

CHAPTER 19

FARMING AND SOCIAL-CARE COMBINATIONS IN POLAND

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Abstract. The situation of social and health care is undoubtedly a field that needs improvement and more attention in Poland. Many groups of society, like homeless, disabled, unemployed or elderly people, lack sufficient support and stay alone with their problems. Expected economic development in Poland in the coming years should imply an increase of expenditures for social care and thereby narrow down the groups that cannot at present get this kind of support. Those two circumstances give great opportunities for development of Farming for Health (FH), as the need for high-quality social care in Poland is rising.

At the moment in Poland there are some existing initiatives referring to FH as well. Those are mostly institutional care farms and some care activities on farms initiated by the farmers themselves. Nevertheless, in Poland such examples are not being perceived as an independent and important field in social care and there is no research on this subject.

The only project that focuses on and clearly recognizes the issue of FH takes place in the south-eastern part of Poland and is the outcome of four years of Polish-Dutch cooperation. Project initiators concentrate on improving the care situation for elderly and physically and mentally handicapped people, as these are the groups that are most lacking good-quality social care, by creating care farms in the region. Care farms, led by farmers, could provide different social-care services for the weakest groups of society and give them an opportunity to participate in farm activities. Project participants believe that, similarly to the experiences from other Western-European countries, care farms will have positive and healing effects on their inhabitants, having in mind physical, psychic and social health.

Main challenges for FH in Poland are:

- to change the mentality and consciousness of Polish society on the subjects of social care, like old age or mental diseases;
- to promote the idea and positive effects of FH in Poland, so that it is known to Polish citizens and conceived as an important alternative in caring for people;
- to develop sustainable financing structures for FH;
- to learn from other countries with a longer history in FH;
- to develop and strengthen the position of the sector of social care in Poland as a whole.

Keywords: family care farms; agriculture and care; Leżajsk; social problems; mentally disabled; physically disabled; Farming for Health

PRESENT SITUATION OF FARMING FOR HEALTH IN POLAND

There is a double answer to the question “Does Farming for Health exist in Poland?”: “yes” and “no”. First of all, there are some existing examples of activities

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related to farming and social care in Poland but they are not being perceived as an independent and important field in social care. According to the personal knowledge of the author, there are examples of institutional types of care farms in few places in Poland and some care activities on farms initiated by farmers themselves. Some examples will be presented in this chapter. It is interesting that the Polish institutional care farms that we know about, are the 'helping-hand farms' (see Annex 1 for a description of some categories). This means that the purpose of their establishment was to support the social-care institution economically (by producing basic food products) and not to provide care to the pensioners. With time, their role in the institution never really evolved to become an essential element of the caring process and remained a factor of minor importance.

For a better understanding of the circumstances under which Farming for Health (FH) may develop in Poland and what hindrances may occur, it is useful to describe social relations in Polish society. Social and health care in Poland are undoubtedly two of the fields needing improvement and more attention. Many groups of society, like homeless, disabled, unemployed or elderly people, lack sufficient support and stay alone with their problems. Expected economic development in Poland in the coming years should imply an increase of the expenditure on social care and thereby narrow down the groups which cannot get this kind of support at present. No less important are further serious efforts to change mentality and consciousness of society on the subject of old age or mental diseases, which still embarrasses too many people. Those issues become even more crucial in view of population forecasts that say that in 2030 one third of the Polish population will have reached retirement age.

As long as there is no research on FH in Poland, and awareness of people about the importance and distinction of this field is absent, it is impossible to assess the real number of care farms (which do exist in Poland), potential groups of people who benefit from it, and Polish discoveries in healing effects of being engaged with farm life.

There is one initiative in the south-eastern part of Poland which focuses on and recognizes clearly the issue of FH. The project taking place in the powiat Leżajsk¹ is a Polish-Dutch initiative with the aim to create care farms in Poland. Project initiators concentrate on improving the care situation for elderly and physically and mentally handicapped people by the promotion of so-called, 'family care farms'². Family care farms, led by farmers, will provide a good-quality care for the weakest social group – elderly and physically and mentally disabled people – and give them an opportunity to participate in all of the farm activities. In the respect of farmers' families in this area, establishment of family care farms in the powiat Leżajsk would allow them to generate enough income to keep their farm.

