Routledge Studies in Management, Organizations and Society

UNIVERSITIES, STAKEHOLDERS AND SOCIAL MISSION

BUILDING COOPERATION THROUGH ACTION RESEARCH

Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Piotr Jedynak, Sylwia Wrona, and Anna Pluszyńska

ROUTLEDGE

Universities, Stakeholders and Social Mission

Today's universities are confronted with questions about the increasing scale of corporatisation and commercialisation, as well as their decreasing activity in the field of the social mission, i.e., engagement in the real problems of ordinary people, local communities and society at large. As a remedy for this problem, this book proposes using action research as a means of shaping collaboration between universities and their stakeholders, taking into account related benefits, opportunities and challenges. In this context, we understand action research somewhat more broadly, as universities' conducting useful research that becomes a domain of their social mission. The core message of this volume is the development of a cooperation process in which the university leaves its "ivory tower", builds relationships with its stakeholders and, as a result, engages more effectively in social life.

In this book, readers will find an original perspective on action research, the application of which enables mutual benefits for universities and their stakeholders. It presents the authors' original model of cooperation based on the AR approach and concrete examples of successful cooperation between universities and their stakeholders. Step by step, it illustrates how to initiate cooperation, conduct useful scientific research and together with stakeholders bring about changes in social life. This book will be of value to university managers, academics, students of social, management and economic sciences, as well as managers and specialists employed in organisations from various sectors that may be interested in cooperation with universities.

Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska is a Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Management and Social Communication at Jagiellonian University, and Head of the Department of Non-Governmental Organizations Management Poland.

Piotr Jedynak is a Professor, Deputy Rector for Personnel and Financial Policy, and Head of the Department of Management Systems at Jagiellonian University, Poland.

Sylwia Wrona is a Research and Teaching Assistant at the Institute of Public Affairs of Jagiellonian University, Poland.

Anna Pluszyńska is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Culture of Jagiellonian University, Poland.

Routledge Studies in Management, Organizations and Society

This series presents innovative work grounded in new realities, addressing issues crucial to an understanding of the contemporary world. This is the world of organised societies, where boundaries between formal and informal, public and private, local and global organisations have been displaced or have vanished, along with other 19th-century dichotomies and oppositions. Management, apart from becoming a specialised profession for a growing number of people, is an everyday activity for most members of modern societies.

Similarly, at the level of enquiry, culture and technology, and literature and economics, can no longer be conceived as isolated intellectual fields; conventional canons and established mainstreams are contested. *Management, Organisations and Society* addresses these contemporary dynamics of transformation in a manner that transcends disciplinary boundaries, with books that will appeal to researchers, students and practitioners alike.

Recent titles in this series include:

Workplace Monitoring and Technology
Jacek Woźniak

Human Capital, Innovation and Disruptive Digital Technology
A Multidimensional Perspective
Muhammad Shujaat Mubarik, Muhammad Shahbaz and Qaisar Abbas

Universities, Stakeholders and Social Mission
Building Cooperation Through Action Research
Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Piotr Jedynak, Sylwia Wrona and Anna Pluszyńska

Business meets the Humanities
The Human Perspective in University-Industry Collaborations
Edited by Martina Skrubbeltrang Mahnke, Mikka Nielsen, Matilde Lykkebo Petersen and Lise Tjørring

Universities, Stakeholders and Social Mission

Building Cooperation Through Action Research

Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Piotr Jedynak, Sylwia Wrona, and Anna Pluszyńska

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2023
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Ewa, author. | Jedynak, Piotr, author. | Wrona, Sylwia, author. | Pluszyńska, Anna, author.
Title: Universities, stakeholders and social mission : building cooperation through action research / Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Piotr Jedynak, Sylwia Wrona, and Anna Pluszyńska.
Description: New York, NY : Routledge, 2023. |
Series: Routledge studies in management, organizations and society | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022022928 | ISBN 9781032129662 (hardback) | ISBN 9781032129679 (paperback) | ISBN 9781003227069 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Community and college. | Action research in education. | Education, Higher--Social aspects. | Service learning. | Community development.
Classification: LCC LC237 .B64 2023 | DDC 378.1/03--dc23/eng/20220713
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022022928

The publication was funded by the Priority Research Area Society of the Future under the program "Excellence Initiative – Research University" at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

ISBN: 978-1-032-12966-2 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-12967-9 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-22706-9 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003227069

Typeset in Bembo
by MPS Limited, Dehradun

Contents

Figures

Tables

Introduction

Monograph issues

In the global world of culture, the university is one of the oldest, in Europe, one of the most traditional and respected institutions, for centuries a driver of development and progress, not only scientific or technological but also moral, political and social (Sowa 2009; Alvesson, Gabriel, and Paulsen 2017). The university is generally considered to be a community of scholars researching and teaching together in collegial ways traditionally based on the ethos of learning and education understood as the legacy of enlightenment (Lynch 2006). Since appearing on the scene in Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries, as a third force based on the authority of reason (in contrast, as Sowa (2009) writes, to the state and its power based on violence and the church with its power based on faith) it has been seen as the refuge of certain values that underpin the development of societies (Alvesson 2013).

Today's universities are confronted with questions about the increasing scale of corporatisation and commercialisation, as well as their decreasing activity in the field of the so-called social mission (Gibbons et al. 1994), i.e., engagement in the real problems of ordinary people, local communities and society at large. The need for greater engagement in social life is becoming the *raison d'etre* of modern universities. Universities are criticised for creating elitist knowledge that is sometimes of no use to anyone; excluding those who are factual knowledge users, "producing" knowledge and passing it on to stakeholders regarded as "consumers". The creation of knowledge occurs very quickly, but the vast majority of societies are unaware of this or do not see much benefit in it. This paradox is evidenced by the proliferation of conspiracy theories about the origin of vaccines during the Covid-19 pandemic. A large percentage of the world's population rejects the advances of science, while the "temples" of knowledge cannot find their way in communicating with the public, displaced by Instagram stars and those who can reach everyone with their message.

Such a state of affairs justifies the need to search for solutions supporting, firstly, the improvement of universities' strategies and capacities for cooperation with stakeholders and, secondly and most importantly, the emancipation,

DOI: 10.4324/9781003227069-1

democratisation, de-hierarchisation, co-creation and sharing of knowledge in universities.

As a remedy for this problem, we propose using action research as a means of shaping collaboration between universities and their stakeholders (e.g., businesses, public organisations and NGOs), taking into account related benefits, opportunities and challenges. In this context, we understand action research somewhat more broadly, as universities' conducting useful research that becomes a domain of their social mission. Hence, the core message of our book is the development of a cooperation process in which the university leaves its "ivory tower", builds relationships with its stakeholders and, as a result, engages more effectively in social life.

Useful research (UR) and action research (AR), in particular some of its types, have become a panacea in the last 50 years to dismiss science and practice, a way to combine theory and praxis, emancipation and democratisation of knowledge, but also to co-create and share it. Features of action research (Coughlan and Coghlan 2002), such as solving practical problems simultaneously with achieving scientific goals, interaction between practitioners and researchers, orientation on change or compliance with developed ethical criteria, promote cooperation between the university and its surroundings. Action research is a natural field of meeting of practitioners and researchers in social groups, organisations or local communities. Action research allows us to learn the weaknesses and strengths of an organised structure that expects change using scientific instruments, and their multi-stage and multi-level nature are contributions to a better understanding of the impact of practice on theory and theory on practice, as well as an impulse for development, community reflection and introducing jointly designed changes.

The theoretical foundations of our deliberations are related to the concepts of organisational cooperation, strategic management and organisational development. The book seeks to answer the question of how to use action research projects to shape and improve universities' cooperation with stakeholders and, more broadly, the implementation of social changes. It is, therefore, a valuable source of innovative knowledge for many groups of readers. The message it contains is the result of the team's research and reflections on cooperation processes and the practice of action research.

The literature review and empirical research carried out by us allow us to not only prepare an original model of cooperation and present factual and successful cases of cooperation between universities and their stakeholders based on the action research approach, which can be regarded as benchmarks but also formulate recommendations on how joint ventures in the field of action research can be incorporated into universities' strategic management in the area of social mission, as well as, more broadly, an element of universities' organisational development.

In the book, the reader will find an original perspective on action research, the application of which enables mutual benefits for universities and their stakeholders. The book presents the authors' original model of cooperation

based on the AR approach and concrete examples of successful cooperation between universities and their stakeholders. Step by step, we show how to initiate cooperation, conduct useful scientific research and together with stakeholders bring about changes in social life. Therefore, the book can be useful for many groups of readers. It is addressed to university managers, academics, students of social, management and economic sciences, as well as managers and specialists employed in organisations from various sectors that may be interested in cooperation with universities. In order to make it easier for the reader to assimilate the content of the book, we have included numerous illustrations in the form of tables, diagrams and original visualisations taken from various solutions developed within the scope of action research projects.

Research design and testing cooperation

The research problem addressed in our book concerns the processes of cooperation between universities and their stakeholders, using the action research approach for the effective implementation of its social mission and the strengthening of public engagement.

Our work is based on a scientific project entitled *Research for Practice. The use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of the organisation* undertaken with funds from the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development, carried out by a 12-person research team at the Jagiellonian University between 2017 and 2019.

Before starting the project, Jagiellonian University had not used the action research approach very widely. The forms of university collaboration in action research encountered around the world such as community-university partnerships, extensive formal networks, PhD programmes or special organisational units dedicated to action research (London et al. 2017; Bogacz-Wojtanowska et al. 2019) were not present at Jagiellonian University until this project. Instead, at the university we had (Jałocha et al. 2021):

- action research as part of informal collaborations where individual researchers, through their relationships and networks, participated in action research in carrying out their environment. This took the form of ad hoc counselling and collaboration between researchers and practitioners as well as participation in large projects
- didactic classes devoted to action research, where students carried out micro-projects within this approach, without establishing formal relationships with other organisations

Hence, the aim of the project, first of all, was to carry out an organisational change at the Jagiellonian University through the use of the action research approach. By virtue of action research, we wanted to design a new teaching practice (a new way of writing diploma theses) and introduce it into the offer of certain study programs at the University. Secondly, also thanks to the use of

the action research approach, we wanted to establish closer relations with selected public organisations and non-governmental organisations, so far cooperating with us rather semi-formally, for mutual benefit. For the University, these benefits were related to the improvement of the teaching offer, enhancing the education of students in close connection with potential employers. For the non-governmental and public partners, it was mainly an opportunity to fine-tune their own organisation with contributions from researchers and practitioners from the University. As part of both of these project objectives, we conducted a restrictive research on our own research practice, aimed at solving the research problem posed at the beginning.

To solve the research problem, we used an extensive literature review and empirical research. The literature review concerned useful research, strategies and types of action research, its kinds, applications, as well as cooperation of higher education institutions with local communities, where action research may be one of the foundations or forms of cooperation. Additionally, we extended the literature review to the theoretical contexts of inter-organisational cooperation, strategic management and organisational development in higher education.

The objectives of the conducted empirical research were as follows:

- developing a model process for cooperation between universities and their stakeholders, using action research
- conducting action research in 30 selected organisations according to the developed cooperation process
- validating the prepared model of the cooperation process

In the case of empirical research, the set of research methods we used was complementary. We used a mix of methodologies (Harrison, Reilly, and Creswell 2020; Creswell and Clark 2007; Schoonenboom and Johnson 2017), in our research. The use of qualitative and quantitative methods contributed to the collection of comprehensive and exhaustive data from a wide range of respondents. The respondents included:

- students of two organisational units of Jagiellonian University involved in the project
- academic supervisors and staff of the two organisational units of the University involved in the project
- representatives of organisations participating in the project

We designed and implemented a number of research methods for the achievement of the research objectives. The research methods used in order to collect the needed research material (data) were the following:

- surveys
- interviews
- observations in organisations

- research notes
- analysis of documents prepared for the purposes of the project

The data collected by means of these different methods were intended to provide a broader and deeper insight into the research question, also increasing its potential and interpretability. The purpose of our use of triangulation was not to obtain relevant and reliable results, but credible ones (Flick 2007).

The questions formulated in the survey questionnaire were both closed and open. A total of ten types of surveys were carried out. Two surveys were carried *ex-ante*. They aimed to recognise opinions on ways and understanding of cooperation and action research, needs, expectations and benefits, as well as assessing competence skills – surveys of various content were addressed to students and organisations. One survey aimed to verify students' opinions on the first organised workshops and their evaluation. One survey was conducted as an *on-going* study of thesis supervisors regarding their assessment of the implemented action research model. Three surveys were addressed to thesis supervisors, organisations and students. They pertained to the relations between thesis supervisors, students and representatives of organisations, the benefits of cooperation and proposed changes. We also carried out three *ex-post* surveys, again covering all study participants.

Eighteen individual semi-structured or free interviews were conducted with thesis supervisors, students and representatives of the organisation. The first stage of the interviews examined all the thesis supervisors participating in the project and concerned the thesis supervision process and methods of conducting MA seminars. The second stage of the interviews was carried out using a targeted research sample of thesis supervisors, students and representatives of organisations. The interviews concerned the very process of cooperation and conducting action research, the result of which we identified as a success.

Six observations were made directly by four researchers. The observations were documented during visits to organisations (four observations) and study visits to research centres carrying out action research (two observations). The subjects of observation in organisations were: the relationship between student and the representative of the organisation, the relationship between the thesis supervisor and the representative of the organisation – in the context of work in AR methodology. The subject of observation in research centres was: the relationship between student and thesis supervisor from the perspective of involvement in AR projects.

Research notes were prepared by two groups of participants: students and thesis supervisors. The first research participants kept so-called researcher's logs, where, through a special teaching platform, they wrote down research insights that were visible only to the student and their thesis supervisor. On the other hand, the thesis supervisors wrote self-reflections, comments and conclusions regarding cooperation and action research in the form of research notes.

The analysis of documents prepared for the needs of the project covered all documents and materials created during the implementation of the

project according to the previously prepared categorisation code. We treat the resulting documents as the achievements of the project team members. The documents included in the study included:

- the application for co-financing of the project *Research for practice. The use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of the organisation* Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development
- description of a model for the preparation of implementation master's theses in the field of humanities or social sciences tested under the project entitled *Research for practice. Use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of an organisation* and a report on evaluation of this model
- archived master's theses of students participating in the project
- tripartite agreement between a university, organisation and student regarding the implementation of the master's thesis
- regulations for the work of students and thesis supervisors as part of the Master's seminar in the years 2017 to 2019 implemented under the project *Research for practice. The use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of organisations*
- student's progress assessment sheets
- appendices (action plan – appendix to the implementation master's thesis; scheme of an implementation master's thesis based on action research; scheme of designed action research
- work time sheet records
- workshop materials (workshop agendas, workshop block plans, presentations, exercise sheets, photographs, workshop reports, jointly developed solution and answer sheets)
- posters promoting the project *Research for practice. The use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of organisations*; social profiles of the Institute of Public Affairs and the Institute of Culture of the Jagiellonian University; websites of the Institute of Public Affairs and the Institute of Culture of the Jagiellonian University; social profile of the project *Research for practice* on Facebook
- meeting agendas and project team work reports
- reports on study visits at the University of Liverpool Management School and University College Dublin
- email correspondence between members of the project team

We conducted the analysis and interpretation of the data by repeatedly collecting readings and comparing the obtained research material. As a result of the thematic categorisation of the codes identified in this way, an original model of cooperation between HEIs and stakeholders as part of action research was created. Thus, the research results combine qualitative and quantitative data, which are complementary to each other. Table 0.1. presents the research methodology designed and implemented by us.

