

Rudolf, Wawrzyniec

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## Building long-term relationship with tertiary education graduates as a marketing challenge for a city

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Wawrzyniec Rudolf<sup>1</sup>  
University of Lodz, Poland

**Building long-term relationship with tertiary education graduates  
as a marketing challenge for a city.**

*Draft paper, please do not quote*

**Key words: Territorial/place marketing, outward migration, place competitiveness**

**Abstract**

The paper concerns the problem how local authorities should tackle with the problem of outward migration process. The dynamics of population development and migration in Europe and its regions have its influence on territorial cohesion and regional competitiveness. Migration is the process which from macroeconomic point of view has number of attitudes in Europe or in Member States. Unfortunately, when we look at that process from the single city or region which lose inhabitants it can have very negative effects into its socio-economic development. Usually the city/region which suffer from outward migration is losing the most valuable workforce – young, creative and **tertiary educated graduates**.

The city/regional authorities should undertake measures aimed at keeping them at place. The best way to do that is stimulating the development of local economy in the long way, but this process, to be successful should be complemented by creative marketing action. The author is presenting the case study of the marketing programme implemented in 2008 in the post industrial city of Łódź, Poland (entitled: The Young Within the City of Łódź). The case study is an example of interesting approach to solve this very vital problem at the local labour market. The article present the complexity of the project, it shows how it correspond with the economic development strategy for the city. The partnership aspect is also undertaken in the context of successful delivering of the programme in the period 2008-2011. The city

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<sup>11</sup> Wawrzyniec Rudolf, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Management, University of Lodz, wrudolf@uni.lodz.pl

managers are collaborating with local universities, job agencies, and other local/regional partners.

The author argue that successful marketing programme should not only concern image creation, but it should be designed for the benefit of the territorial client – place user (in the case study: the current and prospect students in the city of Łódź). The author draw number of conclusions for other local authorities how to face similar difficulties in outward migration at the local labour market.

### **1. Territorial marketing as a method of managing city in market conditions.**

Recently, along with elimination of administrative barriers in the flow of labor force between various countries we have been observing the phenomenon of intensification of economic migration. It is particularly notable in EU countries with uniform European market, characterized by four freedoms: the free movement of goods, services, capital and labor force. The study concerns the cities which as result of economic migration lose their most valuable, young residents who after graduation leave their home towns in search of better jobs and better life. In such situation local authorities are to play a significant role striving to keep this highly qualified personnel in their home towns. The author claims that the measures should be found in territorial marketing. This discipline constitutes a response on part of territorial units to growing competitiveness between territories in their quest for mobile factors of growth. These factors mainly involve financial and intellectual capital. The author has based his considerations on the example of the city of Łódź which also has been affected by unfavorable tendencies of employee migration. This serves at the same time as example of coordinated marketing job which through **“The Youth in Łódź” programme** is to revert this unfavorable tendency.

The adaptation of marketing for the needs of local governments has been for many years practiced both in the USA and Western Europe. These processes seem to be less advanced in Poland although have recently gained momentum. The authors dealing in marketing advocate adaptation of principal pillars of marketing for specific public institutions including local governments. Several limitations should be noted though, particularly those resulting from the non-market character of public institutions. One should note in this respect that many specialists in regional and local development work in order to streamline operation of these

institutions. Particularly specialists in *public management*. Unfortunately, the latter treat marketing instrumentally, narrowing it mainly to promotion and advertising. Further, the author will attempt to define territorial marketing, stressing its extensive scope of semantic range. Territorial marketing is broadly understood and identified with the whole idea of management in territorial governments in market conditions<sup>2</sup>. Assuming extensive meaning of this term we may define territorial marketing as a market idea of managing a settlement entity – as management aimed at satisfying needs and desires of both residents and incomers.

According to A. Szromnik it is also obligatory to foresee changes and to use rationally all available resources. This idea of territorial marketing is based on the conviction that satisfying internal and external needs and desires of reference groups by providing them with appropriate set of material and non-material means is possible owing to their earlier identification and also stimulation and creation<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, marketing is an idea associated with increase of competitive advantage of the area. P. Kotler favors marketing as an ability to attract mobile factors of development to particular places and such concept of marketing is included in his *Marketing Places* book<sup>4</sup>.