POLISH POLICIES REFERRING TO FARMING FOR HEALTH

Social care is part of the national social policy to enable certain persons and their families to overcome their difficult life situations, which they are not able to carry on by themselves. Responsibilities for social care in Poland are divided over all

levels of the self-government structure (gmina, powiat, voivodship) and the state government but also non-governmental organizations (contribution of 10% of total care). The basic care is provided by the gmina where the respective person lives. Gminas are responsible for local support and satisfying general needs of the local society including the organization and provision of social care.

The main guidelines for social care in Poland are laid down in the Act on Social Care dated 29 November 1990. In the present legal status a large share of the responsibility for providing care lies with the state. While execution of these tasks is delegated to the level of gmina and powiat, costs related to care activities are borne by the national budget.

Changes that are currently introduced in Poland as regards social-care policy head for decentralization of financing the tasks. The system of budget grants has been replaced by the system of financing social care from local taxes (before, the major part of tax income was transferred to the national budget which afterwards was redistributed to local levels as budget grant for certain tasks). This reform will change the situation of the existing social-care houses radically. Before, they were financed directly from the national budget through powiat Centres of Family Care. After the reform costs for care will be partly covered by the client, his/her family and the gmina where the respective client is registered. Only in case of previous clients the old system will apply. The new financial law has come into force in January 2005. This law increases the responsibility of gminas for the formulation of local care policy and will force them to look for other types of activities in order to execute this task according to expectations, with in fact less money available.

Enforcement of the new law, together with the present tendencies to put more attention to the problem of the ageing society and the issue of improving the quality of life of disabled people, gives a great opportunity for the development of social-care farms in Poland. Gminas will have to look for the most efficient solution to provide social-care services in their territory, into the aspect of quality of care but also into the economic aspect. Care services provided by farmers will most probably be cheaper than care services provided by institutions. Those are the experiences in many European countries with a longer history of FH. Lower cost of care services on the farms with similar healing results for the clients is the most important argument to convince Polish local governments (which will participate in the costs of social care anyway) to support the creation of family care farms. On the other hand, Polish national and regional social policy will in the years ahead have to deal with a completely new situation, when the needs for social care in the society will increase, simply because the society is getting older and more aware of the existing inequalities of disabled people.

POLISH EXAMPLES OF FARMING AND SOCIAL CARE COMBINATIONS

As mentioned above, there are FH initiatives in Poland. In the following the author will present a description of the examples of FH in different parts of Poland.

Association in support of Integration of Handicapped People (Stowarzyszenie na rzecz Integracji Osób Niepełnosprawnych) in Bronów

The association has already been in existence for six years. It is located in the southern part of Poland. Its members are healthy but also handicapped in many different ways (for example: paralysis or deafness). At present the association has about twenty members and many friendly persons who support its activities from the outside.

The guiding idea for all actions taken by this association is work. Each of us needs to work to feel useful in life somehow. Work always relates to our physical and mental healthiness, because determined actions that we take and certain repetitive activities have a positive therapeutic influence on us. The Association in support of Integration of Handicapped People in Bronów has 2 ha of arable land, a substantial orchard, a vegetable garden, a small house and one barn. Closeness of nature makes it possible to feel its reality and to live wholeheartedly. Nature teems with lively scenes and rhythms, which are indispensable to people. Thanks to nature we all can experience different seasons of the year, growth of plants and animals, calmness, sequence and harmony. Activities can consist of working in a garden and orchard, working the soil (e.g. digging), raking, making patches, planting, weeding, harvesting, mowing, learning to concentrate and to observe better, inspiring interest in nature, learning how to love the environment and how to respect it. At present the association does not possess any agricultural machinery, equipment and animals to breed, but may obtain these in the future.



Figure 1. One of the members of the Association, Krystian, making simple wooden figures for toys for children, Bronów 2002

Two main types of workshops are organized by the association for its handicapped members: handmade production of bee-wax candles and simple

wooden toys and figures. The aim of these workshops is to make useful and precious things. This kind of work teaches responsibility (products must be ready at a certain time and in a certain amount), new skills, sense of the material and form, and improves creativity and imagination.



Figure 2. Common work in the house of the association, from left to right: Andrew, Igor, Roman and Katharina, Bronów 2003



Figure 3. Handicapped members of the association: Andrew (deaf-and-dumb) and Krystian (paralysed after an accident) in the orchard peeling apples, Bronów 2001

Experiences of this Association are that when handicapped people (but not only they) feel useful, limitations and obstacles do not count anymore. It is knowledge, self-determination and skills that really count... It is up to us whether we will be successful and what we will do with our lives.