Table 0.1 Research concept

Stages of research	*Research methods and methods of analysing the research material*	*Objectives of the research methods and methods of analysing the research material*
1. Formulating research questions	• analysis of the results of the literature review • study visits (2)	• identifying a research gap
2. Preparation of research tools and methods of analysing the research material	• analysis of the results of the literature reviewee • analysis of project documents	• formulating research questions
3. Development of a model of cooperation between universities and organisations	• analysis of project documents • *ex-ante* surveys addressed to students and organisation representatives (2 surveys) • individual interviews with academic supervisors (11 interviews)	• identification of needs, expectations and benefits as well as assessment of existing skills and competences of the participants of cooperation
4. Selection of organisations for cooperation/research	• observations in organisations (4) • analysis of documents prepared for the purposes of the project • interviews with students, academic supervisors and representatives of organisations	• targeted selection according to specific criteria
5. Conducting research in organisations	• *ongoing* surveys addressed to students, supervisors and representatives of the organisations (5 surveys) • research notes written by students and supervisors • analysis of documents prepared for the purposes of the project	• obtaining feedback and evaluation from students on the activities carried out; • obtaining feedback from the supervisors on their evaluation of the action research carried out; • obtaining feedback from supervisors, organisations and students on the relationship between supervisors, students and representatives of organisations, the benefits of cooperation and suggestions for change

(*Continued*)

Table 0.1 (Continued)

Stages of research	*Research methods and methods of analysing the research material*	*Objectives of the research methods and methods of analysing the research material*
6. Analysis of collected data	• selecting, ordering, systematising, grouping	• development of a validated model of cooperation processes
7. Validation of the model of co-operation between universities and organisations	• research notes • *ex-post* surveys addressed to students, supervisors and representatives of organisations (3 surveys)	• drawing conclusions from the validation of cooperation processes • development of recommendations
8. Confrontation with literature	• literature studies	• bridging the research gap • confrontation with theory
9. Selection of case studies to exemplify the cooperation process	• analysis of project documents • interviews with students and representatives of organisations (8)	• identifying successful cases of cooperation; • obtaining feedback on the cooperation processes and action research.

Source: the authors' own study.

Book structure

The monograph consists of six chapters, an introduction and a summary. In the introduction, we present the objectives of the book and outline a theoretical context for our deliberations, in particular we address the issues of organisational cooperation, social mission, organisational development and strategic management in the field of higher education. We also present the methodology of our research.

In Chapter 1 we outline the key challenges faced by modern universities and show what they entail. Here we also explore organisational cooperation and, against this background and from different perspectives, we explain how universities cooperate with their stakeholders. In particular, we present the determinants, motivations, forms and benefits of cooperation between universities and organisations in the private, public and non-governmental sectors, as well as its unexpected consequences. The chapter concludes with the presentation of several selected models of university cooperation with the environment, developed at the level of meta-social structures as well as at specific cooperating organisations and universities.

Chapter 2 discusses the strategy of action research. In particular, we show the roots, features, types and significance of this type of research, as well as the course of the research procedure. We also discuss the emancipatory role of action research in the creation and use of knowledge. An important part of the chapter is an analysis based on a literature review and concerning such cooperation using an action research strategy.

Chapter 3 presents the situation of Polish universities and their environment as well as the conditions for launching processes of cooperation with stakeholders. It shows in detail the processes of cooperation between organisations and universities as part of universities' action research. We distinguish the following stages of this process: diagnosis, initiation, adaptation, research, recommendations and an implementation plan, introduction of the designed change and evaluation. For each stage, we show what activities are undertaken in both the university and the cooperating organisation, as well as identify the actors involved. We also identify the limitations of our model.

Chapter 4 focuses on the benefits of cooperation within the framework of action research, as well as the risks that hinder research and the implementation of designed changes in organisations or society. We also identify specific organisational conditions in both universities and cooperating organisations that enable the effective execution of joint projects based on the action research approach. All these issues are shown from the perspectives of those working in an organisation or representing a local community, researchers (including students) and thesis supervisors.

Chapter 5 comprises four case studies developed within the scope of a scholarly project implemented at our university. We present examples of action research conducted by students and researchers in public and

non-governmental organisations. In each case study, we show the process of cooperation, starting from the situation existing in a given organisation and ending with the preparation of an implementation plan and, possibly, the results of its implementation. We also present an overall assessment of the entire process.

Chapter 6 comprises reflections on the use of useful research (including action research) in shaping and implementing the university's long-term social mission. We also want to show how to incorporate the sphere of cooperation with stakeholders that uses useful research into the strategic management of the university, as well as, more broadly, as an element of the university's organisational development. The chapter ends with a set of managerial recommendations, for both universities and their stakeholders, facilitating the achievement of mutual benefits from the use of action research. Finally: a summary in which we will present (managerial, theoretical and methodological) conclusions and implications resulting from the conducted research. We will also outline possible further research directions.

Terminological explanations

In the monograph, we recognise the cooperation of universities with public, non-governmental organisations and enterprises as the basis for our considerations. We also describe it synonymously as cooperation with the environment or cooperation with stakeholders, despite the awareness of certain differences in meaning. While writing about cooperation between the organisation and the university in our project, the term partners refers to the organisation's representatives (representatives of decision-making bodies, the so-called mentors in the organisation) and representatives of universities (thesis supervisors and/or students).

References

Alvesson, M. 2013. *The Triumph of Emptiness: Consumption, Higher Education, and Work Organization*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Alvesson, M., Y. Gabriel, and R. Paulsen. 2017. *Return to Meaning: A Social Science with Something to Say*. Oxford, UK:Oxford Scholarship Online.

Bogacz-Wojtanowska, E., P. Jedynak, S. Wrona, and A. Pluszyńska. 2019. *Action Research w Kształtowaniu Współpracy Uczelni z Interesariuszami*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Coughlan, P., and D. Coghlan. 2002. 'Action Research for Operations Management'. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management* 22 (2): 220–240.

Creswell, J.W., and V.L.P. Clark. 2007. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Flick, U. 2007. *Managing Quality in Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Ltd.

Gibbons, M., C. Limoges, H. Nowotny, S. Schwartzman, P. Scott, and M. Trow. 1994. *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publication.

Harrison, R.L., T.M. Reilly, and J.W. Creswell. 2020. 'Methodological Rigor in Mixed Methods: An Application in Management Studies'. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 14 (4): 473–495.

Jałocha, B., E. Bogacz-Wojtanowska, A. Góral, G. Prawelska-Skrzypek, and P. Jedynak. 2021. 'Opening the Doors of the Ivory Tower: Action Research as a Tool Supporting Cooperation between Universities and External Organizations'. In *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, edited by A.B. Shani (Rami) and A. Noumair, 143–171. Emerald Publishing Limited.

London, J., K. Schwarz, M. Cadenasso, B. Cutts, C. Jr. Mason, J. Lim, K. Valenzuela-Garcia, and H. Smith. 2017. 'Weaving Community-University Research and Action Partnerships for Environmental Justice'. *Action Research* 16 (2): 1–17.

Lynch, K. 2006. 'Neo-Liberalism and Marketisation: The Implications for Higher Education'. *European Educational Research Journal* 5 (1): 1–17. 10.2304/eerj.2006.5.1.1.

Schoonenboom, J., and R.B. Johnson. 2017. 'How to Construct a Mixed Methods Research Design'. *Köln Z Soziol* (69): 107–131. 10.1007/s11577-017-0454-1.

Sowa, K.Z. 2009. *Gdy Myślę Uniwersytet…*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

1 Cooperation between universities and their stakeholders

1.1 Contemporary challenges and problems of universities

Universities or, more broadly, higher education institutions represent a highly heterogeneous and interdisciplinary research subject (Hsu et al. 2018) and are recognised as some of the most complex organisations in society (Perkins 1974). They are also an integral part of the institutional structure of societies, especially European ones (Sowa 2009), operating in an extremely complex environment (Alves, Mainardes, and Raposo 2010). This complexity can be seen mainly through their diverse founding structures, forms of ownership, organisational and functional units, activities, quality and finally, their specialisation and size (Lockett, Kerr, and Robinson 2008; Paradeise and Thoenig 2013). This complexity also extends to the diverse social groups, be they employees-researchers, teachers, administrative staff or students. Hence, this institutional complexity (Greenwood et al. 2011) means that both the scientific observation as well as the management of the university are carried out using many complex methods and at many organisational levels.

Since at least the 1980s, there have been marked changes in the functioning of universities, associated with the globally dominant neoliberal thinking about the entire higher education system (Docherty 2015), called by critics, "academic capitalism" (Münch 2014). At the same time, for several decades, governments in many countries have been pushing specific public policies to make universities more efficient, effective, innovative and adaptive (Bastedo and Gumport 2003), organisations with diverse missions to guide their productivity growth (Levin 1991). Continental European governments, through policies towards HEIs, have used and continue to use a variety of coordination and control tools, seemingly soft agreements, targets, benchmarks, indicators and continuous evaluation (Capano and Pritoni 2019). In contrast, in the English-speaking world, despite strong traditions of institutional autonomy, governments have increased their interference and regulation by creating national agencies for evaluating research and teaching and by becoming strongly involved in aligning university behaviour with socio-economic requirements

DOI: 10.4324/9781003227069-2

(Capano and Pritoni 2019). According to some researchers, the subordination of the higher education system to the demands of economic and political systems limits the autonomy of research and teaching (Geppert and Hollinshead 2017). Political pressures mean that HEIs have nowadays become one of the most important factors in building competitive advantages for countries and regions. Hence, universities are faced with expectations for measurable achievements, which are considered to include high positions in scientific, educational or innovation rankings. According to Mats Alvesson (2013), higher education is nowadays assigned the role of building national greatness; being a leading country in the world educational rankings is treated as evidence of global economic leadership. Very often, modern states and their governments expect to boost the position of national science (as well as individual universities) without increasing real expenditures, only by introducing the principles of free competition (Prawelska-Skrzypek 2020).

The most important trend in the entire higher education system in recent decades is the gradual shift of universities from a common good orientation to a market orientation, and this shift is a manifestation of adaptation to changes in the environment (Cameron 1984). In other words, higher education instead of being a public good becomes a private good (Marginson 2011), and education becomes an intellectual product. This process is related to strong privatisation trends and shifting the costs of producing education and science as private goods onto the buyer (Lynch 2006). This way of thinking about the university completely changes the dynamics of its relations with the environment and stakeholders, as well as the ways of management.

The second trend, closely related to the first, is the transformation of the university ethos, from essentially collegial, to managerial or market-oriented (Taberner 2018). As Łukasz Sułkowski (2017) points out, traditional universities were based on the ethos of science and education, understood as a legacy of the Enlightenment, and were oriented towards serving society, towards producing a common good for human development and improving its welfare. Universities were to pursue scientific research appealing to such imperatives as Communism, Universalism, Disinterestedness and Organized Scepticism (Merton 1973). In this sense, they were, as Kathlee Lynch (2006) argues, considered to be guardians of the free exchange of ideas in a democratic society including as a voice of dissent against prevailing orthodoxies. In other words, it was crucial for them to rely on specific values.

Meanwhile, the market-oriented entrepreneurial University management developed on the basis of the entrepreneurial paradigm (Häyrinen-Alestalo and Peltola 2006), the dynamic development of which we have experienced in recent decades, is based on completely different principles. First of all, universities underwent (at different times, depending on the intensity of change in different countries) a kind of transformation from learning centres to business organisations with production objectives (Doring 2002). The new values of universities (but it is difficult to say that they were shared by employees and students) became: efficiency,

excellence, productivity, competition, individualism. As Kathlee Lynch (2006) notes, a "purely operational orientation" emerged, the traditional academic culture was replaced by a corporate culture, and the language of economic efficiency was introduced into the language of university values (Giroux 2002). It is worth adding, as we mentioned earlier, that this was for many university employees (especially in public universities in Europe) a completely unclear, incomprehensible and enforced change that was often protested against. But modern universities today are big business (Paul 2005), in which the opinions of academics, especially humanists and social science researchers, do not necessarily determine how it is run.

The manifestations of these changes in universities worldwide are commercialisation, marketisation, economisation, growing pressure to seek and acquire resources to not only supplement but also expand their financial budgets, including commercialisation of research (e.g., patents, licences, spin-offs, infrastructure rentals) (Perkmann et al. 2013); a strong focus on innovation (Schmitz et al. 2017), competition between universities, as well as within individual institutions, to attract students, researchers and economic resources – both public and private (Musselin 2018). Academic capitalism, i.e., the university's pursuit of market and market-like activities and the generation of external revenue (Slaughter and Rhoades 2009), primarily means the introduction of market and competitive solutions into university operations and the transfer as well as application of management methods and management approaches to universities (Sporn 1996). Academic capitalism also means a departure from traditional administration in universities in favour of implementing new public management and the use of management methods and techniques taken from business activities (Berg, Barry, and Chandler 2004). Some researchers call the contemporary changes in university management the new managerialism (Deem and Brehony 2005).

As a result of the changes, universities are gradually becoming quasi-corporations or behaving like quasi-businesses, which for employees means increased demands on research results, routinisation of administrative work or greater intensification of work (Dowling-Hetherington 2014), but also causes significant "human costs". It should be emphasised that the introduction of new public management has caused many employees to experience stress or a variety of tensions (Berg, Barry, and Chandler 2004). Furthermore, trust in professional integrity and peer regulation has been replaced by performance indicators, as well as leading to Orwellian surveillance and constant measuring and counting of every university activity (Lynch 2006). There is ample evidence that the entrepreneurial university is an unhealthy institution, that creates conditions that foster resentment, bullying and other forms of staff abuse (Zabrodska et al. 2011). Of course, the Humboldtian model also had its sins, including hierarchical, patriarchal and bureaucratic, but in its essence it has hardly survived anywhere, so it is difficult to consider its shortcomings now.

The introduction of new public management in the life of universities has also disrupted the conducting of scientific research and the publication of its results. The most recent experience comes from Polish universities, where NPM models were introduced in 2011 and intensified in 2018. The changes were aimed, among other things, at increasing the internationalisation of research and participation in international networks and projects, improving the performance of Polish science in the world (i.e., what we described above – science as an element of competitive advantage) through the promotion of the best universities in world rankings, scientometric indices and publications in the best journals. Importantly, everything was supposed to happen with very low financial outlays (Prawelska-Skrzypek 2020). The effects, which are interestingly also very unfavourable, can be seen after only 3 years. Scientists publish in journals in order to gain the "points" expected by universities, which will translate into money, they no longer conduct long-term research, as they will not lead to quick publications, they focus mainly on publishing and writing grants, and they neglect teaching students. There is also a lot of organisational chaos in the universities and a feeling that nothing is as it should be, as the changes have been neither refined nor completely thought through. All this, however, under the noble banner of improving the quality of science, boosting the effectiveness of scientific work or increasing internationalisation.

What is the future of university management? What will their future role be? Is a retreat from the neo-liberal knowledge regime possible (Holmwood 2016)? Will other models of the university come to the fore and become dominant? It seems that the growing criticism of the entrepreneurial university will trigger certain changes, especially with the growing global problems of climate change or growing social inequalities. There is increasing pressure on universities as the environments from which the impetus for change should come. It is hard to imagine that an entrepreneurial university, focused on acquiring its own resources, will be able to cope with this task.

Another trend affecting HEIs globally is growing internationalisation resulting in increased mobility of students, academics, activities, but also entire institutions (Sułkowski 2017). Widespread mobility results in many universities hosting within their walls students and staff from different backgrounds and cultures. As a result, contemporary HEIs are grappling with equity, diversity and inclusion issues, which are abbreviated as EDI challenges (EDI – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion), which are not only due to mobility issues. Also the demographic changes in their surroundings, in particular the influx of immigrants and refugees (especially in Europe) as well as the growing public awareness of the existence of a number of unrepresented, underprivileged groups, make it necessary for HEIs to face these challenges in different dimensions as well.

The willingness to meet the challenges of EDI is causing many universities to undertake a variety of activities to increase openness and inclusion and to find new ways to enable people from underrepresented backgrounds to participate. These include continuous monitoring of the

situation of those who may be affected by prejudice and the impact of changes, the development of formal strategies, as well as communication activities (LERU 2019). Over the past few decades, a great deal of research has been carried out and policy papers have been produced documenting the common disadvantages faced by underrepresented groups in academia and analysing the bonuses for universities of working to promote equality, diversity and inclusion (LERU 2019). Improving the situation in this area brings many benefits which include: improving the well-being of scholars and students, developing the academic community, developing a sense of belonging and commitment which can translate into increased commitment and results. Furthermore, by fully embracing and valuing diversity, universities can secure long-term and poorly measurable benefits in a rapidly changing world and also increase their global impact (LERU 2019).

Gender equality is an example of the EDI challenges that are perhaps the most prominent in today's universities. When it comes to gender equality, recent research in higher education institutions shows that despite the rapid increase in women's educational attainment globally over the past 23 years, the underrepresentation of women compared to the male population in HEIs is still evident in various aspects (UNESCO IESALC 2021). First of all, inequalities affect women, among others, in terms of recruitment and career development, achieving managerial positions (Legato and Glezerman 2017), and there is a strong overrepresentation of women on precariat managerial positions at universities (Ryan and Haslam 2005) and women earn less. Hence, the general perspective is still based on the assumption that the "gender gap" in academia exists, however, the participation of women in academia is slowly and constantly growing (Lone and Hussain 2017; Uhly, Visser, and Zippel 2017). Despite the increasing presence of women studying at universities, the number of those who have achieved the highest authority positions is relatively low. Women are equally represented at the beginning of their career but are underrepresented in top positions (Carvalho and Diogo 2018; White and Bagilhole 2011; White, Carvalho, and Riordan 2011).

