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Leadership in education is strongly dependent on the education system or the higher education system in place in a given country [mainly on the degree of legislative regulation].

My experience and knowledge have constrained my presentation to the Polish system only.

## Polish Conditions

1. Detailed legislative regulations (e.g. concerning curriculum imposed on tertiary-level education institutions in Poland through the so-called curriculum minimum requirements) combined with extensive legal autonomy of universities.
2. A freedom to create new curricula for undergraduate and graduate programmes restricted by the requirement to have the license to offer Ph.D. and post-Ph.D. (habilitation) programmes – I have been asking for years for a tangible proof that the quality of an undergraduate programme and the quality of graduates are correlated with the fact that a given university faculty/department has a license to grant post-doctoral degrees (in Polish ‘dr habilitowany’).

## Polish Conditions - continued

3. Polish system of electing heads of public universities hinders the process of managing universities effectively and tends to eliminate visionaries and potential leaders who wish to implement long-term development plans for universities (electing university heads by the majority necessitates focusing on actions which bring immediate results, on 'here and now.' )

4. Polish system of education (primary, middle and secondary schools) is strongly dependent on a conservative attitude of the teachers' union. 'The Teacher Chart' promotes weak and mediocre teachers in state schools.

## Polish Conditions - continued

5. We can trace back how subsequent legislation on higher education made it difficult to establish innovative non-state tertiary education schools. The most interesting private higher education institutions were established while the Act on Higher Education of 1990 was in force.

6. It is easier and quicker to establish a very good private primary or secondary school than a tertiary education institution. One of the reasons for this is the fact that the state (local authorities) grant private schools per each pupil 50 % of the subsidies they grant to state schools.

Private tertiary education institutions in Poland do not receive any financing from the State budget.

## **The Case of Gimnazjum & Liceum Akademickie [Academic Middle and High School] in Nowy Sącz**

Privatisation of a state school done jointly by the municipal authorities and WSB-NLU in 2000. The school's building, owned by the town, was given to the School for its use (thus lowering the overheads – no rent to pay)

The body running the school - WSB-NLU

Basic assets during privatisation: the School headmaster – Bogusław Kołcz – true leader (one of the first ten teachers in Poland to have been granted a title of ‘Professor of Education’)

Adopting the model of a school for an intellectual elite which admits only pupils who finish primary schools with honours.

# The Case of Gimnazjum & Liceum Akademickie [Academic Middle and High School] in Nowy Sącz

## The Effects:

- Gimnazjum [the Middle school] is recognised as one of the leading schools in Poland, each year achieving the highest results in state examinations, e.g., in the period 2004 – 2010, its pupils' average examination score was 75.2 – 83.1 % while the country's average was 52.6 – 57.7
- 2010 – Liceum Akademickie (secondary school) – pupils achieved an average score of 75.7% in the A-level examination in Polish with the country average of 57.2 % - the first place in Małopolska;
- 2008, Akademickie Liceum came first in Małopolska in the 10th ranking of secondary schools prepared by a Polish daily *'Rzeczpospolita'*.

**The purest form of leadership is the system of ‘Science masters’ which originated in the Middle Ages**

**Creation of ‘science masters’ schools according to Prof Henryk Niewodniczański, physicist (1900+1968)**

- I. Professor X, scientist with organisational skills, reaches the limits of his scientific abilities by the age of 40, has substantial scientific achievements in his field and contacts with leading academic centres around the world;
- II. He starts attracting young candidates for scientists, more talented than himself, provides for them ‘a fast-track’ academic career, allows them to implement their ideas and conduct research, sends them to training to his colleagues at the world’s best research centres.

**The purest form of leadership is the system of ‘Science masters’  
which originated in the Middle Ages - continued**

III. The disciples’ scientific achievements outgrow those of the master but all scientists specializing in the given field recognise them as ‘people from Prof X’s school’.

Such ‘master’s schools’ can have a long-term effect on their environment while creating curricula for the best students education since they develop students’ attitudes and not only increase their knowledge.

