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#11-275 Progress is Always People-Powered: Rising to the Challenge of Building Poland's Nuclear Workforce

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Poland's commitment to establish a nuclear energy program highlights both challenges and opportunities in human capacity building for this emerging sector. The nascent stage of Poland's nuclear workforce development offers unique insights, underscoring the need not only for specialized training and education programs but also for a robust organizational culture that prioritizes safety, inclusivity, and continuous skill advancement to address the growing expectations for responsible practices amid security and social imperatives. A significant challenge in building Poland's nuclear workforce is the limited availability of nuclear-specific higher education programs combined with a scarcity of widely recognized internships and scholarships, which limits prospective talent acquisition. Nonetheless, Poland's comparatively high share of women in engineering within the OECD framework offers an opportunity for closing the gender gap and cultivate a more diverse nuclear workforce. Additionally, Polish nuclear experts demonstrate a proactive approach to fostering international collaboration, actively seeking partnerships with counterparts abroad through grassroots efforts. This approach has translated into establishing institutional-level collaborations, despite the absence of a centrally-driven national policy in this area. The National Centre for Nuclear Research (NCBJ) has emerged as a key player in this endeavor, actively addressing these needs through initiatives that combine practical education with advanced technical training. The MARIA research reactor at NCBJ, with its adaptable core, flexible setup, and open architecture, provides a unique environment for hands-on learning, enabling tailored experiments and measurements that address diverse training needs across technical disciplines. This presentation provides a critical perspective on Poland's approach to building a skilled and resilient nuclear workforce by addressing training needs, fostering a safety-oriented and inclusive culture, and emphasizing practical education and international collaboration in alignment with industry demands. It also presents novel frames of reference for addressing human capacity building in nuclear field from the behavioral science vantage point by applying Organizational Behavior Management (OBM) framework to promote consistent performance and cultivate a proactive safety culture that aligns with the industry's rigorous demand. In light of Poland's growing commitment to social responsibility, climate action, and safety standards, this contribution presents the country's path toward a sustainable and forward-thinking nuclear workforce.

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