HEIs are struggling to develop appropriate goals and management solutions to improve gender equality. As a goal, it may mean achieving equal numbers of women and men, transforming academic institutions towards more procedural transparency and explicit standards of fairness, as well as empowering feminist knowledge creators to produce better, less biased science (Schiebinger 2012). In practice, gender equality programmes in most HEIs of European and North American countries address regulations and practices related to hiring and promotion, provide career guidance, mentoring and networking especially for women, offer training on gender biases and stereotypes, and address work-life balance as a barrier to women's advancement (Bilimoria and Liang 2011; Caprile et al. 2012).

There are also many challenges In the sphere of the educational mission of universities. And here the spread of higher education, the sharp increase

in the number of students, which has usually not been accompanied by an increase in the number of staff, the distortion of the traditional master-student relationship, the growing importance of market regulations, as well as the changes in the relationship between the state and HEIs mean that the whole educational system is also changing. Education has gradually ceased to be a public good in many countries, while in continental Europe the education provided by public universities has become heavily weighted with external regulation. In light of these changes, three key concepts seem to be the most important for the challenges facing academic education: quality of education, employability and distance learning.

The first is the quality of education, a concept that is vague (Brockerhoff, Huisman, and Laufer 2015), multidimensional (Krause 2012), dynamic and contextual, and may also be perceived differently by different stakeholders (Schindler et al. 2015). Interestingly, what students perceive as high quality in their education may not correspond to what academics consider valuable or what employers would like to see in graduates (Dicker et al. 2017). To put it simply, quality of education can be understood today as the degree to which the requirements for the educational process and its outcomes, formulated by stakeholders, are met, taking into account internal and external conditions (Grudowski and Lewandowski 2012). UNESCO ('Road Map for Arts Education' 2006), on the other hand, considers quality of education to be a type of education that offers learners competences that are adapted to the specific context in which they live and that enable them to actively participate in society. In the traditional, Humboldtian university, it was the academic community that decided what actions to take, in terms of educational quality (Rosa and Amaral 2007). Meanwhile, with the growing influence of states on HEIs, the key to quality assurance is no longer internal university norms and values but continuous improvement and increasing transparency and accountability of universities towards stakeholders (Gudkova 2019). For some researchers, these two processes are contradictory, as improvement requires critical commitment, while transparency and accountability, and the associated monitoring and evaluation procedures, do not inspire trust among academics and are disregarded by them and implemented minimally (Gudkova 2019). Additionally, external quality assurance mechanisms for education are often considered rigid, building a culture of distrust, resulting in a focus on education of measurable issues that can be presented in statistics (Brady and Bates 2016).

The second challenge facing contemporary academic didactics is the issue of graduate employability. Employability has become a key concept in higher education all around the world in recent years (Cheng et al. 2021). It can even be argued that it has become a central issue in terms of the educational mission and operation of different types of universities around the world. The concept emerged in academic practice and discussions about the goals of education and higher education, first in English-speaking countries such as the UK and Commonwealth countries ('The Dearing

Report' 1997; British Council Report 1997), and later in other countries as well (UNESCO 2012). Today, the key question for many HEIs is how to link higher education with the needs of business and the labour market, while at the same time not eliminating universal content from education in favour of specialist vocational training (Levidow 2002). The concept of employability itself, although considered vague and non-specific, most often refers to an individual's ability to obtain and maintain employment throughout their career (Hillage and Pollard 1998; Cole and Tibby 2013), with competences that contribute to graduate employability appearing to be the key here (Pegg et al. 2012; Cole and Tibby 2013).

There is a distinction between individual and institutional employability – the latter relates to institutional performance (Cheng et al. 2021). Governments use employability as a measure of university performance (Boden and Nedeva 2010). It also turns into a space for competition between universities. That is why many universities around the world are preparing employability strategies for their graduates, linking it to student recruitment and satisfaction, employment outcomes, stakeholder (employer) relations and community engagement (Cheng et al. 2021).

It is important to note, however, that in countries that have begun to discuss the relationship between higher education and the labour market and have raised the issue of employability, many authors oppose the idea of the dominance of employability values in the mission of higher education. They criticise approaches that allow such dominance of labour market values, or at least question whether this should be the main, educational objective of HE programmes (West 2000; McCowan 2015).

The third area of educational challenge is distance learning, which during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic takes on an even more important global significance. In general, prior to the pandemic, distance learning fulfilled a variety of functions, both in terms of changing and improving didactic processes in universities and its impact on the situation of university stakeholders but also, more broadly, entire societies. Deliberations on the functions of distance learning mainly concerned situations when it is introduced in a planned way, without any pressure caused by a crisis situation. It was believed that such education fosters various kinds of novelties and teaching experiments (González-Yebra et al. 2019), as well as making the learning process independent of time and place (Farajollahi et al. 2010). Online learning in underdeveloped countries increases access to education, helps to catch up on the educational backlog and eliminates the gap in the level of education in relation to developed countries (Oluniyi 2012; Chawinga and Zozie 2016), as well as counteracts the phenomenon of educational exclusion of certain social groups (Moreira, Reis-Monteiro, and Machado 2017). It is further stressed that the role of distance education is specifically to increase participation in higher education systems (Lane 2012). Researchers also draw attention to its missionary nature, as in their view, it should be a part of the fundamental mission of higher education,

which is participation in the socio-economic development of countries, regions and the world at large (Mupa, Chabaya, and Chabaya 2014). It is also recognised that the potential of distance learning in making the vision of the open university a reality, and thus accelerating processes of academic knowledge diffusion (Porteous, Nesaratnam, and Anderson 1997). Robin Roy, Stephen Potter, and Karen Yarrow (2008) confront distance and traditional learning on the basis of the concept of sustainability. This leads to the identification of an important role of distance learning, which is to reduce the negative impact of universities on the environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that distance learning can be treated as a tool for fulfilling the social responsibility of the university, especially in the area of the environment.

Meanwhile, the prolonged state of emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic forced most universities around the world to completely change their mode of operation and face the long-term crisis. One of the biggest challenges proved to be ensuring the continuity of education in a situation where it could not take place in the traditional, face-to-face way. Under the pressure of the pandemic and the restrictions imposed by national governments, university authorities were forced to close their campuses overnight (Dhawan 2020) and transform their learning processes from traditional to distance learning (Carrillo and Flores 2020). At the same time, this gives rise to serious discussions about the role of distance learning in contemporary universities. The pandemic calls for deliberations about the role of distance learning and the experience to date. In addition to the aforementioned missionary nature of distance learning, attention is also drawn not only to the democratisation of knowledge during a pandemic (Chyi 2020), or to reaching people of different ages or socio-economic backgrounds through distance learning (Brouns et al. 2017; Cutri, Mena, and Whiting 2020), but also conversely to the likelihood of duplicating and exacerbating inequalities in a wider range of educational opportunities (Lederman 2020). For some researchers, COVID-19 also represents an opportunity for universities to redefine the notion of excellence in teaching and research, to make academic practice more sustainable and also to develop a culture of care (Corbera et al. 2020).

For some researchers, universities are systems that, despite interactions with the environment, are operationally closed, subordinating all such interactions to a key internal process, called "autopoiesis" (Lenartowicz 2015). External stimuli cause only superficial and temporary changes in them. Real change must be there. generated from within, it must be triggered by a shift within the system's identity. In our view, however, contemporary institutions of higher education are subject to strong pressure from both internal and external forces. They are struggling with the problem of willingness to maintain often centuries-old traditions and with growing expectations to improve the quality of education (Schindler et al. 2015) or conduct research for the needs of the state and the economy. The

search for one's own identity takes place in the face of challenges of meeting the so-called third mission of institutions of higher education (Gibbons et al. 1994), outside the traditional areas of activity, i.e., education (first mission) and conducting scientific research activities (second mission). The third mission means the university's cooperation with the broadly understood socio-economic environment, i.e., cooperation with business, the public and non-governmental sector, and imposes responsibility on it as one of the most important institutions of a culture-forming, innovative nature or one that creates development of knowledge not only within the region or the country (Sam and van der Sijde 2014). At the same time, the implementation of the social engagement of institutions of higher education, including universities, is criticised – their weak involvement in real issues of people, community and society as a whole is emphasised due to the growing corporatisation and commercialisation of universities, as well as greater involvement in recognising the needs of the labour market, not of the whole society (Ospina, Hoffman-Pinilla, and El Hadidi 2008). Universities, a kind of metaphorical ivory towers, are defined as those that produce knowledge, and their surroundings are the subject of research as well as their consumer, i.e., they are to use the knowledge generated by universities (Levin and Greenwood 2008). However, there are frequent accusations against universities of creating elite knowledge from which those who should use it are excluded.

Thus, since the fulfilment of the social, third mission of universities requires them to go out into their environment, to have stronger ties with it and to enter into relationships with its various organisations, the concepts of co-operation and inter-organisational partnership need to be precisely defined.

1.2 Defining inter-organisational cooperation

Systematic observation of inter-organisational cooperation has been conducted since the 1970s (Blomgren Bingham and O'Leary 2006; Kapucu 2006). Nowadays there are many concepts and perceptions of inter-organisational cooperation. The reasons for this are as follows: firstly, the problems of organisational cooperation are dealt with by representatives of various disciplines of social sciences; secondly, inter-organisational co-operation takes many forms, it depends on various factors, related both to the environment of the cooperating organisations as well as those resulting from the characteristics and behaviour of the organisation, i.e., those of an intra-organisational nature. This is proved primarily by the multitude of names referring to cooperation introduced in social sciences, including management sciences. The theory of cooperation, as argued by Chris Huxham (2003), develops with the use of such terms as partnership, alliance, cooperation, collaboration, network or inter-organisational relations.

A common understanding of cooperation is working together, acting together with someone and helping someone in a specific activity. Cooperation

is all kinds of connections between individuals, social groups or organisations, created to achieve a specific goal (Kożuch 2007). Action is behaviour equipped with meaning (Sztompka 2012, 60). Yet in other words: cooperation or collaboration is such an activity that, first of all, is joint, i.e., it concerns at least two entities; secondly, whose sense is perceived by both parties, in which each participant counts on the actions of others.

It is worth taking a closer look at the differences in defining the concepts of cooperation. Thus, for Adil Najam (2000) collaboration means joint work, while cooperation means joint action, which, according to this author, indicates an exaggerated search for a difference between these concepts. Sally Coleman Selden, Jessica Sowa, Jodi Sandfort (2006, 412) point out that cooperation means more informal relations, based on personal contacts of managers and NGO members. Collaboration is the sharing of resources, power and benefits. It occurs when there is an integration of people of cooperating organisations, joint planning and implementation of certain tasks. Co-ordination, on the other hand, is a mutual relationship somewhere in between – it refers to the efforts of organisations to calibrate their own activities – organisations remain independent, but try to align their activities to achieve common goals. On the other hand, R. Scott Fosler (2001) recognises that collaboration is a form of cooperation that means conscious, joint work of two entities to achieve jointly agreed objectives, which could not be achieved alone. It differs from other forms of cooperation, according to R. Scott Fosler, because it means conscious joint action, which is not usually undertaken in cooperation. Coordination, on the other hand, is more a form of conscious cooperation within an organisation, where cooperation between organisational units is expected or natural. It should be noted that R. Scott Fosler also treats cooperation as possibly collusion, i.e., he considers co-operation as cooperation with the enemy. Cooperation is something more than tacit, as R. Scott Fosler argues, cooperation, where entities can function side by side and complement each other's activities, but actually know nothing about each other's existence. At the same time, it is something less than authoritarian coercive coordination. In particular, it implies greater involvement of organisations, planning of joint activities, agreement on goals, strategies and programmes, as well as mutual commitment of resources and capabilities, sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards (Fosler 2001, 19). Hence, for R. Scott Fosler, the notion of collaboration is identical to the notions of partnership and alliance. From this perspective, collaboration requires making conscious decisions and possessing certain capabilities that facilitate this type of activity.

Carolyn Parkinson (2006, 4) analyses the concepts differently. Carolyn Parkinson (2006, 4), who considers cooperation to be an informal, short-term relationship, with not very intensive inter-organisational contacts, where each partner makes decisions autonomously and without agreement, with little risk, because only information and not any other resources are exchanged. In contrast, co-operation is formal, long-term, with moderate

contacts, with division of roles and responsibilities between partners, some decisions are no longer autonomous and must be coordinated, there is a need to reach consensus, risks are taken because organisations commit their resources. Carolyn Parkinson also notes the consequences of the intensity of mutual relations: from cooperation, through collaboration, to integration, i.e., the joint establishment of a new structure. As often cited in the literature, Paul W. Mattessich, Marta Murray-Close and Barbara R. Monsey (2001, 60) also consider cooperation as a less formal type of inter-organisational relationship, coordination as a more formal relationship, while collaboration as the most developed level of inter-organisational ties, often also meaning the establishment of new organisations.

To simplify the understanding of terms, this monograph adopts the interchangeable use of the terms: coordination, collaboration and co-operation.

Cooperation between organisations can be in the form of an informal, short-term relationship, with not very intense inter-organisational contacts, where each partner makes decisions autonomously and without agreement, with little risk, because between them there is only exchange of information and not any other resources. Collaboration can also take a long-term form, with frequent contacts, division of roles and responsibilities between partners, where certain decisions are no longer autonomous and need to be coordinated, there is a need to reach a consensus, and the risk is taken because organisations engage their resources (Parkinson 2006). Parkinson also notes the consequences of the intensity of mutual relations: from co-operation through collaboration to integration, i.e., the joint establishment of a new structure that connects two organisations. There are three types of understanding of inter-organisational cooperation: relationship, process and strategy.

Cooperation is understood as a specific type of relationship between at least two organisations, mutually beneficial relationships, defined, oriented towards achieving common goals (Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey 2001, 59). From this perspective, collaboration is therefore a relationship between at least two organisations. Inter-organisational interactions within this relationship can be occasional, regular, or relatively persistent. Relationships can also be formal or informal, they require a minimum agreement on mutual contacts and goals, as well as sharing responsibility for the success of joint actions. As a result, they can cause changes in organisational structures and lead to the division of power within cooperation areas, as well as contribute to sharing resources and benefits resulting from mutual relations (Parkinson 2006).

Collaboration can also be understood as a strategy for cooperating organisations that ensures an increase in the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness. Such cooperation allows to avoid redundancy in operations, prevents competition in the case of cooperation of public sector organisations and allows to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Collaboration, however, is more often understood as a process rather than a structure or result (Bedwell et al. 2012, 129). A process by which

organisations seek a common solution to a problem that would not be solved alone by one organisation (Sink 1998, 1188). It requires joint, voluntary action and the participation of independent entities that make autonomous decisions (even when organisations have previously agreed to specific operating principles and common goals). This process is aimed at achieving transformational goals, as well as is to improve organisational skills (Wood and Gray 1991).

The description of the cooperation process highlights the following elements:

- the organisation's willingness to cooperate, manifested by its readiness to pursue its own as well as common interests with another organisation) (Das and Teng 1998), i.e., having the ability to go beyond its own interests and their resulting goals
- the need for facilitation and operationalization (Agranoff 2006)
- interactivity involving not only shared interests, but negotiating common norms, rules and ways of working in the collaborative area (Wood and Gray 1991)
- mutability – the interests of the organisation may change during the collaborative processes, which requires constant communication to achieve sustainable benefits and satisfaction
- maintaining the continuing autonomy of the collaborating organisations (the collaborative process may possibly lead to integration of organisations)

When understood as being process-based, cooperation grows out of inter-organisational interactions and is constantly evolving and changing. Viewing collaboration as a process allows us to grasp the dynamics of inter-organisational relationships. This perspective makes it possible to show that collaborative processes can be clearly distinguished in the university's activities, just like financial management, strategy development, staff recruitment and training or student enrolment. In this perspective, the university's cooperation with other organisations means a series of activities and actions performed sequentially with the assumption that each of them contributes a certain value to the whole process and is not an unnecessary, repeated or sham activity (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2011). This series of activities may include negotiating goals, jointly implementing activities, evaluating results, etc. (O'Looney 1994, 62). In this sense, cooperation of the university with other organisations in its environment, means such a joint activity, where the missions of the organisations intersect and the pooling of resources leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the goals.

