



Day-care support for families in Małopolska Region

A study of Małopolska
day-care support
facilities

Summary

Małopolska Regional
Development Observatory

Department
of Regional Policy





SUMMARY

General information

- ① **A day-care support facility** (DSF) is an organisational unit intended to support families and the foster care system, which is mentioned in the Act on supporting families and the foster care system, which provides free of charge support to families by providing care and child-raising services to children. It is voluntary for a child to attend a day-care support facility, unless the child is obliged by the court to do so.
- ② **Day-care support facilities may be managed by:**
 - a gmina (commune/municipality) or a powiat;
 - entities entrusted with managing such facilities by a gmina or a powiat;
 - entities that received a permit from the head of a gmina or a powiat to run a day-care support facility.
- ③ **A day-care support facility may be run as:**
 - a care facility;
 - a specialist facility;
 - field-work by an educator;
 - a combined form.
- ④ **Different public institutions dispose of the data concerning the number and the activity of DSFs in Małopolska.** This report uses data from the Central Statistical Office (CSO), Regional Centre of Social Policy in Kraków (RCSP) and the Małopolska Regional Office in Kraków (MRO). Individual institutions use different methodologies for collecting data, which makes the scope of each database different and they may not be used fully interchangeably. And so:
 - the highest number of day-care support facilities in Małopolska Region was estimated by **Central Statistical Office**, according to which there were **225 DSF** (7th place in the country) in Małopolska in 2015, that offer **7,744 places for charges**, with **7,372 charges** that used them;
 - **Regional Centre of Social Policy in Kraków**, based on the data from the study entitled "Assessment of Social Assistance Resources" for 2015, which covered all Małopolska social assistance centres and powiat family assistance centres, estimated that there are **130 DSFs** in Małopolska that offer **5,418 places**, with **5,530 charges**¹ that used them;

¹ Online Social Statistics Observer, Regional Centre of Social Policy in Kraków, <http://www.obserwator.rops.krakow.pl/>, Access: 29/08/2016.



- due to the availability of the contact details to DSFs, the research conducted by Małopolska Regional Development Observatory (MRDO) was based on the list of facilities drawn up by MRO in Kraków. According to data from the MRO register (as of 30 April 2016), the Małopolska region had **121 day-care support facilities** operating **within 21 poviats** (excl. Tatrzański powiat) and 61 gminas. **The highest** number of such facilities was in **Kraków** (34 DSFs) and Tarnów (9 DSFs) and in the following poviats: Tarnowski, Oświęcimski and Wielicki (8 DSFs each). The fewest facilities (1 DSF each) operated in the following poviats: Limanowski, Proszowicki and in Nowy Sącz.
- 5 The survey MRDO conducted had the following respondents: **89 DSFs out of 121 DSFs listed in the MRO register from 20 poviats and 51 gminas**. The questionnaire was not completed by 32 facilities from 10 gminas (36.0%). Another stage of the survey consisted in distributing questionnaires among the charges of DSFs; we managed to collect 757 questionnaires completed by youth from 39 DSFs. The last stage of the survey consisted in in-depth interviews and group interviews with the managers of the selected day-care support facilities and the representatives of the institutions from their environment.

