



City of Lublin

Intercultural Profile

Background

Lublin is the biggest city in eastern Poland with a population of 362,000, quiet close to the border of Ukraine and Belarus. Lublin has a student population of about 100,000 (around 35% of the total population) attending its 5 public Universities: [Medical University of Lublin](#), [University of Life Sciences in Lublin](#), [John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin](#), [Politechnika Lubelska–Lublin University of Technology](#) and [Uniwersytet Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej](#). Lublin hosts also a number of private higher education establishments and with the philharmonic orchestra as well as a number of international festivals, museums and theatres. The Polish Government has plans to establish a new University in Lublin in cooperation with the Ukraine Government, which promises to be one of the most innovative international ventures of recent years. The Polish-Ukrainian Academy will support multicultural exchange, and will highlight Polish and Ukrainian heritage and history¹.

Lublin throughout its history has oscillated alarmingly between being at the heart of the nation and at the edge, which must have created an ambiguity about its identity and position in Europe. From being once at the centre of a large and self-confident commonwealth of eastern European cultures in the Middle Ages, to completely losing its freedom at the hands of neighbouring empires and being trampled over by various armies. After the trauma of the war years and the communist period, Lublin needs to simultaneously look back and come to terms with its past, but also to move rapidly into the future.

This is a tremendous challenge, particularly given the epidemic of short-termism which characterises Poland at present, in which politicians are given little time to prove themselves in the eyes of a cynical media and public. Also looming are the economic forecasts for Poland which suggest that the last five years of boom and expansion may about to be replaced by a much more difficult and uncertain economic position.

Current population of Lublin:

- Majority of ethnic Poles (more than 95%)
- Small communities of ethnic and faith minorities (mainly Polish, citizens with no Polish descent), Ukrainians, Roma and Jews
- Growing influx of new migrants/refugees: Ukrainians, Belarusians, Armenians, Chechens, Georgians

¹ Please see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lublin>.

and Africans

- Growing foreign students population

The City of Lublin and wider region are traditionally the least developed part of Poland, providing many emigrants in the past. There are few strong industrial traditions and agriculture and trade have been the main sources of income, although trade has always been susceptible to shifting borders and jurisdictions. As such Lublin throughout its history has oscillated alarmingly between being at the heart of the nation and at the edge, which must create an ambiguity about its identity and position in Europe. This has been emphasised once again by Poland's entry into the Schengen agreement, which has proved a mixed blessing for Lublin.

Lublin feels like a city ill-prepared to cope with a challenging economic climate. Road and rail connections are not up to standard and there is no airport. Internal communications and infrastructure are also poor. For a city with a population of over 350,000, the city centre lacks urban density and substance. There is little evidence of investment in modern business infrastructure of the kind that would attract high value companies and employers. Although the centre shows evidence of investment in retail and entertainment functions, this consumer led regeneration may prove shallow, particularly if it is being fuelled by remittances from Poles working abroad.

Governance of diversity

The municipality has set up an Interdisciplinary Group for Integration of Foreigners in 2009 run by Municipal Family Assistance Centre and Caritas centre for support of immigrants. It consists of more than 20 different stakeholders and meets on regular basis. The group's main objectives are:

- to develop cooperation between all city services, local and national government institutions, NGO's and different stakeholders involved in intercultural/integration issues.
- to build up integrated system of support of foreigners in local community

Another support group has been established within the project **Regional Network of Immigrants' Support**. The aim of this network is institutional support for institutions and individuals taking care of foreigners' issues in the Lublin Region. It consists of representatives of different institutions dealing with immigrants.

All the stakeholders have been presented with Intercultural Cities project and it's methodology to involve and consider in their work. However, there is a lack of a dedicated office for diversity and integration that co-ordinates all initiatives and institutions of the city in this field.

