

Improvement of the preschool education system within the Wrocław agglomeration based on the model of common actions of local governments units

Final Report

Contracting Authority:

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1. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1.1 Main objective

Development of guidelines aiming at improving functioning and availability of preschool facilities in the Wrocław agglomeration as well as at creating efficient and attractive offer in term of appropriate availability of kindergartens for children in the Wrocław agglomeration.

2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The time horizon

- The data analysis concerning the current state and location of preschool facilities as for 1 September 2013,
- The prognosis of needs and potential directions of development of the preschool educational services sector within the time horizon up to 2020.

The subjective scope

The study covered the following groups:

- Residents of the Wrocław agglomeration,
- Representatives of local government authorities of the Wrocław agglomeration.

The material scope

- The data of the Central Statistical Office,
- The data from the Educational Information System,
- Plans and zoning studies for communities belonging to the Wrocław agglomeration,
- The Act of 7 September 1991 on the education system (consolidated text: O.J. of 2004 No. 256, item 2572 as amended),
- The Act of 13 (O.J. of 2013 item 827),
- The data acquired from employees of Community Offices covered with the study,
- Other documents or studies dedicated to the subject of the study.

The geographical scope

- The Wrocław agglomeration including the following communes¹:
 - Oborniki Śląskie Commune (urban and rural commune),
 - Wisznia Mała Commune,
 - Długołęka Commune,
 - Czernica Commune,
 - Jelcz-Laskowice Commune (urban and rural commune),
 - Oława Commune,
 - The City of Oława,
 - Siechnice Commune (urban and rural commune)²,
 - Żórawina Commune,
 - Kobierzyce Commune,
 - Kąty Wrocławskie Commune (urban and rural commune),
 - Miękinia Commune,
 - Środa Śląska Commune (urban and rural commune),
 - The City of Wrocław.

¹ The list includes „communes” – rural and urban areas.

² The Appendix B (list of communes) includes the Święta Katarzyna Commune, which since 1 January 2010 has been renamed as the Siechnice Commune.

3. PART I

3.1 The analysis of functioning of various forms of preschool education in communes covered with the study. Description and characteristics of existing forms of preschool facilities in terms of their organisation.

3.1.1 Hours of operating of preschool facilities.

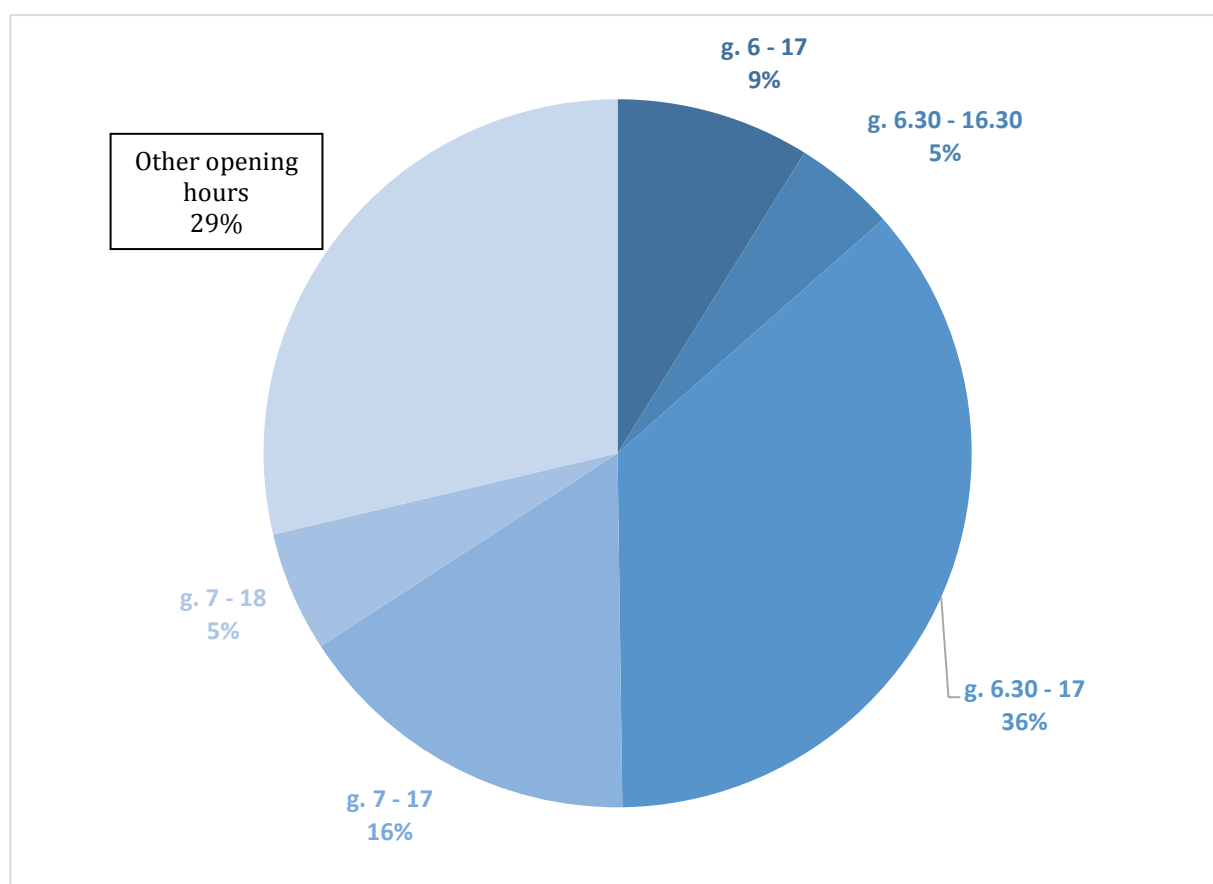


Figure 1. Opening hours of preschool facilities

The most common opening hours of the preschool facilities in the communes covered with the study are as follows: 6.30 – 17 (36% institutions), 7 – 17 (16%) 6 – 17 (9%), 7 – 18 (5%) and 6.30 – 16.30 (5%). The most unusual opening hours are 5.45 – 17.30 (Non-public kindergarten "Magdalenka" in Jelcz-Laskowice), 7.30 – 12.30 (Non-public Preschool Education Unit in Chwalibóżyce) or 8 – 13 (Preschool Point Michałki in Drzemilikowice).

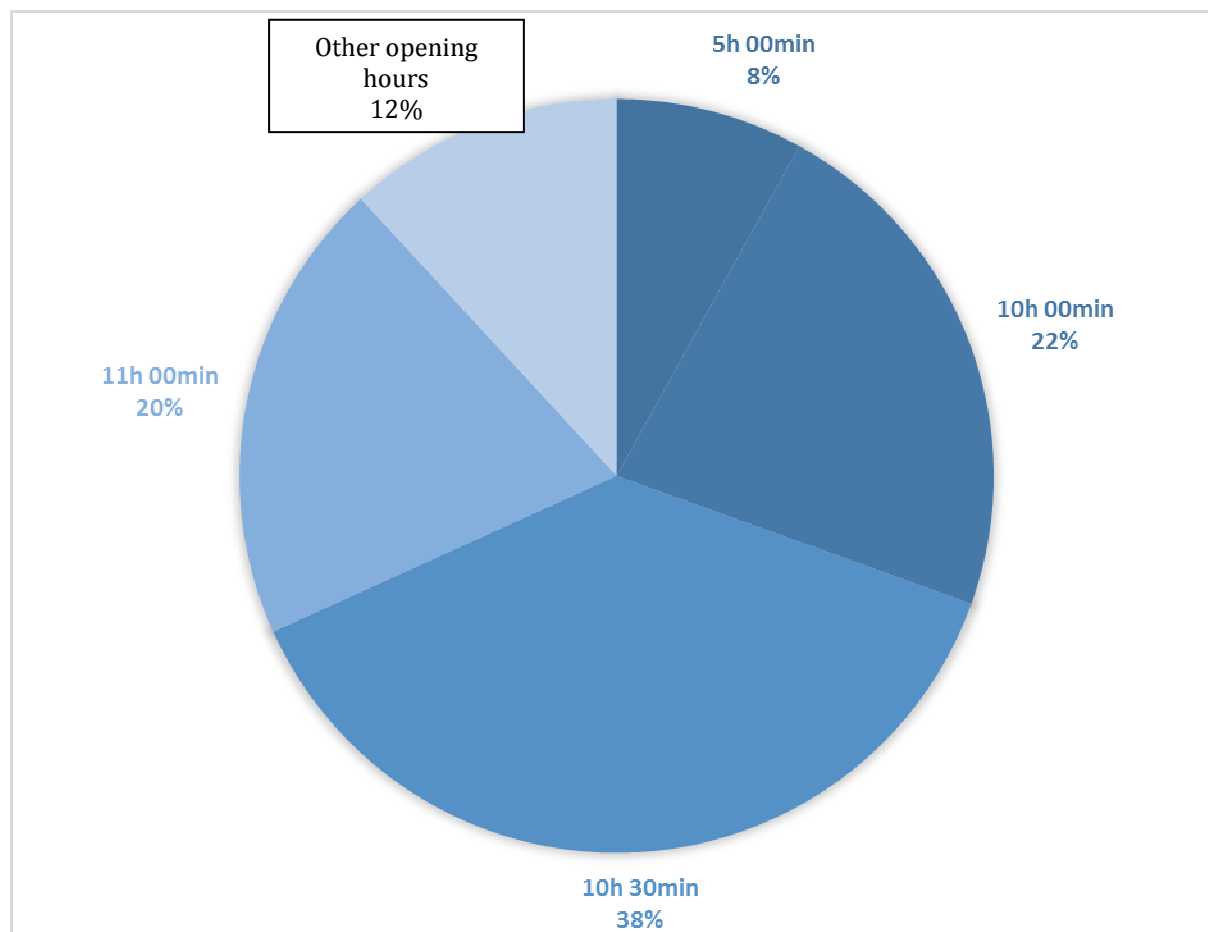


Figure 2. Opening hours of preschool facilities

Preschool facilities in communes covered with the study are usually opened from 10 to 11 hours (89% of facilities for which the information about opening hours was available). A relatively large number of facilities are opened for 5 hours a day (90%), usually these are preschool points or preschool units at primary schools.