The very title of this worldwide known publication on this topic indicates that it is worth attracting investment to the area, both typically industrial and service sector as well as tourists and new inhabitants. Within the latter group the most valuable are those whose virtues may be of use in particular locality. Let us name them the intellectual capital. Their presence may favorably affect condition of local companies and cause influx of new companies, particularly those requiring highly qualified personnel. Undoubtedly, to keep highly qualified personnel in town and to acquire new it is necessary to take comprehensive measures aimed at identification of needs and specific expectations of defined groups of addressees. Another challenge for marketing is to build a comprehensive strategy oriented at meeting these expectations in the long term. And then, the set of tools with which the said expectations can be met. They involve the esthetic image of the town where architecture is of key importance, improvement of broadly understood infrastructure, introduction of basic municipal services

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<sup>2</sup> A. Szromnik, *Marketing terytorialny miasto i region na rynku*, Oficyna Wolters Kluwer business, Cracow 2007; T. Markowski (ed.), *Marketing terytorialny*, KPZK PAN, Warsaw 2006; T. Domański (ed.), *Marketing terytorialny – strategiczne wyzwania dla miast i regionów*, Uniwersytet Łódzki, Łódź 1997

<sup>3</sup> A. Szromnik, *Marketing...*, op.cit., p.17

<sup>4</sup> P. Kotler, Ch. Asplund, I. Rein, D. H. Haider, *Marketing Places Europe. How to attract investments, residents and visitors to cities, communities, regions and nations in Europe*, Financial Times – Prentice Hall, London 1999.

for residents, creation and development of attractions, shaping of friendly attitudes of local inhabitants towards newcomers<sup>5</sup>. The issues of intellectual mobility will be a subject of further considerations in the study. Kotler does not conceal that apart of above mentioned marketing factors it is of great importance what people think about the place, how they perceive it. Nowadays it is the image of the territory that aspires to be a key success factor for the development of the area. In practice, the understanding of territorial marketing is much narrower. Usually, the members of local governments narrow its function to the said image of the territory. This is reflected by increasing number of events promoting towns and regions, organized under the aegis of territorial marketing.

However, the specialists involved in managing the town and region broaden this interpretation to activities aimed at attracting investors and tourists, i.e. carriers of capital, so necessary to generate local development.

According to the author, there is a need for broad understanding of the term territorial marketing which is reflected by the “The Youth in Łódź” programme discussed further in the study, initiated by the City of Łódź in 2008. Along with growing competition for mobile factors of growth between towns we may observe increased activities of local governments, specific for commercial entities. In the study, I will call them signs of territorial marketing, but it is worth mentioning that those who implement them do not use this term, although their activities clearly indicate it.

Further considerations will involve one of the most important problems affecting Polish cities – the problem of economic emigration, which gave rise to “*The Youth in Łódź*” marketing programme.

## **2. The issue of “Brain Drain”**

The human capital has recently become a significant factor of territorial competition. Qualification or experience of local labor force often form principal localization factor, taken into account by arriving investors. It is being built in the long term through development of educational offer at professional and higher level, development of vocational courses and trainings etc.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem

Such offer may effectively attract youth from the region, sometimes from over the country or even foreign students. Unfortunately, such intellectual potential can get lost in favor of other, often competitive centers. That happens due to the mobility of employees. This phenomenon may be defined as a change of domicile of particular person, of international, local or regional character. Following Poland's access to the European Union we have directly seen international mobility, at the beginning heading for Great Britain and Ireland. Some authors negatively assess this possibility as harmful for Polish economy. However, one should remember that the very phenomenon of employees' mobility should not be perceived as pejorative. Such mobility is perfectly natural, often perceived as necessary for the development of professional career. It is of considerable importance for managerial personnel and scholars.