Recognition of inter-organisational cooperation as a phenomenon, which may more and more often constitute a key strategy of an organisation's activities, makes it necessary to look particularly closely at the motivation for cooperation. Explaining the motivation for cooperation will

also be a basis for us to cooperate with universities and organisations from various socio-economic sectors.

At the beginning, it is worth considering the motivations of enterprises to cooperate with various partners. Searching for an answer to the question of what motivates private organisations to cooperate is important because cooperation often fails and there are no benefits to cooperating entities (Rod and Paliwoda 2003, 274). In particular, the differences between proactive and reactive motivations are emphasised – the former relate to the organisation's anticipatory activities, the latter are the organisation's reaction to changes in the organisation and its environment (Babiak 2007, 338–76). The main motivations of enterprises to cooperate, as researchers mention, are organisational, economic, political and competitive reasons of the organisation (Barringer and Harrison 2000; Todeva and Knoke 2005; Babiak 2007).

Organisational motivation includes in particular:

- building organisational competences and capabilities
- teaching and internalising tacit knowledge, collective and rooted skills
- improving operation and acquiring new distribution channels
- creating external value chains of the organisation to suit the environment
- acquiring social legitimacy (understood as an organisational resource)
- developing complementary products and services

Political motivations include the need to adapt to technical standards (most often contingent in law) and the desire to overcome institutional, regulatory and legal barriers to activity.

The most common economic motivations of researchers include:

- reducing operating costs
- acquiring new markets
- reducing and spreading the risk among cooperating organisations
- searching for and access to new resources
- increasing the scale of operations by expanding activity to previously unavailable markets (Barringer and Harrison 2000; Todeva and Knoke 2005; Babiak 2007)

In turn, the motivations associated with the need to increase competitiveness, which organisations want to achieve through cooperation, include:

- the need to adapt to changes in the environment – anticipation of social, political and technological changes
- achieving a competitive advantage
- achieving vertical integration
- access to new technology and technologization

- development of new products and services
- cooperation with potential competitors to avoid competition
- searching for the snowball effect, i.e., being a leader in your business, which will translate into increased interest in the organisation's products and services

Christine Oliver perceives the organisation's motivations for cooperation in a different way (1990, 241–65), distinguishing six basic reasons for cooperation: necessity, asymmetry, reciprocity, efficiency, stability, legitimacy. The reasons may occur on their own and result in the organisation establishing cooperation, but more often they occur in specific combinations – strengthening or competing with each other.

For public organisations, in terms of characteristics and properties, cooperation instead of competing is natural (Kożuch 2007). It allows, above all, to increase the possibility of providing public and social services. The main motivations also include multiplying the impact, increasing the efficiency of using public funds, increasing organisational efficiency and effectiveness, acquiring knowledge and financial resources, introducing new technologies to the public sector and benefiting from economies of scale (Kożuch 2007).

Meanwhile, NGO motivations to cooperate can be divided into three types – adaptive, external and integrative (Campbell 2008). Adaptive motivations, also called internal motivations, relate to starting cooperation, which is a way to solve or adapt to the difficulties bothering an NGO. Problems – such as lack of financial resources necessary to achieve goals, poor social legitimacy, low efficiency, reduction of asymmetry (weaker organisations) or maintenance of organisational autonomy – trigger the activity of a non-governmental organisation in the area of cooperation. External motivations relate to the situation in the environment of the organisation. Its turbulence and uncertainty lead to cooperation to weaken its influence on these organisations. Joint action reduces the uncertainty of the organisation, allowing it to achieve goals that cannot be achieved by a single organisation. The integrative approach assumes that motivations can be both adaptive and external (Campbell 2008).

A different view allows us to see idealistic, instrumental and internal motivations of NGOs engaging in cooperation (Seitanidi, Koufopoulos, and Palmer 2010). Idealistic motivations result from the values that people represent in non-governmental organisations, as well as from the values that make up organisational culture. Instrumental motivations are benefits that only cooperating NGOs can take advantage of – in this case meaning, above all, the search for resources for their own activities, as mentioned above. The search for resources does not have to concern only the financial resources necessary to carry out the mission, but also employees and volunteers, knowledge and social legitimacy. In turn, internal motivations result from organisational goals and assumed values. The organisations for

which cooperation is a value, and achieving goals means cooperation, they simply undertake it. In this approach, cooperation is the implementation of goals that have become the basis for the creation of organisations, often written in organisational documents.

Based on John W. Selsky and Barbara Parker's research (2005) and Ans Kolk et al. (2010) three levels of motivation for an organisation to build various forms of cooperation can be identified – macro-, meso- and micro-levels (see Figure 1.1).

Macro-level means the existence of metagoals of cooperation that organisations from different sectors or society want to achieve, goals impossible to achieve by one organisational actor on their own. Metagoals include raising the standard of living, economic development at the local, regional or national level, developing the labour market, improving the quality of education or protecting the environment. Collaboration is a way to take on challenges by sharing the risk of joint initiatives, raising funds or supplementing your own capabilities (Kolk, Dolen, and Vock 2010). Collaboration causes a synergy effect, but – most importantly – it rejects the solution of social problems from the bottom up, assuming differently that achieving complex goals can only take place through joint, bottom-up action.

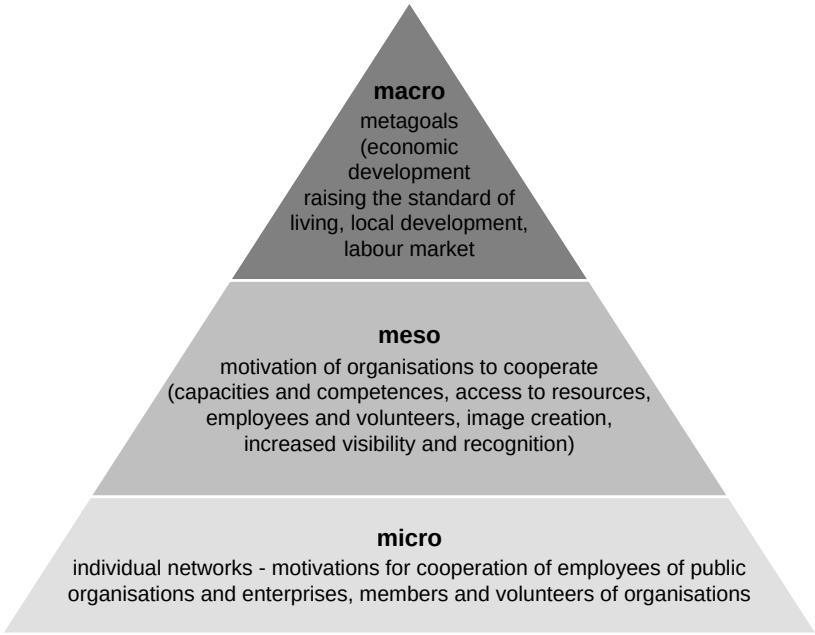

Figure 1.1 Hierarchy of motivation for cooperation between organisations.

Source: Own study based on: (Kolk, Dolen, and Vock 2010).

The meso-level relates to organisational motivations that organisations have, to build various forms of cooperation. In the case of non-governmental organisations, it may be about access to skills and competences that organisations do not own, knowledge and learning, access to other resources, such as financial resources, recruitment of employees or volunteers. From the perspective of enterprises, this will be image creation, greater visibility and recognition. Cooperation at the meso-level can be damaged by a lack of trust.

The micro-level means motivation for inter-organisational cooperation of employees of cooperating organisations. The creation of individual cross-sectoral networks results from the perception of the various benefits of collaboration at the individual level. Cooperation at the micro-level – maintaining interpersonal relationships – can largely condition the success of building mutual relationships.

In summary, organisations follow different motivations when making cooperation decisions. Despite the prevailing belief that resource acquisition is a key motive for collaboration, a much wider range of reasons can be identified. Different types of motivations can be distinguished – depending on the situation in the organisation or its environment, with an economic, social, instrumental or idealistic nature, as well as a static and dynamic one. They can also be prioritised – by assessing at the micro-level, i.e., the level of people in the organisation, at the meso-level, i.e., of the organisations themselves, and at the macro-level, when they relate to cooperation solving problems that go far beyond the capabilities of one organisation. As we will see in the next section, this meso-level is one of the most important foundations of a university's cooperation with various types of public organisations and institutions.

1.3 University cooperation with the environment – basic definitions and perspectives/cooperation between universities and their stakeholders: determinants, forms and results

1.3.1 Conditions of university cooperation

The relations of a modern university or, more broadly, institutions of higher education and the environment are the subject of many scientific studies, in which authors usually focus on the interdependence of universities with the state and the market, less often with civil society and non-governmental organisations, which are its emanation (Kola and Leja 2015). Even less frequently is it recognised how universities influence or can influence entire communities – whether local or a bit broader.

The cooperation of universities/institutions of higher education with the environment is usually called the third mission (Gibbons et al. 1994; Bonaccorsi and Daraio 2007) or the social mission, functioning alongside

traditional areas of activity, i.e., education (first mission) and conducting research and development (second mission). Of course, cooperation with the environment also takes place within the framework of education and research, hence there are also views emphasising that the third mission of the university, i.e., its socio-economic impact permeates the traditional functions and is inextricably linked with them. Recent concepts of the engaged university (Goddard 2009) go even further and advocate that the third mission of economic development should be a guiding and integral principle of the organisation and practice of universities, and not just a separate area of their activity (Sánchez-Barrioluengo, Uyarra, and Kitagawa 2019).

Since the reforms of W. Humboldt, the two above-mentioned functions have been included in the mission of the university, or have been largely emphasised. However, it is not sufficient to describe either the past or the present role of the university in collective life. Thinking of the university as an "ivory tower", where one independently formulates research problems and strives to learn the truth, without taking into account the relation of this truth with collective life or without looking at the actual practice, has little in common with the university tradition. As Kazimierz Sowa writes (after: 2009; Bloom 1997), the first university intellectual, i.e., Socrates, was not sentenced to death for developing independent scientific research, but for allegedly demoralising Athenian youth, who turned against Athenian democracy. Thus, they were live, practical effects of scientific activity. For centuries, the university has always influenced cultural and political life, has been an instrument of civilizational adaptation and a transmitter of moral, cultural and technological codes (Goslar 1998). Hence, it is reasonable to assume that there are three elements of the university mission: research, teaching and social service – the latter we may call the social mission or, somewhat in the contradiction of the Humboldtian university, the third mission. Researchers refer to the activities of the third mission as "third stream activities".

Nowadays this third mission denotes cooperation with the broadly understood socio-economic environment, i.e., cooperation with business, the public and non-governmental sectors, but also a growing commitment to civilizational, cultural or ethical development (Kola and Leja 2015). It also means taking on new roles in society in order to create a sustainable future (Cuesta-Claros et al. 2021; Berchin, de Aguiar Dutra, and Guerra 2021), due to the unique position of universities (Cortese 2003). The third, social mission of the university imposes responsibility on it as one of the most important institutions of a culture-creating, innovative or knowledge-creating nature, not just on a regional or national scale (Sam and van der Sijde 2014; Korff et al. 2014). Moreover, it is recognised that universities, where knowledge is produced, preserved, disseminated, integrated and applied, support contemporary changes in terms of transformation towards a sustainable future (Stephens et al. 2008). In addition to their potential as knowledge institutions, universities also have a responsibility to contribute

to a sustainable future because, as is increasingly resonating, they have been complicit in the current crisis (Cuesta-Claros et al. 2021). On the other hand, there is a widespread view that universities are regarded as a source of scientific and technological development, as co-operators in the production of business innovations (Baaken et al. 2015). The growth of global knowledge has intensified the need for strategic partnerships that go beyond traditional sources of innovation. Hence, enterprises and universities are expected to work together to remove barriers to knowledge, thus becoming powerful drivers of innovation and economic growth (Markman et al. 2005), although more recently, many researchers have pointed out the need to create economic growth, described as "green", mainly through innovative and environmentally friendly technologies (Ruiz-Mallén and Heras 2020).

As we have shown above, social mission and social service are nothing new in the university tradition, what is new over recent years is the gradual institutionalisation, in particular of university contacts with business, as a conscious strategic choice (Shore and McLauchlan 2012), as well as the greater involvement of academic or teaching staff in areas that cannot be attributed solely to teaching or research. In particular, this includes activities for their own regions, transfer of knowledge in any form or initiating research projects in collaboration with regional enterprises (Lange 2021). It is also important that social engagement of universities means building relationships not only with business but also with civil society (Göransson, Maharajh, and Schmoch 2009).

In practice, the implementation of the third mission denotes various activities of HEI, which are most often called entrepreneurial activities, academic entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer, academic engagement or perhaps most aptly – knowledge exchange (Hayter, Rasmussen, and Rooksby 2020), which demonstrates the two-way nature of the relationship between the environment and universities. The notion of "knowledge exchange" goes beyond thinking about traditional academic entrepreneurship, it goes beyond the business benefits that a university can achieve, and it also highlights the commitment to building relationships with the public sector and NGOs (Sánchez-Barrioluengo, Uyarra, and Kitagawa 2019) and more broadly with society as a whole.

Universities undertake a diverse set of third mission activities (Sánchez-Barrioluengo, Uyarra, and Kitagawa 2019). These include, training and consulting activities (Cohen, Nelson, and Walsh 2002; Perkmann and Walsh 2007), student internships and supporting human capital development (Faggian and McCann 2009), research and it's patenting, licensing and spin-off activities (Philpott et al. 2011). So-called third places such as incubators, FabLabs and Living Labs are also developing (Lange 2021).

As some researchers note, despite this wide range of activities, there is a tendency to favour the commercialisation of research results by protecting intellectual property coming from universities (such as patents and licences), at the expense of neglecting other activities that may be less visible (or less

easily quantified) but equally if not more important (Hughes and Kitson 2012; Sánchez-Barrioluengo, Uyarra, and Kitagawa 2019).

To summarise, recent research highlights the complex and multi-layered nature of universities' third mission, as evidenced by the diverse activities they undertake and the multiple relationships they establish over time with different partners. Importantly, the activities of universities are very often linked to their long-standing experience, tradition and dominant identity. As Mabel Sánchez-Barrioluengo, Elvira Uyarra and Fumi Kitagawa (2019) argue, we have seen an evolution of third mission activities in recent years. This is likely the result of both external pressures at the macro level, including government policies, as well as institutional practices at the micro-level and strategic prioritisation by individual universities that recognise their own potential in terms of entrepreneurship and cooperation with their environment. It is worth adding that a large proportion of the world's universities operate in an extremely competitive, international environment, where any resource or capability can determine one's place in the hierarchy (often measured by rankings) and offers various possibilities. Universities are also subject to certain societal expectations (Goddard et al. 2014). At the same time, each university has its own development path in the third mission area (whether aware or not), with greater or lesser involvement in the social and economic life of its environment.

However, it seems that we still know little about how universities operate in their third mission for minority groups, local communities, NGOs or civil society as a whole, and how they cooperate with public institutions. The above-mentioned advantage of more market-oriented elements of the third mission may be more visible and measurable (Hughes and Kitson 2012), and at the same time bring more financial benefits or lead to the accumulation of various resources. However, from the perspective of social impact, the aforementioned social service, or the expected social changes, sustainable development, new economic relations or bridging economic and social gaps, the work of universities with local communities, NGOs or public institutions seems far more relevant.

1.3.2 Definitions and forms of cooperation between university, business, public and non-governmental sector

The cooperation of universities with other organisations (usually enterprises, but also public and non-governmental organisations) can be defined as interactions, relationships or processes, where knowledge and often technologies are exchanged between cooperating entities, resulting in increased possibilities of achieving their mission and goals, in particular knowledge resources (Cricelli and Grimaldi 2010). This cooperation may have a different nature. It can be based on interpersonal interactions or take the shape of inter-organisational relationships, have various intensities and take different forms, depending on the areas of involvement of particular cooperation entities (Davey et al. 2011).

This cooperation is undertaken by organisations for mutual benefit. On the part of the university, a number of benefits have been identified, e.g., at universities, the extension of educational capacity – by improving the content and teaching methods in line with market requirements – can support academic research projects and lead to an increase in external funding streams (Carayol 2003; Davey et al. 2011), which in turn induces universities to increase the number and quality of publications.

In the case of enterprises or other organisations, cooperation increases the innovative capacity through access to the latest knowledge and the possibility of using the technological facilities of universities (Galan-Muros and Davey 2017; Davey et al. 2018), increases productivity, solves organisational problems of institutions or non-governmental organisations, and finally increases the competitive advantage of enterprises in dynamically changing contemporary markets (Tucker 2002; Davey et al. 2011; 2018).