3.1.2 The organisational structure of preschool facilities

The Education Information System distinguishes three points within the organisational structure, these are: reporting units (independent units and associations), schools or facilities within a complex unit as well as divisions at schools of different type (in the case of preschool education system these include divisions at primary schools). This classification divides facilities into operating independently or operating within other unit as its part. Due to this division in the communes covered with the study we distinguish the following units:

Reporting units (independent units and associations)	319
Divisions of a school of different type	120
Schools or facilities within a complex unit	1
Total	440

Table 1. Division of preschool facilities in terms of their position in the organisational structure

3.1.3 Accommodation conditions of preschool facilities.

The preschool facilities in communes covered with the study comply with any condition imposed on such facilities by the legislator. Most of them possess places for physical plays including equipment such as swings and slides, etc. The facilities are fenced ensuring safety during stay of children in kindergartens. Facilities being kindergartens are very well prepared to provide children with the preschool education. In general, the high quality is represented also by facilities such as kindergarten points, however still it is possible to improve standards, and primarily in terms of well organised playgrounds at such facilities (a possible solution is to transform facilities into kindergartens, which shall increase formal requirements for these institutions and the needs of parents). Due to their locations kindergarten divisions at schools are less well equipped than kindergartens or kindergarten points. These divisions lack also rooms for pre-schoolers – these conclusions arise from the survey carried out among local governments (see section 4.3).

3.2 Spatial analysis concerning location of preschool facilities in the Wrocław agglomeration

Table 2. Number of facilities in the Wrocław agglomeration³

Commune	Public kindergartens	Non-public kindergartens	Kindergartens divisions in schools ⁴	Public kindergarten points	Non-public kindergarten points	Public kindergarten complexes	Non-public kindergarten complexes	TOTAL
Oborniki Śląskie – rural and urban commune	2	3	5	0	3	0	0	13
Wisznia Mała ⁵	1	2	4	2	1	0	1	11
Długołęka	2	7	9	0	6	0	0	24
Czernica	1	2	4	0	4	0	0	11
Jelcz-Laskowice - rural and urban commune	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	8
Oława - Miasto	4	2	0	0	1	0	0	7
Oława	1	2	6	1	1	1	2	13
Siechnice - rural and urban commune ⁶	3	3	5	0	4	0	0	15
Żórawina	2	0	4	0	2	0	0	8
Kobierzyce	3	4	6	1	5	0	0	18
Kąty Wrocławskie - rural and urban commune	3	2	5	0	1	0	0	11
Miękinia	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	5
Środa Śląska - rural and urban commune	2	5	2	2	1	0	0	12
Miasto Wrocław	112	29	64	13	66	0	0	284
TOTAL	138	65	119	17	95	1	3	440

³ The data come from the Education Information System (SIO) and surveys carried out among Commune Offices.

⁴ According to SIO in all communes there are kindergarten divisions; however some local governments do not mention them in the surveys.

⁵ In the Wisznia Mała Commune, in Psary, it is planned to open a non-public kindergarten on 01.01.2014 (not included in the specification).

⁶ In the Siechnice Commune, in Siechnice, it is planned to open a preschool education complex on 01.01.2014 (not included in the specification).

Table 3. Number of children of preschool age⁷.

Commune	Number of children aged 3-6 in 2013	Number of children aged 3-6 in 2020 ⁸	Number of facilities	Number of children per one facility in 2013	Number of children per one facility in 2020	Number of children in preschool facilities	Number of children per one place in a facility in 2013 ⁹	Number of children per one place in a facility in 2020
Oborniki Śląskie - rural and urban commune	902	842	11	82	77	663	1,36	1,27
Wisznia Mała	250	479	11	23	44	303	0,83	1,58
Długołęka	769	1596	21	37	76	1223	0,63	1,30
Czernica	407	740	11	37	67	531	0,77	1,39
Jelcz-Laskowice - rural and urban commune	1141	962	4	285	241	858	1,33	1,12
Oława – City	1406	1025	7	201	146	771	1,82	1,33
Oława	373	745	7	53	106	442	0,88	1,77
Siechnice - rural and urban commune	1006	976	12	84	81	992	1,01	0,98
Żórawina	289	624	7	41	89	365	0,79	1,71
Kobierzyce	583	1135	22	27	52	784	0,74	1,45
Kąty Wrocławskie - rural and urban commune	1268	1173	10	127	117	957	1,32	1,23
Miękinia	334	554	5	67	111	466	0,72	1,19
Środa Śląska - rural and urban commune	843	833	11	77	76	783	1,08	1,06
City of Wrocław	25998	28452	303	86	94	22335	1,16	1,27
TOTAL	35584	40066	440	81	91	31453	1,13	1,27

⁷ The green colour indicates that the data were incomplete – the commune did not include the number of places in kindergarten divisions.

⁸ The source of prognosis was described in the section 4.1.2.

⁹ In surveys the local governments presented the information on the number of children **attending** preschool facilities. The factor below was calculated based on these data and the number of children in 2013 as well as a prognosis for the year 2020 for the next column. Taking into account that kindergartens are filled nearly in 100% this factor accurately shows a tendency, namely the increase of the number of children per one place in kindergartens in 2020.

