

Baseline Study Chapter Lublin

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Baseline Study

1. Introduction

This chapter describes the state-of-the-art regarding city-university collaboration in the city of Lublin, Poland. It opens with a short description of the city and its universities (sections 2 and 3). Next, it describes the main co-operations currently in place, based on the “flower” model (section 4) of city-university co-operation. Finally, it shortly describes the main challenges in this respect as identified during the interviews with key stakeholders (section 5), and summarizes the intended directions for the local support group and the local action plan (section 6).

2. City

Lublin is located in the east of Poland, and has about 350,000 inhabitants. It is the main city in a large region, which is mainly agricultural.

Lublin is situated at the cultural border of the eastern and the western Christianity. The commercial routes established in the Middle Ages made the city a multicultural and multi-religious melting pot. It used to have substantial minorities (Jews, Germans, Armenians, French, Scottish, Dutch and British), with the Poles and the Jews as the two largest ones. By the 16th century, the Jewish population has become influential and wealthy. Lublin was an important centre of religious learning, with a large Talmudic academy and one of Poland's first Hebrew printing houses. After the Second World War, only a fraction of the Jewish population had survived, and many of the traces of the Jewish tradition were lost.

Currently, Lublin is an important city of learning, commerce and services, with a very large and lively student population: it has 78,000 students, roughly one in every four inhabitants is a student. The city is a centre of leisure and culture, with a large offer of cinemas, theatre, music, arts, sport and nightlife. Lublin has a well-preserved historic inner city.

European funding programmes are very important for the funding of projects in cities in Poland, not in the least place in transportation infrastructure and urban regeneration. In the last operational programme (for the region of East Poland), also much has been invested in projects related to the knowledge economy: research facilities, science parks, incubators, and other “hardware”. Many universities were able to substantially upgrade their facilities.

The economy of Lublin relies on small and medium sized businesses; there are few large players. The biggest firms are mainly in the food and construction industries (see http://www.lublin.eu/Lublin_business-1-586.html for an overview of the largest firms). Moreover, the high tech and advanced services sectors are relatively small. There is a gap between the needs of

the labour market and the qualifications of Lublin’s university graduates. Many of them move to other cities after graduation.

New developments in Lublin are the Science and Technology Park and the Special Economic Zone Euro-Park Mielec Subzone Lublin, offering attractive tax and location conditions for companies. To investors, the city advertises its location and access as main asset. The train to Warsaw takes about than 2.5 hours (city centre to city centre), a new international Lublin Airport is under construction. Moreover, Lublin is a young city (40% of the population is 35 years or younger). The unemployment rate is 8.3% in the city (11.6% in the region).

The city is currently finalizing its “2020 City Development Strategy”. It builds on the premise that “Lublin accepts, fosters and takes advantage of cultural diversity”. One of the main fields of action is the fostering of cultural openness in the city.

3. Universities

Lublin 5 main public universities, among which two “broad” universities and three specialised ones.

The university of *M. Curie-Skłodowska* (UMCS) is the largest one, with 24,823 students.

The *Catholic University of Lublin* (KUL) has 13,171 students. It is independent from the state. During communist times, it was an important centre of the opposition against the regime.

The *Lublin University of Technology* (PL) has 10,049 students, and focuses on technological studies and research.

The *University of Life Sciences* (UP), has 10,368 students and focuses on biotechnology and life sciences;

The *Medical University* (UM) has 6,037 students and specialises in teaching medical professionals including doctors, pharmacists, dentists, physiologists etc., and also conducts medical research. It is the most internationally oriented university, with about 1,000 foreign students from 55 different countries. The university has a good reputation.

