projects are the Academic Career Bureaux. They focus on getting students and university graduates into employment. They are run by academic institutions or students' organisations. Their aim and mission is to provide careers advice and to provide a professional diagnosis of the optimum routes for students to embark upon their careers and to gain practical experience and how to present themselves on the jobs market to be employed by their chosen employer. The idea of

the Academic Career Bureaux is recognised as increasingly necessary in view of the growing number of unemployed graduates.

Youth unemployment is currently the number one social problem. Increasing numbers of high school and university graduates are unemployed on graduating. In December 2012 64,000 people under the age of 25 signed up at the employment offices. There are many reasons for unemployment among young people, and they range in character from political to personal. One cause of problems in entering the jobs market is unsuitable education due to poor educational and career choices by young people. Part of the problem is also the fact that the educational system does not meet the needs of the labour market. Thousands of young people study for qualifications for which there is no demand. In addition, the labour code is still too inflexible, and the costs of work and the large number of "regulated" professions is too high. Many firms are unwilling to supplement youth employment initiative funding as they see no benefit in employing persons who are only just entering the labour market. Another reason may be the lack of effective programmes to help young people obtain suitable qualifications and to encourage employers to take on young people. Gender is another factor. Since the early 1990s there has been a preponderance of women who have been unemployed compared with men. This is due to historical differences between the sexes in many areas of life and the different positions occupied by men and women on the jobs market. One of the main reasons for the diminishing chances of employment for women is the traditional approach to dividing domestic work and duties.

Finally, there is another aspect. Spending a long time looking for work discourages people and they give up looking, which in turn means turning their backs on career plans, reducing self-confidence and even losing a sense of meaning in life. This means that young people also need moral support. One source of this support is the National Volunteer Labour Corps Priesthood. Its programme was defined by Pope John Paul II: "You must make demands of yourself so that others don't."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unemployment_in_Poland#Unemployment_benefits

<http://www.infonet-ae.eu/articles-national-affairs/1305-youth-unemployment-in-poland>

Ex.1. Answer the questions below.

1. When can you find two moments of the sharp increase of unemployment in Poland at the turn of the XX and XXI c ?
2. Why do “junk contracts” have an adverse effect on the situation on the labour market in Poland?
3. What is the consequence of unemployment being particularly high among the young in Poland?
4. What was the percentage of the registered unemployed who had no right to unemployment benefits in March, 2014 ?
5. What happens if there are no job offers available to young adults according to an innovative pilot programme launched by the Ministry of Labour ?
6. What is the role of the Volunteer Labour Corps ?
7. What are the aims of the Academic Career Bureaux ?
8. What are the main reasons for unemployment among young people (personal, economic and emotional aspect) ?

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