Intercultural outlook and discourse

Notwithstanding the challenges, the city council gives the impression of being progressive and ambitious

The city's mission statement begins with the declaration *"to retain an open orientation to the outside world, to tourists, to students, new residents, investors and people wishing to do business as partners with the city"*. Since 2008 intercultural dialogue is one of the official criteria in open calls for granting socio-cultural projects with particular reference to the project focused on:

- Promotion of idea of intercultural dialogue among citizens
- Preventing prejudice
- Integration of immigrants and foreign students
- National, ethnic and cultural minorities
- Educational projects referring to multicultural heritage of Lublin²

In the autumn of 2010 Lublin has been shortlisted to the final stage of **European Capital of Culture 2016**. The main theme of the Lublin's bid was City in Dialogue which refers to ongoing process of urban, social, institutional change. In the framework of the strategy prepared for the bid, the city developed projects and programs highlighting the role of intercultural interaction in the modern society and also exploring the role of Lublin as a strategic place for cultural exchange within the scope of eastern partnership Programme³.

To live up to its ambitions, the city feels it needs to come to terms with its history, much of which has been suppressed or glossed over by communism. This created the dominant cultural assumption that whilst Lublin (and by extension Poland) has a history of being very culturally diverse, with the pogroms, genocide and ethnic cleansing episodes of the 20th century, it has now been rendered mono-cultural. One suspects there may be an implicit assumption in the average Lubliner that whilst diversity may sound like a good idea in theory, practical experience suggests it must inevitably end in failure and tragedy.

Lublin is now in the process of inventing a new narrative of itself. A place which was historically at ease with diversity and movement and can be again. A place of hospitality and opportunity. The most obvious change with the past is an explicit attempt to face up to the holocaust, which was effectively ignored for 50 years. However, attitudes to foreigners are still predominantly in the 'be kind to people less fortunate than oneself' mode. No-one is really sure whether openness to

² Please see the presentation Lublin. From multicultural heritage to intercultural future available at: <http://prezi.com/1jg6pi-xdsxm/lublin-from-multicultural-heritage-to-intercultural-future/> and Key Data About Member Cities Of The Network available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/cities/Key_data_about_member_cities_of_the_%20network_en.pdf

³ Please see the Final Application available at: http://kultura.lublin.eu/pi/17811_2.pdf

migrants brings benefits to parts other than the soul. The council feels it does understand the arguments of diversity but now desperately needs practical instruments.

The most popular migrants are Ukrainians. There are strong historical connections and they are seen to bring useful trade and labour. However, the extension of the Schengen agreement to Poland has effectively sealed Lublin off from Ukraine causing resentment. It has cut off a major source of students – Lublin being the HQ of the College of Polish-Ukrainian Universities. However, this may be the spur the city needs to realise it has to look beyond its immediate neighbours in the future.

Lublin is now receiving a greater mix of new migrants: Chechens, Tatars, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans and African (although there seemed no sign of this on the streets). Lublin sets out to make them welcome and seems to go out of its way to do more than the Polish norm to encourage migrants to stay. However, there is the feeling that most migrants consider themselves in transit to final destinations in the west. This can make the city feel like it is being made a gate-keeper of Europe without any tangible benefit and over a few years this might breed cynicism.

Lublin is also striving to develop a stronger connection to its foreign students. **“Lublin is friendly”**, was a pilot project carried out in 2009 by the Culture Department of Municipality of Lublin City and Homo Faber Association in order to assess the needs of foreign students and encourage their inclusion in the community. whose main aim was to ask foreign students from Lublin universities about:

- to what degree they are satisfied with their stay in Lublin,
- to what degree they are satisfied with studies at Lublin universities,
- their participation in cultural events organized in Lublin.

Lublin’s foreign student population reached 878 in spring 2008/2009 mainly from countries such as Ukraine (53), Taiwan (43), Belarus (36) and the United States (31) and others⁴.

Piotr Koros, city administration-mayor's department, cooperated with Homo Faber on the monitoring of how Lublin is treating foreigners. *“The first impression was that migrants were not very visible and nobody really took care of them. We started at looking at how the various administrations interact with migrants”* he stated. According to Mr. Koros, assistance to foreigners needs to be provided while a clear willingness for integration needs to be observed from their side as well. It is a two way process.

Piotr Skrzypczak works since 2004 for Homo Faber. His work touches upon the organisation of intercultural events and film festivals in order to inform people about their history as well as their present. Multiculturalism and diversity in the society of Lublin seems to be their present.