Social Care House in Bramki

The Social Care House in Bramki is a public institution for about 170 adult mentally handicapped people. The average age of the inhabitants is 55; they have different levels of disability. The Social Care House in Bramki has existed since 1960.

The 'helping-hand farm' was at the same time established next to the institution. The reason for its establishment was – and still is – to provide vegetables and food for the inhabitants of the institution and provide crucial activities and a useful way to spend spare time. The Social Care House in Bramki runs the farm and is responsible for it. At present the farm covers 6 ha of arable land. Crops that are cultivated here are mostly wheat and potato. This is the basis for feeding the pigs that are being bred as well. The farm produces different types of vegetables, also in glasshouses, for the needs of the Social Care House.

Inhabitants of the House can participate in various activities and help on the farm. They take part in ergo-therapy, which is a special therapy through work. According to their abilities and medical judgement of the doctor they help in preparing feed for the animals and in cultivating the plants, which includes planting, weeding, watering and harvesting. Activities are led by workers of the farm specialized in agriculture and employees of the institution, and go ahead regularly. At present nine of the inhabitants of the house participate in ergo-therapy on the farm. Those are people with different stages of disability and in different age (from 35 to 50). In the past more people were taking part in work on the farm, but nowadays they are too old. Most inhabitants of the Social Care House in Bramki come from rural areas and they have been working on a farm for all their lives. This is why they really appreciate the opportunity to farm again. On the other hand, employees of the house recognize many positive results in the whole rehabilitation process of their patients who participate in ergo-therapy on the 'helping-hand farm'. Inhabitants who work there feel self-esteem, they can do things they like and stay with nature in fresh air.

Association "Communion" (Stowarzyszenie "Wspólnota") in Wojtówka

The Association "Communion" in Wojtówka has existed since 1991 with the main objective to take care of mentally handicapped people. Model for establishing the centres of permanent stay for mentally handicapped people in Wojtówka were the Camphill Centres, which exist all around the world and have their origin in Great Britain.

To fulfil this intention the Association established two homes of permanent stay on the basis of farming and gardening. Work in the garden and on the farm enables occupational therapy for inhabitants of the Centre.

At present, 12 mentally handicapped people live in the Centre. They are from 19 to 45 years old and have different levels of handicap, from light to very serious. Six persons are permanently involved in working in the Centre. They are taking care after the inhabitants, running homes of permanent stay and a farm in Wojtówka, gardening, leading therapeutic and educational workshops and doing the administration of the Centre. In the last two years the Association has built a new house and has bought two other neighbouring farms. Both needed general restoration.

Over the last few years there has been a big interest in the activities of the Association, which resulted in a plan to establish more homes of permanent stay for another 9 to 10 mentally handicapped persons.

From the beginning of its existence, the Association has been organizing camps for special-attention groups, agricultural courses and workshops for mentally handicapped, international youth exchange, meetings of social workers and various cultural events.

PROJECT 'PROMOTING FAMILY CARE FARMS' IN LEŻAJSK

The project 'Promoting family care farms' is the result of four years of Polish-Dutch cooperation. The two main implementing organizations are ETC Nederland in Leusden, The Netherlands, and Leżajskie Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju (Leżajsk Development Association, LSR) in Leżajsk, Poland. As such it is the first FH project in Poland.

ETC Nederland was established in 1974 as a non-profit organization. The original aim was to assist developing countries in the fields of training and organizational development. Nowadays the mission in brief is: "to encourage and support local initiatives with the aim to build sustainable development". ETC supports and promotes local knowledge and experience as the building blocks for sustainable development. Its activities seek to strengthen governmental, non-governmental and private institutions at local, regional and national levels. In this way the institutions should become capable of performing their functions autonomously and without external support. After the projects led by ETC the knowledge stays with the people. The important factor why the local knowledge and experience is a basis for development is because the ETC activities are also based on the potential of the area and people where social acceptance plays an important role.

Leżajsk Development Association was founded in 1993 by entrepreneurs, businessmen, representatives of the local self-governments and representatives of the state administration, with the mission: "to develop the local society". LSR stimulates the development of small enterprises and rural development in the region. Different groups of clients in the area take advantages of its services. Those are mostly SMEs, people starting their own business, offices and public institutions, NGOs, young people, employees or unemployed persons. LSR is the association where the total income is spent on realizing the objectives. It is well informed and has wide private and public contacts in the powiat Leżajsk, the neighbouring powiats and the voivodship of Podkarpackie.