From the vantage point of macro-economics much more harmful is the *brainwaste* phenomenon, i.e. the waste of employees' qualification, since those who emigrate quite often take up jobs below their qualifications. The OECD data indicate that this problem affects immigrants from many countries and striving at stronger integration in societies where the immigrants live and work should constitute a panacea for this. Departure, in the case of economic migration, from the tendency of the said depreciation of intellectual capital of migrants is one of the main challenges facing European Union in the coming years. Directing and managing migration streams and attracting adequate types of economic migrants is a product of government's policy and behavior, activities of companies and employees' conduct. Whether the economic migration causes in a couple of years greater employment of human capital depends on the success of this policy. Even today, such countries as Canada, Australia and United Kingdom strive to introduce well thought out migration policies. For example the *Canadian Experience Class* programme favors immigrants with higher education and professional experience. Also the Polish government foreseeing that in the long run immigration to Poland will outnumber emigration, found it necessary to develop new immigration policy. Although the first signs were optimistic the following years have shown that Polish emigration is the long term problem and only marketing activities are not enough to stop the outflow of our citizens. In 2010 the outflow of our employees is still considerable and the fact that the last two countries (Germany and Austria) have opened their labour markets for Polish citizens on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2011 may result in its increase in the coming years.

Although the mobility of employees is in itself a positive phenomenon, vital for economy of particular countries and for the whole European Union, the drainage of highly qualified personnel is its unfavorable demonstration. The process is popularly called “*brain drain*”- “*human capital flight*” unfavorable for towns or regions that lose their well trained personnel. It might however, prove favorable if the employees who had earlier left the country or region would return, bringing accumulated new knowledge, experience and financial resources. It is not certain though that they would come back to the country or town they had left.

The issue of economic emigration forces administration of countries, regions or towns to undertake activities aimed at restraining emigration of qualified personnel or to attract those who had left earlier. The Polish government should create such conditions for development of economy and quality of life so that the Poles abroad would find it profitable to come back and the process would be smooth in administrative terms.

Undoubtedly, the „Return” project set in motion in 2007 and run by government is noticeable in this context. It was aimed at encouraging immigrants to come back to their home country. Apparently, the Polish emigration has reached unprecedented volume. As early as in 2008 the number of Poles employed in the European Union was assessed at 1.8 million<sup>6</sup>. The survey conducted at that time demonstrated the average age of Polish emigrant to be 26 years. Sixty percent of them do not know what to do next, twenty percent want to come back, the remaining twenty percent do not want to do so. The set of recommendations prepared in September 2006 by the Institute of Public Affairs under professor Lena Kolarska-Bobińska seemed to be the additional inspiration for measures taken by the Polish government in this respect<sup>7</sup>. The „Return” project consists of several parts, one involves children. Although most of the people working in the European Union countries do not have children yet, it is expected that this phenomenon will attain a massive scale. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education will promote introduction of Polish language courses to schools in countries populated in great numbers by Poles. Project’s information function constitutes its significant element. By means of [www.polacy.gov.pl](http://www.polacy.gov.pl) our fellow countrymen may obtain the following useful information: how to pay taxes, regulations on free flow of employees in EU, job offers

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<sup>6</sup> WWW.bezrobocie.org.pl

<sup>7</sup> L. Kolarska – Bobińska and team, Emigrować i wracać – rekomendacje dla instytucji publicznych, Instytut Spraw Publicznych , Analizy i Opinie Nr 66, 09/2006

in Poland, internet forum for Poles and many other. Unfortunately the Return project was not the long term initiative and relatively early has been stopped.

The issue is noticeable in regions or locally. Successful marketing projects aimed at drawing the return of expatriates have been implemented in Europe as early as in the 80s by whole countries (Ireland) or particular towns (Glasgow)<sup>8</sup>. A campaign conducted by the city of Wrocław, encouraging Poles working in the Great Britain to return home, received a lot of publicity in Poland. The billboard campaign drew attention of British society to this town. The British started to get interested in the town which encouraged its fellow countrymen to return home. The mayor of Wrocław – Mr. Rafał Dutkiewicz was invited to the BBC “Hard Talk” talk show which on the average draws worldwide almost 60 million spectators per week. Even though the billboard campaign did not produce expected results it made Wrocław internationally famous.