Table 1. Number of students, foreign students, and % of foreign students, 2011/2012

University	Number of students	Number of foreign students	Foreign students as % of total
<i>M. Curie-Skłodowska</i>	24823	270	1.1%
<i>Catholic University of Lublin</i> (KUL)	13171	253	1.9%
<i>Lublin University of Technology</i> (PL)	10049	21	0.2%
<i>University of Life Sciences</i> (UP)	10368	17	0.2%
Medical University (UM)	6037	977	16.2%
College of Economy & Innovation	8007	31	0.4%
College of Enterprise and Administration	2075	47	2.3%
College of Social Sciences	683	0	0%
University of Social & Life Sciences	3105	97	3.1%
Total	78318	1713	2.2%

In Poland, science and university policy is mainly a matter of the national government. Local or regional governments have no say in this domain. Until recently, university funding depended mainly

on student numbers. Recently, some fundamental reforms are underway: state funding will increasingly depend on the amounts of external funds that a university is able to attract, and also, quality of education will play a larger role. More emphasis on practical/problem-based education is also part of this reform.

Some interviewees note a changing attitude among students in Poland: a growing number of respective students select a university based on quality, even if that university is far away¹. For Lublin, this implies that the regional “captive market” –the hinterland from which many of its students come- cannot be taken for granted anymore.

Next to the public universities, there are four private ones in Lublin: the College of Economy & Innovation (8,007 students), the University of Social & Life Sciences (3,105 students), the College of Social Sciences (683 students) and the College of Enterprise and Administration (2,075 students).

Table 2. Students and graduates in Lublin 2010/2011, per academic field

Academic Field	Students	% of total	Graduates	% of total
Social Sciences	8048	10%	5062	15%
Law/administration	10876	14%	6950	22%
Arts	767	1%	231	1%
Economics	8481	11%	4313	13%
Filology	5078	7%	2585	8%
Humanities	2808	4%	1190	4%
Logistics/transport	1589	2%	684	2%
Medicine	10235	13%	2714	8%
Pedagogy	5643	7%	1770	6%
Life Sciences	11964	15%	4022	13%
Technology	8327	11%	1621	5%
Mathematics/informatics	3385	4%	805	3%
Theology	759	1%	202	1%
Total	77960		32149	

Table 2 shows the numbers and % of students in each academic field, across all universities. The main fields are life sciences, medicine, law/administration, economics, social sciences, and technology.

Lublin does not have one or more main campuses: the university buildings are spread over the city, and so are student houses and facilities. As a result, students are very visible in the city, and largely contribute to the city centre’s liveliness.

Many of the students come from the surrounding (agricultural) hinterland of East Poland. In the coming decade, the number of “regional” students will decline because of demographic trends, with negative percussions for the universities (from 2005 to 2011, the number of students already declined by about 7,000). Thus, universities are looking for ways to attract more students from other regions in Poland or from abroad. As table 1 shows, the number of foreign students is low. Most of

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Note that this remark is based on anecdotic evidence provided by interviewees

them come from Ukraine and Belarus (35%), Asia (20%) and Europe. The medical university attracts a relatively high number of students from the USA.

Currently, there is a debate whether the universities should collaborate more, rather than competing with each other. By now, many academic disciplines are offered by more than one university, and competition is fierce at times. With a declining number of new students, the question of collaboration becomes more urgent.

4. City-university co-operation: an overview

City and universities co-operate in several ways in Lublin, but the complexity is substantial given the large amount of universities in the city. Personal relations between the leaders are good overall. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor both have an academic background, which facilitates the interaction.

In the Municipality, there are several bodies and people who are particularly responsible for the cooperation with universities. There is a Commissioner for cooperation with higher education institutions and Eastern Partnership (prof. Jan Pomorski); There is also a special commissioner for cooperation with East European higher education institutions (prof. Marek Opielak).

Moreover, since May 2011, there is a dedicated Unit for Cooperation with the Academic Environment at the Department of Strategy and Investor Services. It takes up the projects related to human capital creation, which is believed to be one of Lublin's main attractions for (foreign) investors.

With a view to demographic challenges in Poland (low birth rates, ageing), city and university want to prevent a further drop in the number of students and graduates in Lublin, and improve quality of education. The city would like to improve the alignment between the curricula offered and the needs and expectations of the employers.

Despite a variety of actions and interventions (elaborated below), at the city level there is no strategic platform or framework for aligning agenda's and collaboration. Several interviewees stress that this "ad hoc" mode makes it more difficult to engage in longer-term strategic partnerships.

