

# **FDPA**

## **Women in Rural Enterprise Development**

# **CLIENTS' BOOK**



# WRED

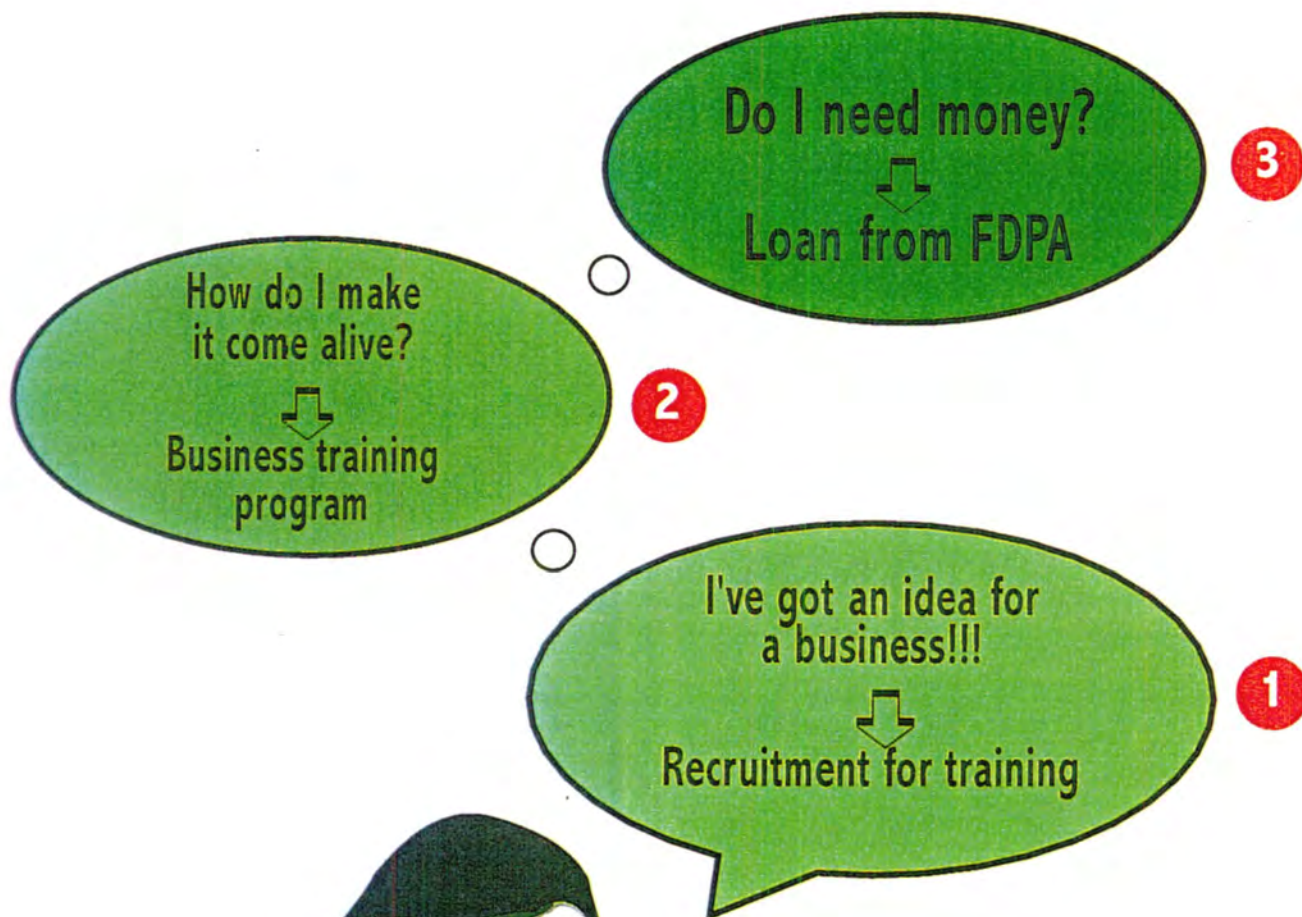
WOMEN IN RURAL  
ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM

LAUNCHED IN 1991

TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE  
INCOME-GENERATING  
AND EMPLOYMENT-CREATING  
INITIATIVES  
AMONG WOMEN  
IN RURAL POLAND



# HOW THE WRED PROGRAM OPERATES?



## The story



(Danuta's B&B)

**NAME OF THE CLIENT:** Danuta Lelental, a farmer, decided to start a bed and breakfast in her own 200 year old half-timbered house in the Mazurian Lake District. The five hectares that she and her husband farm generates only enough profit to support the family for eight months of the year. Danuta had already been taking in tourists informally to supplement the family income. The expansion of the tourist market convinced her that now was the time to expand her own business. She came to FDPA for customer service training and afterwards applied for a loan from the WRED programme.

