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**Aid measureres from
unemployed perspective
(in the light of the
research results)**

1. Introduction

Business and political connections existing nowadays between various countries make crisis situations initiated in one country affect the economies of the others. This has been the case with the 2008 economic crisis whose negative consequences took their toll also on Poland. We have seen, among others, the significant depreciation of the Polish currency, slowdown in production dynamics, trade and retail sales; reduced lending by banks (e.g.: Urząd Komisji Nadzoru Finansowego 2009; Urząd Komisji Nadzoru Finansowego 2011); the unemployment rate has increased: from 6.7% in 2008 to 10.1% in 2012 (dropping in 2013 to 9.8%, according to the *Central Statistical Office*; GUS 2014). Many businesses have decided to take remedial measures, such as: limiting the scope and range of their activities, revising the organizational strategy, and downsizing¹. The last of them,

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1 According to K. Sochacka (2012, p. 6), downsizing is caused by the employer's need to adapt to changing economic, technical and organizational circumstances. It may be caused by the necessity to adapt the staff to resulting changes, including: implementing new techniques and technologies of production, changing the form of ownership, increasing in demand for new qualifications

i.e. downsizing, has been known to be very costly, not only in financial terms, but also from the social standpoint. This is because it leads to the necessity to implement actions that would change the internal structure of the company, including the very structure of employment (Stabryła 1995; Nalepka 1998)². It is therefore associated with the need to conduct redundancies, which are the cause of: lowered sense of security and/or self-esteem, increased frustration and self-limitation, increased risk of interpersonal tensions (cf.: Stankiewicz, Bortnowska 2013). Is it possible, and if so - how, to mitigate these negative processes? What actions have been taken in the years 2008-2014 by Lubusz employers in order to reduce the number/scale of the negative effects of downsizing?³ What kind of aid was offered, to those who lost employment, by the representatives of local authorities, government administration, local businesses and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)? How were these actions received by people losing their job? What kind of aid measures would they like to see in the future? Answering these questions is the objective of the following article. To achieve that goal, empirical research was conducted in 2014.

2. Outplacement - responsibly conducted downsizing

Badly thought-out and unprofessional downsizing can not only become the lost chance for a company to rehabilitate, but may also trigger many undesirable

among employees, using flexible forms of working time, determination in directing downsizing at apparent work, looking for opportunities to reduce costs of operation (Sekula 2001, p. 215). The study conducted by the international auditing and advisory firm, KPMG on 303 Polish companies, found that in most of the analyzed cases (88%) there was an economic slowdown after 2008 which was the main reason for introducing changes in the personnel policy (Karasek, Emerling, Kwiatkowski 2011, p. 9).

2 Although downsizing is associated with mass redundancies or bankruptcy, it is - in effect - supposed to bring positive effects for both the organization and employees (cf. Korska 2009). Its goal is to restore the company's solvency by improving the unfavorable economic conditions (repair downsizing) and/or adapt the company to the conditions that have yet to arrive but will most likely develop in the future, and use them to achieve the company's goals (development downsizing) (cf. Stabryła 2000; Suszyński 1999).

3 It does not apply to those who have lost employment on disciplinary grounds (fault of the employee), i.e. for serious breach of basic employee duties, committing offense which prevents further employment at the position held during the employment contract, if the offense is obvious or has been confirmed by final judgment, loss of privileges necessary to perform work at the position held due to the fault of the employee (Art. 52§1 of the *Kodeks Pracy*).

consequences: for the company itself, its members, and even the local community or region. The cases of poorly executed actions of this kind were described, among others, by M. Korsak (2009). The success of this type of change within the organization depends not only on how it is carried out by the employer, but also on the extent and intensity of aid measures offered by the representatives of local authorities, government administration, local businesses, NGOs and others.

