



## Effective Education for Employment: Warsaw, Poland Interview Series



# Anna Świebocka-Nerkowska

Anna Świebocka-Nerkowska's work at the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) covers entrepreneurship, the development of human resources, the expansion of international markets and regional development. PARP is focused on developing and stimulating enterprising attitudes and behaviours through vocational education.

In this interview Mrs Świebocka-Nerkowska outlines an inspiring and focused vision for the future of education in Poland.

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### Background and Key Findings

PARP has conducted extensive research in Poland, asking employers exactly what they need from their people in terms of skills, attitudes and behaviours. This important work unearthed some fascinating findings:

- Soft skills such as communication and teamwork are needed more and more in the Polish economy, but this need is not being adequately addressed in schools and colleges.
- The lack of a comprehensive, comparative framework for vocational education makes it impossible to usefully measure qualifications across different sectors.
- The Polish education system is developing advanced techniques for entrepreneurship.

*"As human beings we like stability, but the only thing that is stable now is permanent change."*

*“Practical learning is everything – not learning by memory.”*



- Companies in Poland are now providing direct funding for equipment to help address the problem of sector-specific skills gaps.
- PARP has identified infrastructure gaps around facilitating dialogue between business and education and is developing a forward thinking, innovative approach to education for entrepreneurship.

*“Now we have the Internet, we can present problems to students, give them data and let them solve problems individually and in groups... And we can monitor them as they are doing this.”*

## Interview Summary

Pedagogical models are hindering potential progress heralded by the introduction of technology in the classroom: *“Soft skills are not considered... we learn by rote, based on an old formula of education which is still in place, even if we are now using PCs in the classroom.”*

There are core competencies which employers state are essential for meeting the demands of the rapidly changing Polish workplace:

### 1. Cooperation and team work:

*“People will still need to work as individuals, but finding a role within a group, performing as a group member is a basic skill now for many jobs.”*

### 2. Adaptability to change:

*“As human beings we like stability, but the only thing that is stable now is permanent change.”*

### 3. Communication:

*“You need to be able to communicate your needs, your ideas and you need to be able to network with other people. For me this is absolutely crucial.”*

Companies in Poland are now providing direct funding for equipment to help address the problem of sector specific skill gaps: *“In Poland many BPO projects are active on the basis of young, well-educated Polish students and young people...”*

Entrepreneurship is now explicitly taught in schools in Poland – a progressive and even unique situation previously unheard of in our global study of Effective Education for Employment.

There is no comprehensive comparative framework for vocational education: *“This type of measurement would help Polish workers to build a full life-long learning portfolio... We now have those with hard skills – plumbers, for example – assessed and certified, but we need to know how to combine that with the competencies we know are so important for all jobs now.”*

*“I believe that understanding and learning about entrepreneurship is about behaviour and attitudes. It’s about being an active person, looking for new challenges and being open.”*