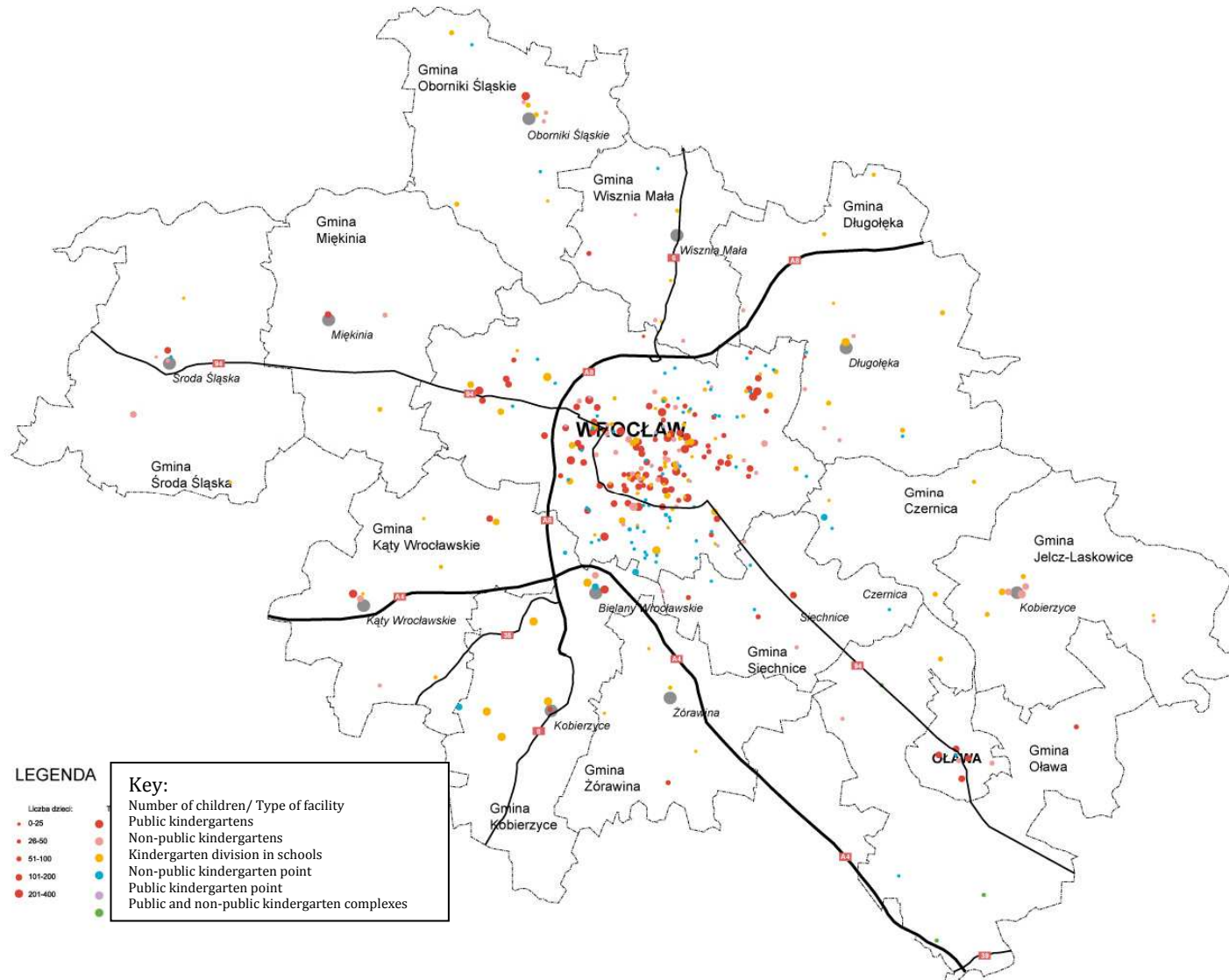


Figure 3. Location of preschool facilities in the Wrocław agglomeration

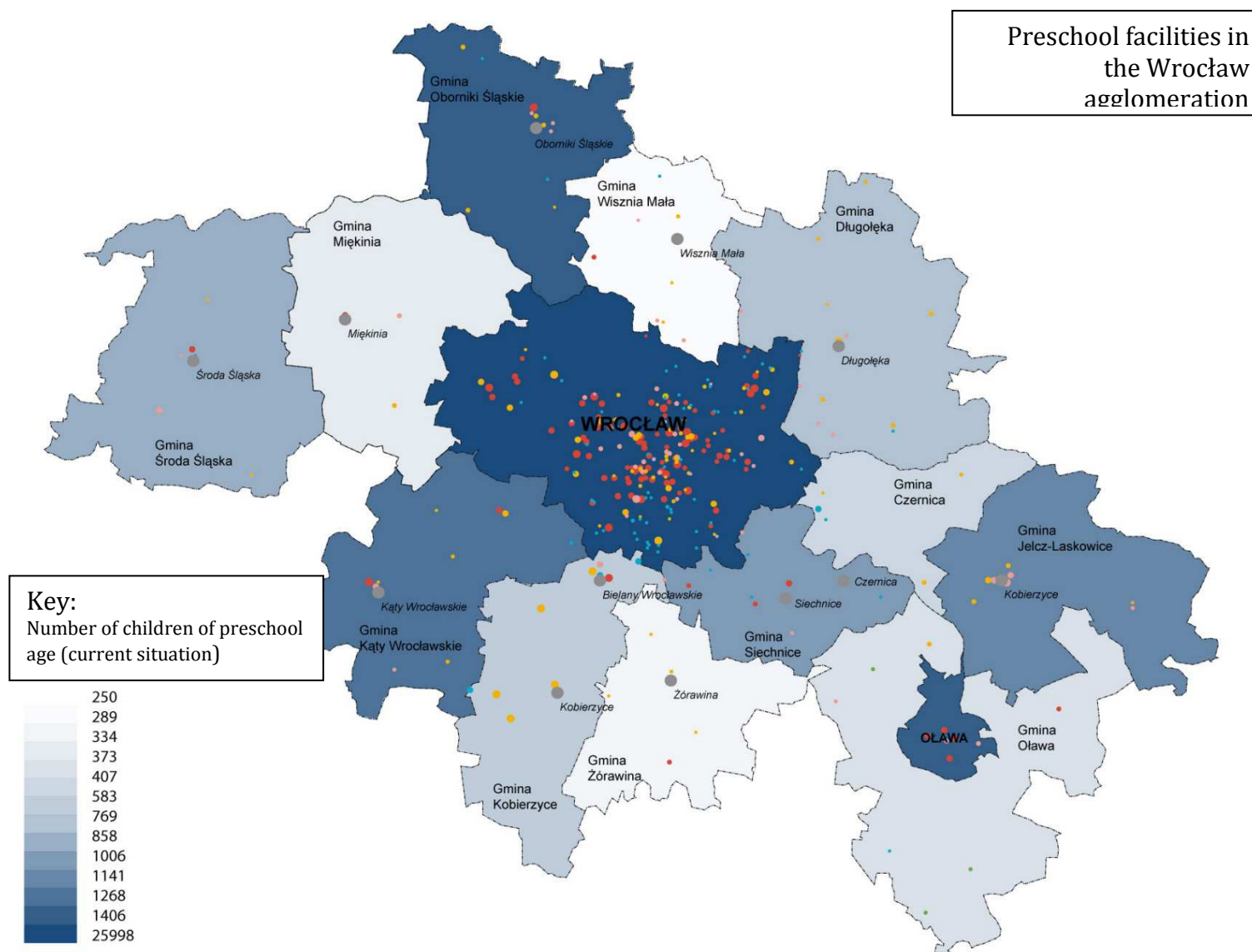


Figure 4. Number of children living in a given commune together with the status of the network of facilities (2013)

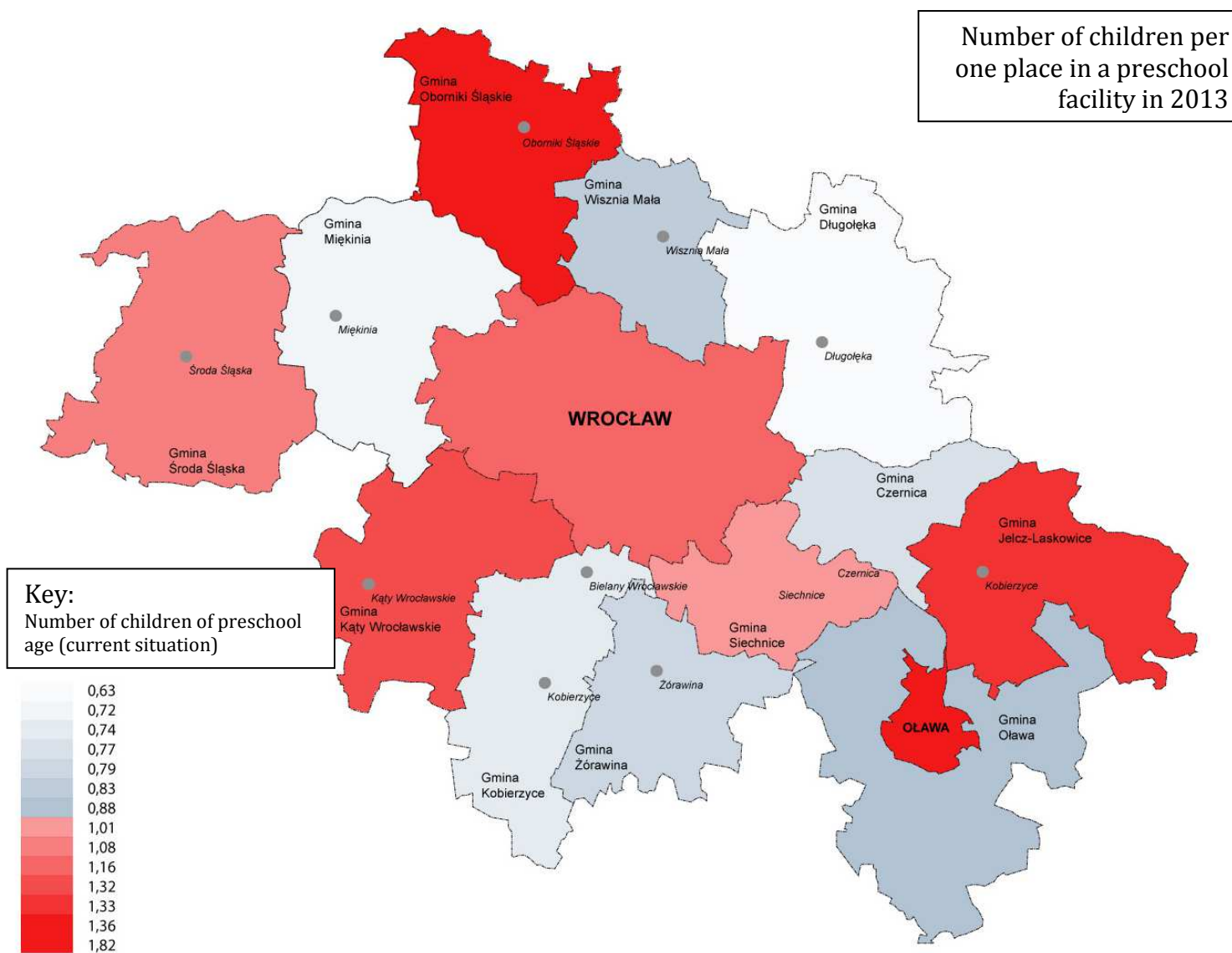


Figure 5. Number of children per one place in a preschool facility (current situation)

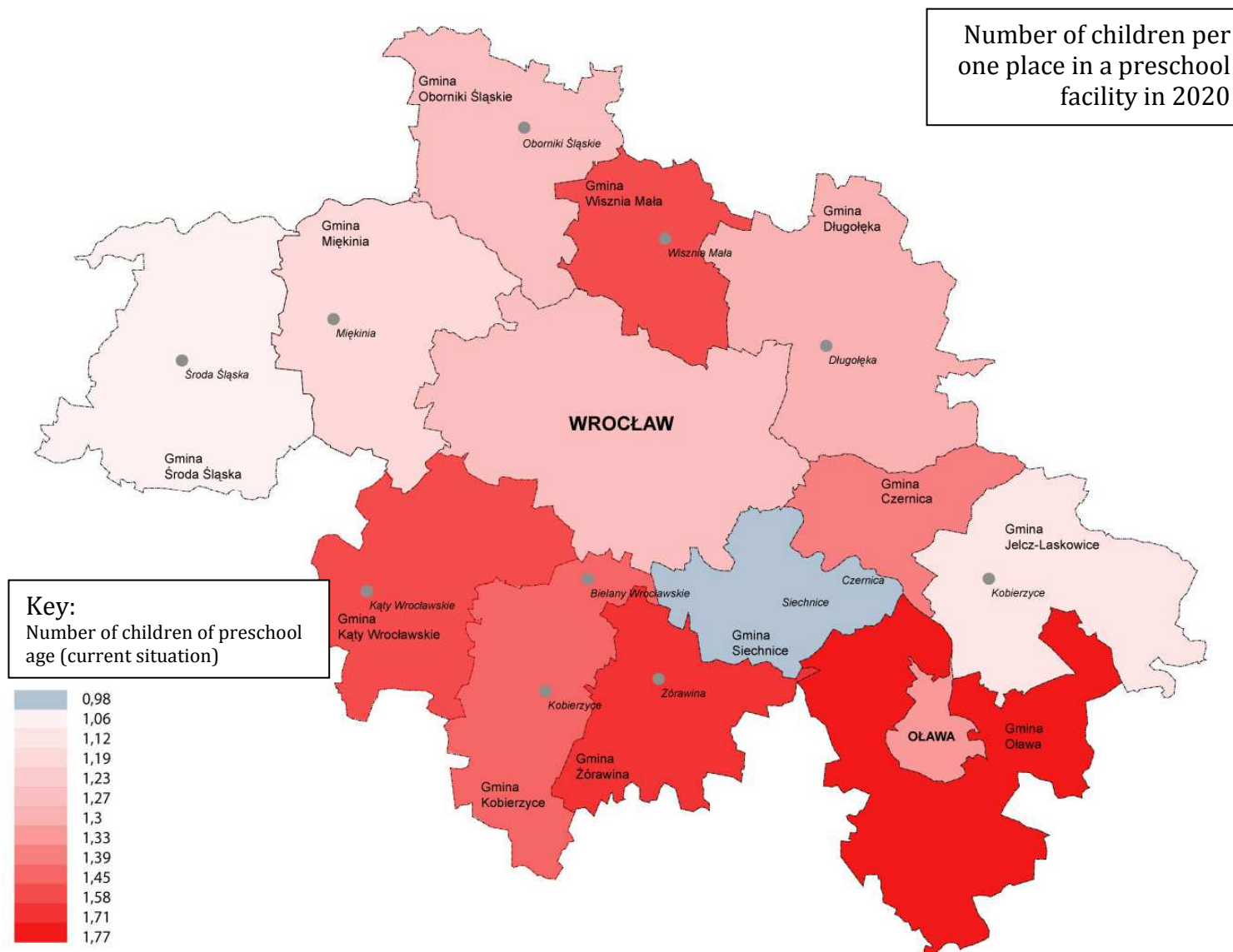


Figure 6. Number of children per one place in a preschool facility (prognosis for the year 2020)

A comment concerning the preschool age:

According to the Polish legislation preschool facilities may be attended by children aged 2.5 to 6 (in exceptional cases up to 10 years of age [*art. 14, par. 1a of the Act on the Education System*] and after 01.09.2014 up to 8 years of age [*new wording of the art. 14m par. 1a shall enter into force on 01.09.2014, O.J. of 2009, no. 56, item 458 and of 2012, item 176*]).

However the study takes into account only children aged 3 to 6 due to the fact that it is difficult to obtain reliable data on the number of children aged 2.5 living in a particular commune, how many of them attend kindergartens and which of kindergartens accept such children.

The tables presented at the beginning of the section 3.2 show deficits in preschool facilities faced by local governments throughout the country. Recommendations concerning halting this trend are presented in the fourth chapter of this study.