**TERMS OF THE LOAN AND PURPOSE:** Danuta received a loan of 6,000 PLN (USD 2,700) for 12 months to refurbish four rooms and a kitchen. Upgrading the standard of services she could provide was necessary to attract German tourists coming to trace their family roots in this part of Poland. The loan was guaranteed by co-signment and backed by Danuta's solid business plan, determination and proof of existing market.

**COMMENTS:** Although Danuta started out with very limited financial resources, Danuta's business is now making enough profit to support her family for the rest of the year, and she has already repaid her loan to WRED. Danuta's business also created two new jobs, for herself and her disabled daughter.



(Some hidden treasures)



(Katarzyna's mother at work)

**NAME OF THE CLIENT:** **Katarzyna Barcińska** learned about our program from a newspaper add. She came to us to learn how to complete a loan application form. She needed additional funding to purchase supplies for her small animal feed distribution business in Bodzanowo.

**DATE THE LOAN WAS DISBURSED:** November 1994

**AMOUNT:** 5,000 ZLP **EQUIVALENT IN USD:** 2,050

**PURPOSE:** The loan was disbursed to expand the variety of supplies.

**TERMS OF THE LOAN:** The loan was given for 12 months with co-signment and her skills as a guarantee.

**COMMENTS:** Katarzyna is a model borrower. She has not only expanded her activity but is also launching her second distribution point in the next village.

**NUMBER OF JOBS CREATED:** 1 + 2



(Katarzyna and her mother in front of her shop)





(Genowefa's bakery is sometimes managed by her daughter)

**NAME OF THE CLIENT:** **Genowefa Naklicka** worked for a cooperative which went through re-engineering. Together with her husband Ryszard who had qualifications as a baker, she decided to rent a village bakery in Redło. The WRED program staff had a chance to taste her bread during one of our visits to the Koszalin region. Genowefa, instead going to the Labour Office for unemployment benefits after being laid off from her job, decided to become an entrepreneur.

**DATE THE LOAN WAS DISBURSED:** February, 1995

**AMOUNT:** 10,000 ZLP **EQUIVALENT IN USD:** 4,250

**PURPOSE:** The loan was disbursed to purchase additional equipment for the bakery.

**TERMS OF THE LOAN:** The loan was given for 12 months with an IOU, her husband's knowledge in bakery and her skills in economics as a guarantee.

**COMMENTS:**

**Genowefa's** enormous energy would be enough for five. It is worth to say that what she does now does not have anything in common with what she had been doing in the cooperative for 18 years. She turned unemployment into an opportunity to try something new and succeeded.

**NUMBER OF****JOBS CREATED:**

2 + 4



(The bakery uses old fashioned brick ovens to turn out great tasting bread.)



(Janina in her garment shop)

**NAME OF THE CLIENT:** **Janina Żukowska** was nearly 40 when she became a widow. Friends are sometimes useful. She was invited to one of our business courses in November but didn't think that she could ever take the risk to start a business of her own. But "you never know" one of her friend said and she was right. Janina has a very strong professional background and with some support from her friends, other shop owners on the same street in Połczyn Zdrój, she took a risk and came to us for a loan. The program helped some, but Janina had to do most of the work herself and she proved that she is a winner.

**DATE THE LOAN WAS DISBURSED:** February 1995

|                |            |                      |
|----------------|------------|----------------------|
| <b>AMOUNT:</b> | 10,000 ZLP | <b>EQUIVALENT</b>    |
|                |            | <b>IN USD:</b> 4,250 |

**PURPOSE:** The loan was disbursed to buy the shop space from the cooperative she worked for. It has also enabled her to expand supplies.