More broadly, this cooperation, as already mentioned above, brings both social and economic benefits at the local, regional or national level. The benefits include economic growth, rise in living standards, and positive changes in the labour market.

Collaborative researchers use different typologies and taxonomies to characterise forms of collaboration between universities and organisations in their environment. In the case of the corporate sector, the forms of collaboration that are most commonly used in practice and discussed in the literature are Joint Ventures, Networks, Consortia, and alliances (Barringer and Harrison 2000; Ankrah and Al-Tabbaa 2015). Michael Santoro and Shanthi Gopalakrishnan (2001), on the other hand, propose four types of university-business collaboration, including: (1) research support (e.g., Endowment/Trust Fund); (2) collaborative research (i.e., institutional agreements, group agreements, informal groups); (3) knowledge transfer (e.g., graduate employment, personal interactions, institutional programs, cooperative education); and (4) technology transfer (product development and commercialisation activities through university research centres).

There is another perspective on the forms of cooperation between HEIs and stakeholders, where eight areas/forms of relations between HEIs and organisations are distinguished, more adapted to the functioning of universities and their practices. And this typology of cooperation also usually refers to business or the corporate sector, but most of these forms can be used by universities in their relations with public organisations or NGOs. Among the most commonly distinguished are (Perkmann et al. 2013; Davey et al. 2018):

- co-management or co-governance – is a form of cooperation, where scientists and university employees are involved in decision-making processes in organisations, usually by representation on the boards of organisations or college councils
- academic entrepreneurship – universities cooperate with organisations during market analysis and the first steps in creating start-ups and new

enterprises, as well as cooperate to create innovative organisational cultures at universities
- lifelong learning – courses and training provided by universities for adults and employees of external institutions, companies and NGOs, developing different levels competence, skills and knowledge for adults
- development and implementation of curricula – that is, jointly launching processes creating the environment for the development of human capital responding to the various challenges of modern societies at universities. As part of this cooperation, the university, together with stakeholders, develops and improves courses and modules in the field of didactics at universities, invites representatives of organisations from various sectors to conduct classes depending on the areas of education, prepares with the private or public organisations dedicated programs of diploma, postgraduate and also PhD education
- commercialisation of results of research and development – by, among others, setting up *spin-offs*, disclosing innovations, patents and licenses – is considered to be this form of cooperation, which is a testament to the university's greatest impact on the environment, as its results give a quick response, to what extent this influence is real
- student mobility – temporary movement of students to enterprises, public institutions and non-governmental organisations
- academic mobility – temporary or permanent movement of teaching staff or researchers from universities to enterprises as well as employees, managers and researchers from enterprises to universities
- cooperation in research and development (*academic engagement*) – joint research and development activities, research contracts, informal and formal contacts and networks, research and development consultancy, joint publications of employees of organisations and academic staff, joint supervision of diploma theses with scientists/company researchers (bachelor, master, doctorate) in cooperation with business and student projects in cooperation with business

To conclude the presentation of the various areas and forms of relationships between universities and other organisations (especially business organisations), another typology, developed by Andrea Bonaccorsi and Andrea Piccaluga (1994) extended by Samuel Ankrah and Omar Al-Tabbaa (2015) should be cited. They stated that it is extremely difficult to create a typology for all possible forms of relationships, proposing, however, six areas-frames in which different forms of relationships between universities and business can be grouped. They included:

- Personal Informal Relationships (e.g., Academic spin-offs, Individual consultancy, Information exchange forums),
- Personal Formal Relationships (e.g., Student internships, Involvement of students in projects, Scholarships, internships, fellowships and postgraduate affiliations, Joint supervision of doctoral and master's theses),

- Third-Party (e.g., Institutional consultancy, Liaison offices, General support units, Associations),
- Formal Targeted Agreements (e.g Contract research, Patent and licensing agreements, Joint research projects and programmes, Exchange of research material or development of a joint curriculum),
- Formal Non-Targeted Agreements (e.g., Endowed Chairs and Advisory Boards, Sponsored R&D in university departments, Research grants, donations, endowments),
- Focused Structures (Innovation/incubation centres, Research, science and technology parks, University—Industry research cooperative research centres).

It is also necessary to emphasise that over the last 20 years, new forms of cooperation have emerged, and, as pointed out by the last authors, the level of organisational commitment on both sides of the cooperation is increasing.

Despite the wide range of forms of cooperation between higher education institutions and organisational stakeholders in other sectors, it is worth noting that initially the research focused mainly on selected forms, including commercialisation by patents or licenses, and on spin-outs and spin-offs, as well as on cooperation in research and development (Davey et al. 2018). Recently, however, the understanding of cooperation has expanded – more forms of cooperation have been created, especially those related to the educational mission of the university and the commercialisation of university research. Great importance is also attached to academic entrepreneurship understood broadly as the engagement of the academic community in entrepreneurial activities in addition to their usual academic duties in order to connect with business in their region and as the introduction of new products in scientific processes and research (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff 2000; Laredo 2007). Such a broader definition recognises the dynamics and heterogeneity of the academic community and their motivations for conducting various types of R&D and entrepreneurship (Davey, Rossano, and Sijde 2015).

An important role, in addition to institutionalised forms of cooperation between universities and organisations, may also be played by informal, mutual social relations between employees of organisations involved in cooperation (Grimpe and Fier 2010; Caniëls and Bosch 2011; Davey et al. 2018). These include:

- informal contacts, conversations, meetings
- ad hoc advice and cooperation of scientists and practitioners
- informal technology transfer
- participation in meetings, conferences

The overall presentation of forms of cooperation between organisations and universities in various areas is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Formalised areas and forms of cooperation between universities and enterprises, public and non-governmental organisations

Frames of relationship/ areas of cooperation	*Education*	*Research*	*Commercialisation and valorisation*	*Management*
Personal Informal and Formal Relationships	• Student internships/ scholarships, • Involvement of students in projects, • Joint or individual lectures, • Dual study programs (semi-practical, semi-academic), • Joint supervision of doctoral and master's theses,	• Individual consultancy, • Collegial conference and publications, • Employment of relevant scientists by business/public/NGOs,	• Academic entrepreneurship (e.g., spin-offs), • Student entrepreneurship (e.g., start-ups)	• Information exchange forums, • Shared resources - use of university or business/public/NGOs facility
Third-Party	• Liaison office		• General Assistance Units (including technology transfer organisations)	• Associations (functioning as brokers)
Formal Targeted and Non-Targeted Agreements	• Training Programmes for employees, • Lifelong learning: • executive education, industry training and professional courses	• Contract research, • Cooperative research projects/ programms, • Exchange of research materials or Joint curriculum development, • Joint research programmes	• Patent and licensing agreements, • Equity holding in companies by universities or faculty members	• Endowed Chairs and Advisory Boards • Research grant, gifts, endowment, trusts donations
Focused Structure	–	• University—Business/Public/ NGOs research cooperative research centres	• Innovation/incubation centre	• Subsidiary ownerships

Source: Own study based on: (Davey et al. 2018, Bonaccorsi and Piccaluga 1994; Ankrah and Al-Tabbaa 2015).

1.3.3 Forms of cooperation of universities with organisations in the European Union and Poland

Cooperation of universities with the environment, especially with business, has been developing for several decades in the USA, Japan, Singapore and European Union member states. The landscape of higher education in Europe also remains heterogeneous in relation to cooperation with the environment. Some studies show that the cooperation of universities is strongly linked to regional development policy, especially in supporting regional innovation (Healy et al. 2014). Where universities are more clearly integrated into regional strategies and universities themselves take a more formal role in the region, which is also expressed in their mission declarations, cooperation also develops. The focus on cooperation in general in recent years has been rather focused on activities that generate direct income (e.g., commercialisation of research and development, consultancy) or direct benefits for students (e.g., mobility programs). The same study, however, suggests that although management of universities or potential cooperating organisations promotes collaboration, its implementation depends largely on the personal interactions and individual contacts of individual members of the academic community (Healy et al. 2014).

In the European Union, the most popular form of cooperation between a university and organisations is collaboration in research and development, student mobility and lifelong learning (Davey et al. 2018). In the meantime, in Poland, in the light of the conducted research, there is a lack of commitment and cultural orientation towards cooperation with business and other organisations. Polish university managers and academics assess themselves and their environment as one of the least oriented to cooperate with business, public and non-governmental organisations in Europe (Davey et al. 2013). The reasons for this state of affairs include the poor funding of universities, the lack of financial resources of organisations dedicated to cooperation and the lack of external sources of financing for such cooperation (Baaken et al. 2015).

Comparing forms of cooperation in Poland and the European Union, the most popular in Poland are student mobility, lifelong learning and the development and implementation of curricula in cooperation with university stakeholders, while the mobility of researchers and commercialisation of research and research and development works are the worst (Davey et al. 2013).

When we compare Poland with its largest neighbour – Germany, it usually lags behind Germany in terms of developing cooperation between universities (except for one form – developing and implementing curricula), although this can be largely explained by the fact that German universities started cooperating earlier and that German technical universities and universities of applied sciences generally operate very closely with business (Baaken et al. 2015). Both countries differ in their approach to

interacting with business, as German universities focus on research related to cooperation with the environment, while Polish universities emphasise education related to the university's stakeholders.

The main barriers to cooperation between universities and public, non-governmental organisations and enterprises in Poland include (Uhl 2017):

- university (usually silo) structures, which do not favour the rapid creation of inter-organisational teams
- intellectual property law, which is often the subject of potential cooperation disputes; on the one hand, it results from the desire to obtain and maintain financial resources from created innovations and inventions on the university's side, on the other, however, the path from patents to products that can be used by enterprises requires much greater financial outlays that the university cannot afford
- lack of flexibility in the allocation of employee responsibilities, which means that focus on teaching inhibits scientific work and project implementation; at the same time, the best employees are leaving many universities, who cannot be acquired due to relatively low salaries for beginners and mid-level researchers
- cooperation between the university and the environment constitute a negligible share in the parametric assessment, therefore its role as part of the implemented policies and strategies of the university and their university units is often reduced
- poor promotion of research and implementation activities outside universities; design support and technology transfer centres do not fully fulfil their functions
- the flow of information, which is weak and causes a lack of awareness on the part of organisational or institutional stakeholders in the field of scientific research and their usefulness at universities, and bureaucracy inhibits the spread of academic knowledge and innovation, hinders the creation of mutual relations and finding cooperation leaders

1.3.4 Conditions, benefits and possible adverse results of cooperation

Within academic structures, there are many factors affecting the academy's willingness to interact with the environment (Davey, Rossano, and Sijde 2015). In particular, the behaviours and attitudes of scientists are important, including their motivations and attitudes towards cooperation and the social capital they possess. Importantly, when comparing various types of academic entrepreneurship (i.e., the engagement of the academic community, including students, graduates, PhD students and academics in broadly understood business activities), it was found that efforts to commercialise research through patenting and spin-off activities are generally motivated by financing, while collaborative research, including joint and contract research as well as consultancy, are more inspired by the motivation associated

with scientific practice (D'Este and Perkmann 2011). Institutionalised forms of cooperation recorded in the missions of the university, as well as functioning in various networks and partnerships with various organisations, which are a protective umbrella for different forms of cooperation with specific organisations, may also be important for starting university cooperation with the environment (Inzelt 2004; Davey, Rossano, and Sijde 2015). In order to strengthen the commercialisation of research, universities also change their organisational structures, creating special units: technology transfer centres, technology parks, incubators, and likewise create special procedures to facilitate commercialisation (Perkmann et al. 2013).

In addition to conditions, it is also worth pointing to drivers of cooperation, i.e., the factors that trigger the interaction of science with the environment. In the case of individual organisations and universities, these factors will of course differ from each other – depending on the type of university (e.g., its more research or more educational attitude), type of organisation (industry in which the enterprise operates, objectives of non-governmental or public organisations). Hence, cooperation may be triggered by the desire to attract more (or better) students by universities, for companies the need to find more experienced and trained employees, for NGOs the desire to attract volunteers or temporary employees who understand the principles of their organisation. Less obvious may be the indirect benefits that organisations and universities seek by raising the qualifications of their current employees, strengthening the organisational brand or retaining existing high-performance employees (Healy et al. 2014). Finally, James Fairweather (1991) and later Samuel Ankrah, Omar Al-Tabbaa (2015) in the course of putting collaboration facilitators in order, point out that their absence can hinder the development of collaboration. They list the following categories of factors:

1 capacity and resources (e.g., resources – financial, human and premises, incentives for researchers at universities)
2 legal issues, institutional polices and contractual mechanisms
3 management and organisational issues (e.g., leadership/commitment and support of top management, communication, mutual trust and commitment (and personal relationships), project management, structure of cooperating organisations, absorption capacity)
4 issues relating to technology
5 political issues – Policies/legislation/regulations to guide/support/encourage cooperation (e.g., tax breaks, business advisory assistance)
6 social issues (e.g., enhancing reputation and prestige)
7 other issues (e.g., geographic proximity)

The literature on the subject provides information on the existence of barriers that may inhibit the development of cooperation between universities and business, the public sector or non-governmental organisations.

These include (Bruneel, D'esteb, and Salter 2010; Cricelli and Grimaldi 2010; Ankrah and Al-Tabbaa 2015): inflexible university policies on cooperation with the environment, low levels of knowledge about research opportunities, cultural differences between the world of academia and of industry, weak management skills at the university, incompatibility between the academic rigour and organisational practice of the entities in the environment. It is also noted that barriers to cooperation, such as bureaucracy, lack of time for cooperation, insufficient financial resources or differences in organisational cultures, should be removed, and public policy and organisation strategies should focus on developing factors that drive the use of forms of cooperation (Davey et al. 2018). Research results show that removing barriers does not necessarily lead to driving cooperation. Instead, if there are sufficient incentives to cooperate, potential partners will find a way to cooperate. They are usually triggered by people who motivate and facilitate the organisation of work. Each stakeholder group has their own motivations to cooperate: researchers work primarily to achieve the benefits of their research, university managers have more widely understood reasons why they want the university to be involved in the process of creating innovation (especially to gain access to potential resources), while organisation managers see potential access to talents and competitive advantage they could gain when working with universities. At the same time, mutual trust and commitment, common interests and goals facilitate the cooperation of all interested groups. People and relationships are the driving force of cooperation with universities in Europe (Healy et al. 2014). More broadly, for scientists and universities, cooperation drivers can be: mutual trust and existing agreement, as well as sharing goals and understanding the interests of cooperating organisations and its stakeholders (Davey et al. 2011). In the case of enterprises, public and non-governmental organisations, as mentioned above, these may present opportunities for hiring interesting fresh graduates, access to knowledge, the possibility of obtaining additional funds, and also a short geographical distance between the university and partners and its business orientation.

The literature on the subject provides a range of information about the benefits of both formal and informal cooperation between universities and stakeholders. First of all, when there is an improvement in learning conditions (learning by doing), developing certain skills and increasing student's chances for employment with a better understanding of workflow or organisational cultures, students benefit. Students have enriched CVs, often have internships as part of their cooperation and are given jobs in organisations cooperating with the university (Davey et al. 2018).

From the organisation's point of view, it is worth noting that the benefits are different depending on whether the cooperation is formalised or not. The first one, based on a variety of formal projects or contracts, primarily causes a flow of knowledge that can be used by business

partners; the time to implement innovations is shortened, costs and expenses in organisations for some projects are reduced (e.g., investments and employment of HR specialists). In addition, partnership with universities is a way of obtaining innovative ideas and access to the latest technological discoveries (Dan 2013), which in particular applies to technical universities.

Cooperation of science with organisational and institutional stakeholders also benefits academy employees (Davey et al. 2018). First of all, it emphasises the increase of opportunities for professional development, training, updating knowledge and the possibility of engaging in research and implementation projects. Personal research projects can be sponsored and promoted by organisations cooperating with universities, as long as they are relevant and practical. In addition, thanks to cooperation with the university's stakeholders, their prestige and recognition in the scientific community, as well as organisational and social status, contacts, financial benefits may increase (Davey, Rossano, and Sijde 2015; Davey et al. 2018).

More broadly, from the perspective of institutions such as universities, attention is drawn to the fact that cooperation increases the prestige of the university and affects the consolidation of its brand in research and development. Universities also use the resources of cooperating organisations to conduct research and renovate research infrastructure (Perkmann et al. 2013; Davey, Rossano, and Sijde 2015; Davey et al. 2018).

The benefits for society should also be broadly acknowledged. The creation of jobs through research and implementation projects, benefits for local industry or services is emphasised. As a result, they increase local gross domestic product and disposable income. The more such cooperation there is, the greater the variety of social and recreational benefits. As a result, regional labour productivity increases (Davey et al. 2018).