The first phase of the project was the ‘Pro-Ecological Project’ in the powiat Leżajsk, carried out from January 2000 to July 2002. It was financed by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MSAL). Its main aim was to develop mechanisms for participatory rural development in view of increasing income opportunities for the rural population while safeguarding the natural environment. The basic output of the project was a powiat development strategy with general directions for development and a list of concrete actions for creating employment opportunities. Analysis of the problems and design of the plan were carried out with a mixture of public and private stakeholders. Family care farming was identified as an important priority area for further study and development.

The ‘Bridging Phase’ was the next phase of cooperation carried out from September 2002 to August 2003 and financed through MSAL. Its mission was: “To consolidate the collaborative mechanisms established during the first phase of the Pro-Ecological Project in view of successfully preparing the implementation of the powiat development plan and establishing an effective public–private partnership”. In this phase, among other aspects, the feasibility of the initiation of family care farms in the powiat Leżajsk was analysed with positive results.

Family care farms fit very well into the pro-ecological project approach because they can increase quality of life for certain groups of society and stimulate non-farming activities on farms, which is of great importance in this target area. Farming for health can be easily combined with the various nature protection activities and can help to sustain the traditional, old methods of food production or farming. Characteristics of the target area: Powiat Leżajsk is located in the south-eastern part of Poland and is divided into five gminas: town Leżajsk, gmina Leżajsk, gmina Nowa Sarzyna, gmina Grodzisko Dolne and gmina Kuryłówka (see Figures 4-6). The total surface area of the powiat is 583 km² with a population of 70,000 people.

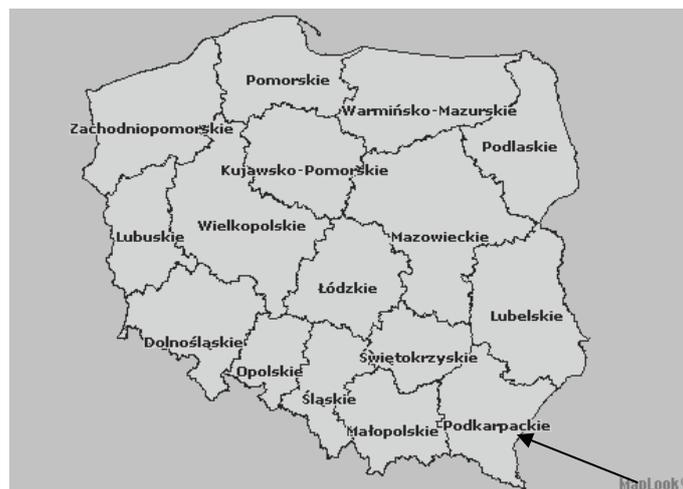


Figure 4. The 16 Voivodships of Poland.



Figure 5. Podkarpackie Voivodship and its powiats



Figure 6. Leżajsk Powiat and its gminas

The indispensable strengths of the powiat are an unpolluted environment and a beautiful landscape that attracts many tourists. Here they find good places, especially for hunting, fishing in the river San, horse riding and hiking. Powiat Leżajsk generates attention also by organizing many festivals and celebrations every year. Examples are the International Festival for Organ and Chamber Music, and the Festival of Hunting.

Farmers in the powiat Leżajsk specialize in the cultivation of fruit, vegetables, tobacco and willow for weaving wicker products. Big problem of the rural areas is the small average size of the farms (3.7 ha, while the average in Poland is 8-9 ha) and the low profitability of farming. Those are the reasons why farmers often look for additional sources of income and why local handicraft is so interesting and

diverse (toys, sculptures, clothes, etc.). Otherwise many of the small-scale farmers would have to quit farming because they are unable to make a living from farming alone.

The unemployment rate in the powiat Leżajsk (18.2%) exceeds the average unemployment rate in Poland. One out of five persons able to work is unemployed. Most of the people without a job are young people (63%) and inhabitants of the rural areas (75%). Farming and agricultural production are the main activities for the majority of inhabitants able to work in the powiat Leżajsk.