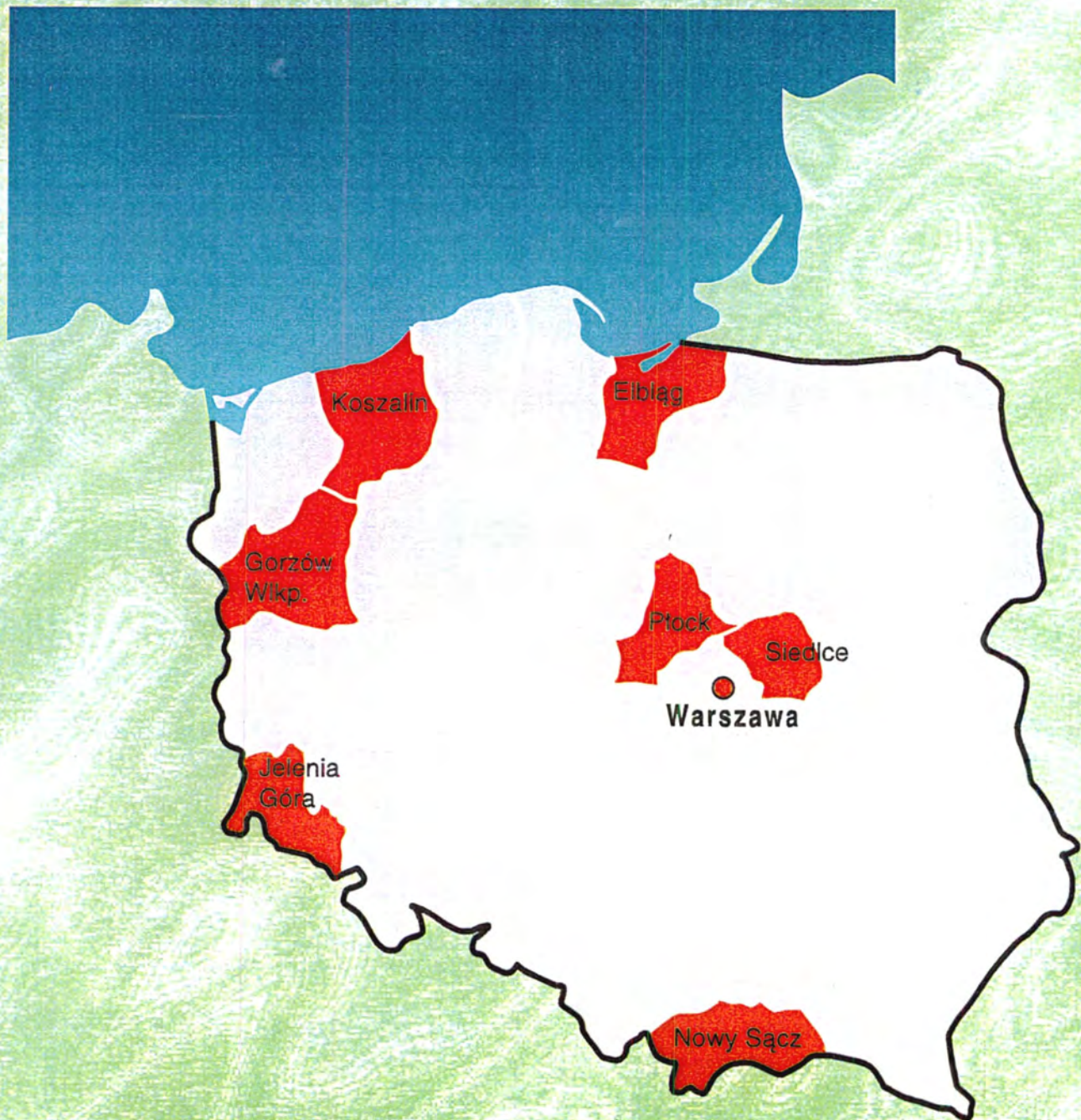
**TERMS OF THE LOAN:** The loan was given for 12 months in two tranches with an interest rate of 36% with an IOU, her skills, her experience, and the business location as a guarantee.

**COMMENTS:** **Janina** did not give up although it was not easy. But again, she was not alone; her friends on the one hand and WRED employees on the other helped her through this difficult part of her life. Today Janina is proud of what she achieved, although she takes her success in stride--it's all in a day's work.

**NUMBER OF  
JOBS CREATED:** 1

# WRED

## AREAS OF ACTIVITY



## ANNUAL REPORT - 1995

The Women in Rural Enterprise Development Program (WRED) is promoting non-agricultural employment in rural communities by offering training, small loans and advisory services to entrepreneurs in seven *województwa* (Elbląg, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Jelenia Góra, Koszalin, Nowy Sącz, Płock and Siedlce). Most of the beneficiaries of the WRED Program are women with limited access to credit and few opportunities for employment. WRED provides loans to these women at the best available rates. Adherence to real market conditions is important for the borrower so as not to give her a false sense of the market. It is also important to the lending institution as it moves toward self-sufficiency.

### WRED ACTIVITIES IN 1995 INCLUDED:

- (i) Building up the loan volume.
- (ii) Providing training to entrepreneurs.
- (iii) Launching three new lending centers.
- (iv) Completion of training and promotional materials.

### WRED TRAINING AND LENDING ACTIVITY IN 1995

| Indicator                                | 1995    |
|------------------------------------------|---------|
| Training workshops conducted             | 33      |
| Prospective clients trained              | 659     |
| Loan applications received               | 153     |
| Loan applications declined               | 38      |
| New loans disbursed                      | 115     |
| Total loans outstanding at end of period | 143     |
| New loans disbursed (USD)                | 406,666 |
| Loans outstanding at end of period (USD) | 302,528 |
| Loans past due                           | 2       |
| Defaults                                 | 1       |
| Number of jobs created                   | 138     |

### WRED SPONSORS

Polish-American Enterprise Fund (USA)  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (USA)  
Deutscher Caritasverband (Germany)  
Alfred Jurzykowski Foundation (USA)  
Citicorp Foundation (USA)  
Stefan Batory Foundation (Poland)  
Fundusz Mikro (Poland)  
EU PHARE LIEN Programme

### OUR GUESTS

Deutscher Caritasverband representatives (Rolf Olschewski and Franz-Josef Vollmer) visited WRED lending centers and borrowers in Stare Pole and Połczyn Zdrój in June.

