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Education in State Archives in Poland (2015–2023)

Edukacja w archiwach państwowych w Polsce (2015–2023)

• Abstract •

The main aim of the article is to analyze the forms of activity of state archives in Poland in the field of education and its prospects. Therefore, the statutory tasks and organizational structure of the state archives were defined; the concept and importance of education in the state archives was defined; its forms were discussed; educational activities were presented on the example of the State Archives in Szczecin; the challenges facing education in state archives were outlined. The caesuras of work are marked by the years of rule of the so-called United Right, i.e., the Law and Justice (PiS) and its coalition partners.

Keywords: education; state archives; Poland

• Abstrakt •

Zasadniczym celem artykułu jest zanalizowanie form działalności archiwów państwowych w Polsce w zakresie edukacji i jej perspektyw. W związku z tym określono zadania ustawowe oraz strukturę organizacyjną archiwów państwowych; określono pojęcie i znaczenie edukacji w archiwach państwowych; omówiono jej formy w analizowanym okresie; przedstawiono działania edukacyjne na przykładzie Archiwum Państwowego w Szczecinie; zarysowano wyzwania stojące przed edukacją w archiwach państwowych. Cezury pracy wyznaczają lata rządów tzw. Zjednoczonej Prawicy, tj. Prawa i Sprawiedliwości oraz jego koalicjantów.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja; archiwa państwowe; Polska

“Archives are the nation’s memory”; they not only collect, store, develop and make available archival materials, but also participate in the historical education of society. The main aim of the article is to analyze the forms of activity of state archives in Poland the field of education and its prospects. Therefore, the statutory tasks and organizational structure of the state archives were defined; the concept and importance

of education in the state archives was defined; its forms were discussed; educational activities were presented on the example of the State Archives in Szczecin; the challenges facing education in state archives were outlined. The caesuras of work are marked by the years of rule of the so-called United Right, i.e., the Law and Justice (PiS) and its coalition partners (November 16, 2015–December 11, 2023). In the period under consideration, the Ministers of Culture and National Heritage were: Prof. Piotr Gliński (November 16, 2015–November 27, 2023), Dominika Chorościńska (November 27–December 11, 2023); and the General Directors of the State Archives were: Prof. Władysław Stępnik (August 10, 2010–February 1, 2016), acting Andrzej Biernat (February 2, 2016–April 20, 2016), Dr. Wojciech Woźniak (April 21, 2016–November 6, 2018), acting Ryszard Wojtkowski (November 7, 2018–January 29, 2019), Dr. Paweł Pietrzyk (from January 30, 2019). To solve the research problem, primarily the institutional and legal method, document analysis, comparative quantitative method and case study were used. The issue of broadly understood archival education was the subject of a study by Agnieszka Rosa (2012). Among the works devoted to this topic, it is worth mentioning the publication edited by Violetta Urbaniak (2017), and articles by, among others, Waldemar Chorążyczewski (2008), Hubert Mazur (2016), Agnieszka Rosa (2015), Marek Szczepaniak and Grażyna Tyrchan (2017).

The state archives in Poland belong to the state archival network. The supervisory authority for state archives is the Supreme Directorate of State Archives (NDAP). The Chief Director of the State Archives is appointed by the Prime Minister at the request of the competent Minister of Culture and National Heritage as a result of a competition. The Prime Minister's competences include the power of dismissing the Chief Director of the State Archives. The general director appoints and dismisses the directors of the state archives. There are three central archives within the state archival network (the Central Archives of Historical Records – AGAD, the Archive of New Records – AAN, and the National Digital Archives – NAC) and 30 non-central archives. It should be emphasized that the mentioned archives cover part of the voivodeship, its entirety or several voivodeships. The statutory tasks and functions of state archives include: 1) shaping the state archival resources; 2) recording, storing, processing, securing and making available archival materials belonging to their resources; 3) control over the handling of materials included in the state archival resources in company archives, file repositories and organizational units with entrusted archival resources; 4) issuing certified copies, extracts, reproductions of stored materials and certificates based thereon; 5) conducting scientific and publishing work in the field of archiving and related fields; 6) popularizing knowledge about archival materials and archives and conducting information activities; 7) performing