Social-care problems in the powiat Leżajsk

A number of interviews have been held in the context of the project to find out what the existing social problems in the region are and in which particular directions social care on the farms should proceed. The following social and health problems have been recognized:

- Poverty because the wage earner(s) is (are) unemployed or partly unemployed.
- People feeling unhappy, isolated and useless due to long-term unemployment.
- Poverty and/or other social problems caused by alcoholism or other kinds of addiction and insufficient institutional care for the addicted people.
- Elderly people feeling unhappy, isolated and useless and lacking necessary care (because their family cannot look after them as they moved out of the area to search for work) and insufficient institutional care for elderly people.
- Physically and/or mentally handicapped people feeling unhappy, isolated and useless and lacking necessary care because the family cannot cope and again insufficient institutional care for physically and/or mentally handicapped people.
- Waiting lists of social-care institutions for elderly and handicapped people in the powiat Leżajsk, which makes getting urgent help impossible.
- Pensions of elderly people become the only regular source of income for a growing number of families in the powiat Leżajsk.

According to the experiences of the public and private social-care institutions that participate in the project Family Care Farms, groups lacking sufficient care in the powiat Leżajsk are especially elderly, mentally and/or physically handicapped people and people with psychological problems.

The multi-generation family has been typical in Polish rural areas for ages. In such a family elderly people usually got care from their children, who were living with them, so there was no need for elderly people to go to social-care institutions. Nowadays the situation has changed. The multi-generation family disappears more and more from the Polish reality because young people are moving to the cities and even to other countries in search of work. The reason for this is a difficult economic situation of most of the families in the powiat Leżajsk where many wage earners are unemployed. Increasingly, elderly people are staying behind on their own and consequently many of them feel isolated, useless and unhappy and cannot be looked after anymore by their children. This means that they have to apply to social-care institutions for care. But an elderly person needing urgent care cannot get this care due to the long waiting lists. They have to wait at least half a year up to 2.5 years for

a place. Most of the people in need of care do not like to go to the institutions, but there is no alternative. Otherwise more family members have to take up the task of caring, which means staying jobless themselves.

The social care for mentally and/or physically handicapped people in the powiat Leżajsk needs improvement as well. Similarly to elderly people, this group that is in need of care stays in the family. The problem is that in most cases the family is not able to care properly for a handicapped person. Usually, disabled people are isolated, feeling useless and unhappy. Institutional social care is not efficient enough. Not all of the handicapped people can get the necessary help.

Type of care farm

The Act of the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, dated 17 October 2001, concerning family social houses and the Act concerning Social Care, dated 12 March 2004, form the basis for setting up care farms. In order to comply with Polish law on social care, project initiators decided upon the specific name of the care farms in south-eastern Poland: 'family care farms'.

Family care farms that the project participants want to create, have the following characteristics:

- Small-scale operations – they give care to three or more persons, with a maximum of eight persons.
- Two types of care farms – farms that offer 24-hour care (with accommodation) and farms that care for a few hours a day (without accommodation).
- They meet specific requirements depending upon the target groups with regard to the location and accessibility of the farm and the kind and quality of the facilities available on the farm.
- Family care farms cooperate with each other at gmina level. They assist each other in certain situations and exchange experiences.
- They get support from the relevant social and health institutions in the powiat.
- Farmers who want to start a family care farm get an introductory training.

Family care farms provide accommodation for living, caring, performing activities and working in the form of occupational therapy. According to the legislative acts and the intentions of the working group on the project in the powiat Leżajsk, family care farms will have to fulfil all necessary criteria to provide high-quality care to their clients. Those criteria refer in the first place to the skills and knowledge about social care of the farmers and to provide appropriate living conditions on a farm. The necessary conditions are especially that buildings and their surroundings have good access for caretakers without any physical barriers, there is proper space in each room for every person in need of care, the farm has outside activity areas such as gardens and stables for small animals, is fully equipped, that in multilevel buildings without an elevator the rooms for care seekers are located on the ground floor, etc. In view of providing high-quality services to care clients, it is envisaged that family care farms in Leżajsk strive for offering more than is required by the legal criteria.

Target groups

Taking into account legal aspects in Poland, social problems in the particular area and all possibilities and limitations for family care farms, it was evident for the working group that family care farms will initially focus on the following groups of care clients: 1) elderly people; 2) physically and mentally handicapped people; and 3) people with psychological and/or social problems.

It was agreed that it should be possible to give care to a combination of the above-mentioned target groups, if preferred by the farmer and his wife and if they have the opportunities and skills to do so. It is expected that members of one target group can support members of the other target group in many ways, which is confirmed by experiences of the Dutch care farms. Care farms with mixed groups of clients have one of the best therapeutic results in The Netherlands.