According to the UNICEF report¹⁰ the percentage of children covered with the preschool education in Poland in 2010 was 69.9%. For urban areas this percentage amounted to 83.6% and for rural areas to 51.2%. However, according to the OECD data¹¹ the percentage of children aged 3-4 subject to the education amounts to 57% and for children aged 5-14 to 95% (in 2011). According to the report of the Supreme Audit Office¹² the coverage factor of the preschool education of children aged 3-5 increased respectively from 41% to 57% (between school years 2007/2008 and 2009/2010). For the Wrocław agglomeration these data are as follows:

Commune	Percentage of children attending a facility
Oborniki Śląskie – rural and urban commune	74%
Wisznia Mała	100%
Długołęka	100%
Czernica	100%
Jelcz-Laskowice - rural and urban commune	75%
Oława – Miasto	55%
Oława	100%
Siechnice - rural and urban commune	99%

¹⁰ UNICEF, *Dzieci w Polsce. Dane, liczby, statystyki*, [*Children in Poland, Data, numbers, statistics*], Warszawa 2013, p. 14.

¹¹ OECD, *Education at a Glance 2013. OECD indicators*, 2013, p. 269.

¹² NIK, *Informacja o wynikach kontroli wychowania przedszkolnego*, [*Information on results of audits of the preschool education*], Warszawa 2012, p. 6.

Żórawina	100%
Kobierzyce	100%
Kąty Wrocławskie – rural and urban commune	75%
Miękinia	100%
Środa Śląska - rural and urban commune	91%
Miasto Wrocław	86%
Average for the Wrocław agglomeration	89,63%
Average for cities of the Wrocław agglomeration	70,37%
Average for villages of the Wrocław agglomeration	92,84%

Table 4. Percentage of children attending kindergartens¹³

The percentage of children attending kindergartens in the Wrocław agglomeration looks better in than in the entire country. It is interesting that in rural communes we observe the factor higher than in urban communes. This phenomenon might result from the presence of two radically different cities in the summary – Wrocław and Oława. In addition, such a high factor in some communes (Długołęka, Czernica, Wisznia Mała, Środa Śląska, Siechnice, Oława, Kobierzyce, Kąty Wrocławskie) may be a consequence of the fact that it is difficult to estimate how many children in a given kindergarten attend it not being registered in that commune (in many cases the number of children in facilities is significantly higher than the number of children registered in that commune). An important issue is also the difficulty in calculating how many children aged 2.5 – 3 attend preschool facilities, which certainly overestimates this factor (the table includes children aged 3 – 6 in accordance with the ORE data and the number of children attending the preschool facilities in accordance with the data obtained from local governments). Determination of the real and current value would require a more detailed study including individual interview with parents of each of child – which due to logistic issues is extremely difficult. In addition, such a high percentage of children attending preschool facilities in rural areas is a consequence of a presence of a large city and a specificity of the agglomeration, where neighbouring villages become sleeping districts for people working in the central site.

This means that the calculated result, which in many communes amounts to 100%, includes: children registered in a given commune and attend preschool facility in that

¹³ The table includes children aged 3 – 6 in accordance with the data of the Centre for Education Development (ORE) as well as the number of places in kindergarten facilities pursuant to the data obtained from local governments.

commune, children aged 2.5 years, who are not included in the prognosis as well as migrations from outside of the Wrocław agglomeration. The discrepancies between the value of the factor and conclusions drawn from the survey (section 4.2) may arise from misunderstanding of questions by respondents (for example distinguishing the so called reception class and kindergarten).

In conclusion — in comparison to the entire country the Wrocław agglomeration looks favourable, when consider the percentage of children benefiting from the preschool education, even despite the above doubts. It should be however noted that this tendency, with the lack of development of the preschool education system, will change. In accordance with the prognosis, in 2020 in each of communes (excluding the Siechnice Commune) there will appear significant shortages of places in preschool facilities (see table 3).

4. PART II

The primary objective of the PART II of the object of the contract is a detailed analysis concerning developing guidelines for creating an effective and attractive offer in the context of providing an adequate availability of the preschool education system within the Wrocław agglomeration taking into account current provisions of the Act on the Education System.

4.1 The prognosis of needs and potential directions of development of the sector of preschool education services in the time horizon up to 2020 in the context of:

4.1.1 Development of the structure of the settlement network in the area covered with the analysis based on the communal plans and strategies for residential housing development (plans and zoning studies).

Studies of conditions and directions of the spatial development for communes included in this study have been analysed. The development of the settlement network in the agglomeration assuming current preschool facilities is illustrated by the map below. Thanks to combination of the current network of preschool facilities with the potential directions of commune development it is clear, in which communes we might observe shortages in places in preschool facilities.

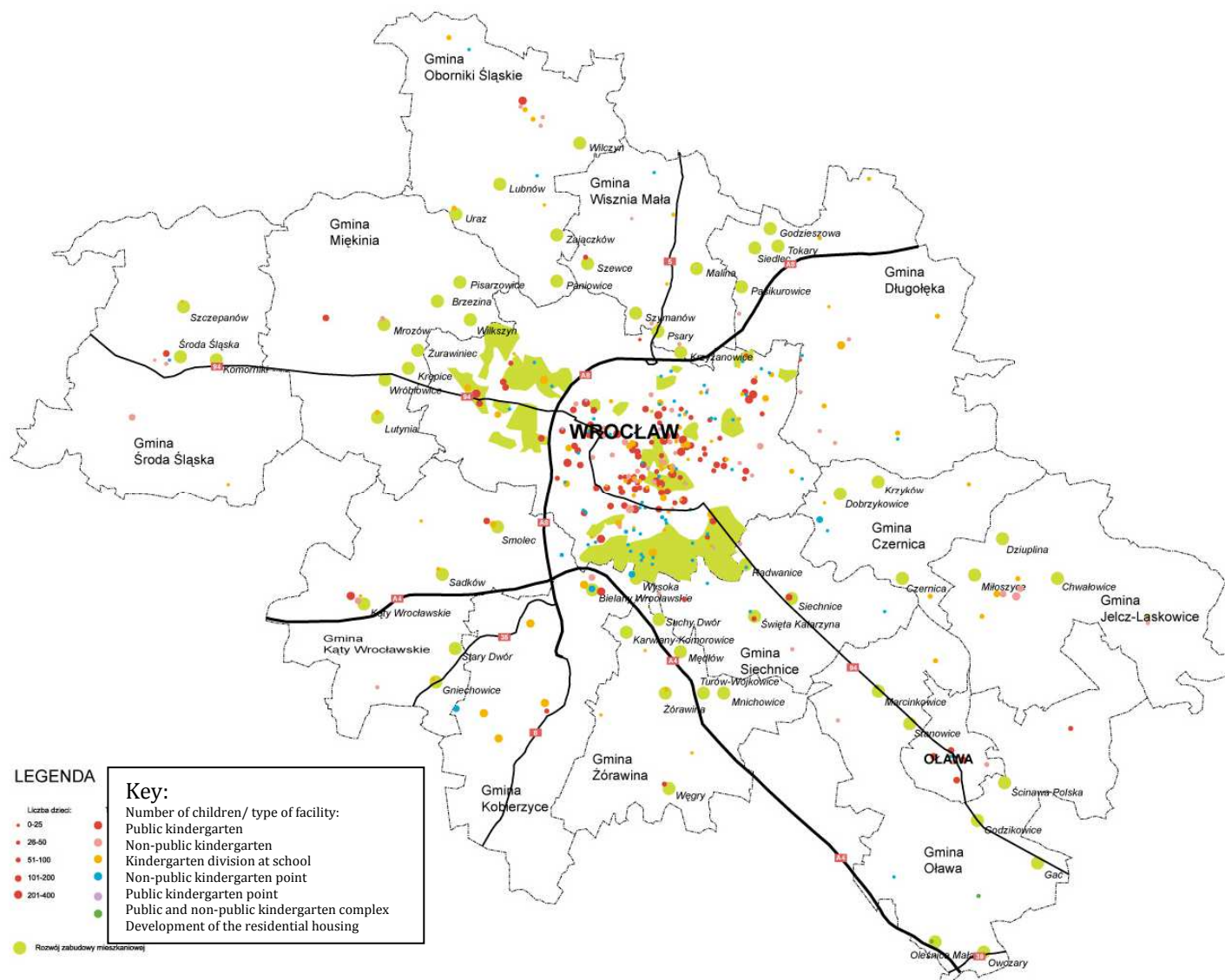


Figure 7. Development of the settlement network in the context of the current network of preschool facilities

4.1.2 The prognosis of needs and potential directions of development of the sector of preschool education services in the time horizon up to 2020 in the context of migration processes, relocation of population and demographic processes.

The prognosis has been developed based on the data generated within the generic model entitled: “Prognoza zapotrzebowania na usługi edukacyjne” [Prognosis of demand for educational services] prepared by the Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji. A document applied in creating the generic model was primarily the material entitled “Prognoza dla powiatów i miast na prawie powiatu oraz podregionów na lata 2011 - 2035” [Prognosis for poviats and cities with country rights as well as sub-regions for the years 2011 - 2035] developed by the **Central Statistical Office**. This document served to determine the prognosis of demand for educational services including¹⁴:

- size and structure of population;
- natural movement (births, deaths);
- internal migration for permanent residence (inflow and outflow);
- external migration for permanent residence (inflow and outflow).

The demographic forecast developed for the area of the Wrocław agglomeration assuming currently existing preschool facilities is illustrated by the map presented on the next page. Thanks to combination of the current network of preschool facilities with the prognosis it is clear, in which communes we might observe shortages in places in preschool facilities.

¹⁴ „Wykonanie modelu generycznego w postaci aplikacji, służącej do prognozowania zapotrzebowania na usługi edukacyjne w jednostkach samorządu terytorialnego – uwagi metodyczne”, [Development of a generic model in the form of application serving for forecasting the demand for educational services in local government units – methodical comments], Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, Poznań 2012, p. 4 – 6.