Employers, in cooperation with the representatives of the entities mentioned above, may undertake various projects aiming to reduce the negative consequences of downsizing. One of the most important of them is *outplacement* and offering to dismissed individuals, their families and members of the organization who avoided losing their job, something more than merely the standard benefits required by generally applicable labor laws (Religa, Kicior 2010, p.105). Positive effects can be brought by versatile and comprehensive care: managerial, organizational, legal, institutional, psychosocial, and - if necessary - also medical, intended to reduce any kind of distressing effects of downsizing (cf.: Makowski 2001, p.167). Examples of the activities undertaken within the outplacement program include: financial aid and counseling services, psychological support focused on the development of qualifications related to coping with difficult situations accompanying the loss of job, and management of one's own professional career; assistance in the scope of information, consulting and training with respect to the local job market (and the possibility to cooperate with local organizations that operate on it), organizational and advisory activities focused on finding new employment, entrepreneurship training, legal consultations for those interested in starting a business, medical care (for more, see: Stankiewicz, Bortnowska 2015).

The representatives of local authorities, government administration, local businesses and NGOs can also play an important role in mitigating the negative consequences of redundancies (including mass redundancies). People who have lost their place of employment, and thus a source of income for themselves and their families, should be offered e.g. job placement, career counseling, psychological support; chance to participate in professional internships, intervention works, public works, job fairs, training; as well as assistance in obtaining the so-called *one-off measures* (e.g. from EU funds) to start their own business. An obstacle to the involvement of the entities mentioned above in helping the unemployed is, as indicated by M. Klimczuk-Kochańska and A. Klimczuk (2012), not only access to financial or human resources, but also the fact that many available descriptions of *outplacement* procedures recommend mainly the services of commercial companies, and less often the help offered by NGOs carrying out tasks in the

field of job market. Taking all this into consideration, the following questions arise: What kind of aid was offered to the Lubusz employees who lost their job in the years 2008-2014? Who did they receive it from? What did they think of it? The answers to these questions have been addressed later in this article.

3. Research methodology and characteristics of the research sample

The research was conducted in the second quarter of 2014. It contains the opinions of 129⁴ intentionally selected people residing in Lubusz Voivoideship⁵, who have lost their job between 2008 and 2014⁶ (with none having been dismissed on disciplinary grounds). The direct survey technique was opted for, using a categorized and standardized questionnaire (prepared with the use of knowledge based on the study of literature), including, among others, twelve questions: closed and semi-open (single and multiple choice); five of them were additionally elaborated upon and presented in tables. The following scales were used: unipolar and bipolar ordinal scale, position scale and Likert scale. The questionnaire also included socio-demographic variables characterizing the respondents. The analysis of responses allowed for fulfillment of the research objectives.

Among the research participants, there were slightly more women than men (57% vs. 43%). A similar number of the respondents were in various age groups: 28% of the respondents were 41-50 years old, 24% - 31-40, one in five (20%) - 26-30 or over 50. The smallest group of the respondents (8%) comprised people

4 As a result of these efforts, a total of 140 completed questionnaires was obtained. Preliminary grouping of raw material and analysis of the collected data were made. Eliminated were those questionnaires which contained conflicting or inconsistent responses, as well as those in which respondents did not reply to all the questions (including metrics questions). Consequently, further analysis of 129 questionnaires was conducted. With the use of Statsoft STATISTICA and Microsoft Excel, coding and analysis of the collected data were performed. The calculations included but were not limited to: interest rates, arithmetic means, V-Cramer's coefficients.

5 The research was conducted in twenty four Lubusz towns. More than half of the respondents (54%) lost their job in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (Zielona Góra and Gorzów Wielkopolski), a fifth of respondents (21%) - in towns with 20.001-50.000 inhabitants (e.g. Nowa Sól or Żary). Least respondents (13.2% and 11.6%, respectively) were dismissed from companies located in towns inhabited by fewer than 10,000 people (e.g. Kozuchów or Łęknica) or slightly bigger, from 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants (e.g. Krosno Odrzańskie, Sulechów).