Anna Dąbrowska is coordinator of the project *“Witamy w Lublinie”* (Welcome to Lublin). The research entitled *“Lublin is friendly”* was the basis for a report. Working with the report Homo Faber Association prepared a project called *“Welcome to Lublin”* which started in July 2009.

⁴ Please find the final report on: http://kultura.lublin.eu/pi/10636_2.pdf

The project “Welcome to Lublin” addresses foreigners who live or study in Lublin. During its course HF gives foreigners and people who most often are in contact with them an opportunity to meet and to understand their mutual needs. *“It was important for us to learn more about migrant’s life in Lublin, more specifically the students who come from all over the world representing various cultures and backgrounds: Americans, Arabs, Swedish, Ukrainians”*, Anna says.

Monika Artymiak, Head of Lublin City Residents Affairs Bureau, engaged mainly in administrative matters and migrant registration. She shares the conclusions of the monitoring research according to which the administration should be friendlier to foreigners. The collaborators of the office are not trained in intercultural communication. There is only such training for academics. *“Now we have officially registered 1700 foreigners in Lublin from many eastern countries, for example Vietnam, Taiwan (120 people). It is difficult to find migrants who are not students. They tend to hang out with people from their own community but are not formally organised”* Monika says.

Initiatives towards the inclusion of foreign students

Homo Faber prepared an academic calendar to encourage students to participate more in the city’s social life rather than stay confined to the student accommodation. The calendar is also a guide of the city, of cultural events and general practical information. Besides that, all information about things to do in Lublin, Polish culture and customs is provided in the website www.hello.lublin.pl The HF’s collaborators started organising walks through Lublin showing people different places and the people in charge of the main Institutions of the city. Homo Faber is in contact with the tutors who take care of foreigners, meeting them in some official occasions in the universities.. Moreover, HF is the first association that provides trainings in the institutions of border guard in Poland. These workshops are based on assumption, notions on stereotypes, prejudices of Lublin department of border guard. Homo Faber has provided training to the police, fire brigade and border guards. That was the first time the police were trained on human rights issues.

Public services and mediation

The Centre for Foreigners works since 2000 with the support of foreigners: they talk and assist directly in their language. According to the Centre, Integration is a process implemented mainly at the local level, in this way it is important to promote a dialogue between residents and foreigners and develop educational facilities among residents themselves too.

The Municipal Family Assistance Center (MOPR) carried out a number of social integration and vocational programs and projects

MOPR assists refugees, people with provisional protection status -according to the Geneva Convention. The main goal is to assist family, especially families with life obstacles who are not able to overcome these obstacles themselves. Actually MOPR has more than 400 workers, divided in 21 sections located all around the city.

MOPR also encourages the cultural integration of foreigners, families tend to close up when they are confronted with certain difficulties and tend to forget the needs of their children, hence the importance of social intervention⁵.

Objectives of the projects:

Expansion of the existing range of integration for beneficiaries of international protection, including in particular:

- Improve access to housing through the creation of protected housing or local law change
- Support the social integration of foreigners by promoting public awareness of foreigners in the receiving environment, including the dialogue between the host community and foreigners
- Support in solving the difficulties of life, emotional, family, family with the help of assistance
- Activities aimed at promoting sustainable social participation
- To promote vocational training and recognition of foreign nationals
- Integration and social and professional reintegration of social welfare clients

Overall results and experiences acquired in the implementation of projects:

- Minimize homelessness among foreigners,
- Equal opportunities,
- Decision-making by foreigners on the past,
- Gaining gradual independence from social assistance institutions
- Open learning attitudes and self-resourcefulness,
- Development and education of children and adults,
- Excessive expectations of foreigners to the support they receive,
- Focus on meeting the needs and minimizing one other needs such as securing employment,
- Reluctance to leave the protected housing,
- Transfer of responsibility for organizing issues, family / personal / residential social workers,
- Acquiring new skills and work experience.