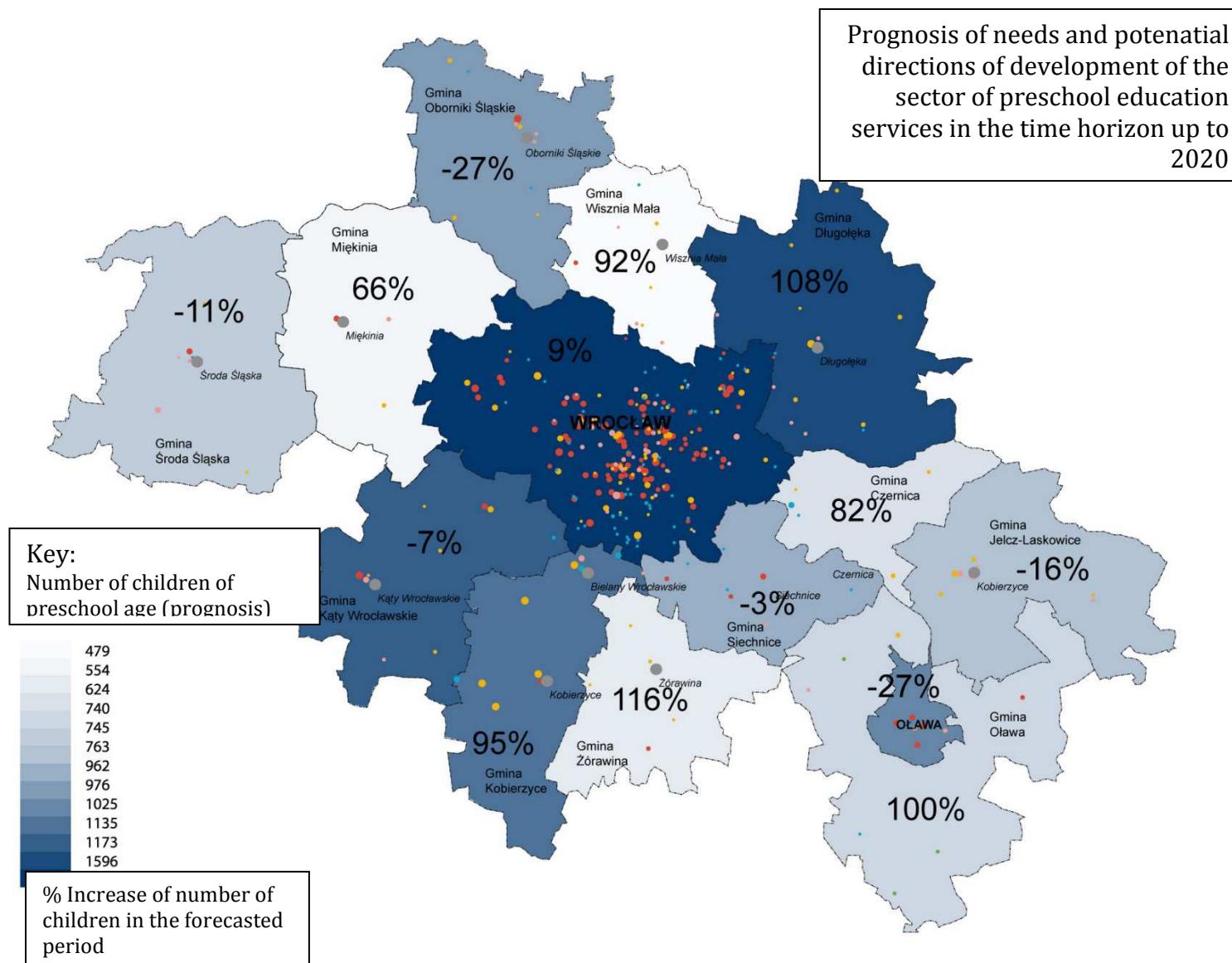
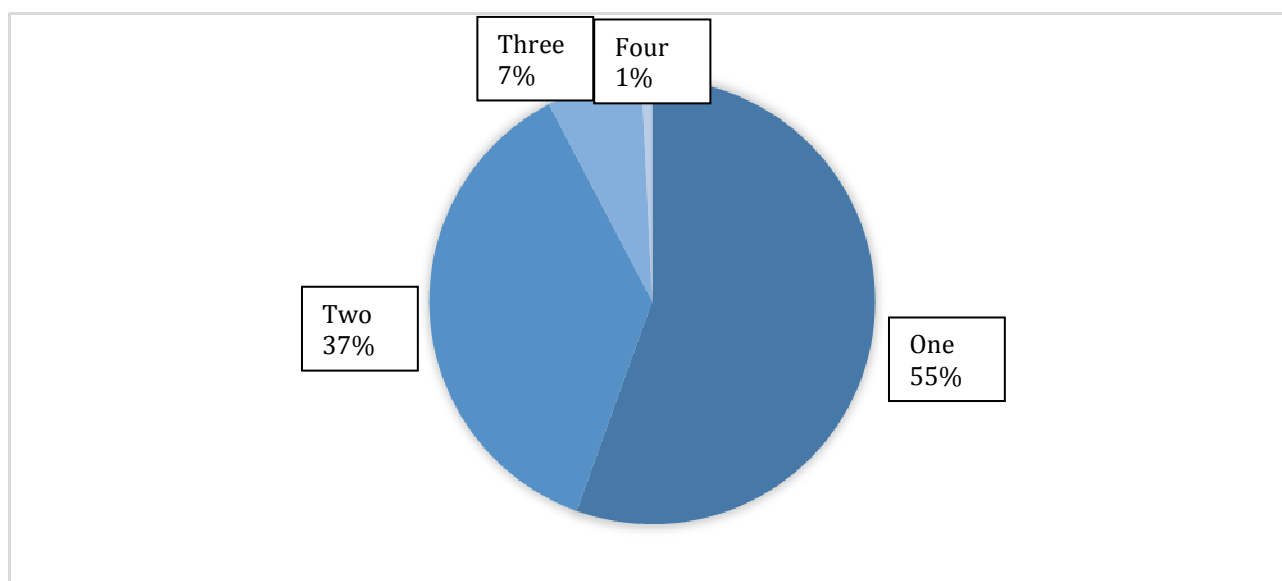


Figure 8. Prognosis of needs and potential directions of development of the preschool education network taking into account the demographic forecast up to 2020 and the currently existing network of preschool facilities

4.2 The analysis of demand for services offered by preschool facilities based on the study on needs, requirements, preferences and attitudes towards preschool education among residents of the agglomeration.

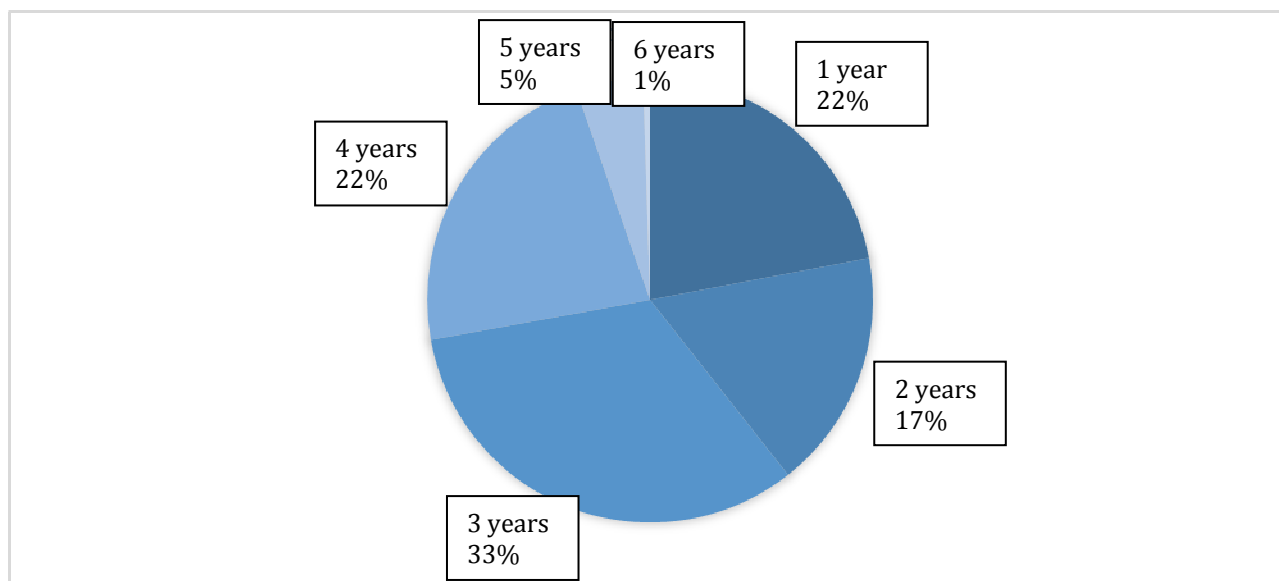
391 interviews with residents of the Wrocław agglomeration have been carried out. In order to ensure the highest possible accuracy of the analysis (in the context of objectives of the study) the interviews have been performed among people, who are parents of children not older than 6.

Number of children in families within the Wrocław agglomeration



Most common answer among the respondents in the context of children they have is one (55% – 217 respondents), than two (37% – 145 respondents), three (7% – 26 respondents), and the least frequently stated response is four (1% – 3 respondents).

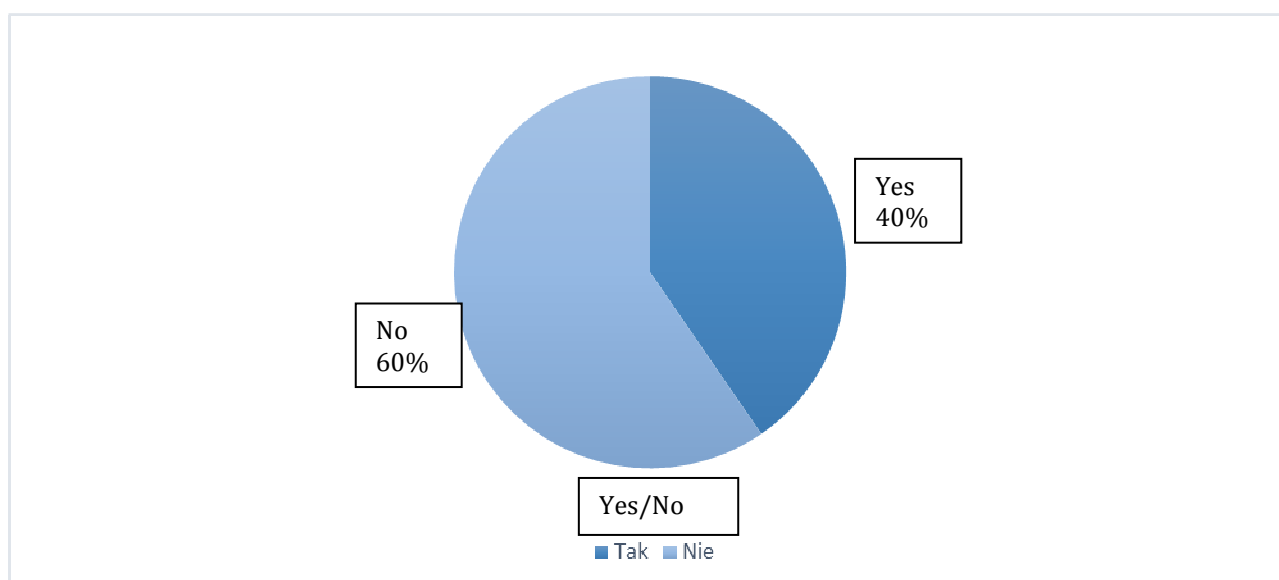
Age of the youngest child among respondents of the survey



Age of the youngest child	Percentage of answers	Number of answers
less than 1 year	0.00%	0
1 year	21.99%	86
2 years	17.39%	68
3 years	32.74%	128
4 years	22.51%	88
5 years	4.86%	19
6 years	0.51%	2

Table 5. Age of the youngest child in families of respondents of the survey

Does Your child attend a preschool facility?