6 More than one in four respondents (28%) still had the status of an unemployed person at the time of completing the survey questionnaire.

under 26 years of age. The majority of respondents (89%) expanded the group of dismissed executive employees in the analyzed period.

Most respondents lost their jobs in a small- (35.5%) or medium sized (34%)⁷ company. The others were dismissed from micro- (15%) or large- (15.5%) sized enterprises. A significant proportion of the respondents (21% and 18%, respectively) lost employment in businesses engaged in wholesale and retail trade or industrial processing. One in eight (14%) used to be employed in the construction industry, while every twelfth respondent (8.5%) - in transportation, warehouse management and communications business. One in sixteen (approx. 6%) lost his or her job at the hotel, restaurant and financial agency, or in public administration, national defense and insurance.

The rest of the respondents (20.5% in total) were dismissed from the companies operating in the sectors involving but not limited to: education, energy, agriculture, health care.

The research sample, therefore, consisted mostly of the people who lost their jobs in a small- or medium-sized company located in the town with more than 100,000 inhabitants, operating mostly in trade, manufacturing, construction and transportation. One in four study participants still had the status of an unemployed person.

4. Outplacement in practice on the example of Lubusz employers; their assessment by dismissed employees

The research participants have pointed to different types of aid measures offered to them by employers conducting downsizing⁸. The study shows that the most common assistance offered to dismissed individuals were: positive references for future employers (50%), timely payment of severance (47.3%) and provision of temporary health insurance (38.8%). As seen, the main focus is to temporarily secure the dismissed employees financially, and also to increase their chances of finding new employment by providing positive assessment of their attitude

7 The research has shown (www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/wyniki/documents/6_052.pdf, date of access: 12.10.2014), that members of the SME typically have less knowledge about the activities in the field of outplacement as compared to the representatives of large companies. Authors of the article are aware that small percentage of people dismissed from large companies could affect the obtained study results and show a lower prevalence of aid measures proposed to the surveyed Lubusz citizens who lost their jobs in the years 2008-2014.

8 The research focused on the active forms of aid actions offered to the unemployed.

towards the company, job or colleagues. The other, less commonly offered aid measures were described in more detail in the article titled *Outplacement in practice on the example of Lubusz companies* (Outplacement w praktyce lubuskich przedsiębiorstw; Stankiewicz, Bortnowska 2015). The question that remains is what did the research participants think of all this?

Analysis of the results revealed that 43% of the respondents negatively assessed the assistance provided to them by their employers. A similar percentage (approx. 42%) of them rated it positively, but among those dominated the opinion that the aid measures were merely *sufficient* (72.2%). Few respondents identified them as *good* (9.3%) or *very good* (2.3%); 16% abstained from giving an explicit opinion on the subject⁹. The average score was 2.7. The V-Cramer's coefficient showed weak correlation between specific assessments (positive, negative) and the majority of variables characterizing the respondents or the company they had been dismissed from. This coefficient assumed the highest value for the industry (0.35 - which points to the correlation of medium strength).

Analysis of the correlation (between sectors and the other analyzed variables characterizing the respondents or the company they had been dismissed from) revealed the correlation of medium strength for the variable determining company size (0.4). It was found that the most negative ratings of aid measures were given by employees dismissed from midsize companies engaged in the processing industry or trade (wholesale and/or retail) – at this point, however, it is worth noting that it was the most numerous group of respondents). Negative assessment was given by 26% of the people belonging to the respective categories of the respondents. These correlations could be the consequence of a decline in return on sales of products, goods and materials (in Lubusz companies employing more than 49 people) which took place at least in some years of the research period¹⁰.

As a result, they could limit the expenditure on severance payments and other aid measures offered in case of downsizing, and thus trigger discontent and exacerbate frustrations of dismissed employees. The majority of respondents (90%) belonging to the analyzed subgroups have lost employment on an executive

9 It was also determined that nearly 60% of the respondents would not recommend their former job or employer to a friend. The opposite opinion was given by one in five respondents (24.2%). The others did not know have an opinion on the subject.