Trustees of the Charles S. Mott Foundation, William White, the Chairman, and Jeanette Mansour, Program Officer spent a day with the Program staff in the Płock area in September. They visited the WRED local office, a feed store in Bodzanów, the grocery of another client, and enjoyed a meal at the restaurant of a third program beneficiary before returning to Warsaw.

Ms. Marianne Mott, and two coordinators from the C. S. Mott Foundation visited the Płock *województwo* and met with WRED clients in October.

Ms. Lisa Rey had a full day briefing on the program. She visited borrowers in the Płock area and met program staff at the Płock WRED local office.

C. Douglas Ades, the PAEF representative and the program consultant, conducted a half day workshop on WRED Program promotion, team building and problem solving for all WRED staff.

## ACTIVITIES OF WRED IN 1995

Three new local lending centers in Nowy Sącz, Jelenia Góra and Siedlce were launched, expanding the WRED Program to provide assistance to seven *województwa* (Elbląg, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Jelenia Góra, Koszalin, Nowy Sącz, Płock and Siedlce). WRED has been commended for its accessibility to borrowers and its quick response time.

The WRED Program, in consortium with *Małopolskie Stowarzyszenie Doradztwa Rolniczego* (Małopolska Association for Agriculture Advisory Services), won a FAPA tender for training for teachers in four southern *województwa* of Poland on small business management. WRED trainers conducted three training sessions for 25 teachers each.

A fee-for-service contract with Fundusz Mikro (FM), a subsidiary of the Polish-American Enterprise Fund was signed in August. Based on the agreement, FM will make funds available for borrowers in the Siedlce *województwo* for a nine month trial period.

WRED and the Rural Tourism program are joining forces to develop community-based tourism as a vehicle for economic development in two new regions. This project is funded by the European Union PHARE LIEN programme.

The WRED training manual "If you want to - you can" was updated and printed along with other training and lending documents.

Promotional materials were developed and printed. They include stickers for borrowers, presentation transparencies in Polish and English, a "Borrowers book" featuring the stories of WRED clients, and information brochures and leaflets.

### WRED STAFF

Elżbieta Dec, Deputy Director  
Anna Kosidło, Program Manager  
Andrzej Tomczyk, Financial Specialist  
Zdzisław Chojnacki, (Połczyn Zdrój)  
Izabela Dobrowolska (Stare Pole)  
Janina Lebieź (Gorzów Wielkopolski)  
Małgorzata Mrowca (Nowy Sącz)  
Anna Orłowska, Credit Officer  
Magdalena Parlow-Adamus, Coordinator  
Marian Piechocki, (Jelenia Góra)  
Ewa Zawadzka (Siedlce)  
Alicja Zielińska (Płock)  
Kathleen Dunlop, Consultant

### ADVISORY BOARD TO THE WRED PROGRAM

Eleonora Kuczmara-Ludwiczńska, Chairperson  
Maria Anna Knothe, Deputy Chairperson  
Dagmara Baraniewska, Anna Bölskei  
Joanna Bujarska, Wanda Dąbrowiecka  
Elżbieta Dec, Zdzisława Janowska  
Jadwiga Kopciuch, Barbara Labuda  
Małgorzata Niepokulczycka, Ewa Ostrowska,  
Teresa Pałaszewska-Reindl, Danuta Piontek, Jolanta Tanaś

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## SHARING OUR EXPERIENCE

The WRED Program has been selected as a model rural economic development program and E. Dec was invited to Florence (Italy) to take part in preparation of the "Partnership for Social Development Casebook." The casebook was presented and very well received during the UN Conference on Social Development in Copenhagen in March.

E. Dec represented WRED at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization meeting on "Socio-economic situation and status of rural women in Central and Eastern Europe" in Tallin (Estonia) in June.

E. Dec and K. Dunlop participated in the NGO Forum on Women in China in September. K. Dunlop also participated as an observer at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women.

In September K. Dunlop participated in a regional workshop on the needs and opportunities of rural women in Central and Eastern Europe. The workshop was organized by UNESCO in Vienna.

In September, A. Kosidło was invited to Malaga (Spain) for 8th International Rural Development Summer School sponsored by FAO of the United Nations.

In November, E. Dec was invited by Bulgarian Women Union to share experience in launching a similar lending operation for Bulgarian women.

## WOMEN IN RURAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

### Rural women as participants in lasting economic reform

The establishment of democratic institutions and efficient market economies in Central and Eastern Europe is an urgent priority. Its importance is reflected in the international effort to promote enterprise in the region, and to open the way for entrepreneurs willing to take the risks, and earn the rewards, that a market-driven economy offers.