60% of respondents admitted that their child does not attend a preschool facility. However, it should be remembered that 39.38% respondents answered that there is a child aged one or two, and this fact affects the distribution of answers to this question.

When respondents were asked, whether they intend to send their child to a preschool facility, only 19.31% of them answered that they do intend to send their child to such facility. This fact could be considered in the context of the high factor of children attending preschool facilities (see section 3.2). The first problem in this study is the issue of unpredictability of future behaviour of respondents in the context of their today's answers. Some of parents of children aged 0 – 3 may be discouraged by media reports on the availability of preschool facilities and therefore at the moment they do not consider sending their child to such facility (in some communes there is still more than one child per one place). This situation can change, when a respondent will face a final choice "whether to send a child to kindergarten". These issues are not analysed in this report. Another factor affecting this discrepancy is an already mentioned in this report difficulty to diagnose unambiguously how many children aged 2.5 attend preschool facilities. Such children may inflate this rate significantly. Another issue is that some children attend preschool facilities in other communes than they are registered. This problem may apply not only to migrations within the agglomeration, but also outside the agglomeration (attendance of children from neighbouring communes to facilities located in the Wrocław agglomeration). Thus, the real value of the factor may be lower, however still high when compared to the whole country.

The table below presents reasons why respondents do not intend to send their children to preschool facilities:

Reason	Percentage of answers
No reason stated	43.09%
Parents themselves take care for a child	21.81%
Grandparents take care for a child	10.64%
Babysitter takes care for a child	9.57%
Child is too young	4.79%
I do not know	4.26%
Respondent does not see the need to send child to a kindergarten	3.72%
No answer provided	2.13%

Table 6. Reasons why parents do not send their children to preschool facilities

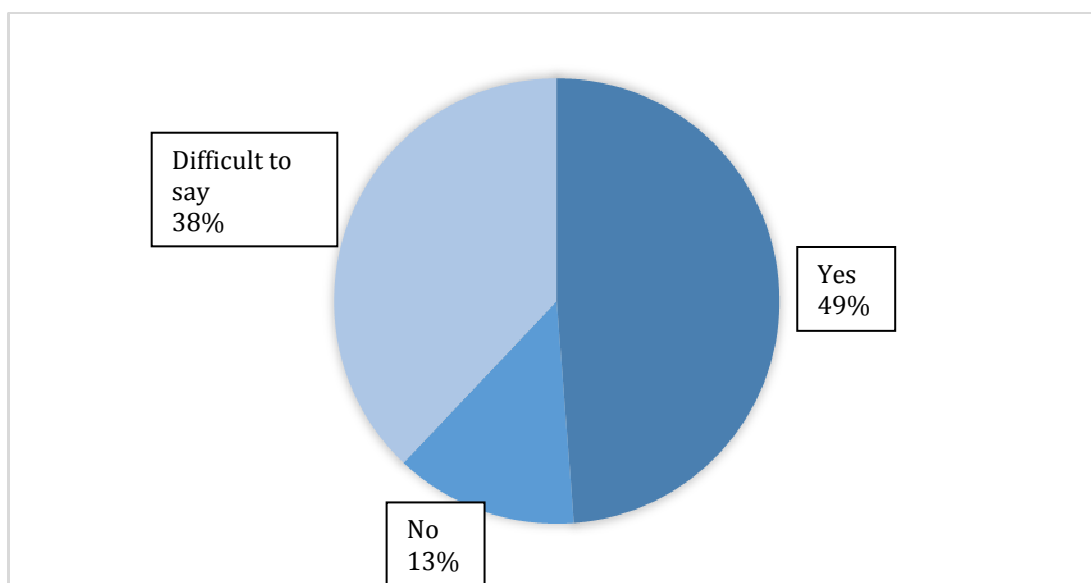
People who plan to send their child to a preschool facility were asked the following question: at what age do you plan to start the preschool education of your child/children at a preschool facility?

More than half of respondents (60%) intend to send their child to a preschool facility, when aged 3, 27% when a child will be 4, 9% when a child will be 5 and 2% do not know, when they will send their child to such facility.

Another issue studied in the survey was related to motives guiding parents when choosing a preschool facility.

The survey shows that each of motives is relevant, however it could be noted that for all parents the most important are the following: distance from the place of residence, quality of the staff, monthly costs of primary care at a preschool facility, opening hours of a facility, number of wards, neighbourhood, housing conditions and equipment of a preschool facility.

Another issue studied in the survey was a question whether respondents are willing to send their child to a private preschool facility.



The responses show that nearly half of parents (49%) would begin the preschool education of their child in a private facility and 38% of respondents are undecided. Only 13% would not decide to start the preschool education at a private facility. This means that it is reasonable to develop a network of private facilities that gained trust of parents.

Other issues studied in the survey are those associated with financial aspects. To the question concerning costs of the preschool education in facilities located in the area, where the respondents live, the answers were as follows:

Over one third of parents believe that costs of education in preschool facilities are too high (35.96% of responses) and 60.1% that these costs are difficult to estimate. None of respondents said that these costs are too low. Only 3.94% of respondents believe that costs are adjusted to the quality of services. This opinion seems to be consistent with responses provided by representatives of local governments (see section 4.3), who are convinced that the level of co-financing of the preschool education is too low and therefore it is necessary to impose fees on parents. This comment applies to extracurricular activities, which are not financed within the so called core curriculum.

Another question was dedicated to the accepted distance from a place of residence to a preschool facility. Due to diversity of means of transport, respondents referred to the time given in minutes. Most of the responses ranges from 20 to 30 minutes (78.98%). 13.59% of respondents accept time over 35 minutes to reach a preschool facility, while 6.15% is willing to dedicate only up to 15 minutes for this purpose.

Answer	Percentage of answers
30 min	37.95%
25 min	24.62%
20 min	16.41%
35 min	7.69%
15 min	6.15%
40 min	4.36%
10 min	1.28%
45 min	0.77%
50 min	0.51%
1h	0.26%

Table 7. Acceptable distance from place of residence to preschool facility

The next question concerned the opening hours of a preschool facility.

Answer	Percentage of answers
8.00 - 17.00	40.92%
8.00 - 18.00	19.69%
8.00 - 16.00	15.86%
7.00 - 18.00	9.72%
7.00 - 17.00	6.91%
7.00 - 16.00	4.35%
7.00 - 17.00	1.02%
9.00 - 18.00	0.77%
9.00 - 17.00	0.51%
8.00 - 12.00	0.26%

Table 8. Preferred opening hours of preschool facilities

The most preferred opening hours are 8-17 (40.92% of responses). Next these are 8-18 (19.69%), 8-16 (15.86%), 7-18 (9.72%), 7-17 (6.91%) and 7-16 (4.35%).

On the other hand, as this was described in the section 3.1.1 the most popular opening hours of preschool facilities in communes covered with the study are: 6:30 – 17 (38% of facilities), 7 – 17 (16%), 7 – 18 (6%), 6:30 – 16:30 (5%) and 6 – 17 (4%).

Next questions were dedicated to expectations of respondents towards local governments.

The most important issue for respondents is that the local government ensure children in preschool facilities safety, provide medical care and extracurricular activities for children in preschool facilities. This last requirement seems to be difficult to meet – particularly when confronted with responses of local governments concerning financial issues. It is irrelevant for parents, whether they are informed about preschool facilities via e-mail and most of them have no opinion on the issue of supporting private preschool facilities and financial support for preschool facilities to provide additional posts allowing for longer opening hours at these facilities.

The next question concerned the issue of organising transport to preschool facilities by local governments.

42% of respondents stated that local governments should organise transport to preschool facilities for children, 11% answered that such transport is not necessary and 47% that it is difficult to say, whether communes should organise transport to preschool facilities.

The last question concerned forms of operation of preschool facilities.

Answer	%
Public kindergartens run by units of local government as well as other entities	59.34%
Non-public kindergartens	36.32%
Kindergarten division at primary schools	2.56%
Public kindergarten points (run by units of local governments as well as other entities), non-public	1.28%
Preschool education complexes	0.51%
Other	0.00%

Table 9. Preferred forms of operation of preschool facilities

According to the respondents the best form of operation of preschool facilities is a public kindergarten (59.34%) and non-public kindergartens (36.32%). Only 2.56% of respondents specified as preferred form a kindergarten division at primary school, 1.28% kindergarten point and 0.51% preschool education complex. This is an interesting fact when compared with reality, because kindergarten points and divisions represent approximately 50% of all preschool facilities in the communes covered with the study.

To sum up – respondents of the survey usually have one or two children, which is consistent with the current family model (the so called “2+1” and less frequently “2+2”). The report clearly shows that in 2020 there will be significant shortages in places at preschool facilities within the Wrocław agglomeration. This is caused more by a positive migration balance in the examined areas than by a birth-rate, as evidenced also by the survey carried out for the purposes of this study. Over 70% of children in the group covered with the study are 0 – 3 years old. This means that many of them will start the preschool education soon. Despite the fact that 19.31% answered that they are willing to send their child to a preschool facility, a continuous increase of demand for preschool services should be expected (arguments in this regard were presented at the beginning of the section 4.2). Most of respondents intend to send their child to a preschool facility, when aged 3. This means that parents do not exploit the opportunity given by the

legislator providing the possibility of preschool facility for children aged 2.5. This problem might be a consequence of the fact that only a few facilities are prepared to take care of children at that age.

The most important motives for selection of a preschool facility considered by parents include the distance from a place of residence, opening hours, neighbourhood of a facility, housing conditions and equipment of a facility. A form of preschool education preferred by parents is a public kindergarten. An important issue for parents is also to ensure safety and medical care for children staying in facilities. These issues are largely affected by representative of local governments – a network of preschool facilities should be design together with local society, in order to meet requirements of parents and therefore increase the percentage of children benefiting from the preschool education.

4.3 Analysis of financial and organisational capacity of the local government authorities in generating actions for increasing the availability of the preschool education in the Wrocław agglomeration based on the information obtained from representatives of particular communes covered with the study¹⁵.

4.3.1 The most important barriers hampering the development of preschool care system from the perspective of local government authorities.