10 For wholesale and retail sales, profitability index of products, goods and materials (in Lubusz companies employing more than 49 people) over the period 2008-2013 amounted, respectively, to: 2.0; 1.9; 1.3; 1.3; 1.1 and 0.6, while for companies engaged in the processing industry: 5.2; 5.7; 3.8; 4.8; 4.7 and 5.3 (Bank Danych Lokalnych, <http://www.stat.gov.pl>, date of access: 24.07.2014).

position (e.g. salesperson, production line worker, warehouse manager) that does not require highly developed, sought-after technical skills necessary to generate product innovations. It can be assumed that the limited scope of aid measures offered by the employer was due to their belief in the low “value” of these workers, their easy replacement, and therefore pointlessness of providing them proper outplacement¹¹ (for more, see: Stankiewicz, Bortnowska 2015).

5. Aid measures offered to the unemployed by local governments and associated entities; their assessment by the unemployed

The research finds that almost 60% of the respondents have not made use of any assistance offered by the representatives of local authorities, government administration, local businesses and/or NGOs. The following questions arise: What were the reasons for it? What type of aid was offered to the Lubusz unemployed and how they assessed it? In order to answer them, the V-Cramer factor values were examined¹². In the case of the variables - age, sex, type of position (managerial/executive), company size, type of industry and workplace location, the analyzed coefficient did not exceed the value of 0.3, which translates into lack of correlation of at least medium strength. Consequently, the authors of the article focused solely on the analysis of the correlation existing between specific actions and the company sector (in the case of this variable, V-Cramer’s was the highest, 0.28, although its value still pointed to rather poor correlation). It was found that using this kind of aid was most common among people who have lost their job in public administration and defense (71.5%). Among them, there were also those who were dismissed from labor offices. They had probably been more aware of the assistance offered to the unemployed by the representatives of local authorities, government administration, local businesses and/or NGOs. It is also possible that, knowing the specifics of their operation, they had more confidence in these institutions. They would consequently overcome shame, fear or aversion to such organizations and apply for help.

11 Especially that some of these people could be seasonal workers employed during the time of increased production and sales.

12 Cramer’s V coefficient assumes values between 0 and 1. The article includes the following scale correlation: $|r| = 0$ (no correlation exists), $0 < |r| < 0.3$ (poor correlation), $0.3 \leq |r| < 0.5$ (average correlation), $0.5 \leq |r| < 0.7$ (significant correlation), $0.7 \leq |r| < 0.9$ (high correlation), $0.9 \leq |r| < 1.0$ (very high correlation), $|r| = 1$ (full, function correlation). This scale is, however, contractual and is sometimes recognized differently by the authors of statistical reports (Stanisz 2006).

The majority of respondents (83%) who accepted aid offered to the unemployed Lubusz citizens, took advantage of job placement. Other analyzed actions attracted less interest among the study participants. For example: professional counselors were approached by a little over a quarter of the respondents (28.3%), while only every fifth of them participated in internships (22.6%) or job fairs (20.8%); one in ten (9.4%) was given the opportunity to participate in intervention works. Very rarely (7.5%) one would turn to psychological assistance, training or one-off means for starting a business. The least common among the respondents (5.7%) was participation in public works. More than half of the study participants (60%) positively assessed aid measures offered to them by the representatives of local governments and associated entities. 56.3% of these people rated the measures as *good*, 40.6% - as *sufficient*, and only 3% - as *very good*. The average score was 3.1. Analysis of the Cramer's V showed weak correlation between the fact of positively/negatively assessing the analyzed entities and the sex of the respondent, size of the town where they lost employment, type of job position they were dismissed from (values for the above-mentioned correlation measure were respectively: 0.08, 0.24, and 0.22). For the remaining variables included in the research, higher values of correlation coefficient pointed to correlation of medium strength: industry (0.43), company size (0.35) and age of the respondent (0.33).