Social work with immigrants

The project is financed by the European Fund for Integration of Third country nationals and is implemented under the supervision of the Implementing Authority for European Programmes. The project aims at upgrading the skills of social workers, employed in the City Family Assistance Center and its branches in Lublin, in the field working with clients coming from third countries. Long-term goal is to raise the standard of service to citizens of third countries in Poland. The substantive scope of the project:

- Improve the competence and knowledge of social workers in the field of intercultural communication
- Improve the knowledge of legal and administrative procedures that may apply to aliens
- Improving the knowledge of the education system and the access of foreigners to Polish

⁵ See more on: www.mopr.lublin.pl

- schools
- Improve the state of knowledge on health and the access of foreigners to the Polish healthcare
 - Sensitize social workers to the special needs of third country nationals and the consequences and risks of lack of intercultural competence.

Safe haven - the creation of protected housing for foreigners' project co-financed by the European Refugee Fund

The project aims at the integration of beneficiaries of international protection, including recognized refugees and foreigners benefiting from subsidiary protection by:

- advice and assistance in areas such as housing, means of subsistence, integration into the labor market, welfare,
- actions to promote durable and sustainable participation in social and cultural life
- measures focusing on education, vocational training, recognition of qualifications and diplomas.

The overall Implementation of the project will improve the situation of foreigners expanding range of integration by providing a protected housing and a different method of work environment - the assistant of the family. The project aligns families, the chances of foreigners in accessing the labor market. Foreigners through participation in training and vocational courses will have a greater opportunity to participate in social and professional life and will benefit from goods and services to ensure children's development.

As a result, foreigners will be able to overcome the problems of life and actively participate in life, which gradually lead to their integration, and thus undoubtedly facilitate the functioning of the territory of Poland.

"ROMA - social and vocational activation of Roma in Lublin"

The project is financed by the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Operational Programme.

The overall objective of the project was to increase the chances of members of the Roma community in Lublin in the competitive labor market through activation of professional education and access to various forms of active social inclusion.

The specific objectives of the project were:

- The development of professional skills of members of the Roma community through training and vocational courses, computer and language skills;
- The promotion and dissemination of knowledge of Roma culture and customs by organizing training courses for employees of the city of Lublin government, NGOs and teachers.

Within the project, a number of activities were developed: vocational training for Roma, workshops on job market integration and specific trainings for office workers and NGOs.

"Intercultural dialogue - the exchange of experience"

The A-venir Foundation co-funded by the European Fund for integration of third country nationals and the state budget, is in charge for the implementation of this project under the supervision of the

Implementing Authority for European Programmes in partnership with the Urban Family Welfare Centre in Lublin and the Caritas Wuppertal. The project aims at increasing the standard of service for foreigners in Poland by raising the qualifications of social workers in Lublin. Social workers have already been trained skills in the context of the project "Social work with immigrants - a pilot training project for staff MOPR Lublin", realized by the Foundation in 2009. Were then conducted the training, during which the beneficiaries of the project have the opportunity to broaden their knowledge about intercultural communication issues, legislation and administrative provisions necessary to work with foreigners⁶.

"The common house – Poland"

It is a project mainly financed by the European Refugee Fund and co-financed by the Caritas Poland. The project aims at developing and improving the integration offering guidance to both applicants for refugee status and beneficiaries of international protection through the following objectives:

- Supporting the processes of foreigners; social inclusion by creating a system of consistent and replicated activities
- Encouraging children's education and counseling for adults
- Provision of psychological, social and legal for asylum seekers, recognized refugees and foreign nationals subject to a supplementary protection

For these purposes, a number of activities take place; one of these is the establishment of the Interdisciplinary Group for Integration of Foreigners Affairs. The main tasks include the construction of an integrated system of support for foreigners in the local community by developing a model of inter-institutional cooperation leading to increased efficiency in team problem solving. Integration and cooperation of institutions and NGOs working together through a clear, efficient flow of information will enable the provision of professional assistance.

Integration Laboratories. Integration of third country nationals in selected EU countries in the institutional context is also a project of Caritas Poland financed by the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country nationals and the state budget.

Its purpose is to describe best practices of integration used in the EU Member States to third country nationals and the ability to transplant them to the Polish institutional context. The project will improve the quality of service of foreigners.