In December 2006 the Office of the City of Wrocław together with four Wrocław universities began intensive promotion campaign in Ukraine. Mass emigration of young people caused that the city decided to strive for students from the East. In main Ukrainian campuses they hung 100 large bulletins and 50 so called citylight billboards. Within the campaign city ads were purchased in the national daily “Gazeta Ekspres”. Internet was also applied. The internet site [WWW.teraz.wroclaw.pl](http://WWW.teraz.wroclaw.pl) was translated into Ukrainian ([WWW.teperwroclaw.pl](http://WWW.teperwroclaw.pl)), with vital information on studying and working opportunities in Wrocław. It should be mentioned that institutional organizations were established, enabling long term promotion of Wrocław. These involved „teraz Wrocław” Office and the Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency established by the President of Wrocław together with the Rector of the Wrocław University of Economics.

The initiative taken by the Association of Young Polish Community in Great Britain – the “Poland Street” is a new example of measures aimed at drawing Polish immigrants back to Poland. Their project, named “12 Towns – Return? But where to? – Let us get down to facts” consists first of all in organizing 12 open meetings with members of Polish community abroad, local authorities and businessmen from various towns of Poland. 12 largest Polish

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<sup>8</sup> W. Rudolf, Marketing miasta przemysłowego wobec inwestorów zewnętrznych, in: Marketing terytorialny, (eds.) T. Markowski, Polska Akademia Nauk Komitet Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania Kraju, Volume CXVI, Warsaw 2006, p. 154



towns have been invited and initially declared their strong will to take part in it<sup>9</sup>. The meetings for young members of Polish community abroad are designed to convince them to return home. The meetings started to take place in 2009 and the interest among the Polish participants in UK was very large (on the average 200 people took part in first meetings) the organizers have declared continuation of the project in 2010. It is worth mentioning in the context of the project that costs are partially covered by the advertising cities and sponsors. During particular presentations and discussions the use of teleconference techniques brought the costs down (not all lecturers have arrived in person). One should add that the effectiveness of such programmes depends to a large extent on macro-economic conditions. Depreciation of Polish currency increases earnings of Polish emigrants and discourages them from coming home. It resulted in much lower interest in the following meetings and finally the half of the initially confirmed cities' presentations for 2009-2010 have not taken place.

Further, we will focus on marketing programme named "The Youth in Łódź" which has been implemented in Łódź since spring 2008 and it still developing in 2011<sup>10</sup>.

### **3. The „Youth in Łódź” programme**

The „Youth in Łódź” programme is a good example of marketing approach in activities of the city authorities. This is supposed to decrease professional mobility of young inhabitants of Łódź.

#### **Origin and introduction of the programme**

The survey conducted by the Media-tor for the City of Łódź manifested very alarming results. Conducted in October and November 2007 named accordingly "Directions and reasons of migration of students Łódź higher education institutions"<sup>11</sup> and "Motives for choosing a town to study" proved that half of the surveyed did not know whether they wanted

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<sup>9</sup> Białystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Cracow, Lublin, Łódź, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Warsaw, Wrocław.

<sup>10</sup> Łódź is a post-industrial town, once based on textile industry and is the third-largest (750 000) city in Poland. More than 100 000 people study here in 21 colleges.

<sup>11</sup> The Directions and Reasons of Migration of Students of Łódź Higher Education Institutions, The Report on implementation of the survey for the Office for Development of Entrepreneurship and Jobs OCL, Media-Tor Badania Rynku, Łódź, June 2007

to remain in Łódź after graduation or leave the town. Merely one out of five of those surveyed responded that he or she will remain in Łódź. It should be noted that prevailing majority of those surveyed expressed their opinion that they would have been inclined to remain in Łódź if they had found satisfactory job and had been confident of permanent employment. The results of the second survey confirmed that the choice of university and settlement is determined by situation in the job market and possibility of finding satisfactory employment.

In the survey the respondents were given several initiatives for appraisal in respect which of them would improve attractiveness of Łódź as a place to work and live. As a result, a set of instruments which received the most indications was provided. These have been incorporated in the “Youth in Łódź” consolidated marketing programme. The programme strives to encourage young people to bind their future with Łódź, to increasing number of applicants for those fields of study which are preferred by employers and to improve image of Łódź as a city with friendly attitude in respect of professional development.

### **Programme components**

The programme consists of several components, further briefly described .