The city-university nexus covers a number of fields. Below is a list of the most important current collaboration activities in the domains as identified in the flower model.

Local/regional economy

The Cities' Unit for Cooperation with the Academic Environment runs some special projects to support integration and cooperation of local authorities, business and science in promising industries (IT, biotechnology, energy sector). It also co-ordinates an annual Mayor's Contest for the best thesis work related to the economic development of Lublin.

The city collaborates with Maria Curie Skłodowska University (the largest in town) with the aim to develop the labour market. The project's objective is to improve quality of the educational offer. So far, 16 new specializations were developed, that should better meet the needs of employers in the region. The budget of the project is about € 5m.

The SYNERGIA project, through internships, aims to improve the practical skills of economy students (again at the Maria Curie Skłodowska University), hoping to make the graduates more attractive for employers.

The Catholic University organises courses and trainings for companies and institutions, and actively promotes contacts between companies and the university. Moreover, the universities' Career Service (established in March 2000) carries out tasks of the employment agency (job intermediation services, career counselling and personal counselling) and is listed in the National Register of Employment Agencies under no. 413. The unit cooperates with many employers from the region and Poland as a whole. Its services include selection of candidates, collecting and publishing job offers, temporary job offers (for students), internship offers and information on free trainings and other initiatives; company promotion at the university, and the organisation of 'job fairs'.

City and university consider new firm creation as a critical element of economic development and upgrading, and both sides see potential for student enterprises or spin-outs from research groups. So far, there is no central co-ordinated action in this field; rather, each university has its own "incubator" where startups are nurtured, some of them supported by European funding.

Internationalisation

The city wants to encourage young people from abroad to study in Lublin. For this purpose, a multilingual website for students was created (www.study.lublin.eu) by the Unit for Cooperation with the Academic Environment; moreover, joint city-university delegations make presentations abroad to promote studying in Lublin.

"Study in Lublin" is a common initiative to have a promotional campaign on the international level (actions: the website, promotion through social networking websites).

Student life

- Lublin has a very active student life in many respects. The city administration helps and supports when necessary (i.e. providing permissions, solving public transport problems etc.) but does not have an proactive interventionist policy in this respect. Lublin is also known for its safe city life.
- In the cultural sphere, the city administration appreciates the cultural activities of students (for example the Science Festival, as mentioned under the heading of "science & society") and supports them in various ways.
- Concerning student housing (a pressing issue in many student towns), there are no marked problems or shortages in Lublin; many inhabitants are ready to rent rooms to students and consider it as a welcome source of additional income.

Attractiveness/marketing

- City & universities are having discussions to construct a city wide broadband network, to improve the electronic infrastructure of the city.

- The “study in Lublin” initiative (mentioned above) is a joint effort to market the city as attractive study city for foreign students.

Science & society

- The Lublin Festival of Science is a co-production of all universities, several cultural institutions and the city. The target groups are at high school, junior high school students and even primary school pupils and kindergarten children. Its main aim is to present the results of scientific research in an attractive way.
- The Catholic University organises various courses for: children from the age of 6, junior high school and high school students, and adults, as well as open lectures and occasions where scientists present their latest achievements. It promotes higher education studies at primary schools, junior high schools and high schools from the city and region. A ‘package’ is available for schools, including classes for all school-age groups, special events, e.g. "Days with Science", and a lab centre aiming to promote natural sciences.
- The Marie Curie University has a strong tradition of organising cultural events for students and other youth. In the Academic Cultural Centre “Chatka Żaka” many events are held: the National Folk Music Festival “Mikołajki Folkowe”, Student Film Festival, Poetic Fight Club, National Student Theatre Festival “Kontestacje”, the UMCS Festival of Young People, the weekly “Scene Ad Hoc” concerts, lectures, talks, exhibitions, workshops, theatrical and cabaret shows, and many activities.
- The Technical University, some research groups conduct research with direct relevance for urban actors. One example is a group that measures and analyses air quality in schools (together with students), and provides advice.
- The Medical University organizes special summer camps for students to provide local communities with medical advice. Another public event is the so called White Coat Sunday.