It was found that none of the people under 26 years of age has positively assessed the aid measures offered by the representatives of local authorities, government administration, local businesses and/or NGOs, regardless of the size of the company they had been dismissed from and the industry it operated in. Such assessment might have been due to an increasing conviction of the poor efficiency of these actions, among others. In 2009, the number of the Lubusz unemployed under 24 increased by 34% as compared to the previous year (from 9,300 to 12,450). In subsequent years, this number would decrease (2010 - 11,905; 2011 - 11,597; 2012 - 11,115), but in 2013 it was still higher than in 2008 (10,150) (Bank Danych Lokalnych 2014). Negative ratings also could have resulted from disappointment with regard to the current situation of the youth on both Polish and European job market.

The highest unemployment rates among the youth under 26 were observed in Greece (58.4%) and Spain (55.7%); in Poland, the unemployment rate in this particular age bracket was 28.1% in 2013. These people, despite having a college diploma and good command of foreign languages, usually had more troubles finding a job than their parents two or three decades ago. Oftentimes, they could expect nothing more than unpaid internship or the civil contracts.

(http://www.nestle.pl/assetlibrary/documents/nestl%C3%A9%20youth%20employment%20initiative_kontekst%20spo%C5%82eczny.pdf, 21.08.2014).

Looking at the people over 50, the percentage of those who welcomed the aid measures of the local governments and other organizations mentioned above, was 31.3% for small businesses and 10% in middle-sized companies (everyone in this group who was dismissed from micro- and large-sized enterprises negatively assessed the received assistance). Positive ratings were most common among those respondents who have lost their jobs in a company engaged in wholesale and retail trade. Perhaps, among them were people who did not possess sought-after professional skills¹³ and were aware of the fact that many employers would see this as a disadvantage. Furthermore, knowing the difficult situation on the job market of people aged 50+¹⁴, they chose to lower their demands and were satisfied with the aid they had been offered. Potential cause for higher ratings of aid measures offered to the unemployed - as compared to the youth under 26 - could be due to the participation in programs aimed at improving the professional profile of the unemployed Lubusz citizens aged 50+ (e.g.: *"New skills for the unemployed 50+"*, *"Professional employees 50+"*, *"Re-entry on the job market"*, *"Professional activation of women in post-military departments"*). Within such programs offered were: internships, career counseling, training (e.g. vendor/cashier, administrative and office worker with elements of accounting, call center worker), assistance in finding a job (<http://zielonalinia.gov.pl/>, 08.21.2014), etc.¹⁵

Summing up the results of the research presented in Section 5., it can be concluded that only 40% of the respondents have actually benefited from the assistance of local government representatives and associated entities. Most of them, trying to shorten the period of remaining without a permanent place of

13 As can be seen from the examination conducted in labor offices by Supreme Chamber of Control, people aged 50+ are at a disadvantage in finding new employment due to their qualifications. This group is characterized by generally low level of education (approx. 70% of the unemployed - vocational, basic or lower) (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2013).

14 As demonstrated by research conducted in 2013 by Supreme Chamber of Control, in 2010-2012, despite the implementation of activation tools, the number of the registered unemployed in this age bracket increased by 15.4%, while the number of the other registered unemployed remained at 7.6% (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2013).

15 Unfortunately, these programs and similar projects implemented by the Ministry of Work and Social Policy and labor offices did not bring the desired results. The outcome of aid measures offered to the unemployed over 50 years old was usually short-sighted and usually did not provide permanent employment to the unemployed (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli 2013).

employment, decided to accept aid in the form of job placement. The fourth part of the respondents consulted professional advisors, or took part in internships and/or job fairs. Few demonstrated entrepreneurial, proactive attitude and started their own business (although this may be due to complex procedures of applying for grants, or insufficient financial resources of those who apply for this type of funds). At the same time, it should be added that more than half of the beneficiaries of the presented aid measures assessed them positively (although many as merely sufficient). It should also be emphasized that the negative assessment was given by all the people under 26 years of age. One potential reason for this was an overall difficult situation of the youth on both Polish and European job market. The case was different for the respondents aged 50+. It might have been due to the fact that they had a chance to participate in activities organized by local labor offices, dedicated exclusively to the unemployed Lubusz citizens of this age group, or simply assumed passive attitude, being convinced, for example, of their professional skills being out of date.