The situation of the day-care support facilities in the Małopolska Region

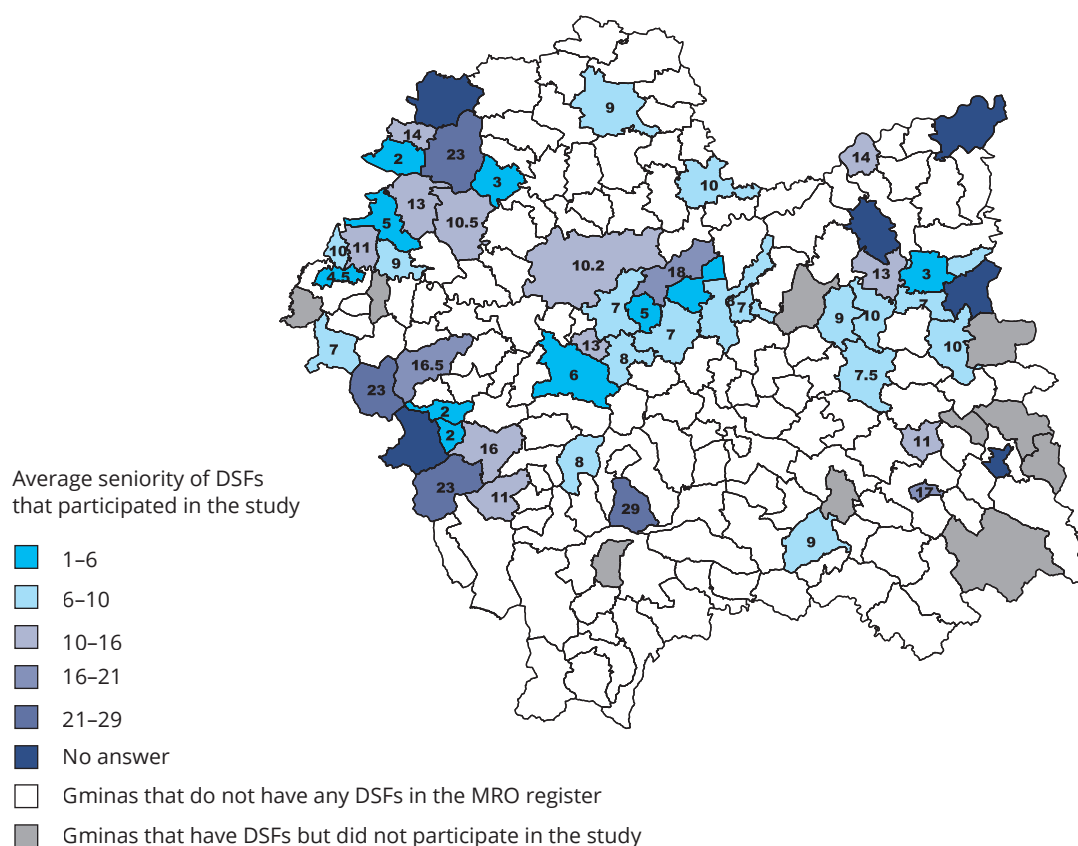
- 6 The results from all parts of the research show that **a high need for day-care support facilities exists**, as they play a very important role in the process of organising support for families. Among the group of analysed children and teenagers that attend such facilities, **95.1% of them would recommend such facilities to their peers**.
- 7 **There is an uneven territorial distribution of DSFs in the Małopolska Region** – there are gminas and poviats that have relatively many facilities, and there are some that have only a few or not even one. The demand for additional DSFs was reported by facilities from 14 gminas (21.3% of the DSFs questioned), and the respondents from 59.6% DSFs stated that their facility does not offer services to all the children and teenagers they have within their area of operations. Moreover, **68.8% of the charges questioned pointed out that they know people to whom they would recommend attending DSFs and using the services they have on offer**.
- 8 **The general situation of DSFs in the Małopolska Region is very diverse, which also affects the quality of the support provided to charges and their families in individual parts of Małopolska**. One of the reasons for the large differentiation among DSFs is the lack of a framework standards for their operation – the Act on supporting families and the foster care system, which is the basis for the operation of such facilities, leaves them a lot of leeway in terms of work organisation, offer, or operation mode.
- 9 Małopolska is **dominated by care facilities** (77.7% DSFs according to the MRO register). According to the respondents, there are too few facilities in the region that have **a specialist profile and offer e.g. professional therapy and speech-therapy services for the charges and their families**, compared with the observed demand. Only less than one in five facilities listed in the register has such a profile. The fact that such DSFs

are more expensive to run is of significance here. Moreover, facilities that conduct field-work or combine different forms of operation are not popular in Małopolska (4 DSFs in the register).

- 1 0 According to the respondents of the qualitative research, the most prevalent causes of the shortage of day-care support facilities in gminas/poviats are: **lack of interest of the local authorities, financial limitations, personnel shortages, lack of appropriate premises.**
- 1 1 As there is no reliable data, **it is difficult to estimate the real demand for day-care support facilities in Małopolska. Over 76% of the DSFs surveyed do not verify this for the purposes of their on-going operations.** Several suggestions have been formed after talking to respondents as to actions that might be helpful while assessing the potential demand:
 - analysis of the register of the day-care support facilities in Małopolska, in particular as regards the shortage or insufficient number in individual gminas and poviats;
 - analysis of publicly available demographic data concerning the given gminas and poviats;
 - analysis of waiting lists at the operating day-care support facilities;
 - conducting background interviews with family assistants, pedagogues, school psychologists, and other persons that work with potential charges of day-care support facilities on a day-to-day basis.
- 1 2 The financial standing of day-care support facilities in Małopolska is very diverse. The region has both very affluent facilities and facilities that experience financial problems. The average budget of a DSF in 2015 per one statutory place was approx. **PLN 3.7 thousand**; however, the exact value of the budget in the analysed group ranged from PLN 700 to PLN 29.1 thousand. **The highest number of DSFs (44.1%) disposed of the annual budget up to PLN 100 thousand.** Care facilities had a lower budget on average (approx. PLN 119 thousand) than those with other forms of operation (approx. PLN 310 thousand).
- 1 3 The most DSFs in Małopolska were managed by local government units – 43.8% and non-governmental organisations – 42.7%. **The basic source of income of the DSFs surveyed were the funds obtained from the local government units – for 52.3% of them, they were their sole income in 2015.** Other facilities mostly combined different forms of co-financing, with the most popular ones being funds from donations (27.9% of DSFs), private sources (10.5% of DSFs), and public collections (9.3% of DSFs). **The majority of the facilities that is run by local government units had income mainly from public sources**, and only 39.1% of them also obtained funding from other sources. In turn, **a significant majority – 80.0% - DSFs managed by entities other than**, local government units (i.e. non-governmental organisations, church organisations and legal entities) **had a much more diverse sources of income.**
- 1 4 The day-care support facilities in Małopolska have **significant experience in organising day-care support – the average seniority of DSFs is 15.5 years.** Out of the facilities surveyed, 9 of them (12.2%) have operated for over 20 years, and the longest-operating facility having 31 years of seniority – a facility in Kraków that has operated since 1985.