tasks specified in the Act or separate regulations (*Ustawa...*, 1983, Art. 28). The tasks and functions of state archives are defined in various ways in the literature on the subject (Jabłońska, 2016, pp. 44–58; Strykowski, 2015). There is no doubt that we are observing a gradual shift from the “classic” archival functions related to collecting, developing resources, and scientific activities through the administrative (official) function towards information, promotional, and educational activities. It is important to distinguish the last three functions. In the case of information activities, it is about disseminating information about archives and their resources. Promotion is aimed at building a positive image of the archive (Rosa, 2012, pp. 39–42). The promotional function is similar to the educational one through its forms, methods and means, but they are no less different (Jabłońska, 2016, pp. 68–73). A. Rosa defines the educational function of archives as “a set of tasks faced by archival institutions, aimed at raising the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of society through specific educational activities” (2012, p. 34). Archival education is addressed to various sociodemographic groups, from children and teenagers to seniors. In the conditions of a democratic society, state archives become institutions open to the transfer of information. This is not only about equal and full access to records (the principle of public access to the archive), but also about involvement in society’s education. In this sense, archives are obliged to prepare users to work with archives, teach them how to research and search, and shape citizens who understand their culture and history (Rosa, 2012, pp. 62–71). The main goal of education in state archives should be to popularize one’s own resources, transfer knowledge about the history of the region and country reflected in the stored materials, and to shape the historical identity of society. H. Mazur emphasizes: “Documentation found in archives should be used in historical education (and not only historical education, but also in, e.g., civic education) on an equal footing with museum or library collections” (2016, p. 23).

Generally, in the 21st century, the implementation of educational tasks by state archives in Poland is not questioned by the majority of historians, archivists, educators, and methodological advisors. The subject of discussion is rather the importance of this function of archives compared to other, basic ones, or the scope and forms of education. The need for state archives to provide education is related to specific social, cultural and, more broadly speaking, civilizational conditions. First of all, these offices operate in public space. They belong to the state administration, they serve society. Through education, state archives become more recognizable and build their brand; their activities contribute to the promotion of knowledge about the region (including among the younger generation) and the development of good practices between public administration entities, the

non-governmental sector and the social environment. Undoubtedly, historical education in archives is necessary due to the very low level of knowledge about these institutions, their tasks and functions (Mazur, 2016, p. 25). Very often, state archives are confused or even identified with the Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). By participating in various forms of education in state archives, various groups of recipients learn the essence of the functioning of these offices. The educational function carried out by state archives is aimed at making the public learn about local and regional history. This is done by transmitting and expanding knowledge about the history of “small homelands”; the archives thus participate in strengthening relations with the “big homeland”. In county cities, state archives are sometimes the sole or the main centers of cultural and educational life (Magier, 2009). They actively participate in shaping the identity of the local, subregional community. The special addressees of the educational offer of the state archives are children and young people. Thanks to classes at the state archive, their historical knowledge is expanded. Thus, archives’ popularization activities can complement compulsory historical education in schools. By presenting materials from the archive in an accessible form, children and young people will learn the history of the region and the country in a tangible way. The educational activities of archives contribute to the development of cooperation with state and local government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and informal groups. By implementing joint educational projects, a synergy effect is achieved, which results in building greater recognition by these entities, expanding the group of recipients of the educational offer and (as mentioned) shaping the local, regional, state, and civic identity.

In recent years, the role of educational activities of state archives has increased. External and internal factors contributed to this. External factors that contributed to the increase in educational activities in archives include: the development of technical possibilities (including the Internet), new educational initiatives of various entities, and social demand for this type of activities (Szczepaniak & Tyrchan, 2017, p. 68). Moreover, the educational activities of the archives are part of the priorities of the government’s historical policy. During the rule of the United Right, the aim of this policy was to promote pride in the sense of being Polish. The key values of PiS’s historical policy were: Polonocentrism, messianism, emphasizing the role of Catholicism and the Church, martyrdom, and promoting an unwavering patriotic attitude. Particular attention was paid to the popularization of the country’s recent history by state institutions. This was also important in the context of celebrating the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining independence (Kowalczyk, 2023). Internal factors were related to the adoption of a new strategy for state archives and the creation of organizational units responsible for education. There were two strategies