Polish economic reform has created opportunities for thousands of resourceful entrepreneurs. The private sector in Poland is well established, and new jobs are being created at a high rate. The private sector, however, is not yet able to absorb all of the men and women being laid off. The outlook for the rural population in particular, which represents 40% of the Polish population, is uncertain. The collapse of State farms, affected by the withdrawal of subsidies, growing competition, restructuring and business liquidation, the unfamiliar hazards of unmanaged markets, and the loss of traditional markets to the East, have disrupted Poland's agricultural sector. Although many Polish farmers are adapting, high levels of unemployment in rural areas have been one of the undesirable aspects of the transformation.

Women are being hit hard. They often lose their jobs first and many were employed by State farms and enterprises now being restructured or liquidated. Women represent a growing percentage of the unemployed in rural areas and there is no sign this trend will be reversed soon.

On the other hand, Polish women have a long tradition of initiative, enterprise and energy. Their entrepreneurial skills are reflected in the management of family budgets, and in their active involvement in the provision or management of many of the resources of agricultural production. Often better

educated than Polish men, they have always demonstrated determination and creativity under difficult circumstances.

### The Women in Rural Enterprise Development Program

In 1991, anticipating the emerging problem of unemployment in rural areas, the Foundation for the Development of Polish Agriculture (FDPA) launched a program to support rural women who want to organize small businesses. The WRED program was established to meet the need for new businesses, and jobs, in Poland's rural communities. It also meets the active demand of rural women for the skills and knowledge needed to create a private business.

The main objective of the WRED program was to create a credit and training institution to help women in rural communities develop new enterprises with limited resources. The program encompasses business training, advisory services, and access to small loans.

In July 1991, FDPA and Women's World Banking (New York) sponsored a week-long conference for over 100 agribusiness managers and community leaders, all women, from all parts of Poland. The purpose of the meeting was to raise awareness of the growing unemployment problem in rural areas, and to demonstrate that microenterprise development programs can be an important generator of employment and income.

The WRED program took shape, with adjustments to meet the needs of rural Poland. The program is the first of its kind in Central and Eastern Europe. There were no models in Poland or elsewhere in the region, and development of an effective strategy has been an important part of FDPA's effort. The creation of a microenterprise manual entitled "If you want, you can," specifically for Polish rural entrepreneurs was an important first step. The organizational phase (in 1991 and 1992) of the WRED program was fully supported from FDPA's reserves. During this period over 1000 entrepreneurs were trained in WRED's workshops.

A revolving line of credit to finance small businesses was an important element of the planning from the outset. The Polish-American Enterprise Fund made this money available to FDPA in the form of a soft loan, and later converted the loan to a grant. In 1993, the program attracted a three-year grant from Caritas-Germany and from the C.S. Mott Foundation, permitting the WRED program to spread geographically. WRED currently provides its assistance and services through seven microenterprise development centers, and plans to open two more centers in 1996.

WRED provides access to loans at the best available market rates. Adherence to real market conditions is important for the borrower so as not to give her a false sense of the market. It is also important to the lending institution as it moves toward self-sufficiency.



*Iwona from Malbork. Flower Shop. Loan to expand variety of flowers.*

|                    | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|
| Enterprise centers | 5    | 7    | 9    |
| Workshops          | 32   | 25   | 25   |
| Clients            | 606  | 600  | 600  |
| Loans disbursed    | 39   | 240  | 300  |
| New jobs created   | 115  | 480  | 600  |

### Assistance provided through the WRED program

The program presently operates in seven voivodships: Elbląg, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Jelenia Góra, Koszalin, Nowy Sącz, Płock, and Siedlce. In these communities, local offices have been established in close cooperation with Agricultural Extension Centers (ODRs). Seven local coordinators provide assistance to small entrepreneurs, assess loan applications, and monitor loans already disbursed.

WRED provides a range of services. The most important are:

**Business training**, including aspects of business management, marketing, business planning and credit application, is designed to meet the needs of entrepreneurs with sound business ideas who are interested in obtaining a loan from FDPA funds.



*Katarzyna used her loan to expand her animal feed distribution business in Bodzanów.*

**Loans**, up to 10,000 PLN, are made to applicants who have concrete business ideas to start or further develop an enterprise.

Preference is given to projects which need credit for less than one year and which create new jobs. Final decisions on loans are made by the FDPA loan committee.

**Advisory services**, are provided to borrowers who

obtain a loan from FDPA's revolving line of credit. An important component of the advisory service is a monthly meeting of borrowers and an FDPA specialist to exchange ideas, discuss problems, and monitor payments.