- ***Student training and internship portal.*** The portal was established for students of Łódź high schools and higher education institutions in order to facilitate obtaining additional skills and vocational experience during internship. The portal will also produce notable benefits for employers popularizing student training as a perfect way for acquiring valuable future employees.
- ***Financing hostels for new students*** In order to encourage young people to study in Łódź, some companies participating in the programme will be financing for a minimum period of one year accommodation of students from outside Łódź Province. Best results when applying for selected fields of study were adopted as criterion.
- ***Employer financed scholarships for best students.*** The employers will finance at least one year long scholarships for students who choose to study employer favored fields of study.

- **Scholarships for best students financed by the City of Łódź.** The Students who study fields indicated in the strategy of Łódź development as priority sectors may get support already during their first year of studies.
- **Scholarships for (post)graduates.** (Post)graduates who study fields highly regarded by employers may obtain employer financed scholarships on condition that doctoral thesis lies within the interest of the sponsoring company.
- **Co-operation with high schools.** The OCL Department of Education has prepared "Strategy for vocational education in high schools under sponsorship of the city of Łódź" project aimed at creating conditions for organization and implementation of vocational education with regard to demand from job market and development of youth and parent awareness of necessity of vocational education.
- **TEWI – The Łódź Technological Platform. Technology, Education, Knowledge, Innovation.** The project consists in creation of informative network operating in Łódź higher education institutions playing educational role and also enabling implementation of R&D works. The objective of the TEWI is to improve professional qualifications of future employees for companies which employ hi-tec technologies, vital for the development of Łódź. The platform is also to support innovation enterprises based on Polish scientific potential, securing conditions for planning and creation of innovative products made with hi-tec technologies.
- **The system of monitoring job market of Łódź agglomeration.** The system is to provide adequate number of employees with skills required by employers.
- **Information – promotion campaign.** The campaign forms an integral part of the programme. It is implemented by the *Great Open House* creative agency, selected by open tender. The agency prepared campaign's communication strategy and creative lines. They also provided internet site ([WWW.mlodziwlodzi.pl](http://WWW.mlodziwlodzi.pl)) for the programme. Interesting and clear logotyp of the programme easily combines with various colors.

The communication campaign has been divided into three stages:

**I stage** – the campaign is addressed to recent secondary-school graduates, facing choice of place and field of further education. The motto of this part of campaign: „*Żyj i pracuj po*

*łódzku*” [play on words: „Live and work in a Łódź fashion” or „Live and work decently”] is to demonstrate that Łódź is a place worth living and working in, meaning with proper remuneration and without unnecessary „Rat race”. Images of virtual students from Łódź have been applied in the visual campaign.

**II stage** – The campaign is mainly addressed to students under „Łódź breaks stereotypes” motto. Innovative method of advertising have been employed here, raising interest through presentation of incomplete sentences and play on words on billboards (*I have been disappointed with Łódź..., I made my career thanks to connections...*) completed in a week with the rest of the sentences entirely changing their initial meaning (*Łódź made my career possible.*) and (*Computer chips made my career possible.*) accordingly. The campaign attracted attention of national media in the context of risky remarks (e.g. I have been disappointed with Łódź) but the information noise could only contribute to positive perception of Łódź and made it popular in the country.

**III stage** – Following stage of the “Youth in Łódź” promotion campaign began with “Choose Łódź”. The campaign has been mainly addressed to young people facing choice of town to study and consequently often a place to live and work. To attract attention of the young it was decided to have the campaign contest various negative associations with politics and to juxtapose it with positive message of the “Youth in Łódź” programme. The billboards and other external advertising media modeled after election posters<sup>12</sup> received images of real young residents of Łódź – students of the two biggest Universities in the region – the Technical University and the University of Łódź. It was a manipulation made up of ambiguous, witty watchwords. Each billboard depicts particular benefit, each comprises the same cohesive structure: at start a negative component referring to politicians/politics (struggle for power, unkept promises) which are then turned into joke and particular programme benefit. This stage of campaign took place in Łódź but also in several places in the region and country.

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<sup>12</sup> The said campaign has been brilliantly combined with the then election campaign for a new five year term to Europarlament, which resulted in billboards receiving better attention.