in operation in the analyzed period. In the *State Archives Strategy for 2010–2020*, one of the strategic goals was “building the image of state archives as modern and friendly institutions, actively participating in the education process of an open society”. Operational goals are related to the popularization and promotion of knowledge about archives, their resources, educational and scientific activities, which involve cooperation with domestic and foreign schools, teachers, educational authorities, institutions and associations; organizing scientific and educational events, publishing works in the field of history and archiving, and familiarizing with the needs of the society in regard to this offer (*Strategia...*, 2011).

The next strategy for the years 2020–2030 states that one of the main goals is archival heritage: “The national archival resource as a widely recognizable, universally accessible and important part of cultural heritage and cultural goods”. As part of this strategic goal, an operational goal (1.3) was set under the slogan: “Archives in education. Education in the Archives. A modern model of archival education”. This goal is to be achieved by: developing, in cooperation with the ministry responsible for education and upbringing, and school boards, an archival education program in the children and youth education system; introducing elements of knowledge about archives into the educational system; developing a catalog of educational forms both on-site and outside the archives; implementation of educational zones for students, teachers, lecturers, history lovers and enthusiasts, adults (including seniors), and people with special needs; development and implementation of an archival education system in cooperation with schools for various age groups and profiles; developing assumptions and forms of competence development for archivists carrying out educational tasks. Other operational goals are related to carrying out broadly understood educational activities: “Modern publishing policy of the State Archives” (1.2), “State Archives in synergy in the social environment. Developing cooperation with institutions in the field of science and education, culture and social institutions” (1.4), “#PopArchiw. Popularization of knowledge in the State Archives and activities related to brand positioning by the State Archives” (1.5). The latter goal included, among others: development and launch of a modern virtual exhibition portal, organization of cyclical and thematic archival competitions (*Strategia rozwoju...*, 2021). NDAP has unified the structure of state archives, introducing branches or single-person positions for the popularization of archival resources from 2023.

Education in the state archives takes place in various forms. A typology of educational forms was presented by A. Rosa, taking into account the following criteria: 1) place of classes (in the archive and outside it); 2) organizer of classes (independently by the archive, co-organized by other institutions); 3) number of participants (individual, group, collective forms); 4) dominant medium of communication (forms

based on words, sight, action); 5) duration of educational activities (short, long-term, cyclical forms); 6) purpose of undertaken activities (general and vocational education); 7) people participating in educational activities (scientific and educational environments, history enthusiasts, people looking for legal evidence, all documentation holders); 8) method of organizing activities undertaken by the archive (lessons, training, meetings, tourism, events). The most common educational forms in archives include: lectures, talks, discussions, shows, games, competitions, conferences, training, archival lessons, interest groups, archival trips, exhibitions, archival events. A separate educational activity includes activity on the Internet, especially websites, social networking sites, and online lessons (Rosa, 2012, pp. 168–278).

During the analyzed period, the state archives carried out educational activities in various forms. It is worth paying attention to cyclical and anniversary events organized in the state archival network. In the analyzed period, NDAP co-organized twice (together with the Association of Polish Archivists – SAP) the General Meetings of Archivists. The 7th congress took place in Kielce on September 20–22, 2017, under the slogan *Archival Studies without Borders*. The 8th congress took place in Łódź on September 7–9, 2022, under the slogan: *Archives, Mirrors of Time, Treasuries of Memory*. Cyclical events include the International Day of Archives (MDA), established in 2007 by the International Council on Archives, celebrated on June 9. During the MDA, archives (including warehouses) are opened to visitors, documents are presented, lectures and workshops are held. In 2019, the Chief Director of the State Archives, P. Pietrzyk, established the Archivist's Day, which falls on September 30 (St. Jerome of Stridon Day). The events organized by the archives on this day are intended to consolidate and promote the archivist community. In 2020, Mr. Pietrzyk established Donor's Day, celebrated on December 6 (St. Nicholas Day). This holiday is intended to honor people who donate their legacies to the archives. The event is usually accompanied by a presentation of the acquired heritage and collections. In addition, some archives participate in the European Night of Museums and European Heritage Days. From 2022, NDAP and the Ministry of Education and Science are organizing a nationwide genealogy competition entitled *Without Roots You Will Not Bloom: My Great and Small Homeland*, addressed to primary school students. The aim of the competition is to encourage young people to search for genealogy and archives, and to learn about local, regional, and country history. The participants' task is to create a family tree and describe the history of their family based on conversations with relatives and documents found in family and state archives. From 2022, NDAP is organizing a series of international lectures for history students and archivists entitled *Konarski Lectures*, with the participation of outstanding scientists. NDAP also participates in the Polish National List of the