Map 1.

Average seniority of DSFs in Małopolska in 2015



N = 89 DSFs

Source: own study based on the MRDO research

- 1 5 DSFs in Małopolska organised specialised classes, with the **most popular** being **compensation classes** (in 64.0% of DSFs) and **social therapy** (in 57.3% of DSFs). The least popular classes in the analysed facilities were the speech-therapy classes; at the same time, **46.1%** responded indicated **the need for new classes** for their charges in their facilities, in particular speech-therapy classes. The most frequent barriers that hinder enriching the offer are the personnel shortages and the shortage of funds.

Users of the surveyed day-care support facilities

- 1 6 It is a good practice to conduct a diagnosis among the charges and to monitor their family situation in order to adjust the offered support to real needs. **However, over 30% facilities failed to draw up such assessments for their charges**, with only 17.1% that intended to implement such activities in the future.
- 1 7 The results of this qualitative research show that the charges of day-care support facilities are most often neglected in terms of child-raising issues, and their needs are not met in full by their parents/legal guardians. The families that use the support of day-care

support facilities frequently face numerous problems, with the most frequent ones being: poverty combined with unemployment, addictions, in particular alcohol addiction, insufficient child-raising competences, exercising violence, and general learnt helplessness in life. In practically all DSFs surveyed, **the charges need help in learning at school and in building positive relations with their peers**, which was pointed out by over **90% DSFs surveyed**.

- ① ⑧ The results show that DSFs in Małopolska want to organise their cooperation with **the parents and the guardians. Systemic organisation of cooperation was pointed out by 73.0% of the facilities surveyed**. There are **three different models of cooperation** with parents of charges in place: therapeutic activities, pedagogic and psychological education, as well as undertaking numerous activities in the area of animation and integration.

Personnel of the surveyed day-care support facilities

- ① ⑨ All 89 facilities had in total **517 employees**, with the majority of them being educators (43.4%) and managers acting as educators (11.9%). Other professions included: 9.1% pedagogues, 6.0% psychologists, and 2.9% therapists. Moreover, in 2015 over half of the facilities took advantage of the **support** provided by **volunteers**, which accounted for approx. 25% of the personnel in total. The volunteer work was much more popular in the group of facilities managed by entities other than local government units (in 64.5% of such DSFs).
- ② ⑩ **The type** of the given day-care support facility (specialist or care facility) **is of significance as regards hiring specialists** (i.e. psychologists, pedagogues, therapists). In 2015, a significantly higher percentage of facilities of specialist nature hired the representatives of such professions: 59.1% DSFs hired psychologists, 50.0% DSFs hired pedagogues, and 31.8% DSFs hired therapists.
- ② ① It is estimated that the DSFs surveyed **lack approx. 62 specialists**, of which: 25 educators, 15 psychologists, 7 pedagogues, 7 speech-therapists, 7 therapists and 1 child-minder. The most frequent reasons for the personnel shortages are: insufficient funds at the facilities (57.9% responses), low pay (28.1% responses) and insufficient premises for the purposes of a given specialist (8.8% responses).
- ② ② The majority of the day-care support facilities in Małopolska (66.3%) **supported the development of their** employees. The most frequent form of the development by sending them to attend meetings or conferences (46.1% DSFs), organising training courses (30.3% DSFs) and meetings with experts (21.3% DSFs). Moreover, there is a high demand for training personnel **in particular as regards the methods of working with families and individual work with a child**.
- ② ③ Most frequently, the facilities **cooperated with** educational institutions (87.6% responses) and social assistance centres (88.8% responses). The cooperation mostly consisted in the joint exchange of information about individual charges and their families, granting support in working with children and teenagers, and organising joint integration events.



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