The project aims to diagnose and provide Polish institutions involved with the work of third-country nationals, NGOs and Polish migration policy makers usable set of good practices. For this purpose, the diagnosis carries out best practices in the eight selected EU countries (Belgium, Finland, Spain, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom and Italy), a detailed analysis of their functioning in institutional contexts selected four countries and will be carried out to examine the need and opportunities their absorption by the institutions in Poland.

⁶ Please find information on: <http://laboratoria.caritas.pl/?id=1&lang=1>

The project aims at strengthening the institutions involved in the processes of integration of third country nationals residing legally in Poland, by diagnosing the current situation and to provide knowledge of the integration of foreigners into the host society as discussed in detail best practices and processes to strengthen information exchange and institutional cooperation within Member States EU and analysis activities of the institutions involved in the processes of integration of foreigners. In the Polish case, the project is to enable to draw experience from countries / institutions for which immigration is not a new problem (transfer mechanisms / solutions).

Education

The project "**Study in Lublin**" is carried out by the city Council whose main goal is to provide assistance and knowledge to the students of Lublin. Looking at this intellectual capital it is no more true that there exist 100.000 students; according to recent data the number is decreasing drastically because of demographic change. Lublin is the fifth city in Poland as a number of foreigner students. A number of activities are planned targeting foreign students, i.e. the creation of an information point and of a website running in 4 languages providing assistance.

Culture and Creativity

In Lublin there's a big festival (**Wielokulturowy Lublin**) organised and implemented by organisations representing minorities; they present their cultural heritage and they mix all the events in one festival. Piotr says: "in the framework of the European capital of culture we have some big projects on intercultural dialogue and the main theme was city in dialogue":

Multicultural Lublin (socio-cultural project involving directly representatives of ethnic and religious minorities, refugees, immigrants. Project consists of artistic presentations, workshops and meetings presenting contemporary cultural diversity of Lublin. The event organized every year in cooperation with the City of Lublin and the first edition took place in 2008.

Media and public perceptions

Campaign "Because I was a stranger ...".

The importance of conducting a campaign in order to increase social awareness for third country nationals is particularly stressed and justified in the eastern Polish region, due to its location on the eastern border of the EU and a significant presence of these people in the area. It is also important that the area has a large cross-border movement of nationals from third countries, for which the region is not only a "stop" in the way of transit, but it becomes a place of settlement, a legal resident or long-term resident status. The initiative includes activities in the eastern regions of Poland-Lubelskie, Podlaskie and Podkarpackie provinces.

The campaign slogan "Because I was a stranger..." is a fragment containing the words of the Gospel of Jesus, which is to encourage the public to think and, in consequence, to answer whether and how to welcome foreigners. Main characters of campaign appear in several of its scenes – firstly on

billboards, then in a series of short video clips and commercials broadcast on television in Lublin, as well as through the broadcasts in Radio Lublin.

According to the organisers, the most important impact was that migrants became visible in the media. This was possible because the project was very coherent (all media used : radio; TV, internet) and that migrants were not only involved but participated actively in the programs. The greatest achievement was that people realised that their very neighbours were well integrated in Polish society but also had his own cultural life. The campaign is funded by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, the state budget and the resources at the Volunteer Centre in Lublin.

Taking into consideration the size and dimension of a multi-threaded campaign (TV, radio, billboard, information and education) it managed to cover an estimated group of about 2,640,000 people. Therefore, it seems relevant to take up actions conducting frequent contacts - the interaction of migrants with nationals of the Member States, building a dialogue between cultures, educating citizens on issues of migrants and their culture. There is an additional need to deal with "intercultural media or journalism" in the academic institutions. Young people should be trained to know the differences between the various migrants and avoid confusions⁷.

An added value is represented by the creation of the **Omnes Gentes** group that was initiated during the campaign process and still works for the Volunteers Centre. Half of the group's members are people from Ukraine, Cuba, England, USA and France.

Omnes Gentes gathers locals and foreigners living in Lublin who want to organize activities such as: Animation of children, fun shows about other cultures and training support of foreigners in various techniques of working with children on a voluntary basis.