UNESCO Memory of the World Program. It includes unique treasures of national heritage of fundamental importance for the history, culture and identity of the country, including, for example, those in the archives. In the analyzed period, the archives participated in the co-organization of nationwide educational events, e.g.: 20th General Congress of Polish Historians in Lublin (2019, discussion panel), 13th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Poznań (2022, exhibition), ‘Niepokorni Niezłomni Wyklęci’ Festival in Gdynia (2023, discussion panels).

Anniversary events are usually related to the NDAP priorities set every year. The form of their implementation is usually exhibitions and conferences (see Table 1). In the years 2018–2023, the state archives were involved in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining independence. Therefore, among others, the Independence Family Archives project was created, which is intended to encourage private individuals to care for their legacies. Consultation points were opened in 33 archives. In 2019, the central celebration of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the network of state archives took place at the Royal Castle in Warsaw.¹ To celebrate this anniversary, the following events were organized in the archives: archival lessons, workshops, exhibitions, seminars, and film screenings. In the context of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine in 2022, the archives presented an exhibition entitled *Mom, I Don’t Want War!: 1939–45 Poland/2022 Ukraine*. Historical drawings by Polish children were presented, which were a record of the experiences of World War II and Ukrainian children affected by the Russian attack. In the analyzed period, the educational activities of the archives related to various aspects, primarily of the modern and recent history of Poland.

The coronavirus pandemic (SARS-CoV-2) resulted in the transfer of archive activities to the virtual world (websites, YouTube videos, virtual exhibitions). Overnight, the archives were closed to users and visitors. The website: szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl gained importance. It is a website of the state archival network administered by NAC, which presents archival collections online. During the coronavirus pandemic, the percentage of virtual exhibitions also increased, at the expense of traditional ones (see Table 2). On June 9, 2020, NDAP announced a competition entitled *O Tempora, o Mores! Notes of a Family Archivist from the Times of the A.D. 2020 Pandemic Caused by the Coronavirus*. The aim of the competition was to obtain notes that are individual testimonies of events and everyday life as well as personal experiences, experiences and emotions during the pandemic (Żelazek, 2020, p. 217).

¹ The state archives were established by the Chief of State, Józef Piłsudski, by the Decree on the organization of archives and the care of archives of February 7, 1919.

Table 1. Examples of Anniversary Events in the State Archives

Year	Event	Form of execution	Organizer
2016	1050 th anniversary of the baptism of Poland	Exhibition	AP Bydgoszcz
2017	Year of the Vistula River	Exhibition	AP Gdańsk
2018	100 th anniversary of regaining independence Independence Family Archives	Conference	NDAP
2018	100 th anniversary of regaining independence On the road to independence	Exhibition	AAN, NAC
2018	100 th anniversary of regaining independence Archival photoplasticon	Mobile photoplasticon (Kaiserpanorama)	NAC
2019	100 th anniversary of the state archives	Grand celebration	NDAP
2019	450 th anniversary of the Union of Lublin	Ceremony/exposition	AGAD
2019	Year of the Silesian Uprisings	Exhibition	AP Katowice
2020	100 th anniversary of the Polish-Bolshevik war	Website (1920.gov.pl)	AAN
2020	40 th anniversary of the establish- ment of NSZZ “Solidarność”	Exhibition Conference	AP Białystok AP Szczecin
2020	100 th anniversary of the birth of John Paul II	Exhibition	AN Kraków
2021	230 th anniversary of the adoption of the May 3 rd Constitution	Series of events	AGAD
2021	100 th anniversary of the outbreak of the Third Silesian Uprising	Exhibitions	AP Opole AP Katowice
2021	40 th anniversary of the intro- duction of martial law	Series of events	AAN
2022	Russia’s aggression against Ukraine	Exhibition	AAN/Website “Mom, I See War”
2022	80 th anniversary of the crea- tion of the Home Army	Conference Exhibition	AAN
2023	550 th anniversary of the birth of Nicolaus Copernicus	Exhibition	AP Toruń

