

## LOCAL ENGAGED RESEARCH ROADMAP – LODZ

### CHALLENGE 1. Depopulation of Lodz

#### 1. Challenge description:

Lodz is among the fastest ageing large cities in Poland. Depopulation results first from the ageing of the population and next from the outflow of the population to other cities and suburbs. These processes largely determine the city's economic development, the local government's budget capabilities, priorities in social policy, and actions related to mitigating the effects of climate change, such as housing, transportation, health policies and related planning and strategic decisions.

However, the demographic challenges should be considered in two contexts. The first one concerns the interpretation of census data. According to Poland's Central Statistical Office, Lodz, like most Polish cities, is experiencing a population decline. This decrease is 80% the result of a high number of deaths with fewer births and 20% the result of the population's outflow. It is also the result of civilization determinants such as decreased female fertility and the systematic lengthening of human life. In addition, the overall migration balance in Lodz is mainly due to suburbanization processes. The challenge of depopulation is primarily related to the relevant challenges from the perspective of the risk of declining numbers of applicants to the University of Lodz.

On the other hand, the positive element is that in the group of 20-29-year-olds, the migration balance is still positive at more than 500 people per year, and, moreover, there is a steady increase in international students and other foreigners (primarily Ukrainians) and their families. The second important context of demographic challenges is that tens of thousands of refugees and other foreigners have come to Lodz by leaps and bounds in recent years. The challenge in this area is to develop a methodology for estimating the authentic population, including the number of foreigners, who must be covered by public statistics.

**2. Links to strategic documents:**

- a. City of Lodz Development Strategy 2030+
- b. Sectoral policy in the health field of the city of Lodz 2030+
- c. Social Policy 2020+ for the City of Lodz – Strategy for Solving Social Problems
- d. Demographic Strategy of Poland 2040

**3. Key actors involved:**

- a. Department of Strategy and Development of the City of Lodz – the City Strategy Office,
- b. Department of Health and Social Affairs of the City of Lodz – Seniors and Health Policy Branch.

## **CHALLENGE 2. Strengthening the city residents' involvement in adaptation to the climate change effects**

### **1. Challenge description:**

Solutions for developing blue-green infrastructure, water retention, resource-efficient urban management, and introducing environmentally friendly energy solutions are considered suitable by most residents. Problems arise when a particular solution for implementation in a specific location appears. They then take the form of contestation or criticism (NIMBY syndrome). The challenge in this context is to introduce methods of communication that will be able to convince people to apply or accept pro-environmental solutions (even if these involve effort or cost on the part of residents), as well as to use more effective forms and channels of information about actions taken in the city or consultations on them. On the other hand, a long-term challenge, still distant but crucial for the city's future development, is a far-reaching energy transition based on decarbonization.

### **2. Links to strategic documents:**

- a. [Environmental protection program for the city of Lodz for 2018-2021 with an outlook until 2025](#)
- b. Low emission management plan for the city of Lodz
- c. [Ecopact for Lodz](#)

### **3. Key actors involved:**

- a. Department of Ecology and Climate of the City of Lodz Office,
- b. Office of Urban Civic Activity of the City of Lodz.

## CHALLENGE 3. Integration of socially excluded groups

### 1. Challenge description:

In the case of Lodz, the problem of integrating socially excluded groups concerns primarily seniors and senior citizens. Among other things, there is a strong need to reduce the effects of the so-called singularization of older people (broader: [challenge four](#)). The problem with strengthening the social activity of the economically inactive is primarily due to the lower level of education of Lodz's residents compared to the average for large Polish cities and weaker purchasing power than other large cities. The other large group affected by the risk of marginalization in Lodz are migrants, especially (after the outbreak of the war caused by Russia in Ukraine) Ukrainian migrants. Thus, the city's cultural diversity is relatively small today but will rapidly progress, including people outside the culturally close neighbouring countries. Here, a particular challenge is the integration of a subgroup of migrant children, who require special care in terms of inclusion in education and social ecosystems, as well as migrant participation in social life. A separate group whose needs we recognize are victims of domestic violence. This group requires exceptional sensitivity in identifying and addressing its needs appropriately. The desired integration of socially excluded groups should occur at various levels, starting with identifying ways to reach these groups and their needs (cf. [challenge ten](#)). Even if these groups integrate internally, they usually do not direct their activities externally (so they become non-inclusive). Therefore, institutional support is also crucial in terms of integration.