Kinds of care given by family care farms

Family care farms offering 24 hours' care and protective services on the farms (in practice a few hours per client per day) can offer a combination of the following kinds of care:

- daytime physical and social care;
- guidance by daytime activities;
- occupational therapy.

Daytime physical and social-care services involve helping care clients in casual life situations and activities. On such farms farmers assist their clients by supplying meals, cleaning and tidying up rooms, giving help with dressing, eating, washing and bathing, help by taking care of personal things, caring or assisting in case of illness and help to make use of other health/medical services, help to buy clothes, shoes and other personal belongings.

Guidance in daytime activities and occupational therapy concentrates more on doing certain activities that a person would not have a chance to do while staying in an institution or at home. This kind of care involves the clients themselves, which is expected to have a positive influence on their therapeutic results. Social-care farmers guide care clients and show them how they can participate in the farm and household activities like taking care of animals, working in the vegetable garden, doing other auxiliary works on the farm, preparing meals or tidying up rooms.

Occupational therapy by family care farms is offered in close cooperation with the appropriate social-care institution in the powiat. Together they work out the content, method and means for therapy of every individual person in need of care.

On each family care farm it is of great importance that farmers take into account health, physical and intellectual skills, individual needs and abilities of a person who stays on the farm, as well as human rights, including the right to privacy, freedom and safety.

Organizational structure of family care farms in the powiat Leżajsk

In the Family Care Farms project, cooperation between family care farms, social-care institutions and local authorities is of vital importance. Only such environment enables building up a professional sector of high-quality care services on family care farms. Farmers in the powiat Leżajsk have no experience in professional social care and, in addition, their households will need much effort to adjust them to the needs of clients. For this reason farmers need support of the social-care institutions in their powiat during the initial phase as well as while prospering. From the institutions' point of view, establishment of family care farms will diversify care services in the region and reduce existing long waiting lists of people needing care. Social-care institutions in the powiat Leżajsk have been very active in the elaboration of the concept through their involvement in the preparatory working group on the project.

Figure 7 represents the cooperation and information channels within the proposed family care farm sector.

People in need of care are in the centre of attention in the organizational structure of family care farms. The project is primarily dedicated to their needs, abilities and development. Clients will have four ways of applying for help in the social-care structure:

- to the Powiat Centre of Family Care (PCPR), the managing social-care institution at powiat level;
- to the Gmina Centre of Social Care (GOPS), the managing social-care institution at gmina level;
- to the Occupational Therapy Workshops (WTZ), Environmental Houses of Mutual Aid for mentally disabled (ŚDS), Homes of Social Care for elderly people (DPS) or other institutions which directly provide care;
- to the Supporting Bureau, which is the operational, coordination and first contact body of the Family Care Farms Association, for conscious clients interested in receiving care from family care farmers.

These contact institutions give information about the possible places of social-care support for clients and their families. When a person is interested in staying on a family care farm, he/she is directed straight to the Supporting Bureau, which presents the offer of family care farms in the region and their conditions, and brings the client into contact with the farmer. For the future it is also necessary to form a Client Association, which will look after the interests of clients, negotiate an optimal social-care system in the region and ensure a proper balance between what people in need of care want and what the social-care sector provides.