Source: Author’s own study based on NDAP annual reports (see: Sprawozdanie z działalności Naczel-
nego Dyrektora Archiwów Państwowych..., 2016–2022).

Table 2. Exhibitions Carried Out by the State Archives in 2016–2022

Form	Year						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Traditional exhibitions	420	400	400	430	150	200	278
Virtual exhibitions	400	200	600	340	750	770	728
Total exhibitions	820	600	1000	770	900	970	1006

Source: Author’s own study based on NDAP annual reports (see: Sprawozdanie z działalności Naczel-
nego Dyrektora Archiwów Państwowych..., 2016–2022).

The basic forms of educational activity of individual state archives in the analyzed period were: archival lessons, archival trips, exhibitions, complemented by conferences, training, and competitions. All 33 state archives participated in cyclical events – archival holidays. An example is the case study of the State Archives in Szczecin. The archive covers the former Szczecin Voivodeship, its resources consist of approximately 14 km of current files (from documentation created in the 13th century during the Pomeranian Griffin dynasty, through the rule of Brandenburg and Sweden, Prussian-German and Polish rule). The archive's educational offer is addressed primarily to high school students, university students, seniors, and individual residents of Szczecin. It is carried out in the form of archival lessons, archival-historical workshops, historical meetings (lectures), and trips. The Archive has a permanent offer of archival lessons (available on the website). They are usually conducted in the form of a mini-lecture, presentation of archival material and combined with a visit to the archive building (reading room, library, digitization and conservation studio, warehouse). The topics of archival lessons concern the history of Western Pomerania, archive activities, historical sources, and genealogy. A separate category of archival lessons were lectures related to the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining independence, carried out in the archive in 2017–2018 in cooperation with the Education Board in Szczecin. In 2016, the State Archives in Szczecin and the Municipal Archives in Greifswald organized archival and historical workshops entitled *The History of Connections for Polish and German Youth*. In 2021, workshops on family archives were organized in Barlinek. Historical meetings are open lectures addressed to the inhabitants of Szczecin. Archival tours are organized in response to the needs of various professional and age groups.

The archive consistently conducts exhibition activities. The most important exhibitions organized and co-organized in the analyzed period included: *Documents of Everyday Life of Szczecin's Inhabitants* (2016), *From the History of Christianity in Western Pomerania* (2016), *Szczecin's Road to Freedom: Strikes of 1988* (2018), *Poland Reborn (1918–1939): From the Perspective of German Pomerania* (2018), *Szczecin Anti-Communist Opposition of the 1980s and the Times of Breakthrough through the Lens of Jarosław Kaczorowski and Wojciech Woźniak* (2019), *The Furthest Poland: Szczecin 1945–1948* (2020), “*Let This Day Be Passed Down from Generation to Generation*”: *On the 230th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Constitution of May 3* (2021), *Mom, I Don't Want War!* (2022), *Architectural Heritage of Szczecin 1.0: The Villas of Łęčno* (2022).