The main barriers identified by local governments are those associated with financing the preschool education. This applies primarily to the lack of funds for construction of new facilities, modernisation or extension of operation of those already existing. A significant problem seems to be related also to the level of co-financing of the preschool education – the subsidy is too low in comparison with needs of communes. In terms of formal and legal issues the main obstacle seems to be the over-regulation of legal procedures impeding construction of new facilities and efficient management of already existing resources. Logistic barriers identified by local governments mainly concern lack of rooms in primary schools for the establishment of new units and lack of means of transport children (representatives of the Wisznia Mała Commune notice that this will be particularly problematic after 01.09.2017). This is associated with the amendment of paragraphs 2 and 3 of the article 14a of the Act on Education (O.J. of 2013, item 827). This amendment extends a catalogue of preschool facilities to which transport shall be provided by a commune.

¹⁵ The data to this part of the study were obtained from representatives of local governments through a survey.

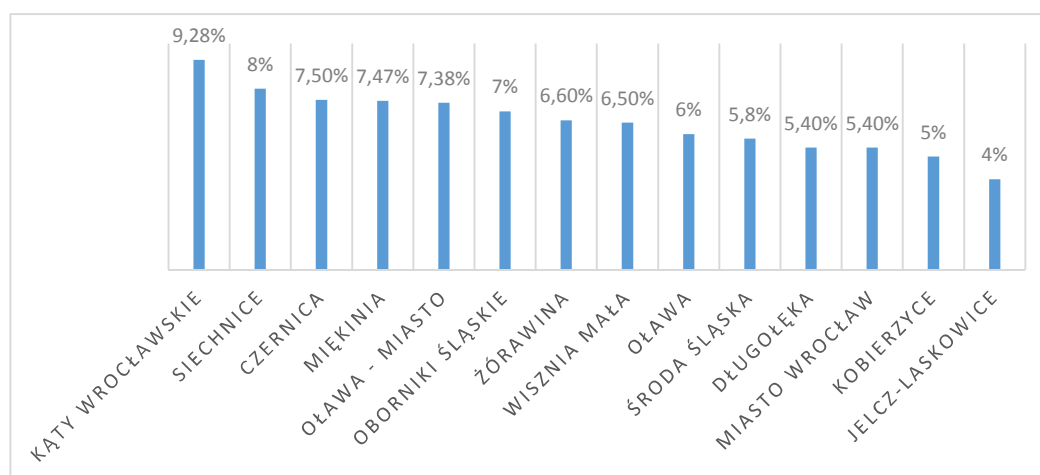


Figure 9. The share of expenditures on preschool facilities in total expenditures from local budgets

Most of communes covered with the study finance the preschool education largely from own resources of a commune. This ratio ranges from 80.21% up to 100%. In the current school year a possibility to obtain a restricted grant for each child benefiting from the preschool education was introduced. Therefore in the information above for some of communes a subsidy from the central budget was assumed. Regardless of this fact, in principle the preschool education in communes covered with the study is financed from own resources of communes. The share of expenditures on the preschool education in budget of local governments included in the study ranges from 4% to 9.28%. Communes, using the recommendations included in the section 4.4 may significantly increase expenditures on the development of preschool education not distorting at the same time these factors, and therefore not overburdening their budgets.

4.4 Strategic recommendations for local governments concerning the preschool education

4.4.1 Financial

A prominent problem in operation of preschool facilities is their financing from a municipal budget. Representatives of communes in surveys frequently mentioned financial issues concerning direct subsidies, lack of possibilities to finance investments related to the preschool education (particularly funds for construction of new facilities). The section below contains description of possible methods for financing the preschool education in communes.

„For co-financing the objectives related to the preschool education a commune receives a direct subsidy from the state budget that could be used exclusively for co-financing current expenditures associated with implementation of these objectives” (art. 14d par. 1 of the Act on Educational System). A detailed procedure of applying for the subsidy is included in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 13 August 2013 (O.J. 2013 item. 956). Most of communes apply provisions of this Act, however they should be recalled for purposes of this study.

Sources of financing the preschool education may include also the EU funds. Currently the Regional Operational Programme for the Lower Silesian Voivodeship 2014 – 2020 is under public consultations lasting up to 02.12.2013¹⁶. Local governments will have the opportunity to apply for co-financing from the Priority Axis 7 – that is “educational infrastructure” within the Investment Priority entitled: Investments in preschool, primary and secondary infrastructure.

A problem faced by local governments concerning financial issues is finding funds for infrastructural investments. Local governments do not possess funds for such projects (for example a construction of a new branch of a kindergarten, expansion of existing facilities). The officials note that subsidies from the central budget or from the EU funds might be insufficient in this respect, among others due to the fact that legal procedures for obtaining the subsidy are overregulated or because it is impossible to obtain subsidies for infrastructural investments from certain measures or sub-measures of operational programmes.

Public-private partnership

A possible solution to this situation could be the application of the PPP model (public-private partnership) for construction of new preschool facilities.

The PPP model is a long-term cooperation of the public and private sectors in provision of services for the society. This method could be applied not only to create a new infrastructure, but also to modernise the already existing one and therefore to obtain a higher quality of services.¹⁷

¹⁶ http://rpo.dolnyslask.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/13pazdziernik/29/zaproszenie_konsultacje.pdf

¹⁷ *Partnerstwo publiczno-prywatne w praktyce*, Publishing house: C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2009, p. 5.

Investments in the public-private partnership model are a perspective for development of local governments, in particular in the light of depleting EU resources. Although in the Western Europe investments implemented within the PPP model are nothing new, the Polish local governments still reluctant to engage in projects implemented within this model. According to Bankier.pl: “Entrepreneurs are interested in constructing and financing educational facilities and the public sector needs this type of solutions. A detailed analysis of a project in terms of demographic potential, demand for services provided by a project, costs of construction or renovation of facilities is a responsibility of the public party, however we, the entrepreneurs, can suggest some solutions and we are willing do this”¹⁸.

Issues associated with the PPP are regulated in the Act of 19 December 2008 on the Public-Private Partnership (O.J. 2009, no. 19, item 100) and in the Act of 9 January 2009 on concessions for construction works or services (O.J. 2009, no. 19, item 101).

In addition, on 01.09.2014 a provision of the Act will enter into force imposing financial obligations on communes¹⁹:

„If a public kindergarten or other public form of preschool education run by a commune is attended by a ward not living in this commune, a commune, where this ward lives covers costs of the preschool education of this ward in the amount equal to current expenditures foreseen per one ward respectively in public kindergartens or other public forms of preschool education run by the commune, where a ward attend to a kindergarten or other form of preschool education, decreased by fees for using the preschool education and alimentation being incomes of the commune budget as well as by the amount of subsidies as referred to in the article 14d, paragraph 1, received per one ward by a commune that run a kindergarten or other form of preschool education attended by this ward.”

However, the problem of financing the preschool education requires much more comprehensive analysis. Quoting an expert study prepared for the needs of the Expert Team for development of guidelines related to the family policy at the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland:

¹⁸ <http://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/PPP-szansa-na-nowe-zlobki-i-przedszkola-2361693.html>

¹⁹ Added art. 79a will enter into force on 01.09.2014 r. (O.J. of 2013, item 827)

“At the moment Poland has no system for financing the preschool care that would allow achieving a universal (close to 100%) access to kindergartens. The existing solution is based on a historic compromise, set at a lower level of development of the kindergarten network than the current one and even more different than the one being objective. The necessity to change the method of financing kindergartens has been noticed by the Ministry of National Education, which developed a project of the so called Kindergarten Act. (...) However, this is not sure, whether the instruments proposed in the Act will prove efficient and sufficient to maintain a universal access to kindergartens. Therefore, the implementation of the Act must be carefully monitored”²⁰.

4.4.2 Legal and organisational

Representatives of local governments often consider a legal barrier such provisions that hamper efficient management of the preschool education (volatility of legal regulations, imprecise, ambiguous case law, etc.). A recurring problem is also an issue of overregulation of provisions applicable to the organisation of preschool education, both in terms of their number and level of detail of regulations.

Therefore, it seems that some deregulation of the law concerning the preschool education would facilitate local governments rational and sustainable management of resources in this respect. Legislative changes however are the responsibility of the legislator and do not depend on the local governments that must apply currently applicable provisions.

Local actions

At the local level local governments may appoint an association (pursuant to the Act of 7 April 1989 The Association Act²¹). An association may be appointed in order to support development of the preschool education in the Wrocław agglomeration, promoting the idea of education of children from the youngest age and preventing social exclusion. Specific actions undertaken by such association may include:

²⁰ Herbst, Mikołaj, *Finansowanie przedszkoli w Polsce – stan obecny i wyzwania na przyszłość, Ekspertyza opracowana na potrzeby Zespołu ekspertów ds. wypracowania rekomendacji w zakresie polityki rodzinnej przy Kancelarii Prezydenta RP*, p. 18.

²¹ Consolidated text developed based on: O.J. of 2001, no. 79, item 855, of 2003, no. 96, item 874, of 2004, no. 102, item 1055, of 2007, no. 112, item 766, of 2011, no. 112, item 654.

- Organising conferences or other form of official meetings of members of local communities (entire agglomeration), representatives of private enterprises and local authorities;
- Participation and creation of the IT platform supporting development of the preschool education network in the Wrocław agglomeration (description of a platform in the next paragraph);
- Conducting ongoing studies on the demand for the preschool education services in the Wrocław agglomeration;
- Appointing an association may become a new source of financing development of the network of facilities, which is important in the light of the demographic forecast and the new budget perspective of the European Union 2014 – 2020.

IT platform

The IT platform could prove to be a valuable measure in organisational matters and allow exchanging information and experiences between officials responsible for the preschool education (diagram on page 83).

The system for exchange information between official should be based on the CRM platform (customer relationship management) being a system for managing relations with customers. An appropriate adaptation of the system would become a support for officials and could help developing the network of preschool facilities in a particular commune.

Such measure will allow introducing logistic information (such as a number of facilities, number of places in facilities, location, and possible shortages), exchange of experiences (ideal measure for exchange of experiences concerning the PPP model describes in the section 4.4.1) or consultation of issues related to the current management of facilities.

Furthermore, it could be a good measure for communication with parents. They would obtain an access to the content specified by an administrator and therefore would be able to evaluate the possibility of starting the preschool education by their child. This is particularly important for the issue of development of the Wrocław agglomeration. Improved access to such information would be beneficial for parents, when they would settle outside borders of the City of Wrocław.