### Advisory Board

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#### Members of the Advisory Board

Eleonora Kuczmera-Ludwiczynska, Chairperson  
Maria Anna Knothe, Deputy Chairperson

Anna Böleskei, Joanna Bujarska, Jolanta Czechowska, Wanda Dąbrowiecka, Elżbieta Dec, Halina Flis-Kuczynska, Zdzisława Janowska, Jadwiga Kopciuch, Barbara Labuda, Małgorzata Niepokuleczycka, Ewa Ostrowska, Teresa Pałaszewska-Reindl, Danuta Piontek, Stanisława Popiela, Jolanta Tanaś

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In March 1992, the WRED program was introduced to a group of successful Polish women, who offered their support in organizing and implementing the program. Eighteen distinguished women

established the program's Advisory Board, providing valuable counsel and promoting the program as one of the leading economic development initiatives in rural areas. Eleonora Kuczmera-Ludwiczynska currently serves as Chairperson. Maria Anna Knothe is Deputy Chairperson.

### Long-range Plans

FDPA staff have mastered the art of enterprise development in rural Poland. Employing entrepreneur training, small loans and continuing support, the WRED program is creating new jobs and helping rural women establish new businesses at a reasonable cost. This model, tested and proven at FDPA's seven lending centers, can be successfully replicated throughout rural Poland and other emerging democracies. Our objective is to mobilize the financial and human resources to expand this system, and to reach as many rural entrepreneurs as our resources will permit.

### Management

The Women in Rural Enterprise Development is the Foundation's largest program, employing (in mid-1995) twelve professionals in its central office in Warsaw and in seven local lending centers. Elżbieta Dec, a Deputy Director of the Foundation, has been responsible for FDPA's Women in Rural Enterprise Development Program since it was established in 1991. Anna Kosidło, who joined the program in 1992 as a credit officer, is the Program Manager.



*Ewa produces clothing according to her own designs. She took a risk to start her own business.*

# FDPA FUNDACJA NA RZECZ ROZWOJU POLSKIEGO ROLNICTWA

## FOUNDATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLISH AGRICULTURE

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The Foundation for the Development of Polish Agriculture (FDPA) is an independent, not-for-profit, Polish foundation established in 1988. It is one of the most experienced non-governmental assistance organizations operating in Central and Eastern Europe, and has participated in many of the important assistance initiatives undertaken since political and economic reform began in 1990.

The Foundation presently pursues four core programs:

The Women in Rural Enterprise Development (WRED) program is creating new business opportunities in rural communities across Poland. Nine lending centers offer specialized training, small loans and ongoing advisory services to rural entrepreneurs, most of them women with few other economic opportunities. Since 1993, FDPA has helped hundreds of women develop the skills and self-confidence needed to launch an independent enterprise. The WRED program has attracted the support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (USA), the Polish-American Enterprise Fund, Deutscher Caritasverband (Germany), The Ford Foundation (USA), Citicorp Foundation (USA) and the Alfred Jurzynowski Foundation (USA).

The Rural Tourism Program is promoting one of the most promising economic activities available to residents of rural Poland. The early support of the Fondation France-Pologne (France) and the American Express Foundation (USA) enabled FDPA to develop strategies based on the experience of France, Ireland and other European countries. With funding provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (USA), the American Express Foundation and the European Union's PHARE program, FDPA has organized a model ('pilot') project in western Poland and will be replicating the model in other regions.

The Agricultural Policy Development initiative is a forum for the formulation of farm and trade policies that will facilitate the integration of Poland into the common European food market. FDPA's continuing series of policy seminars and conferences is supported by a number of private and public organizations, both foreign and domestic, and has attracted speakers from Poland, from important European trading partners and from the United States.

The Sustainable Agriculture Program tests and promotes farming practices that are sensitive to the rural environment and more profitable for the farmer. The Foundation has been demonstrating these practices on 15 working farms in two important agricultural regions, and has begun to promote these more widely with the support of the Polish Government, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the PHARE program.

The Foundation also offers a range of advisory and technical services to foreign and domestic clients. The Foundation's most important technical assistance program is the RAAPS program, which helps small- and medium-sized Polish businesses develop and implement long-range business plans. The work is funded by the United States Agency for International Development. The prime contractor and program manager is Land O'Lakes, an American dairy cooperative.

FDPA has also invested successfully in Poland. The Foundation has developed a portfolio of program-related investments, through which it owns interests in small- and medium-sized companies operating in the food sector. FDPA's financial and technical partners have made it possible for the Foundation to spread its capital across a number of important subsectors, including fruit processing, fruit-juice packaging, livestock production, genetics, milk-processing and trade publishing. Participation as an equity investor has given FDPA invaluable insight into the practical problems and constraints of an operating company, and permits it to offer advice to others that is solidly based on its own experience. Returns from these investments support the Foundation's core programs and extend the resources available for its work.