As A. Rosa emphasizes, conferences have not only an informative but also an educational dimension (2012, p. 205). Due to its scientific potential (the archive employs two people with habilitation degrees and four with doctoral degrees), the

State Archives in Szczecin has organized numerous scientific, popular science, and training projects. The following scientific conferences were organized: *Historical Book Collections in the Libraries of State Archives* (2016), *Do Not Forget Those Days: 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of NSZZ “Solidarność”* (2020), *Family Archives and Private Collections in the Resources of West Pomeranian Cultural and Scientific Institutions* (2022). In 2019, popular science sessions were held in Szczecin and Koszalin entitled: *Women of the First Solidarity: 2019 – The Year of Anna Walentynowicz. The archive organized archival workshops in cooperation with the SAP branch for in-house archivists in Międzyzdroje* (2019) and *Stargard* (2023). In 2019, a seminar on recorded non-state archival resources was held, addressed to representatives of non-governmental organizations.

A distinctive feature of the archive's educational activities in the years 2018–2023 were competitions, carried out jointly with the Education Board in Szczecin. The anniversary historical competitions were addressed to young people from secondary schools in Western Pomerania: *Polish Roads to Independence (1914–1923)*, *Polish-Bolshevik War 1919/1921, “It Will Be Your Duty to Fight with Weapons in Your Hands”*: *Historical Competition on the 80th Anniversary of the Creation of the Home Army, Polish Legions in Italy*. Art competitions (poster making) were aimed at primary school (and post-school) students: *Szczecin Strikes 1988, “Do Not Forget Those Days...”*: *40th Anniversary of the Signing of the August Agreements, 230th Anniversary of the Adoption of the May 3rd Constitution*. There was a competition for teachers to create a lesson plan on teacher independence (titled: *My Independence*). Since 2019, a cyclical competition has been organized entitled: *Find Your Family Heirloom and Describe Its Story*. The aim of the competition is: to popularize historical knowledge among students of West Pomeranian schools, to learn family history, and thus to interest students in the subject of genealogical research, to promote knowledge about collecting and securing memorabilia of the past from family archives, and to improve their own writing skills. The winning works are published every year. Moreover, in 2022, the State Archives in Szczecin and the Archives of the University of Szczecin organized a competition entitled *Welcome to the Archive*, addressed to students of art secondary schools and art students for the aim of imagining the archive using any painting technique. In 2023, in cooperation with the Pomeranian Library in Szczecin, a project was initiated entitled *A Trip to the Source*. The aim of the campaign is to interest young people in the history of Poland and Western Pomerania, to promote reading and knowledge of historical sources. The event is carried out in the form of an introductory lecture, and students of schools participating in the event read parts of historical chronicles.

During the period under consideration, the MDA was held with a specific main theme. The presentation of documents was accompanied by lectures, discussions, exhibitions, and visits to the archives. In 2016, the MDA theme was: *Genealogy. Community Archives. City Game*, in 2017 – *Faces of Szczecin in Archival Sources*, in 2018 – *Szczecin's Road to Freedom*, in 2019 – *Fashion in Poland and Western Pomerania in the 20th Century*, in 2021 – *Theatrical Life in Polish Szczecin (1945–2020)*,² in 2022 – *Junak – A Legend from Szczecin*, in 2023 – *Maritime Economy of Szczecin after 1945*. The Archive regularly participated in a series of lectures as part of the West Pomeranian Heritage Days, and in 2016 – in the European Night of Museums (documentary films on regional topics, made in the 1970s and 1980s, entitled *5th Festival Night of Museums of the State Archives in Szczecin*, were presented). Since 2018, the archive has been opening its doors to visitors as part of the International Tourist Guide Day. As part of the Donor Day, legacies donated by private individuals are presented. Archivist Day is an opportunity to train and meet company archivists.

The archive has its own YouTube channel, website and Facebook page, with approximately 9.6 thousand views and likes. Statistics of selected forms of educational activities of the archive are presented in Table 3. A permanent element of the archive's educational activities is cooperation with the University of Szczecin, state and local government cultural institutions, a branch of SAP, and non-governmental organizations (especially veterans and repressed people's organizations). The educational activities of the State Archives in Szczecin in the years 2016–2023 were conducted in various forms. Together, they constitute a case study of the implementation of the educational function by the state archival network.