Efficient management of the platform would contribute to a smoother flow of information, which is extremely important issue in the context of building the knowledge-based-economy and to significant reduction of costs of operating preschool facilities (and in a long run the extended system would also contribute to operating the entire school network in the Wrocław agglomeration).

4.4.3 Logistic

Creating new facilities

New preschool facilities should be established in villages, which (in accordance with studies of conditions and directions of the spatial development of a commune) are most vulnerable to shortages of places in preschool facilities, due to planned in that locations development of the residential infrastructure. These villages include:

Commune	Villages
Oborniki Śląskie – rural and urban commune	Paniowice, Uraz, Lubnów, Wilczyn, Zajączków
Wisznia Mała	Krzyżanowice, Psary, Szymanów, Szewce, Malina
Długołęka	Tokary, Godzieszowa, Siedlec, Pasikowice
Czernica	Czernica, Dobrzykowice, Krzyków
Jelcz-Laskowice – rural and urban commune	Miłoszyce, Dziuplina, Chwałowice
Oława - Miasto	In the vicinity of investment areas
Oława	Stanowice, Godzikowice, Ścinawa Polska, Gać, Marcinkowice, Oleśnica Mała, Owczary
Siechnice – rural and urban commune	Siechnice, Radwanice, Święta Katarzyna
Żórawina	Żórawina, Karwiany-Komorowice, Suchy Dwór, Mędłów, Turów-Wojkowice, Mnichowice and Węgry
Kobierzyce	Wysoka, Bielany Wrocławskie
Kąty Wrocławskie – rural and urban commune	Kąty Wrocławskie, Smolec, Sadków, Gniechowice, Stary Dwór
Miękinia	Wilkszyn, Brzezina, Mrozów, Wróblowice, Lutynia, Krępiec, Pisarzowice, Żurawiniec
Środa Śląska – rural and urban commune	Komorniki, Szczepanów and the western part of Środa Śląska
City of Wrocław	Description of the development of the City of Wrocław on page 36 of this study

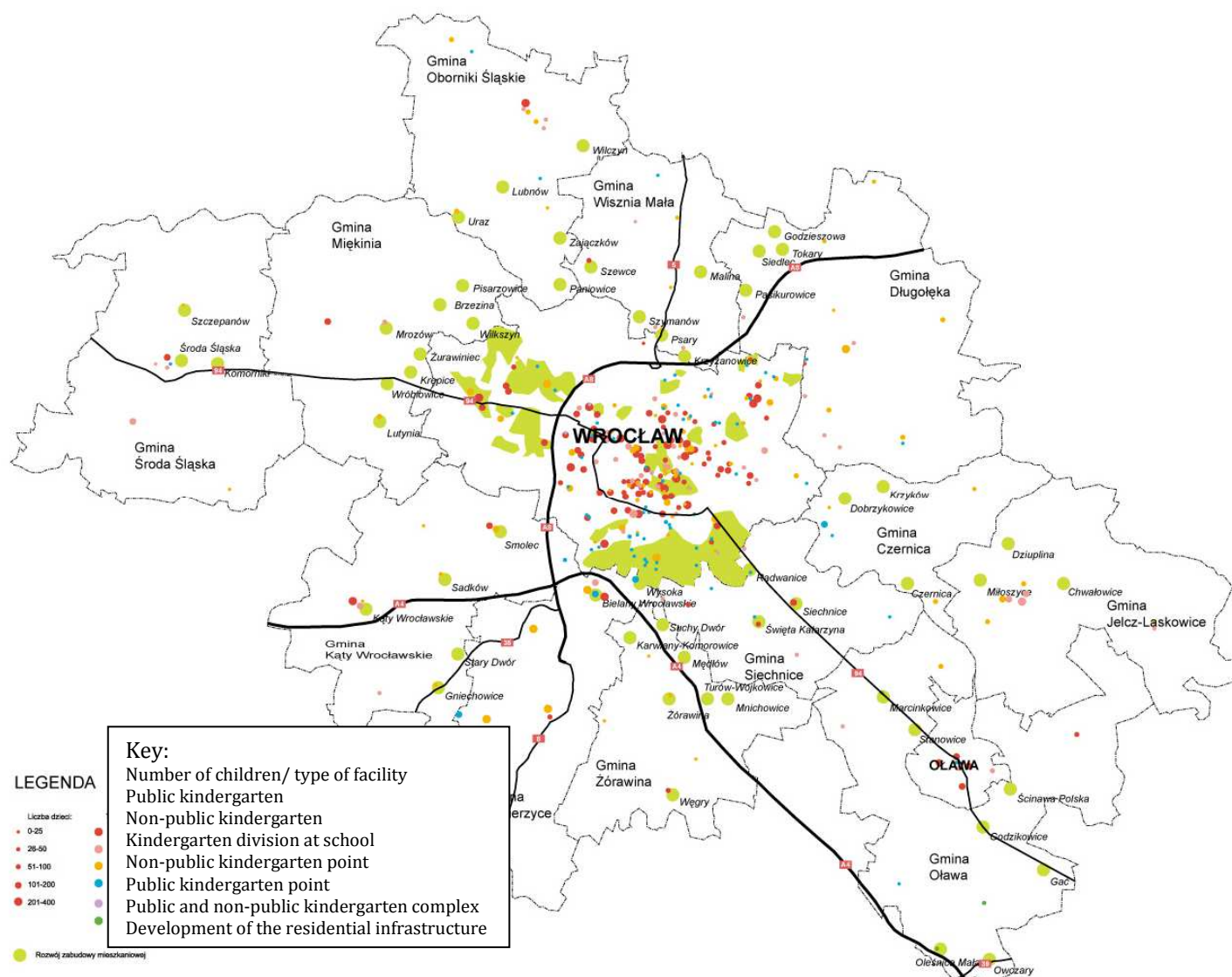


Figure 10. Villages vulnerable to shortages of places in preschool facilities

Modification of forms of functioning

Residents of communes covered with the survey study answered that the best form of functioning of the preschool facilities are kindergartens (public or non-public). This might be a consequence of the fact that the legislator assumes greater regulation of these facilities (in comparison to kindergarten points). Therefore parents prefer kindergartens as facilities, where they would like to start education of their children. Communes should apply measures that would encourage owners of non-public kindergarten points to convert them into non-public kindergartens, and therefore would meet expectations of parents concerning high standards they are guided by.

Transport organisation

In the survey study 43% of respondents agreed that a commune should organise a transport facilitating access to preschool facilities. This is particularly important issue in rural communes. To a lesser extent this applies to Wrocław, where the network of preschool facilities is denser and the public transport much more efficient.

A possible solution in this respect is to appoint a communal company or entrusting this form of transport to private hands (within the PPP model) in order to relieve already burdened local budgets.

5. SUMMARY

The study was intended to draw up recommendations for development of the preschool education system in the Wrocław agglomeration. For this purpose the Contractor analysed the current condition of the preschool education network in communes covered with the study and conducted surveys among residents and representatives of local governments in these communes related to issues associated with the preschool education. Based on this the recommendations dedicated to the development of the preschool education network were prepared (presented in the chapter 4).

Within the Wrocław agglomeration there is a developed network of preschool facilities. Currently this network includes 440 facilities (including 138 public kindergartens, 64 non-pubic kindergartens, 119 kindergarten divisions at primary schools, 17 public kindergarten points, 96 non-public kindergarten points, 1 public kindergarten complex and 3 non-public kindergarten complexes). Preschool facilities in

communes covered with the study meet all requirements imposed on such facilities by the legislator. Most of facilities have a place for physical activities including such equipment as swings, slides, etc. Facilities are fenced ensuring safety of children during they stay in kindergartens. The Wrocław agglomeration is characterised by a high percentage of children attending preschool facilities (amounting to 89.63%) in comparison to the entire country. This fact seems to contradict with the common belief namely that there are not enough places in preschool facilities. It should be however noted that the study covered both public and non-public facilities. Shortages of places in kindergartens apply mainly to public facilities, for services of which there is a higher demand (due to lower costs of preschool education in such facilities). A detailed analysis of this phenomenon is presented in the section 3.2.

The survey conducted for purposes of the study was related to issues associated with expectations of parents towards the educational offer of kindergartens. Most of respondents intend to start education of their children when aged 3. This means that parents do not exploit the opportunity granted by the legislator providing the possibility of preschool education for children aged 2.5. This problem might be a consequence of the fact that only few preschool facilities are prepared to take care of such children.

The most important motives for selection of a preschool facility considered by parents include the distance from a place of residence, opening hours, neighbourhood of a facility, housing conditions and equipment of a facility. A form of preschool education preferred by parents is a public kindergarten. An important issue for parents is also to ensure safety and medical care for children staying in facilities. These issues are largely affected by representative of local governments – a network of preschool facilities should be design together with local society, in order to meet requirements of parents and therefore increase the percentage of children benefiting from the preschool education.

The study, based on the survey conducted among representatives of local governments, identifies barriers in the development of the preschool education network. The main barriers identified by local governments are those associated with financing the preschool education. This applies primarily to the lack of funds for construction of new facilities, modernisation or extension of operation of those already existing. A significant problem seems to be related also to the level of co-financing of the

preschool education – the subsidy is too low in comparison with needs of communes. In terms of formal and legal issues the main obstacle seems to be the over-regulation of legal procedures impeding construction of new facilities and efficient management of already existing resources. Logistic barriers identified by local governments mainly concern lack of rooms in primary schools for the establishment of new units and lack of means of transport children.

The report includes also a problem of development of residential areas in communes covered by the study (based on *Studies and directions of spatial development of communes*). The study presents this development taking into account changes in the structure of population. During the forecast period within the Wrocław agglomeration we will observe a significant growth of the number of children aged 3 – 6. If local governments do not undertake appropriate measures aiming at development of preschool facilities network, then after 2020 each of communes will face a problem of serious shortages of places in preschool facilities.

In order to avoid this problem the Contractor drew up recommendations concerning the method of development of the preschool facility network within the Wrocław agglomeration. These recommendations can be divided into: legal and organisational, as well as logistic. The former concern possibilities to obtain a direct subsidy from the state budget for financing actions related to the preschool education, opportunities funds from the Regional Operational Programme for the Lower Silesian Voivodeship 2014 – 2020 and possibility to apply the PPP model in development (through modernisation or expansion) of the preschool facility network. Legal and organisational recommendations are related to appointing an association or union of communes. Measures undertaken within their frameworks can provide additional source of funding the preschool education and therefore relieve budgets of communes. Organisational recommendations are related to establishment of the IT platform providing support for officials and parents. The final part of recommendations concerns logistic issues. In this case the report suggests possible locations of new facilities, modernisation of those already existing, organisation of transport and implementation of the flexicurity concept.