FDPA's international Board of Directors and Polish staff are its most important resource. Members of the Board represent Poland, the United Kingdom, Holland, France, Germany and the United States. The staff of 30 Polish professionals bring skills from the agricultural, food, financial and management sciences.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jonathan Taylor, Booker (United Kingdom), Chairman

Henryka Bochniarz, NICOM Consulting (Poland)  
William Herbster (USA) Krzysztof Hermanowicz, fruit grower (Poland) Andrzej Hopfer, Olsztyn Agricultural University (Poland) Leon Irish, International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (USA) Hans-Jurgen Kochmann, Dr Kochman Wegner & Partner (Germany) Gunther Luedecke, GAL Consult (Germany) William Moody, Rockefeller Brothers Fund (USA)

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#### PROGRAM STAFF

Robert Anderson, Executive Director

*Rural Economic Development* Elżbieta Dec, Deputy Director *Rural Tourism* Kathleen Dunlop Anna Połujańska Lisa Ramsey *Women in Rural Enterprise Development* Zdzisław Chojnacki Izabela Dobrowolska (Elbląg) Anna Kosidło Janina Lebieź (Gorzów Wielkopolski) Małgorzata Mrowca (Nowy Sącz) Anna Orłowska (Płock) Magdalena Parlow-Adamus Marian Piechowski (Jelenia Góra) Andrzej Tomczyk Ewa Zawadzka (Siedlce) Alicja Zielińska (Płock)

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The Foundation is pursuing four core programs. The Women in Rural Enterprise Development (WRED) program is creating new business opportunities in rural communities across Poland. Nine lending centers offer specialized training, small loans and ongoing advisory services to rural entrepreneurs, most of them women with few other economic opportunities. Since 1991, FDPA has helped hundreds of women develop the skills and self-confidence needed to launch an independent enterprise. The WRED program has attracted the support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (USA), the Polish-American Enterprise Fund, Deutscher Caritasverband (Germany), The Ford Foundation (USA), Citicorp Foundation (USA) and the Alfred Jurzyński Foundation (USA).

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The Sustainable Agriculture Program has promoted farming practices that are sensitive to the rural environment and more profitable for the farmer. The Foundation has demonstrated these practices on 15 working farms in two important agricultural regions, and promoted these with the support of the Polish Government, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the PHARE program.

The Foundation offers a range of advisory and technical services to foreign and domestic clients through its consulting affiliate, FDPA Consulting.

#### RURAL FOUNDATIONS INSTITUTION-BUILDING INITIATIVE CONTINUES

The first national congress of rural and agricultural foundations was held in Radzików (near Warsaw) in April 1995. Over 90 people attended, among them representatives of over 40 Polish foundations, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the press.

Later in the year an informational meeting at the Warsaw Agricultural University attracted 80 people, including staff of agricultural extension centers. The Foundation for the Development of Polish Agriculture, in the role of coordinator, reported on developments since a joint statement on the Law of Foundations was drafted and adopted at Radzików in April. A proposal for the organization of an information clearinghouse was discussed and a group was named to begin an inventory of all of the resources available to rural communities, including sources of governmental, non-governmental, and foreign assistance. A second group began work on a joint statement to the Ministry of Agriculture, asking that NGOs be invited to help design and implement the Ministry's assistance programs.

Plans for the second annual meeting of rural foundations are well advanced. The two-day conference will be held in September 1996, in conjunction with national meetings of the Polish Forum of Non-Governmental Initiatives (*Forum Inicjatyw Pozarządowych*).

Polish foundations are operating under an antiquated law adopted some years ago. A new law governing foundations is being drafted, and legislative action is expected before the end of the year. The proposed law includes provisions that are thought to be counterproductive to the development of the Not-for-Profit sector in Poland. FDPA, the *Forum Fundacji Polskich*, the Private Enterprise Development Support Project ('GEMINI') and the Polish Forum of Non-Governmental Initiatives (*Forum Inicjatyw Pozarządowych*) are working to introduce language that will support a vigorous, productive non-governmental sector.

#### WOMEN IN RURAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS

In late February, the Foundation celebrated the fifth year of the Women in Rural Enterprise Development program, which has taught the principles of private enterprise to thousands of Polish entrepreneurs and helped hundreds establish a small business in their rural community.

The retraining and employment of Poland's rural population is moving to the top of the national agenda. On April 17, the national newspaper *Nowa Europa* reported that

between 1996 and 2000, Poland's working-age population will increase by 920,000 people. Of these, 45% will live in rural areas and few are likely to find work. Statistical data indicate that 741,000 unemployed live in rural areas, but members of the parliament's Agricultural Committee agree the actual number is much higher.

The WRED program operates through seven enterprise development centers throughout Poland. The directors of the program are Deputy Director Elżbieta Dec and Program Manager Anna Kosidło.