The literature on the subject also provides information on the fact that there is a dark side, i.e., disadvantages or unexpected effects, which can lead to the cooperation of academic institutions with public, non-governmental organisations and business. It should also be emphasised here that cooperation has become a big idea for the creators of contemporary models of public policy – in particular at the level of the European Union and individual countries where it is deemed a way of solving many socio-economic problems. It happens that cooperation is not a process or phenomenon in organisations, but a superior phenomenon to which organisations should adapt. Meanwhile, researchers note that collaboration is often the result of a certain fashion, mood or climate to interact (Heap 2000). In turn, Robert Agranoff (2006) notes that cooperation can be a fashionable saying, a slogan that attracts attention, and is seen as a priority way of solving social problems, implemented easily and pleasantly. Meanwhile, as research on cooperation primarily between enterprises prove, obtaining expected benefits and satisfying

results requires time and perseverance in cooperation. Hence, the question arises here whether the cooperation of our entities is a categorical imperative that organisations follow regardless of gaining benefits, or a strategic choice that has deep sense for the organisation. If, as Monika Kostera (2010, 15) claims, people in organisations are looking for meaning, then giving meaning to cooperation should become the main concern for the organisation – both on the side of science and co-operating entities.

In the case of cooperation between scientific institutions and stakeholders, many unclear issues are highlighted (Gillis and McNally 2010; Bozeman et al. 2012; Howells, Ramlogan, and Cheng 2012; Perkmann et al. 2013; Dan 2013; Davey, Rossano, and Sijde 2015; Davey et al. 2018):

- as regards education: the impact of business partners on curricula is unclear, interference in educational processes does not always bring benefits
- from the perspective of universities as organisations - the quest for additional income through closer cooperation with the environment, including commercialisation of research (e.g., patents, licences, spin-offs, renting out infrastructure) may lead to the instrumentalization of their activities and a decline in the ethos of science
- as regards scientific research at universities: the possibility of manipulation, interference in research; shifting the focus of research and knowledge production from social interests to business interests, decrease in research productivity and publishing capacity; ethical problems in research – disclosure of results, impact on research topics; questionable results in relation to expenditure
- as regards the work of scientists: although university employees see a wide range of benefits (status, contacts, financial benefits or recognition from the academic community) resulting from engaging in cooperative activities, nevertheless this commitment is not achieved without friction and problems. Maintaining a balance between traditional academic duties and cooperation with the environment imposes challenges such as coping with stress, cultural differences in organisations, going beyond the traditional understanding of the role of a researcher
- for organisations cooperating with universities: the time needed to integrate university research into the production process in the business environment is considered a time-consuming and complex process, poor flexibility of the university in response to the situation in the environment, low tendency of the university to implement short-term solutions that enterprises need, delay in the achievement of the organisation's goals and finally the potential financial risk. The cooperation can also generate problems in the organisation through a communication mismatch with the partner university, the possibility of "piracy" of know-how, as well as problems related to the intellectual property of jointly developed products

1.4 Models of cooperation between universities and their environment

The literature on the subject provides many theoretical and empirical models of cooperation between universities or, more broadly, higher education institutions and the environment and stakeholders of various socio-economic sectors. Models of cooperation can be identified both at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels. The macro-level refers to relations between large institutional structures, such as the science sector or higher education institutions (HEIs) and the state, business or civil society structures. The meso-level is the cooperation of an organisational nature that specific universities and the organisations they cooperate with, have, whether private, public or non-governmental. The micro-level means cooperation between university staff and public organisations and enterprises, members and volunteers of NGOs. Cooperation at the micro-level – maintaining individual relationships – can to a large extent determine the success of developing cooperation at the meso- or macro-level. Below are some of the most important models from the macro and meso-level.

Today, at the macro-level, a frequently discussed concept, taking into account the role of universities in the dispersion of knowledge and innovation, is the so-called triple helix relationship model, which is based on the assumption that business, science and higher education institutions and public authorities are increasingly interdependent (Leydesdorff 2012), expanding the distinctive triad, consisting of science, business and the state, in an inter-woven spiral of different mutual relations. The concept refers directly to the changing and expanding role of the science sector in development and the resulting new interactions with the external environment: the business sector and administration (see Figure 1.2). The

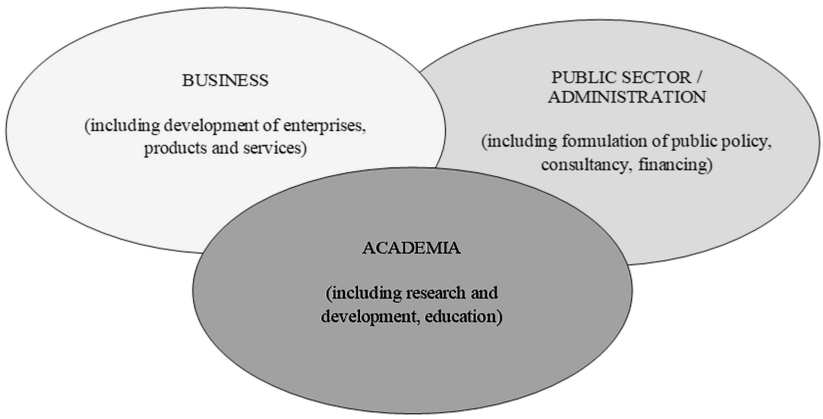

Figure 1.2 The triple helix model.

Source: Own study based on: (Leydesdorff 2012).

potential for cooperation is determined by the relations between these three sectors and entities; the lack of these connections significantly hinders the flow of knowledge. In the triple helix model, the creation of the knowledge economy is the most important (Carayannis, Barth, and Campbell 2012).

In recent years, a proposal for cooperation, which is called a quadruple helix or even wider, a quintuple helix, has become more and more important.

The proposal of the model/concept of cooperation called the quadruple helix covers, in addition to the business, public and science sectors, the media and civil society (see Figure 1.3). According to the authors, the processes launched under the quadruple helix allow the formation of a knowledge-based society and a knowledge-based democracy (Carayannis, Barth, and Campbell 2012). In particular, it is recognised that a glocal, knowledge-based economy and the launch of innovation processes must be supported not only by the triple relationship helix, but also on civil society and its values as well as the media and culture (Carayannis and Campbell 2009). This fourth spiral is associated with the media, creative industry, culture, values, lifestyle, art, and maybe also with the concept of a creative class (Carayannis and Campbell 2009).

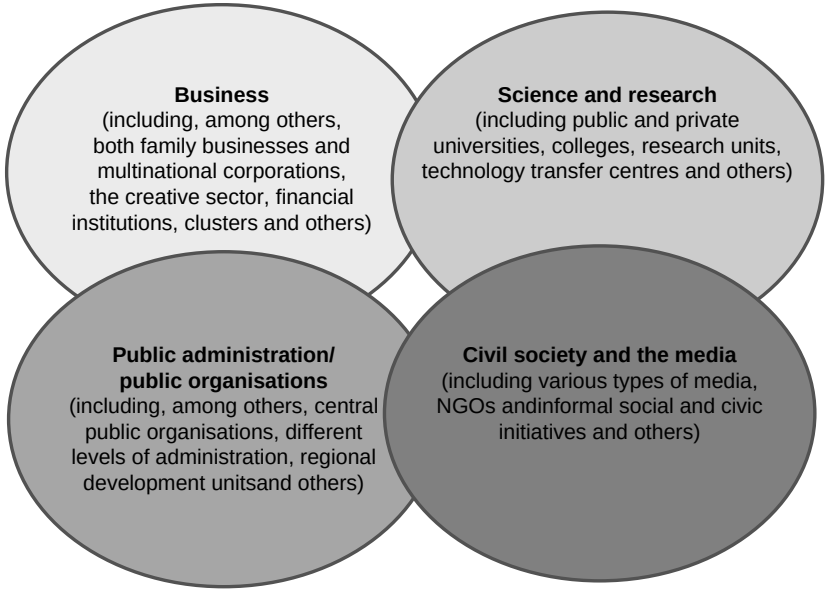

Figure 1.3 The quadruple helix model.

Source: Own study based on: (Carayannis and Campbell 2009; Van Waart, Mulder, and De Bont 2015).

The quintuple helix model, i.e., a five-element helix (Carayannis, Barth, and Campbell 2012), is based on previous models and adds – as the fifth helix – the environment. It provides a framework for thinking about the environment, sustainable development and social ecology (Carayannis and Campbell 2009) as the basis for the interaction, co-development and co-evolution of society and nature. In this sense, relations and cooperation between science, business, the state and civil society must take into account or should be built taking into account the natural environment. Therefore, the five-fold helix model is in line with approaches, models and goals of sustainable development ('Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' 2015).

There are also several organisational models in the literature that present the process of formation of cooperation between the university and organisations in its environment (i.e., the meso-level mentioned above). One of them, developed by Hitoshi Mitsuhashi (2002) and modified through a systematic literature review (Ankrah and Al-Tabbaa 2015) includes 5 stages of the formulation of cooperation between business/industry and universities (see Figure 1.4). Stage one is Partnership identification, which includes identifying the purpose of the collaboration, gaining a general understanding of the capabilities of potential partners and assessing pre-existing relationships. Stage two is the creation of a list of potential, prospective partners. Stage three is the assessment and selection of partners, involving, prior to final selection, an objective assessment of the strategic interests of potential partners, an

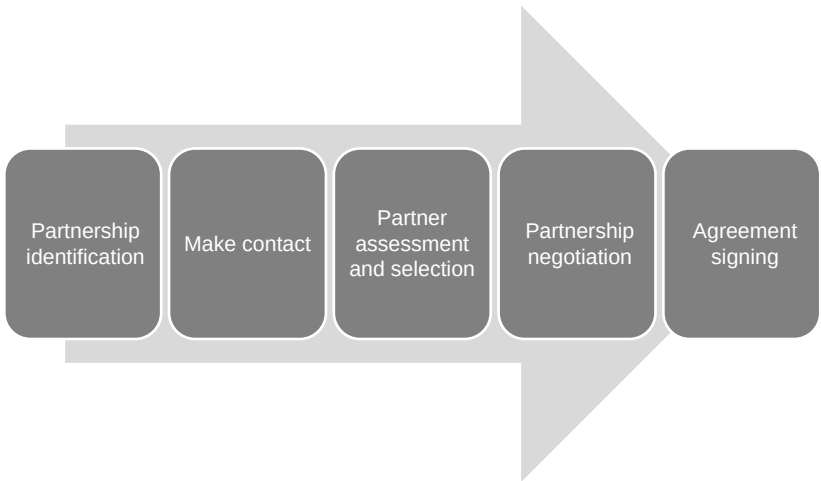

Figure 1.4 Model of the collaboration process between universities and the industry.
Source: Ankrah and Al-Tabbaa 2015.

analysis of the actual capabilities of potential partners compared to those declared, and finally the identification and organisation of an appropriate mix of partners. The fourth stage, partnership negotiation, involves the comprehensive definition of the partnership/cooperation, including the definition of the goal or mission/vision of the partnership, the specific common goals/tasks for the venture, the organisational structure of the partnership, the mode of management and administration with clearly defined responsibilities, as well as agreeing on the plan and milestones for the cooperation, indicators for success and final deliverables (Ankrah and Al-Tabbaa 2015). Finally, the fifth stage is the signing of the agreement.

While the model prepared by Hitoshi Mitsuhashi (2002) and adapted by Samuel Ankrah, Omar AL-Tabbaa (2015) describes the de facto preparation for real collaboration, the conceptual model of the collaborative process in the field of scientific research, prepared by Simon Philbin (2008), presents a perspective of what happens between organisations also after the stage of signing formal agreements and, as the author notes, allows for adaptation by collaboration practitioners, both in academia as well as in organisations (mainly business), to facilitate new collaborations, development of innovation and knowledge transfer (Philbin 2008).

The model is based on a linear sequence of activities that includes five stages (see Figure 1.5), namely: (1) terrain mapping; (2) proposition; (3) initiation; (4) delivery; (5) evaluation. This sequence of activities is supported by two elements related to the exchange of information and knowledge: the research mission and the business mission, which allow it to be linked to strategic management activities undertaken both within the university and within the business organisations. As a result, collaboration can contribute to and influence the strategy of both companies as well as universities. Social capital also plays an important role in capturing the necessary social interactions required for collaboration, as well as the functioning of the collaboration agent, i.e., the role of person who personally drives the collaboration and is responsible for achieving the required goals to initiate and implement the collaboration (Philbin 2008).

In conclusion, it should be noted that if the models at the macro level take into account the participation of civil society or societies as a whole in relations with the academia, then the models at the meso-level, refer mainly to relations with business or industry. There is a clear gap in modelling the relationship between universities and non-profit stakeholders, i.e., with third sector organisations and public institutions. Hence, in our book we propose the use of action research to build relationships with these stakeholders as well. In the next chapter, we undertake a broader outline of what action research is.

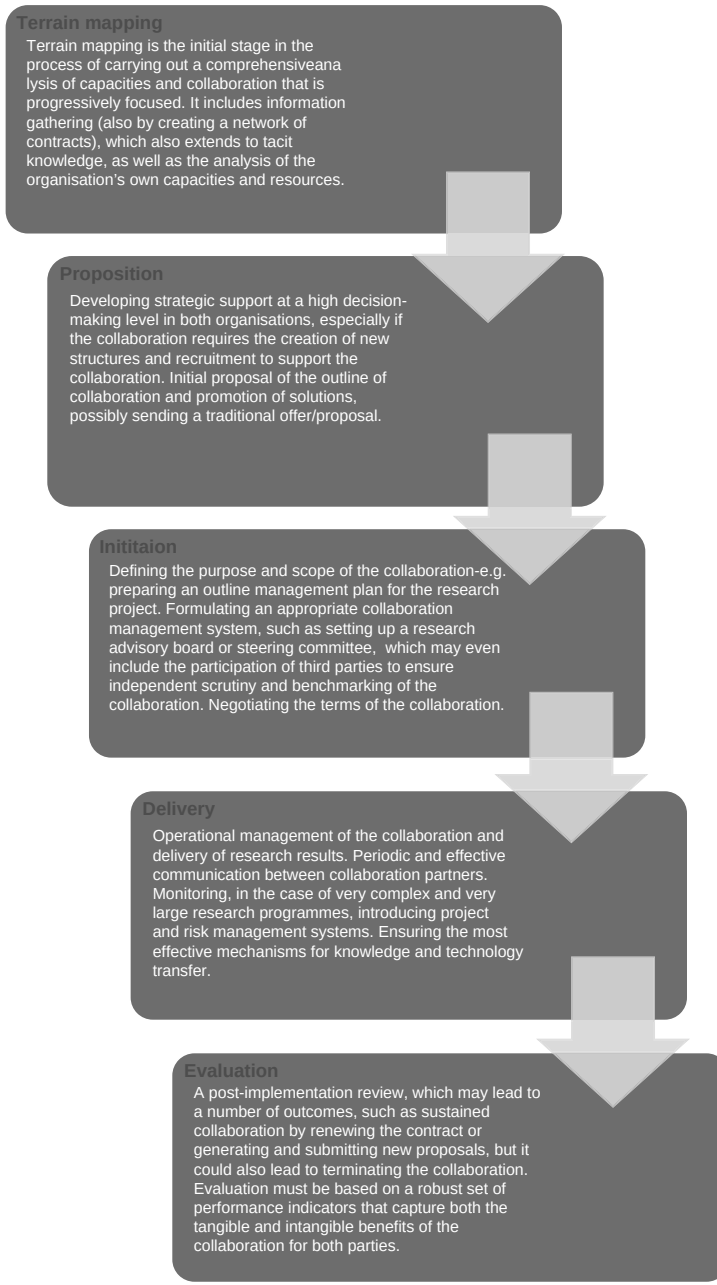

Figure 1.5 Model of the process of collaboration between universities and stakeholders after signing a formal contract.

Source: Compiled from (Philbin 2008).

References

Agranoff, R. 2006. 'Inside Collaborative Networks: Ten Lessons for Public Managers'. *Public Administration Review* 66 (special issue): 56–64.

Alves, H., E.W. Mainardes, and M. Raposo. 2010. 'Relationship Approach to Higher Education Institution Stakeholder Management'. *Tertiary Education and Management* 16 (3): 159–181. 10.1080/13583883.2010.497314.

Alvesson, M. 2013. *The Triumph of Emptiness: Consumption, Higher Education, and Work Organization*. Oxford University Press.