## Controversial Thesis

In the contemporary system of higher education in Poland,  
a true leader who wishes to establish a good quality  
institution of higher education that distinguishes itself from  
others must be

**a rebel,**

and it is only possible in the sector of private higher education  
institutions.

## The Case of WSB-NLU

I. Established in 1991-1992 in Nowy Sącz, the first institution of higher education founded from scratch in a small town without any support of state authorities.

There was a leader with entrepreneurial thinking who did not adopt solutions from state schools. There was a mission (development of the town and region, educating employees for free-market economy) and a clearly defined **goal** (to become the best school of business in Poland within 10 years).

II. The key to success was to base WSB-NLU operations on the curriculum transferred from an American university as well as to adopt an organisational culture of NLU.

III. Vital factors of success were supporting the business curriculum with an intensive foreign language programme and shaping students' attitudes (bravery in facing new challenges, energy and creative thinking)

**The task of the leader of a higher education institution is to understand the challenges of the future and to be open to changes**

## **The Case of WSB-NLU**

- I. Period from 1991 to 1997 – period of lack of financial stability, support from two American universities, building organisational culture;
- II. Period from 1998 to 2005- ‘fat years’, big number of candidates for students, winning in rankings, investment in infrastructure and professional development of faculty members;
- III. Period from 2006 to 2010 – crisis in admissions to full-time programmes (caused by competition from EU, mainly British universities, which started admitting Polish students).

The necessity to start anew and jump forward.

## Strategy for 2011-2020

Transition from a 'teaching school' to a college educating in practical manner and conducting scientific research, aiming to create a significant centre for development of economy and the regional environment

I. The MultiMedia City Project

II. 'Diamond' Project

Mission- not changed

Goal - to achieve a position of a world-class higher education institution able to compete with the world's leaders in selected fields.

# Miasteczko Multimedialne Sp. z o.o.

## [MultiMedia City] – key projects:

### MEDIA 3.0

- Seed fund
- Technological incubator
- Pre-incubation - 30 projects
- 475 innovative projects obtained during 3 months of operations
- Budget of PLN 14 million ( 100% subsidised)

Project Investments – new technologies

### PROMOTING VC ACTIVITIES

- Training project for people who have ideas for new businesses;
- Training workshops, conferences on VC, Seed Capital, Business Angels
- Budget of PLN 1.5 million (100 % subsidised)
- Several hundred participants trained

Creating the awareness of innovation transfer and project recruiting

### CONSTRUCTING INFRASTRUCTURE

- R & D Centre (laboratories & know-how)
- Technological Observatory - trend analysis
- Centre for Innovation and Economic Consulting
- Incubator
- Business park
- The area of 15.900m<sup>2</sup>
- Net value of PLN 111.7 million ( 85% subsidised)

State-of-the art infrastructure

## **Areas of Activities:**

- 3D Animation and Graphics;
- Applications and Software
- Games Technologies
- Telecommunication
- Internet and New Media
- E-learning
- Mobile technologies



WYZZS  
A T I O

‘Diamond’ Project as a solution to Poland’s biggest need of the future – an increase in entrepreneurial and innovative attitudes of Polish people.

2 segments:

- Programme of developing creative thinking skills through problem solving addressed to all pupils of early education (grades 1 through 3, children ages 6 – 8);
- Program of supporting gifted students (Centres for Gifted Pupils) starting from grade 4 of primary school through middle school and the first two grades of high school).

The project is implemented jointly with the Małopolska Marshal’s Office and the Małopolska Teacher Enhancement Centre.

## General Conclusion

The future of the Polish higher education depends greatly on the emergence of true political leadership in the Polish government when:

I. The scientific research sector and higher education are recognised as the only effective mechanisms for building competitive advantage in the times of knowledge-based economy;

II. The political elites stop being afraid of a reaction of Polish academic circles to the introduction of true reforms such as competition for public subsidies or restriction in universities' autonomy to a sensible level that will enable to manage public universities following the interests of the country.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**

**KRZYSZTOF PAWŁOWSKI**

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