Table 3. Selected Forms of Educational Activities of the State Archives in Szczecin in 2016–2022

Form	Year						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Archival lessons	62	42	54	68	5	8	34
Trips	50	29	8	51	3	2	18
Total exhibitions	4	7	5	9	3	5	6
Traditional exhibitions	4	5	5	9	1	4	5
Virtual exhibitions	0	2	0	0	2	1	1

Source: Author's own study based on annual reports of AP in Szczecin (see: *Sprawozdanie z działalności Archiwum...*, 2016–2022).

² In 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the MDA was not held, and in 2021, it was organized in a virtual form, presenting thematic films on the YouTube channel.

In the conditions of a democratic and networked society, the educational function of archives should be continued. The role of the archive should not be limited to that of an elite office or scientific institution, difficult to access for the average user. At the same time, a balance should be maintained between the implementation of traditional tasks related to collecting, processing, making available, shaping the national archival resources, official and scientific activities, and archival education. A major threat to archives is the desire to constantly increase the number of educational projects at the expense of their quality or infantilization of the message.

Starting from the 21st century, state archives have been developing educational activities. In this respect, they currently have separate organizational units and specialized staff. Employees of popularization departments/positions become educators, self-promoters (Chorażyczewski, 2008), or archival educators (Rosa, 2012, pp. 85–88, 164–167, 2015, pp. 134–137). Their tasks include: carrying out archival lessons, presentations and workshops with archival materials, city games, projects, organizing competitions, exhibitions, making archival publications public, cooperating with curators, schools, individual history teachers, mass media and third sector organizations, bringing together enthusiasts of regional history, organizing educational events. In the future, archival educators could act as methodological advisors on methods of working with source materials. The ideal situation would be for archival educators to combine the competences of teachers and archivists (Rosa, 2015, pp. 138–139). Undoubtedly, these employees should be provided with the opportunity to improve their qualifications through courses, training and conferences organized by NDAP, universities and educational institutions (Mazur & Rosa, 2014). Those centers that are the seats of universities (providing studies specializing in archival studies) and methodological centers are predisposed to this role. A valuable informal initiative bringing together archivists, historians, museologists, librarians, and Polish teachers who carry out the mission of teaching history based on sources is the Archival Educators Forum, which has been operating since 2014. This forum organizes regular conferences and meetings. Conferences are certainly a platform for integration of archival educators. A good example of such practice is the *Educare necesse est...* conference, organized since 2016 by the IPN Archive, the State Archives in Warsaw, the Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw, the Masovian Local Government Center for Teacher Training, and NDAP. Their aim is to familiarize teachers and educators with the resources and educational offer of archives and to encourage the use of archival sources during school classes. The Archival Education Section operates within the Association of Polish Archivists. All these initiatives should be continued.

State archives are not politicized, which means that the education they provide (including historical information) will be largely free from ideological entanglements. Employees of state archives are subject to the regulations of the Civil Service Act. According to these regulations, members of the civil service corps cannot: publicly manifest political views, create or participate in political parties, combine their work with the mandate of a councilor (*Ustawa...*, 2008, Art. 78, par. 1, pp. 2, 4). On the other hand, politicians in power will always strive to shape a specific knowledge about the past through the institutions subordinate to them as part of their historical policy. Regardless of the political context, there is no doubt that the archive can play a key role in familiarizing students with the history of the region and shaping its connections with the “small homeland”, for example, by presenting archival materials, especially those related to the history of a specific village or city, e.g., location documents (Chorążyczewski, 2008, pp. 50–51). This unique role of archives also results from the fact that regional studies are not included in the history curriculum in schools. In order to build the brand of the network of state archives, it is important to carry out cyclical educational projects at the central level and at individual archives (e.g., competitions, thematic meetings). It seems that state archives could participate in the production of educational films to a greater extent, especially since NDAP and some archives have their own YouTube channels. In the reality of the information society, archives must constantly “remind” society of their existence through media and educational activities. All the more so because state archives cooperate and at the same time compete with other entities in the field of historical education. In provincial cities, the competitors of state archives in this respect are branches of the Institute of National Remembrance (with extensive education departments), cultural and educational institutions. In cities with county rights, through educational activities state archives can become leaders in building subregional identity.

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