Ankrah, S., and O. Al-Tabbaa. 2015. 'Universities–Industry Collaboration: A Systematic Review'. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 31 (3): 387–408.

Baaken, T., S. Rossano, F. von Hagen, T. Davey, and A. Meerman. 2015. 'University-Business Cooperation and Entrepreneurship at Universities – An Empirical Based Comparison of Poland and Germany'. *Optimum. Studia Ekonomiczne* 5 (77): 4–26.

Babiak, K. 2007. 'Determinants of Interorganisational Relationships: The Case of a Canadian Non-Profit Sport Organisation'. *Journal of Sport Management* 21 (3): 338–376.

Barringer, B.R., and J.S. Harrison. 2000. 'Walking a Tightrope: Creating Value Through Interorganisational Relationships'. *Journal of Management* 26 (3): 367–403.

Bastedo, M.N., and P.J. Gumport. 2003. 'Access to What? Mission Differentiation and Academic Stratification in U.S. Public Higher Education'. *Higher Education* 46 (3): 341–359.

Bedwell, W.L., J.L. Wildman, D. Diaz-Granados, M. Salazar, W.S. Kramer, and E. Salas. 2012. 'Collaboration at Work: An Integrative Multilevel Conceptualization'. *Human Resource Management Review* 22 (2): 128–145.

Berchin, I.I., A.R. de Aguiar Dutra, and J.B.S.O.A. Guerra. 2021. 'How Do Higher Education Institutions Promote Sustainable Development? A Literature Review'. 29 (6): 1204–1222. 10.1002/sd.2219.

Berg, E., J. Barry, and J. Chandler. 2004. 'New Public Management as Contested Terrain: The New Public Management and Higher Education: A Human Cost?' In *Questioning the New Public Management*, edited by M. Dent, J. Chandler, and J. Barry, 161–176. London and New York: Routledge.

Bilimoria, D., and X. Liang. 2011. *Gender Equity in Science and Engineering: Advancing Change in Higher Education*. 1st ed. Routledge. 10.4324/9780203149133.

Blomgren Bingham, L., and R. O'Leary. 2006. 'Conclusion: Parallel Play, Not Collaboration: Missing Questions, Missing Connections'. *Public Administration Review* 66: 161–167.

Bloom, A. 1997. *Umysł Zamknięty*. Translated by T. Bieroń. Warszawa: Zysk i S-ka.

Boden, R., and M. Nedeva. 2010. 'Employing Discourse: Universities and Graduate "Employability"'. *Journal of Education Policy* 25 (1): 37–54. 10.1080/02680930903349489.

Bogacz-Wojtanowska, E. 2011. 'Zarządzanie Procesem Współpracy Jednostek Samorządu Terytorialnego i Organizacji Pozarządowych'. *Kwartalnik Trzeci Sektor*, no. special issue: 79–87.

Bonaccorsi, A., and C. Daraio. 2007. *Universities and Strategic Knowledge Creation: Specialization and Performance in Europe*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Bonaccorsi, A., and A. Piccaluga. 1994. 'A Theoretical Framework for the Evaluation of University—Industry Relationships'. *R&D Management* 24: 154–169.

Bozeman, B., J. Youtie, C. Slade, and M. Gaughan. 2012. 'The "Dark Side" of Academic Research Collaborations: Case Studies in Exploitation, Bullying and Unethical Behaviour'. In. Frederiksberg, Denmark: Copenhagen Business School.

Brady, N., and A. Bates. 2016. 'The Standards Paradox: How Quality Assurance Regimes Can Subvert Teaching and Learning in Higher Education'. *European Educational Research Journal* 15 (2): 155–174. 10.1177/1474904115617484.

Brockerhoff, L., J. Huisman, and M. Laufer. 2015. *Quality in Higher Education: A Literature Review*. Ghent: Centre for Higher Education Governance.

Brouns, F., A. Teixeira, L. Morgado, S. Fano, A. Fueyo, and D. Jansen. 2017. 'Designing Massive Open Online Learning Processes: The SMOOC Pedagogical Framework'. In *Open Education: From OERs to MOOCs*, edited by M.J. Kinshuk and M.K. Khribi, 315–336. Springer. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-662-52925-6_16.

British Council Report. 1997. 'Graduate Employability in the Middle East and North Africa: Post-Arab Spring'. http://www.britishcouncil.org/employability_report.pdf

Bruneel, J., P. D'esteb, and A. Salter. 2010. 'Investigating the Factors That Diminish the Barriers to University—Industry Collaboration'. *Research Policy* 39: 858—868.

Cameron, K.S. 1984. 'Organizational Adaptation and Higher Education'. *The Journal of Higher Education* 55 (2): 122–144. 10.1080/00221546.1984.11778679.

Campbell, D.A. 2008. 'Giving up The Single Life: Leadership Motivations for Interorganisational Restructuring of Non-Profit Organisations'. *Administration in Social Work* 33 (4): 368–386.

Caniëls, M., and H. van den Bosch. 2011. 'The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Building Regional Innovation Systems'. *Papers in Regional Science* 90 (2): 1–16.

Capano, G., and A. Pritoni. 2019. 'Varieties of Hybrid Systemic Governance in European Higher Education'. *Higher Education Quarterly* 73: 10–28. 10.1111/hequ.12180.

Caprile, M., E. Addis, C. Castaño, I. Klinge, M. Larios, D. Meulders, J. Müller, et al. 2012. 'Meta-Analysis of Gender and Science Research. Synthesis Report'. Brussels: European Commission, DG Research & Innovation.

Carayannis, E.G., T.D. Barth, and D. Campbell. 2012. 'The Quintuple Helix Innovation Model: Global Warming as a Challenge and Driver for Innovatio'. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship* 1 (2): 1–12.

Carayannis, E.G., and D.F. Campbell. 2009. 'Model 3 and Quadruple Helix': Toward a 21st Century Fractal Innovation Ecosystem'. *International Journal of Technology Management* 46 (3): 201–234.

Carayol, N. 2003. 'Objectives, Agreements and Matching in Science-Industry Collaborations: Reassembling the Pieces of the Puzzle'. *Research Policy* 32 (6): 887–908.

Carrillo, C., and A.M. Flores. 2020. 'COVID-19 and Teacher Education: A Literature Review of Online Teaching and Learning Practices'. *European Journal of Teacher Education* 43 (4): 466–487.

Carvalho, T., and S. Diogo. 2018. 'Women Rectors and Leadership Narratives: The Same Male Norm?' *Education Sciences* 8 (2) (75): 1–14. 0.3390/educsci8020075.

Chawinga, W.D., and P.A. Zozie. 2016. 'Increasing Access to Higher Education through Open and Distance Learning: Empirical Findings From Mzuzu University, Malawi'. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* 17 (4): 1–20.

Cheng, M., O. Adekola, J. Albia, and S. Cai. 2021. 'Employability in Higher Education: A Review of Key Stakeholders' Perspectives'. *Higher Education Evaluation and Development*, 1–16. 10.1108/HEED-03-2021-0025.

Chyi, N. 2020. 'The Coronavirus Is Democratizing Knowledge'. 2020. https://www.wired.com/story/opinion-the-coronavirus-is-democratizing-knowledge/.

Cohen, W.M., R.R. Nelson, and J.P. Walsh. 2002. 'Links and Impacts: The Influence of Public Research on Industrial R&D'. *Management Science* 48 (1): 1–23.

Cole, D., and M. Tibby. 2013. *Defining and Developing Your Approach to Employability: A Framework for Higher Education Institutions*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Coleman Selden, S., J.E. Sowa, and J. Sandfort. 2006. 'The Impact of Nonprofit Collaboration in Early Child Care and Education on Management and Program Outcomes'. *Public Administration Review* 66 (3): 412–425.

Corbera, E., I. Anguelovski, J. Honey-Rosés, and I. RuizMallén. 2020. 'Academia in the Time of COVID-19'. *Towards an Ethics of Care, Planning Theory & Practice* 21 (2): 191–199.

Cortese, A.D. 2003. 'The Critical Role of Higher Education in Creating a Sustainable Future'. *Planning for Higher Education* 31 (3): 15–22.

Cricelli, L., and M. Grimaldi. 2010. 'Knowledge-based Inter-organizational Collaborations'. *Journal of Knowledge Management* 14 (3): 348–358. 10.1108/13673271011050094.

Cuesta-Claros, A., S. Malekpour, R. Raven, and T. Kestin. 2021. 'Understanding the Roles of Universities for Sustainable Development Transformations: A Framing Analysis of University Models'. *Sustainable Development* 1–14. 10.1002/sd.2247.

Cutri, R.M., J. Mena, and E.F. Whiting. 2020. 'Faculty Readiness for Online Crisis Teaching: Transitioning to Online Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic'. *European Journal of Teacher Education* 43: 523–541. 10.1080/02619768.2020.1815702.

Dan, M.C. 2013. 'Why Should University and Business Cooperate? A Discussion of Advantages and Disadvantages'. *International Journal of Economic Practices and Theories* 3 (1): 67–74.

Das, T.K., and B.S. Teng. 1998. 'Between Trust And Control: Developing Confidence in Partner Cooperation in Alliances'. *Academy of Management Review* 23 (3): 491–512.

Davey, T., T. Baaken, V. Galán-Muros, and A. Meerman. 2011. 'Study on the Cooperation Between Higher Education Institutions and Public and Private Organisations in Europe'. Brussels: European Commission, DG Education and Culture.

Davey, T., V. Galán-Muros, A. Meerman, and T. Kusio. 2013. 'The State of Business –University Cooperations in Poland'. Amsterdam: Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre, apprimo UG oraz University Industry Innovation Network.

Davey, T., A. Meerman, V. Galan Muros, B. Orazbayeva, and T. Baaken. 2018. 'The State of University-Business Cooperation in Europe Final Report'. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Davey, T., S. Rossano, and P. van der Sijde. 2015. 'Does Context Matter in Academic Entrepreneurship? The Role of Barriers and Drivers in the Regional and National Context'. *Journal of Technology Transfer* 6: 1–26.

Deem, R., and K.J. Brehony. 2005. 'Management as Ideology: The Case of "New Managerialism" in Higher Education'. *Oxford Review of Education* 31 (2): 217–235.

D'Este, P., and M. Perkmann. 2011. 'Why Do Academics Engage with Industry? The Entrepreneurial University and Individual Motivations'. *Journal of Technology Transfer* 36 (3): 316–339.

Dhawan, S. 2020. 'Online Learning: A Panacea in the Timeof COVID-19 Crisis'. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems* 49 (1): 5–22.

Dicker, R., M. Garcia, A. Kelly, P. Modabber, A. O'Farrell, A. Pond, N. Pond, and H.M. Mulrooney. 2017. 'Student Perceptions of Quality in Higher Education: Effect of Year of Study, Gender and Ethnicity'. *New Directions in the Teaching of Physical Sciences* 12 (1): 2051–3615.

Docherty, T. 2015. *Universities at War*. SAGE Publications, Inc. 10.4135/9781473910263.

Doring, A. 2002. 'Challenges to the Academic Role of Change Agent'. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 26 (2): 139–148.

Dowling-Hetherington, L. 2014. 'The Changing Demands of Academic Life in Ireland'. *International Journal of Educational Management* 28 (2): 141–151. 10.1108/IJEM-02-2013-0021.

'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Universities: The Power of a Systemic Approach'. 2019. LERU position paper.

Etzkowitz, H., and L. Leydesdorff. 2000. 'The Dynamics of Innovation: From National Systems and "Mode 2" to a Triple Helix of University-Industry-Government Relations'. *Research Policy* 29 (2): 109–123.

Faggian, A., and P. McCann. 2009. 'Human Capital, Graduate Migration and Innovation in British Regions'. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 33: 317–333. 10.1093/cje/ben042.

Fairweather, J.S. 1991. 'Managing Industry—University Research Relationships'. *Journal for Higher Education Management* 11: 1–7.

Farajollahi, M., H. Zare, M. Hormozi, M.R. Sarmadi, and N. Zarifsanaee. 2010. 'A Conceptual Model for Effective Distance Learning in Higher Education'. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education* 11 (3): 63–77.

Fosler, R.S. 2001. *Working Better Together. How Government, Business, and Nonprofit Organizations Can Achieve Public Purposes through Cross-Sector Collaboration, Alliances, and Partnerships*. Washington: Independent Sector.

Galan-Muros, V., and T. Davey. 2017. 'The UBC Ecosystem: Putting Together a Comprehensive Framework For University-Business Cooperation'. *Journal of Technology Transfer* 44(4): 1311–1346.

Geppert, M., and G. Hollinshead. 2017. 'Signs of Dystopia and Demoralization in Global Academia: Reflections on the Precarious and Destructive Effects of the Colonization of the Lebenswelt'. *Critical Perspectives on International Business* 13 (2): 136–150. 10.1108/cpoib-07-2016-0026.

Gibbons, M., C. Limoges, H. Nowotny, S. Schwartzman, P. Scott, and M. Trow. 1994. *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publication.

Gillis, M.R., and M.E. McNally. 2010. 'The Influence of Industry on Dental Education'. *Journal of Dentistry Education* 74 (10): 1095–1105.

Giroux, H. 2002. 'Neoliberalism, Corporate Culture and the Promise of Higher Education: The University as a Democratic Public Sphere'. *Harvard Educational Review* 72 (4): 1–31.

Goddard, J. 2009. *Re-inventing the Civic University*. London: NESTA.

Goddard, J., M. Coombes, L. Kempton, and P. Vallance. 2014. 'Universities as Anchor Institutions in Cities in a Turbulent Funding Environment: Vulnerable Institutions and Vulnerable Places in England. Cambridge Journal of Regions'. *Economy and Societ* 7 (2): 307–325. 10.1093/cjres/rsu004.

González-Yebra, Ó, M.A. Aguilar, F.J. Aguilar, and M. Lucas. 2019. 'Co-Design of a 3D Virtual Campus for Synchronous Distance Teaching Based on Student Satisfaction: Experience at the University of Almería (Spain)'. *Education Sciences* 9 (21): 1–17.

Göransson, B., R. Maharajh, and U. Schmoch. 2009. 'New Activities of Universities in Transfer and Extension: Multiple Requirements and Manifold Solutions'. *Science and Public Policy* 36 (2): 157–164. 10.3152/030234209X406863.

Goslar, R. 1998. 'Uniwersytet Jako Narzędzie Adaptacji Cywilizacyjnych'. In *Idea Uniwersytetu u Schyłku Tysiąclecia*, edited by H. Żytkowicz. Warszawa: Fundacja na rzecz Nauki Polskiej.

'Graduate Employability in Asia'. 2012. Bangkok Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education. Bangkok: UNESCO.

'Graduate Employability in the Middle East and North Africa: Post-Arab Spring'. 1997. British Council. http://www.britishcouncil.org/employability_report.pdf.

Greenwood, R., M. Raynard, F. Kodeih, E.R. Micelotta, and M. Lounsbury. 2011. 'Institutional Complexity and Organizational Responses'. *The Academy of Management Annals* 5 (1): 317–337. 10.1080/19416520.2011.590299.

Grimpe, Ch., and H. Fier. 2010. 'Informal University Technology Transfer: A Comparison Between the United States and Germany'. *Journal of Technology Transfer* 35 (6): 637–650.

Grudowski, P., and K. Lewandowski. 2012. 'Pojęcie Jakości Kształcenia i Uwarunkowania Jej Kwantyfikacji w Uczelniach Wyższych'. *Zarządzanie i Finanse* 10 (3(1)): 394–403.

Gudkova, S. 2019. 'Rola Akredytacji Międzynarodowych w Zapewnieniu Jakości Procesu Uczenia Się'. In *Dialog – Tom Internacjonalizacja*, edited by Ł. Sułkowski and R. Seliga. Uniwersytet Jagielloński.

Häyrinen-Alestalo, M., and U. Peltola. 2006. 'The Problem of a Market-Oriented University'. *Higher Education* 52 (2): 251–281. http://www.jstor.org/stable/29735013.

Hayter, Ch.S., E. Rasmussen, and J.H. Rooksby. 2020. 'Beyond Formal University Technology Transfer: Innovative Pathways for Knowledge Exchange'. *The Journal of Technology Transfer* 45 (1): 1–8.

Healy, A., M. Perkmann, J. Goddard, and L. Kempton. 2014. 'Measuring the Impact of University Business Cooperation (EAC/23/2012): Final Report'. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Heap, S. 2000. 'NGO – Business Partnerships: Research-in-Progress'. *Public Management* 2 (4): 555–563.