Integration Town

"Integration Town" is an event in the social campaign "Because I was a stranger ...", which aims at bringing in communication locals with foreigners living in Lublin, understanding the culture of the people coming from other countries and building intercultural dialogue. A great emphasis is also given to the various local communities in promoting intercultural dialogue and to create platforms for dialogue between religions and within religions between communities.

The meeting involved over 200 representatives of various circles from Lublin region - NGOs, youth groups, religious movements, informal groups of entertainers, teachers, informal educators, members of student organizations, volunteer groups, volunteers that lead classes of multicultural education. The program consisted of trainings for volunteers for leading multicultural education classes, attended by volunteers-trainers; integration meetings in groups, in which the leading coaches and volunteers were foreigners (joint preparation and tasting of "world cuisine", film screenings, workshops, dance and vocal improvisations integrating theater and pantomime, fashion shows).

⁷ See more: <http://www.integracja.lublin.pl/>

Conclusions

Strengths

Lublin, the only Polish city chosen to join the Intercultural Cities Programme, intends to present a new face of diversity, a rich world of eastern borderlands and its culturally diverse heritage. The Lublin model of intercultural dialogue is based upon a) good practices which must be shared with the European partners, b) festivals and other large-scale events and c) everyday activities carried out within communities across national, religious and cultural borders.

The Lublin's motto for the European Capital of Culture candidature was "A city in dialogue" underlining the great efforts implemented by the Administration in order to involve all the social groups, including refugees and foreigners, which had previously stayed at the sidelines : the City is at the centre of an ongoing process of urban, social and institutional change. The city is vitally interested in cultural exchanges with the West and in the increased involvement of Poland's eastern regions in the processes of European integration. Lublin plans to build a strong European Neighbourhood Policy in the east throughout culture, extending the present close cooperation with Ukraine and Belarus to Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova.

Since 2008 intercultural dialogue is one of the official criteria in open calls for granting socio-cultural projects with particular reference to the activities aiming at increasing intercultural awareness among citizens, at preventing prejudice and social exclusion, at promoting human rights, as well as mutual respect and dialogue between minorities and residents of Lublin.

Lastly, a large number of volunteers take part to the various ongoing projects initiated in the framework of the Intercultural Cities Programme: the participation to this Programme gave to the Administration the opportunity to improve the collaboration between the City itself and all the stakeholders (NGOs, representatives of minorities) to carry out the activities.

Challenges

Lublin needs to appoint a political and an administrative focal point/co-ordinator for intercultural integration to co-ordinate policies and initiatives and focus on the remaining challenges.

A more direct negotiation between NGO's and people directly involved in the activities of the projects: it's the first and fundamental step even though it's difficult. Assessment of the target groups real needs (soft needs/hard needs) of the activities with particular reference to migrants and refugees, must become part of the project.

Much more official coordination of the intercultural and integration activities is required. In particular, more solid link between the City of Lublin and projects concerning students (especially foreigners) is crucial in order to achieve an intercultural strategy able to attract foreign students. In this context all the Universities must be involved in the intercultural strategy.

A better involvement and training of the main actors: police, administrators, officers in order to build a support group to this coordination and a more efficient resources management for the

funding of these projects are essential, as many of projects are not sustainable: they will disappear without EU funding.

The lack of precise statistics and data due to the lack of a concrete registration system is a problem in developing evidence-based policies. Not everyone is obliged to register and some people are registered in the city office, some in the regional office and some in the government office. The lack of integration policy on the national level is also problematic.

Most of the work of the city is based on short-term EU-funded projects with limited continuity and sustainability. These projects focus often on the development of service infrastructure and technical skills while the acquisition of intercultural mediation competence is limited.

Media policies are a challenge since there is no umbrella institution/project to monitor local media and ensure a sustainable partnership

Welcoming and governance practices need to be strengthened in order to develop more comprehensive and strategic approach.

The level of intercultural awareness and education and the prevention of discrimination among social service providers and the general population needs to be improved.

The various target groups require a number of different approaches to be developed. For example, different approaches should be developed in order to address refugees, foreign students, etc.

Lublin is perceived as a transit / temporary place of stay. Most of migrants do not consider Lublin as a place to stay. This fact in line with the lack of adequate social services, discourages migrants from settling down

November 2011