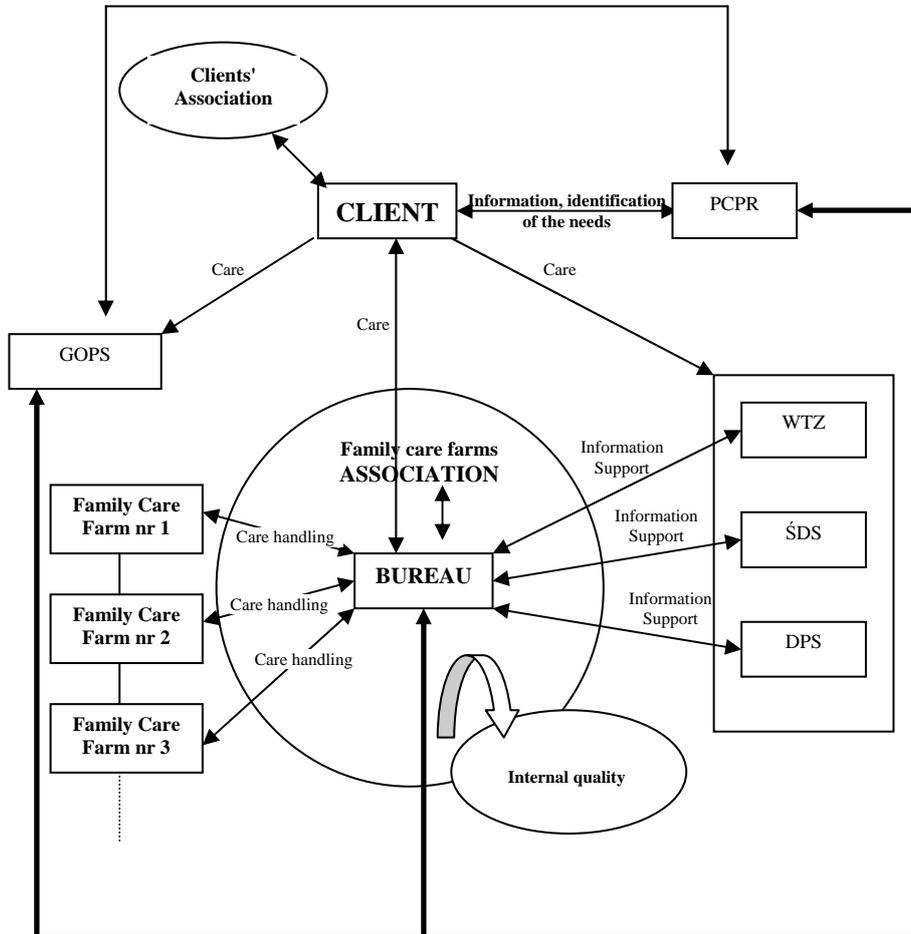


Figure 7. Information and identification of social-care needs in the region

Gmina Centre of Social Care (GOPPS) realizes tasks of the gmina concerning social care. It is responsible for money allocation from the gmina's budget designed for social-care services in the territory of the gmina. GOPPS investigates the client's social and financial situation and decides on the financial contribution of each person in need of care.

Powiat Centre of Family Care (PCPR) realizes tasks of the powiat concerning social care. It has the basis of all existing care entities in the powiat, serves as information point, provides expert support, etc.

Both of the above-mentioned institutions are responsible for controlling the quality of social-care services and living standards on the family care farms. On the other hand, the Supporting Bureau is responsible for working out the internal quality

system that has to be fulfilled by all farmers. GOPS is also responsible for allocation of financial means for the social-care services in the respective gmina.

Another role is attributed to individual care-providing institutes like Occupational Therapy Workshops (WTZ) in Leżajsk, Environmental House of Mutual Aid for Mentally Disabled (ŚDS) in Sarzyna, and Home of Social Care for Elderly People (DPS) in Brzózka Królewska. They can support family care farmers in:

- training knowledge and skills in giving care to different groups of clients;
- organizing meetings between farmers and relevant social- or health-care institutions to exchange experiences with giving care to a specific client group;
- assistance in the intake of people to the family care farm;
- assistance in formulating a care plan and setting up a dossier for each client. A care plan describes the kind of care the client needs, the kind of activities that are appropriate for him/her and possibilities for the future. In the dossier the farmer makes notes of the behaviour, health and changing needs of the client;
- supporting family care farmers who have clients with difficult problems by giving advice or taking up a client in their institution for a certain period in case of a crisis situation;
- providing expert and equipment support in the rehabilitation and therapeutic process of people staying on family care farms.

Setting up family care farms in the powiat Leżajsk will need a lot of time and attention. Existing social-care institutions have neither the time nor the competence to do that. This is why it is necessary to implement the Supporting Bureau as a main coordination body in the family care farms sector. Initially, the Bureau will be responsible for establishing the first family care farms. This is why it will have to make a detailed survey concerning the interests of potential clients, farmers, local governments, public and private institutions in starting up family care farms in their gminas. In the initial phase the Supporting Bureau calculates the costs of care services offered by family care farms and searches for possible sources of financing their activity. After family care farms appear in the region, the Supporting Bureau will overlook the network of this new sector, maintain close contact with all institutions that are involved, be a central information point for clients (elderly, mentally and physically handicapped people) and farmers, and register, coordinate and match demand and supply (in terms of service needed and offered). Another important function is to provide follow-up to the client, stimulate the quality of the social-care services, exchange knowledge and experience (the Bureau as a place where all information is gathered), support starters, and take care of the interests of family care farmers.