### 2. Links to strategic documents:

- a. Sectoral policy in the health field of the city of Lodz 2030+
- b. Social Policy 2020+ for the City of Lodz – Strategy for Solving Social Problems
- c. Law of July 19, 2019 on ensuring accessibility for persons with special needs

### 3. Key actors involved:

- a. Office of Urban Activity – Department for Social Integration of Foreigners,
- b. Lodz Multicultural Center,
- c. Wspólnie/Спільно Lodz,
- d. Center for Foreigners Assistance in Lodz,

- e. Ombudswoman for Seniors at the City of Lodz – Ms. Celina Maciejewska
- f. Department of Health and Social Affairs of the City of Lodz – Senior and Health Policy Branch.

## **CHALLENGE 4. Increasing equitable access to good quality, sustainable and affordable social and health services**

### **1. Challenge description:**

The effective deinstitutionalization of social services towards developing social services provided locally, close to citizens' residences, is becoming a significant challenge. Dependents aged 60+, at risk of isolation and social marginalization, are a growing group in the Lodz Voivodeship (about 670,000 people) and the Lodz Metropolitan Area (about 320,000 people). It depends on three main factors:

- The population of older people is steadily increasing, particularly in Lodz. In the region as a whole, there is 24.15% of the population aged 65+, and in the coming years, there are projected to be several per cent increases in the post-working age population,
- With age come limitations related to chronic diseases and disabilities – among those 60+, almost half have them. Among those 80+, dependents account for more than two-thirds of the population,
- There is an increasing phenomenon of “singularization” among older adults, i.e., they increasingly remain in single-person households, which promotes their social isolation and marginalization. Almost half of the target group remains in single-generation, one- or two-person households, in which care functions from the immediate environment are significantly limited.

Lodz's challenge is building an effective and sustainable system of providing services in the local environment for those needing support in daily functioning. Equally important will be solutions combining social and housing support, including sheltered and assisted housing, adaptive housing and social rental agencies. The spread of systems based on new information and communication technologies (e.g., telecare, paging systems, telemedicine) and door-to-door transportation for people with limited mobility will also be essential in improving access to services. Regarding health services, long-term nursing care, long-term home care teams, home hospice care, senior care, care in daycare homes, and community psychiatric care for adults should be developed.

2. Links to strategic documents:

- a. Sectoral policy in the health field of the city of Lodz 2030+
- b. Social Services Development Strategy, public policy to 2030, with an outlook to 2035
- c. Healthy Future. Strategic framework for the development of the health care system for 2021-2027, with an outlook to 2030

3. Key actors involved:

- a. Department of Health and Social Affairs of the City of Lodz,
- b. Municipal Social Assistance Center,
- c. OPUS Foundation,
- d. Subvenio Foundation,
- e. 4Future Foundation,
- f. Municipal Medical Centers.

## **CHALLENGE 5. Strengthening diversity acceptance and its promotion among the urban community**

### **1. Challenge description:**

A particular challenge in this aspect is to spread diversity thinking horizontally. Integrating different groups and social environments in Lodz (e.g., migrants not only from Ukraine but also, for example, from Belarus, Georgia or Vietnam) requires combining the efforts of various entities operating at the intersection of health, housing, educational or cultural policies. In this case, a particular challenge is to reverse the deteriorating public sentiment toward migrants, which is discernible today. While greater openness to diversity is evident among young residents of Lodz, the pace and scale of positive change seem unsatisfactory. Hence, even more emphasis should be on anti-discrimination education at every level of education. An essential aspect of this challenge is also a spatial issue related to the need to spread the practice of so-called universal design, i.e. adapted to people with special needs (e.g. people with disabilities, neuroatypical, etc.).

### **2. Links to strategic documents:**

- a. [Lodz accessibility standard](#)
- b. [Lodz barrier-free card](#)
- c. [Lodz guide for people with disabilities](#)

### **3. Key actors involved:**

- a. Office of Urban Activity – Social Inclusion Team,
- b. Mayor of Lodz’s Proxy for Equal Treatment – Ms. Eliza Gaust,
- c. Office of Economic Development and International Cooperation of the City of Lodz – International Cooperation Branch,
- d. Lodz Diversity Coalition,
- e. Marek Edelman Center for Dialogue,
- f. Equality Factory,
- g. Koper Helps,
- h. KobieTY Lodz,





- i. HaKoach Association,
- j. Autism Team Foundation.