6. Preferences of the unemployed Lubusz citizens concerning aid measures in the field of *outplacement*

During the research, it was also established which aid measures the respondents would like to take advantage of in the event of future job loss. A special ranking of these measures has been devised for this purpose – it was presented in table 1.

Table 1. Ranking of aid measures in the field of outplacement offered by representatives of local authorities, government administration, local businesses and/or non-governmental organizations preferred by the unemployed [%]

Ranking position	Type of aid measure from the field of <i>outplacement</i> offered by representatives of local governments and associated entities	% of responses
	Job placement	53.5
	Internship	48.0
	Professional counseling	46.0
	Financial aid for starting a business	33.3
	Job fairs	30.2

	Psychological assistance	19.4
	Training	10.1
	Intervention works	7.0
	Public works	4.6

Source: own study

One in two respondents expressed their interest in job placement, internship and/or professional counselor services (these were also the most frequently used measures by the unemployed respondents). One in three respondents expressed their desire for receiving financial aid in the form of funds earmarked for starting a business, and/or participating in job fairs (it is worth remembering that this type of aid has been offered only to one in thirteenth participants of the research). Every fifth respondent would be interested in receiving psychological assistance (very rarely provided), and every tenth - training, whether it is language or human resource management, business management, computer, machinery and equipment literacy, or professional networking. Few people are willing to participate in public works or intervention works.

The survey reveals that many of the respondents are looking for stable employment, rather than temporary solutions (such as intervention works). This begs the question whether the representatives of local governments include these needs in the Lubusz employment plan for 2015, *Lubuski Plan Działań na Rzecz Zatrudnienia na rok 2015* (Zarząd Województwa Lubuskiego 2015)¹⁶. Analysis of the information contained in the following document has shown the plan is to continue the implementation of the task under *Measure 6.1* within the Human Capital Operation Program (Polish abbreviation: *POKL*). The measure aims to improve access to employment and support of economic activity in the region, while *Submeasure 6.1.1.* refers to the support for the unemployed on the regional labor market. The purpose of this task is to raise the level of economic activity and employability of the unemployed who figure on the registers of district labor offices, and to establish conditions conducive to the development of economic activity in the region. There are also plans regarding the implementation of professional activation, involving one or more forms of aid (such as job placement and/or professional counseling, internship/apprenticeship, training leading to improving, supplementing or changing

16 Approved on January 7, 2015 during the meeting of the Board of the Lubusz Province.

professional qualifications). The aid is to be granted to 160 people (including 95 between 15-24 years old and 65 between 50-64 years old). In addition, the entities implementing those aid programs are to take care of: raising self-esteem among these beneficiaries, changing their attitude from passive to active, increase their motivation, develop their interpersonal, organizational and analytical skills, active job search, time management. Furthermore, the following measures are planned to be implemented: assistance for dismissed employees in the education sector (including: training, career counseling, job placement, internship, funds for post-graduate studies, subsidized employment), youth-stimulating measures (*Electronic Youth Activation Centre* hotline, ECAM and *Green Line* online platforms, providing counseling and career information through *Mobile Professional Information Centers* and *Youth Career Centers*, assistance in active job search during individual consultations, group workshops for active job search, organizing job fairs in OHP organizational units¹⁷), or offering support for the unemployed in particularly difficult situation on the market through individual and group counseling (such people include, e.g.: long-term unemployed, over 50 years old, on welfare, with at least one child under 6 years old, having at least one child with a disability (up to 18 years old) and/or people with disabilities; professional activation will cover about 3,000 unemployed people, with around half of them being “activated” through social works) (for more information, refer to: Zarząd Województwa Lubuskiego 2015). These aid measures meet the needs of the unemployed respondents.