Financing structures of family care farms

According to the legislative aspects on social and health care, family care farms can be regarded as a specific form of family social houses (Act concerning Family Social Houses, 17 October 2001) and/or as a place where 'protective services' are offered (Act concerning Social Care, 12 March 2004) to lonely people, who need

help of others because of high age, illness or disability. Both acts describe which people can make use of social care, which requirements should be satisfied by the family social houses, who can establish them, and how the care services should be financed. In both cases the gmina pays for care given to these persons as the body responsible for providing social care to citizens. The board of each gmina makes a regulation that settles the own contribution of the care questioner, which can never be higher than 70% of the pension of each person in need of care. This contribution does not depend on the place where a person stays; the same percentage will be applied for a place in the institution as for a place in the family care house.

The system of financing social-care services in Poland has changed in May 2004, when the gmina instead of the national budget became responsible for paying all expenses for social care in its territory from its own budget. Since this moment a gmina has to choose the optimum combination of means to provide social-care services to its citizens, in both an economical and a social way. Project initiators want to introduce to gminas an alternative to institutional forms of social care – family care farms, which will be most probably cheaper than the social-care institutions. Expectations are that gminas with their limited budgets will be interested in creating family care farms in their territory, under the condition that the quality of care will stay at a comparable level of acceptability.

Financing of family care farms is divided into the structural financing and funding for supporting the sector of farming and care combinations. Structural financing, which is the direct payment for the care services given by the farmers, has to be very precisely and clearly arranged so that all organizations and authorities involved know their responsibility. Structural financing of family care farms has to be the own private–public contribution of local authorities, social-care institutions and clients. This is the only way to achieve an efficient and prospering family care farm sector without the risk of discontinuation. According to Polish law costs of care services are covered first by the client, then his/her family, and at the end the responsible gmina.

A separate issue is the financial support of the sector as a whole, which is necessary to implement and sustain the idea of social-care farming in Poland. Those are the funds for:

- training of social-care farmers;
- promotion;
- advisory services;
- information and knowledge exchange;
- mediation and negotiation of better conditions for the farmers;
- support in reducing the costs of family care farms, etc.

The acquisition of the funds for the above-mentioned tasks stays in the hands of the Supporting Bureau. Coverage of the initial investment costs of the establishment of family care farms may be possible by making use of European Union funds and other available funds. Another possibility is to involve different local and regional actors, for instance, through the board of Podkarpackie voivodship, neighbouring gminas and the city of Rzeszów, which are interested in the project running in the powiat Leżajsk.

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NOTES

¹ In the following chapter some specific terms like gmina, powiat and voivodship are used. Since 01.01.99 there is a three-level administrative division of the country:

- województwo – voivodship (often translated with province),
- powiat (often translated with district),
- gmina (municipality).

There are 16 voivodships, 373 powiats (among which 308 are territorial powiats and 65 cities with the rights of powiat) and 2489 gminas in Poland.

² Family care farm – name for a care farm in the project in Leżajsk that complies with Polish legislation (Act concerning Family Social Houses).

ANNEX 1. DESCRIPTION OF TYPES OF FARMS

*Types of farms as used in The Netherlands**The 'helping-hand' type*

The person who needs care goes to a farm and participates in the daily work that has to be done on the farm. In this type there are only 1 to 3 care questioners. Each person does that kind of work that fits close to his individual possibilities. The full responsibility for giving guidance by the work that has to be done lies with the farmer (and/or his wife). There is no formal cooperation with a social- or health-care institution. The care seekers do not need specialized care and they can reasonably work on their own.

The care branch business type

Besides the regular farm enterprise there is a commercial care branch enterprise. In this model 3 to 12 people can get the care they are asking for. Some of them may participate in the daily work that has to be done on the farm, but most of them will do activities specially created on the farm for them. Those can be gardening, caring for small animals, hobby activities, etc.; in general, activities that are useful and that fit close to the individual possibilities of the care-seeking people. There is a formal cooperation with an existing social- or health-care institution that takes the responsibility for the quality of the care that is given. Of course the farmer and/or his wife take their part in the caring and will be supported by the care institution. In this type it is possible that a number of farm households work together within an association and that the association cooperates with one or more care institution(s).

The institution care farm type

In this type the care farm is not a regular farm, but part of the care institution. The daytime activities and the occupational therapy are fully integrated into the specialized care. Care can be given at any time. The activities are created to fit closely the possibilities of the care seekers. The care institution needs to make heavy financial investments to establish a care farm within its organization. It should have at its disposal specific agricultural knowledge and certain recognitions and it has to take into account all kinds of regulations concerning agriculture.