## CHALLENGE 6. Intensification of efforts to foster spatial order and limit urban sprawl

### 1. Challenge description:

Some of the identified challenges for Lodz have a territorial dimension, and the most important of them are related to increasing suburbanization and spatial chaos, that result mainly from an inefficient national-level law on spatial development (currently being reformed). For example, the greatest number of problems with accessibility to social, health, recreational or cultural infrastructure arise in residential areas furthest from the city centre (Olechów, Janów, Złotno, Rokiciny). Therefore, those living on the periphery bear the most tremendous cost of urban sprawl. The “return of the city to the centre” strategy, which has been in place for over a decade has brought many investments into the city centre, but did not succeed in preventing the urban sprawl. This is primarily due to the lack of more concrete than informational and promotional tools for this strategy, including financial or fiscal tools. These limitations result from local conditions and the lack of systemic solutions at the national level. This strategy was accompanied by a massive revitalization projects the historic centre of the city, that aimed at increasing the quality of life in downtown. Another big project, that aims at strengthening development of central district of Lodz is the so-called New Centre of Lodz a plan to revitalize a large section of the central part of the city around the main train station. Not all of master plan level objectives have proven to be achievable taking into consideration the property market determinants (residential function has proven to be more demanded). Filling this space with actual investment activities is still in progress, with factors such as pandemic and war in Ukraine obstructing the process. “The New Center of Lodz” is a “territorial” development challenge.

### 2. Links to strategic documents:

- a. [Study of determinants and directions of the spatial development of the city of Lodz](#)
- b. [Resolution No. LV/1146/13 of the Lodz City Council of January 16, 2013 on the Strategy for Spatial Development of Lodz 2020+](#)
- c. [Development Strategy of the Lodz Metropolitan Area](#)

d. General plan of the city of Lodz – in preparation and consultation process

**3. Key actors involved:**

- a. City Architect Office,
- b. Municipal Urban Planning Studio,
- c. Miej Miejsce organization,
- d. “Space for Lodz” social initiative,
- e. Association of Polish Town Planners – Lodz branch,
- f. Lodz Regional Chamber of Architects of Poland,
- g. Association of Polish Architects Lodz Branch.

## CHALLENGE 7. Strengthening public participation

### 1. Challenge description:

Public participation in Lodz faces problems typical of other Polish cities. Reaching new groups of potential participants in consultation processes remains a challenge, so innovative channels and methods of information and communication with residents are sought. Some of the social groups, including, for example, the student community, have greater potential that could be used in the process of gaining knowledge about the city. In terms of the functioning of the third sector, the challenge remains the development of NGOs operating systemically in the area of civil society development and actively participating in the process of planning and implementing systemic activities. NGOs operating in Lodz, on the other hand, are proficient in action-oriented activities that require emergency response (e.g. helping sick children, victims, refugees, etc.). NGOs in Lodz are often underfunded and dependent on funds from the local government budget (external funding, based on external competitions or endowments, is underutilized). Social Dialogue Committees seem to be exhausted as a formula for cooperation between the local government and NGOs

Additionally there soon will be a new need to create so-called Social Service Centres by 2027 to develop and integrate social services organised and provided at the local level (Law of July 19, 2019, *on the implementation of social services by a social service centre*).

### 2. Links to strategic documents:

- a. [City of Lodz Development Strategy 2030+](#)
- b. [Social Policy 2020+ for the City of Lodz – Strategy for Solving Social Problems](#)

### 3. Key actors involved:

- a. Office of Urban Civic Activity of the City of Lodz,
- b. OPUS Foundation,
- c. Topografie Association.

## **CHALLENGE 8. Development of citizens social capital and educating for the city as a common good**

### **1. Challenge description:**

This challenge manifests itself in frequently inappropriate attitudes toward the city (e.g., preserving the aesthetics of shared spaces, greenery, etc.). The general population of Lodz still needs to be more informed about how valuable and numerous examples of its material heritage as an industrial city are (factory complexes, tenements, villas and palaces, but also a great deal of greenery). Urban actors could sensitize this heritage much more strongly from the final years of elementary school. Another aspect of this challenge is the need to “teach” the city as a socio-ecological system, i.e. to make residents aware that its economy, culture, buildings, transportation and energy systems, and blue and green infrastructure are strongly interconnected. Lack of respect for urban space as a common good and slow to rebuild local identities, further reinforced by poorly integrated land use policies, translate into Lodz’s spatial chaos challenges.