7. Conclusion

The primary objective of the aid measures offered to the unemployed by the representatives of local authorities, government administration, local businesses and non-governmental organizations is to reduce the problem of unemployment by creating the conditions conducive for life, work and/or running a business. The support should not rely solely on the payment of their allowances and other cash benefits because they slightly improve the situation of the beneficiaries in a short period. It is rather necessary to promote professional and social rehabilitation of the socially excluded, who - without help from the outside - are not able to fulfill their basic needs by themselves.

17 Interesting forms of aid offered to the unemployed under 30 seem to be, among others: settlement vouchers, employment vouchers, or refund of premiums for first-time employees.

The study has shown that more than half of the respondents, the unemployed Lubusz citizens, did not take advantage of any active forms of counteracting unemployment offered to them by representatives of the local authorities, government administration, businesses and non-governmental organizations in the years 2008-2014. If they decided to accept this kind of aid, the most commonly chosen was job placement. Consulting professional advisors and participation in internships or job fairs were opted for less often. These activities, as shown by the analysis of the respondents' answers, were also the most expected ones by the unemployed Lubusz citizens. Many respondents sought solutions that would provide them with stable employment, such: internship, training, professional counseling. One in three respondents would welcome receiving funds for starting a business or participate in job fairs (few had that opportunity). Most of the assistance expected by the unemployed respondents is in line with the Lubusz employment plan for 2015, *Lubuski Plan Działań na Rzecz Zatrudnienia na rok 2015* (especially from the standpoint of young people, those over 50 years old and others who find themselves in a particularly difficult situation on the job market). The following questions remain: what percentage of the Lubusz citizens in need will receive aid upon losing employment? Will it prove to be sufficient to ensure that they once again become valuable participants on the job market? The answers to these questions require further research.

Summary

Aid measures for the unemployed and their assessment (in the light of the research results)

The negative consequences of the economic downturn started in 2008 in the USA affected many countries, including - Poland. In many organizations, it was necessary to carry out the redundancies, and these ones, if they were implemented in an unethical way, usually intensified dysfunctional processes within the companies. The paper presents examples of outplacement activities which can be taken by the government and by employers to limit these negative effects and to reduce the extent of unemployment. It also shows the results of empirical studies carried out among workers of the Lubusz region, who were made redundant in 2008-2014. There were indicated, e.g. the activities, which benefited the respondents and those ones, which they would like to use, but did not have such an option.

Keywords: *economic downturn, redundancies, outplacement.*

Streszczenie

Działania pomocowe bezrobotnym i ich ocena (w świetle wyników badań)

Negatywne konsekwencje spowolnienia gospodarczego zapoczątkowanego w 2008 r. w Stanach Zjednoczonych dotknęły wiele krajów, w tym - Polskę. W wielu przedsiębiorstwach niezbędne stało się przeprowadzenie zwolnień pracowniczych, a te, jeśli były realizowane w nieetyczny sposób, nasilały procesy dysfunkcjonalne w firmach. W artykule zaprezentowano przykłady działań z zakresu *outplacement*, które mogą zostać podjęte przez samorządy i pracodawców, aby ograniczyć te negatywne zjawiska i/lub by zmniejszać skalę bezrobocia. Przedstawiono także wyniki badań empirycznych zrealizowanych wśród lubuskich pracowników zwolnionych z pracy w latach 2008-2014. Wskazano, m.in. działania pomocowe, z których skorzystali respondenci oraz te, z których chcieliby skorzystać, lecz nie mieli takiej możliwości.

Słowa

kluczowe: *spowolnienie gospodarcze, zwolnienia pracownicze, outplacement.*

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