#### AN EXTRAORDINARY ENTREPRENEUR

Ewa Rusak of Polczyn Zdrój is an exceptional entrepreneur, even by the high standards of the beneficiaries of the Women in Rural Enterprise Development Program. Like other WRED clients, she has established a successful business. Her company dries and packages herbs, producing naturally grown, local products that are widely used for therapeutic and other purposes. She employs two assistants and has increased her family's income four times. What is unusual, however, is that she has done this in spite of a physical disability, proving that motivated women can succeed against the highest odds.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** I am sometimes asked what the Foundation for the Development of Polish Agriculture does. Often the question comes from someone who remembers the Foundation's original scope of work, which was to meet the needs of private agriculture in a centrally planned economy.

Like all Polish institutions, FDPA has been shaped by events since the disintegration of communist Europe in 1989. We have adapted, and redirected our assistance where it has promised the greatest effect. Today FDPA is an independent, not-for-profit foundation working at almost all levels of the rural and food economies.

Almost one-half of our program staff are helping to create non-agricultural jobs in rural areas. The Women in Rural Enterprise Development Program is establishing new businesses in rural communities across Poland. FDPA offers training, loans and advisory services to rural entrepreneurs, most of them women. Since 1991 we have helped hundreds of women develop the skills and self-confidence they need to launch a business. Since 1993 we have been actively promoting rural tourism, one of the most promising choices available to rural residents.

The Sustainable Agriculture Program is demonstrating and encouraging farming practices that are more sensitive to the environment and more profitable for the farmer. This work brings us into touch with a group of progressive farmers, on the one hand, and a group of distinguished teaching professionals, on the other.

The Policy Development initiative is a platform for the development of policies that will facilitate the integration of Poland into the common European market.

At other levels, our business planning unit is working with a growing number of Polish food companies, helping them solve their most urgent problems. Other services are offered to foreign and domestic clients in all important agricultural sectors. This advice is solidly based on our experience as an investor, which has given us insight into the practical problems of an operating company.

Finally, we are helping other NGOs working in rural economic development organize and perpetuate themselves.

The ambitious scope of our work today is a reflection of the many needs of rural Poland as it passes through an extraordinary period of reformation and renewal.

#### PROSPECTS FOR AGRICULTURAL MARKETS IN POLAND, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE WORLD

On December 7 and 8 the Foundation will sponsor a two-day international conference, featuring speakers representing The World Bank, the Agricultural Policy Analysis Unit of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture, the Central Planning Office and the Polish Institute of Agricultural Economics. About 150 participants are expected.

Claude Blanchi, a senior advisor of The World Bank and an author of the 1990 report, *A Strategy for Polish Agriculture*, will speak on the evolution of Polish agriculture since that keystone report was published. Professor Józef Zegar of the Central Planning Office will present an overview of Polish agriculture after six years of economic reform.

Władysław Piskorz and Jerzy Plewa of the Agricultural Policy Analysis Unit and John Slater of the British Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will address aspects of the Common Agricultural Policy and Polish integration into the European Union.

J.B. Penn of Sparks Companies (Washington) will discuss the international implications of the World Trade Organization, and Wiesław Zapędowski of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture will analyze Poland's experience as a member of the WTO.

David Nelson-Smith of Cargill Europe, who is based in London and represents an important multinational trading company, will present views from the marketplace.

The second day of the conference will explore the outlook for important agricultural commodities, beginning with an overview of trends in international trade by Wiesław Gawron of the Polish Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics. Other speakers from the Institute of Agricultural Economics will analyze the prospects for farm inputs, grains, potatoes, sugar, oilseeds, fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products and poultry.

#### GROWING INTEREST IN THE WOMEN IN RURAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Trustees of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, who have provided ongoing funding for the WRED program, spent a day with Elżbieta Dec and other FDPA staff in the Płock area in September.

The Mott Foundation's trustees were led by their chairman, William White, and Program Officer Jeanette Mansour. The trustees visited a feed store in Bodzanów and the grocery of another client in Płock. They visited the WRED enterprise development center and ate at the restaurant of a third program beneficiary before returning to Warsaw.

In October, another trustee of the Mott Foundation visited Poland. Maryanne Mott visited farms enrolled in FDPA's Sustainable Agriculture Program at Niżdzin with Marie Bagel and met WRED clients in Bodzanów and Płock.

Lisa Rey, the wife of United States Ambassador Nicholas Rey, had a full day of briefings on the WRED program with Elżbieta Dec in late October. She visited borrowers in the Płock area and met program staff at the Płock enterprise development center. Ms Rey was also briefed on the status of rural women in the Płock area by Ludmiła Będzikowska, the Director of the Agricultural Extension Center. Ms Będzikowska reported that

about 50% of the residents of the Płock *województwo* live on farms or in rural communities;

the reported unemployment rate is about 20% of the workforce;

about 40% of farm families report that at least one member of the household works off the farm; and

there is a high level of invisible unemployment, particularly among women living on farms.

Budget constraints have forced the Płock extension center to reduce its staff of advisors to women by 80%.