### **2. Links to strategic documents:**

- a. [Amazing City. Lodz – The Last Undiscovered City. Material promoting the architectural and urban uniqueness of the city](#)
- b. [Social Policy 2020+ for the City of Lodz – Strategy for Solving Social Problems](#)
- c. [Education development policy](#)

### **3. Key actors involved:**

- a. Office of Urban Civic Activity of the City of Lodz,
- b. Department of Labor, Education and Culture of the City of Lodz
- c. [Miej Miejsce](#) organization,
- d. [“Space for Lodz”](#) social initiative,
- e. The Normal City FENOMEN Foundation.

## CHALLENGE 9. Improving public mass transportation

### 1. Challenge description:

Public transportation in Lodz is highly uncompetitive compared to individual transportation. Lodz's streetcars and buses need better funding and a reduction in the number of subsequent connections and their frequency to avoid the risk of a so-called ["death spiral" of public transportation](#). The agglomeration railroad in Lodz functions slightly better. Still, this one serves only the eastern and partially southern parts of the agglomeration and needs to be better integrated technically and institutionally with the city's other transportation systems. The challenge is also Lodz's negative public perception of public transportation and the slow pace of updating strategic documents in urban and agglomeration transport policy.

### 2. Links to strategic documents:

- a. Resolution No. LI/528/97 of the Lodz City Council of January 29, 1997 on the [adoption of a transport policy for the City of Lodz](#)
- b. Resolution No. LXVII/1727/18 of the City Council of Lodz dated February 21, 2018 on the adoption of the ["Plan for sustainable development of public mass transport for the City of Lodz until 2025"](#)
- c. [Watchdog report on Lodz's public transport in the context of the city's transport policy implementation](#)

### 3. Key actors involved:

- a. Department of Planning and Economic Development of the City of Lodz,
- b. Department of Strategy and Development – The City Strategy Office,
- c. Roads and Transport Authority,
- d. Institute of Civil Affairs,
- e. The Normal City FENOMEN Foundation.

## **CHALLENGE 10. Tailoring research on urban issues to the urban management practice needs**

### **1. Challenge description:**

Despite significant progress, cooperation between the local government and the expert community, including Lodz's universities, still needs to be completed. Preparing a reliable diagnosis and creating recommendations for city management is complex. Funds for this kind of research from the city's budget are small, as is the authorities' awareness of how to use them. National funding arrangements for higher education institutions need to be revised – the need to support research for practice is recognized, but change in this area has been very slow. Examples of research that would be useful to the city today but which is not available, for example, are those that would provide detailed knowledge of the scale and nature of the influx of immigrants to Lodz and, in terms of security, knowledge of existing shelters and their equipment and other civil defence solutions (in the context of the armed conflict in attacked Ukraine). Creating a think-tank-like centre to coordinate this kind of research, perhaps within the UNIC Centre for City Futures framework, is vital for meeting this challenge.

### **2. Links to strategic documents:**

- a. [Strategy of the University of Lodz 2021–2030](#)
- b. [City of Lodz Development Strategy 2030+](#)
- c. [Education development policy](#)

### **3. Key actors involved:**

- a. University of Lodz,
- b. Department of Strategy and Development of the City of Lodz.

## Methodological note

Challenges and the creation of a roadmap for cooperation between the University of Lodz and urban actors through the engaged research initiative emerged during a deliberative meeting on March 27, 2024, at the Urban Activity Factory – the organizational unit of the City Hall responsible for coordinating activities in the field of broad social inclusion. The three-hour meeting hosted a group of about twenty from the local government and the University. This group embraced all the aspects converging all UNIC 2.0 thematic lines, including building urban resilience in the face of climate change, strengthening diversity and stimulating social entrepreneurship, urban planning and assembling a culture of creativity or cooperation for safety and quality of life in Lodz.

The workshop aimed to identify Lodz's real needs reflected in its policies and strategies. It led to the development of the above ten most immediate challenges, which have a chance to be solved in cooperation with the academic community of the University of Lodz. The formula of the workshop, i.e. the [conversation cafe](#), also allowed us to achieve a second vital goal, i.e. to strengthen cooperation between specific people dealing with essentially the same issues. Although some do so as employees of the University and others as employees of the city administration, they are all pursuing the same goals and networking. As a result of such meetings, concrete joint research ventures intend to appear to solve Lodz's actual problems.

## Participants:

| University of Lodz                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Municipality of Lodz                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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