### **Initial evaluation of the programme.**

The above mentioned components of the “Youth in Łódź” programme prove its comprehensiveness. It is clearly seen that the programme is not only to be an element of shaping image of Łódź but also it is to be a medium stimulating positive bonds of the young people with the town. As it has been already mentioned it is a permanent programme and it will be continued as long as there is a political will and budget for programme implementation. Whereas long term success of the programme will be dependent on many factors, both those macro-economic (directly independent from local authorities) and factors related to socio-economic situation in the town and region (indirect impact of local government) and programme management process (direct city control).

Acquisition of partners for the programme (businessmen, higher education institutions, career agencies etc.) which seek their own benefits in this enterprise, seem to form a principal challenge for the programme management. It is worth mentioning that the Technical University of Łódź and the University of Łódź have become key partners in the programme.

The representatives of the Office of the City of Łódź do not exclude broadening this group in the future but initially it was a matter of prestige – the two largest and the best universities in Łódź. On part of the employers the partners to the programme involve mainly large corporations, often with a participation of foreign capital. They involve: Indesit, Dell, ABB, Gillette, BRE BANK, MultiBank and other. After one year of programme operation the number of business partners rose to 45, a good result taking into consideration economic slowdown. Another group involves media. The press (Gazeta Wyborcza, Dziennik Łódzki), radio (Radio Łódź, Żak Student Radio ), television (TVP Łódź, TOYA) and free newspapers reaching students (042 magazine, echo miasta).

The first evaluation of the programme implemented after the second stage of its implementation (end of 2008) demonstrated very good results<sup>13</sup>. A survey of 1000 students from various colleges has been conducted. Over 70 percent of those questioned have heard about the „Youth in Łódź” programme. Fewer knew about programme related initiatives –

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<sup>13</sup> See more: The Report on implementation of the survey for “Youth in Łódź” programme by the Media-Tor Badania Rynku in November 2008 for the Office for Development of Entrepreneurship and Jobs OCL,

less than half. The respondents have correctly understood the programme message – encouraging young people to remain in Łódź and perception of Łódź as a city with hopes for the future. Almost 60 percent of those surveyed think that the campaign has been constructed in such a way that it appeals to young people. More than half think it is clear and 48 percent that it is well noticeable. Unfortunately only few respondents took advantage of programme internet site. In the case of WWW.mlodziwlodzi.pl it were only 15 percent of respondents, and in the case of WWW.praktyki.lodz.pl a mere 9 percent. It is worth mentioning that evaluation concerned only the first year of operation of the programme which is of permanent character. The WWW.mlodziwlodzi.pl visit statistics obtained during the third stage of the campaign are much more promising (10 000 visits per week). The effectiveness of the programme has been proved by the fact that if in 2007 as much as 23 percent of those surveyed definitely wanted to leave the town after graduation, a year later this proportion went down to 17 percent.

#### **4. Conclusions for towns interested in increasing their competitiveness in the job market.**

The above considerations lead us to a conclusion that city authorities trying to keep highly qualified personnel within the city and attract those who had left earlier should conduct appropriate long term policy in this respect. The important component of this policy involves shaping positive image of the town worth living and working in. Identification of concrete and real examples of satisfied persons and their popularization seems to constitute in this case particularly desired marketing technique. One should not forget about at the same time conducted policy of shaping proper conditions for the development of existing and acquisition of new economic entities for the city and the region. However, the policy should be conducted especially intensely in regard to selected sectors which, considering local socio-economic conditions have considerable chances for development in particular area.<sup>14</sup>

The times when cheap labor force created competitive advantage are long gone. It happens however, that international corporations are forced to save and are inclined to move their factories to countries, regions or towns with lower costs of manufacture (e.g. Dell from

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<sup>14</sup> In the case of Łódź it is a manufacture of household appliances, logistics, BPO and IT sectors. They have been identified in the Strategy for Łódź document prepared under “Cluster for Łódź” project made by McKinsey and Company in 2006.

Ireland to Łódź). In the long term however, the strengthening the competitiveness should be based on quality factors, which today involve qualified personnel, innovation of local companies, development of R & D sector, social capital etc.

The Youth in Lodz programme has resulted in the long term strategic partnership between the local authorities in Lodz and the local universities which should be followed by greater number of the joint initiatives.

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- [WWW.teraz.wroclaw.pl](http://WWW.teraz.wroclaw.pl)