5. Key issues and challenges

The first Local Support Group meeting, (attended by about 30 representatives from the main universities and several city officials) unveiled a great need for cooperation and partnership of the city and universities, and to limit non-productive competition between them.

A number of shared areas of interest were identified:

Local/regional economy & labour market

- Retaining more graduates in the region, by developing the local labour market and improve the alignment between educations and need of companies.
- Cooperation with business partners: Finding effective modes, methods, models and procedures of establishing cooperation with local companies in order to provide them with qualified workforce, internship and training programmes and specialised courses tailor-made to companies

- Effectively establish linkages between business/scientific institutions and public authorities; reaching industry representatives and make them interested in scientific projects
- University and technology transfer: Learn from good practices in the transfer of technology and knowledge between universities and companies as well as between universities and public authorities

Attractiveness /marketing & internationalisation

- Improve the joint promotion of the city and universities for attracting young people and encouraging them to study in the city. Finding effective ways of attracting students from more distant regions of the country and from abroad.
- Improve the promotion of Lublin's universities in the Eastern countries (in particular from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, as they are able to study in Polish).
- Study the impact of foreign students on the city of Lublin
- Collaboration regarding international scientific initiatives and events (financing, locating, promotion).
- Set up a joint alumni policy

Student life

- Creating facilities for the student community in public space, city transport, etc.
- Improve city infrastructure for disabled students.

Science & society

- Connect student training to urban challenges; Improve the practical skills of students by having them work on concrete projects in the city, as part of the curricula.

6. Directions for the local support group and the local action plan

The focus of the local support group has to be chosen yet, in line with one or more of the challenges formulated in section 5. However, after the visits and interviews for the baseline study, a focal challenge seems emerging, which can be summarized under the heading "making students work for the city".

The idea is to let Lublin students or researchers (from any university) gain practical experience by working on issues relevant for the city, as part of the curriculum (internships, thesis work, project work in teams), or as a way of doing voluntary work. This could benefit the urban society and the same time enhance the quality of education (teaching students more practical skills).

There is a lot of "hidden" demand for those type of student activities, and an organisation is needed to articulate the needs. The Local Support groups considers to work towards building a platform or organisation that functions as an intermediary between relevant, practical questions and challenges

of actors in the Lublin society (the city administration, schools, companies, or any other organisation), and universities on the other hand.

During the interviews held for this baseline study, several stakeholders expressed strong sympathy and support for this idea. The example of Demola (a similar practice that operates in Tampere, Finland, described in this baseline study) could function as a benchmark for the work to be done in Lublin.

Developing a platform like this could be a new step in the complex collaboration process between city and its many universities.

Interview partners:

Ms. Anna Krzyżanowska-Orlik, Managing Authority, Marshal's Office of the Lubelskie Voivodship (Lubelskie Region)

Mr. Dariusz Matosiuk, Vice-Rector for Scientific Affairs, Medical University of Lublin

Ms. Hanna Trębacz, Vice-Rector for International Relations and Postgraduate Education, Medical University of Lublin

Mr. Stanisław Michałowski, Rector, University of Maria Curie - Skłodowska

Mr. Ryszard Mojak, Vice-Rector for General Affairs, University of Maria Curie - Skłodowska

Ms. Marzenna Dudzińska, Vice-Rector for Scientific Affairs, Lublin University of Technology

Ms. Katarzyna Mieczkowska-Czerniak, Deputy Mayor of Lublin

Ms. Joanna Żytkowska, Vice – director of Department of Strategy and Investor Services

Ms. Joanna Szeląg, Chancellery of the Mayor, Lublin Municipal Office

Ms. Agnieszka Małyska, Chancellery of the Mayor, Lublin Municipal Office

Ms Ewa Kipta, Planning Department, Lublin Municipal Office

Mr. Marcin Skrzypek, Culture of Space Council, co-author of the Lublin Strategy 2020