Hillage, J., and E. Pollard. 1998. 'Employability: Developing a Framework for Policy Analysis'. *Department for Education and Employment*. Labour Market Trends 107: 83–84.

Holmwood, J. 2016. 'The Turn of the Screw'; Marketization and Higher Education in England'. *Prometheus* 34 (1): 63–72.

Howells, J., R. Ramlogan, and S.L. Cheng. 2012. 'Universities in an Open Innovation System: A UK Perspective'. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research* 18 (4): 440–456.

Hsu, P.L., E.A. Maccari, M.R. Mazieri, and J.E. Storópoli. 2018. 'A Bibliometric Review of Institutional Theory on Higher Education Institutions'. *Future Studies Research Journal: Trends and Strategy* 10 (3): 383–401.

Hughes, A., and M. Kitson. 2012. 'Pathways to Impact and the Strategic Role of Universities: New Evidence on the Breadth and Depth of University Knowledge Exchange in the UK and the Factors Constraining Its Development'. *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 36 (3): 723–750. 10.1093/cje/bes017.

Huxham, C. 2003. 'Theorizing Collaboration Practice'. *Public Management Review* 5 (3): 401–423.

Inzelt, A. 2004. 'The Evolution of University-Industry-Government Relationships During Transition'. *Research Policy* 33 (6): 975–995.

Kapucu, N. 2006. 'Public-Nonprofit Partnerships for Collective Action in Dynamic Contexts Of Emergencies'. *Public Administration* 84 (1): 205–220.

Kola, A., and K. Leja. 2015. 'Rozszerzona Trzecia Misja Uniwersytetu Na Przykładzie Jego Relacji z Podmiotami Trzeciego Sektora'. *E-Mentor* 4 (61): 4–12.

Kolk, A., W. van Dolen, and M. Vock. 2010. 'Trickle Effects of Cross-Sector Social Partnerships'. *Journal of Business Ethics* 94, 123–137.

Korff, N., P. van der Sijde, P. Groenewegen, and T. Davey. 2014. 'Supporting University – Industry Linkages: A Case Study of the Relationship Between the Organisational and Individual Levels'. *Industry & Higher Education* 28 (4): 281–300.

Kostera, Monika. 2010. *Organizacje i Archetypy*. Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer.

Kożuch, B. 2007. *Nauka o Organizacji*. Warszawa: CeDeWu.

Krause, K-L. 2012. 'Addressing the Wicked Problem of Quality in Higher Education: Theoretical Approaches and Implications'. *Higher Education Research and Development* 31 (3): 285–297.

Lane, A. 2012. 'A Review of the Role of National Policy and Institutional Mission in European Distance Teaching Universities with Respect to Widening Participation in Higher Education Study through Open Educational Resources'. *Distance Education* 33 (2): 135–150. 10.1080/01587919.2012.692067.

Lange, B. 2021. 'Framing Third Places for Universities' Third Mission – Field Configuring Events as Collaborative Learning and Transfer Formats'. *International Journal of Training and Development* 25 (4): 433–449. 10.1111/ijtd.12239.

Laredo, P. 2007. 'Revisiting the Third Mission of Universities: Toward a Renewed Categorization of University Activities?' *Higher Education Policy* 20 (4): 441–456.

Lederman, D. 2020. 'Will Shift to Remote Teaching Be Boon or Bane for Online Learning?' *Inside Higher ED* (blog). 2020. https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2020/03/18/most-teaching-going-remote-will-help-or-hurt-online-learning.

Legato, M.J., and M.M. Glezerman, eds. 2017. *The International Society for Gender Medicine: History and Highlights*. London: Academic Press.

Lenartowicz, M. 2015. 'The Nature of the University'. *Higher Education* 69: 947–961. 10.1007/s10734-014-9815-0.

LERU. 2019. 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Universities: The Power of a Systemic Approach'. LERU position paper.

Levidow, L. 2002. 'Marketizing Higher Education: Neoliberal Strategies and Counter-Strategies'. In *The Virtual University? Knowledge, Markets and Management*, edited by K. Robins and F. Webster, 227–248.Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Levin, H.M. 1991. 'Raising Productivity in Higher Education'. *The Journal of Higher Education* 62 (3): 241–262.

Levin, H.M., and D. Greenwood. 2008. 'The Future of Universities: Action Research and the Transformation of Higher Education'. In *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 211–226. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Leydesdorff, L. 2012. 'The Triple Helix, Quadruple Helix, …, and an N-Tuple of Helices: Explanatory Models for Analyzing the Knowledge-Based Economy?' *Journal of the Knowledge Economy* 3 (1): 25–35.

Lockett, N., R. Kerr, and S. Robinson. 2008. 'Multiple Perspectives on the Challenges for Knowledge Transfer between Higher Education Institutions and Industry'. *International Small Business Journal* 26 (6): 661–681.

Lone, F.A., and M. Hussain. 2017. 'Gender Variations in Research Productivity: Insights from Scholarly Research'. *Gender Variations in Research Productivity: Insights*

from Scholarly Research 1608: 1–12. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4799&context=libphilprac.

Lynch, K. 2006. 'Neo-Liberalism and Marketisation: The Implications for Higher Education'. *European Educational Research Journal* 5 (1): 1–17. 10.2304/eerj.2006.5.1.1.

Marginson, S. 2011. 'Higher Education and Public Good'. *Higher Education Quarterly* 65: 411–433. 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2011.00496.x.

Markman, G.D., P.H. Phan, D.B. Balkin, and P.T. Gianiodis. 2005. 'Entrepreneurship and University-Based Technology Transfer'. *Journal of Business Venturing* 20 (2): 241–242. 10.1016/j.jbusvent.2003.12.003.

Mattessich, P.W., M. Murray-Close, and B.R. Monsey. 2001. *Collaboration: What Makes It Work*. St. Paul: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

McCowan, T. 2015. 'Should Universities Promote Employability?' *Theory and Research in Education* 13 (13): 267–285.

Merton, R.K. 1973. 'The Normative Structure of Science'. In *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*, edited by R.K Merton, 267–278. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mitsuhashi, H. 2002. 'Uncertainty in Selecting Alliance Partners: The Three Reduction Mechanisms and Alliance Formation Processes'. *International Journal of Organisational Analysis* 10: 109—133.

Moreira, J.A., A. Reis-Monteiro, and A. Machado. 2017. 'Higher Education Distance Learning and E-Learning in Prisons in Portugal'. *Comunicar* 25 (51): 39–49. 10.3916/C51-2017-04.

Münch, R. 2014. *Academic Capitalism: Universities in the Global Struggle for Excellence*. 1st ed. Routledge. 10.4324/9780203768761.

Mupa, P., O. Chabaya, and R.A. Chabaya. 2014. 'Polishing the Thinking on the Role of Open and Distance Learning in Socio-Economic Development: Exposing the Missing Functions of Higher Education'. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5 (11): 177–184. 10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n11p177.

Musselin, C. 2018. 'New Forms of Competition in Higher Education'. *Socio-Economic Review* 16 (3): 657–683. 10.1093/ser/mwy033.

Najam, A. 2000. 'The Four C's of Third Sector-Government Relations: Cooperation, Confrontation, Complementarity, And Co-Optation'. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* 10 (4): 375–396.

Oliver, C. 1990. 'Determinants of Interorganizational Relationships: Integration and Future Directions'. *Academy of Management Review* 15 (2): 241–265.

O'Looney, J.O. 1994. 'Modeling Collaboration and Social Services Integration: A Single State's Experience with Developmental and Non-Developmental Models'. *Administration in Social Work* 18 (1): 61–86.

Oluniyi, O. 2012. 'The Challenges and Prospects of the Transition to Open and Distance Learning in Higher-Education Institutions in Nigeria'. *Malaysian Journal of Distance Education* 14 (2): 83–104.

Ospina, S., A. Hoffman-Pinilla, and W. El Hadidi. 2008. 'Cooperative Inquiry for Learning and Connectedness'.*Action Learning: Research and Practice* 5.

Paradeise, C., and J.C. Thoenig. 2013. 'Academic Institutions in Search of Quality: Local Orders and Global Standards'. *Organization Studies* 34 (2): 189–218. 10.1177/0170840612473550.

Parkinson, C. 2006. *Building Successful Collaborations: A Guide to Collaboration Among Non-Profit Agencies and Business*. Cambridge: Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation.

Paul, D.A. 2005. 'Higher Education in Competitive Markets: Literature on Organizational Decline and Turnaround'. *The Journal of General Education* 54 (2): 106–138.

Pegg, A., J. Waldock, S. Hendy-Isaac, and R. Lawton. 2012. *Pedagogy For Employability*. York: Higher Education Academy.

Perkins, J. 1974. *Higher Education: Crisis and Support: An International Perspective*. New York: International Council for Educational Development.

Perkmann, M., V. Tartari, M. McKelvey, E. Autio, A. Broström, P. D'Este, R. Fini, et al. 2013. 'Academic Engagement and Commercialization: A Review of the Literature on University – Industry Relations'. *Research Policy* 42 (2): 423–442. 10.1 016/j.respol.2012.09.007.

Perkmann, M., and K. Walsh. 2007. 'Relationship-based University-industry Links and Open Innovation: Towards a Research Agenda'. *International Journal of Management Reviews* 9 (4): 259–280.

Philbin, S.P. 2008. 'Process Model for University-industry Research Collaboration'. *European Journal of Innovation Management* 11: 488–521.

Philpott, K., L. Dooley, C. O'Reilly, and G. Lupton. 2011. 'The Entrepreneurial University: Examining the Underlying Academic Tensions'. *Technovation* 31 (4): 161–170. 10.1016/j.technovation.2010.12.003.

Porteous, A., S.T. Nesaratnam, and J. Anderson. 1997. 'Distance Teaching of Environmental Engineering Courses at the Open University'. *European Journal of Engineering Education* 22 (2): 213–222.

Prawelska-Skrzypek, G. 2020. 'Academic Autonomy in the Contemporary University'. *Journal of Intercultural Management* 12 (3): 2–20. 10.2478/joim-2020-0042.

'Road Map for Arts Education'. 2006. In. Lisbon: UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Rod, M.R.M., and S.J. Paliwoda. 2003. 'Multi-Sector Collaboration: A Stakeholder Perspective on The Government, Industry and University Collaborative Venture'. *Science and Public Policy* 30 (4): 273–284.

Rosa, M.J., and A. Amaral. 2007. 'A Self-Assessment of Higher Education Institutions from the Perspective of the TQM Excellence Model'. In *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Trends in Regulation, Translation and Transformation*, edited by D.F. Westerheijen, B. Stensaker, and M.J. Rosa, 20:181–207. Dordrecht: Springer.

Roy, R., S. Potter, and K. Yarrow. 2008. 'Designing Low Carbon Higher Education Systems: Environmental Impacts of Campus and Distance Learning Systems'. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 9 (2): 116–130.

Ruiz-Mallén, I., and M. Heras. 2020. 'What Sustainability? Higher Education Institutions' Pathways to Reach the Agenda 2030 Goals'. *Sustainability* 12 (4) (1290): 1–18. 10.3390/su12041290.

Ryan, M.K., and S.A. Haslam. 2005. 'The Glass Cliff: Evidence That Women Are Over- Represented in Precarious Leadership Positions'. *British Journal of Management* 16 (2): 81–90.

Sam, C., and P. van der Sijde. 2014. 'Understanding the Concept of the Entrepreneurial University from the Perspective of Higher Education Models'. *Higher Education* 68 (6): 891–908.

Sánchez-Barrioluengo, M., E. Uyarra, and F. Kitagawa. 2019. 'Understanding the Evolution of the Entrepreneurial University. The Case of English Higher Education Institutions'. *Higher Education Quarterly* 73 (4): 469–495. 10.1111/hequ.12230.

Santoro, M.D., and S. Gopalakrishnan. 2001. 'Relationship Dynamics between University Research Centers and Industrial Firms: Their Impact on Technology Transfer Activities'. *Journal of Technology Transfer* 26 (1–2): 163–174.

Schiebinger, L. 2012. 'Getting More Women into Science: Knowledge Issues'. In *Gender and Science: Studies across Cultures*, edited by N. Kumar, 3–19. Foundation Books.

Schindler, L., S. Puls-Elvidge, H. Welzant, and L. Crawford. 2015. 'Definitions of Quality in Higher Education: A Synthesis of the Literature'. *Higher Learning Research Communications* 5 (3): 3–13.

Schmitz, A., D. Urbano, G.A. Dandolini, J.A. de Souza, and M. Guerrero. 2017. 'Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the Academic Setting: A Systematic Literature Review'. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* 13: 369–395. 10.1007/s11365-016-0401-z.

Seitanidi, M.M., D.N. Koufopoulos, and P. Palmer. 2010. 'Partnership Formation for Change: Indicators for Transformative Potential in Cross Sector Social Partnerships'. *Journal of Business Ethics* 94 (1): 139–161.

Selsky, J.W., and B. Parker. 2005. 'Cross-Sector Partnerships to Address Social Issues: Challenges to Theory and Practice'. *Journal of Management* 31 (60): 849–873.

Shore, C., and L. McLauchlan. 2012. 'Third Mission' Activities, Commercialisation and Academic Entrepreneurs'. *Social Anthropology* 20: 267–286. 10.1111/j.1469-8676.2012.00207.x.

Sink, D. 1998. 'Interorganizational Collaboration'. In *The International Encyclopedia of Public Policy and Administration*, edited by J.M. Shafritz, 1188–1191. Boulde: Westview Press.

Slaughter, S., and G. Rhoades. 2009. *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, State, and Higher Education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Sowa, K.Z. 2009. *Gdy Myślę Uniwersytet…*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Sporn, B. 1996. 'Managing University Culture: An Analysis of the Relationship between Institutional Culture and Management Approaches'. *Higher Education* 32: 41–61. 10.1007/BF00139217.

Stephens, J.C., M.E. Hernandez, M. Román, A.C. Graham, and R.W. Scholz. 2008. 'Higher Education as a Change Agent for Sustainability in Different Cultures and Contexts'. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* 9 (3): 317–338.

Sułkowski, Ł. 2017. 'The Culture of Control in the Contemporary University'. In *The Future of University Education*, edited by M. Izak, M. Kostera, and M. Zawadzki, 85–108. Palgrave Macmillan. 10.1007/978-3-319-46894-5_5.

Sztompka, P. 2012. *Socjologia. Analiza Społeczeństwa*. Kraków: Znak.

Taberner, A.M. 2018. 'The Marketisation of the English Higher Education Sector and Its Impact on Academic Staff and the Nature of Their Work'. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 26 (1): 129–152. 10.1108/IJOA-07-2017-1198.

'The Dearing Report'. 1997. Higher education in the learning society [Dearing report] London: The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. Leeds, viewed 27 Jun 2022.

Todeva, E., and D. Knoke. 2005. 'Strategic Alliances and Models of Collaboration'. *Management Decision* 43 (1): 123–148.

'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'. 2015. Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 25th September 2015. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

Tucker, R.B. 2002. *Driving Growth through Innovation: How Leading Firms Are Transforming Their Futures*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Uhl, T. 2017. 'Współpraca Nauki z Gospodarką i Administracją Dla Rozwoju Innowacyjności'. In 28–32. Kraków: MNiSW, UJ.

UNESCO. 2012. UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000220416

Uhly, K., L.M. Visser, and K.S. Zippel. 2017. 'Gendered Patterns in International Research Collaborations in Academia'. *Studies in Higher Education* 42 (4): 760–782. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03075079.2015.1072151.

Van Waart, P., I. Mulder, and C. De Bont. 2015. 'A Participatory Prototyping for Future Cities'. In *PIN-C 2015: Proceedings of the 4th Participatory Innovation Conference 2015: Reframing Design*, edited by R. Valkenburg, C. Dekkers, and J. Sluij. The Netherlands, 18–20 May.

West, J. 2000. 'Higher Education and Employment: Opportunities and Limitations in the Formation of Skills in a Mass Higher Education System'. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 52 (4): 573–588.

White, K., and B. Bagilhole, eds. 2011. *Gender, Power and Management: A Cross Cultural Analysis of Higher Education*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

White, K., T. Carvalho, and S. Riordan. 2011. 'Gender, Power and Managerialism in Universities'. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33: 179–188. 10.1 080/1360080X.2011.559631.

'Women in Higher Education: Has the Female Advantage Put an End to Gender Inequalities?' 2021. UNESCO IESALC - International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377182.

Wood, D.J., and B. Gray. 1991. 'Toward a Comprehensive Theory of Collaboration'. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science* 27 (2): 139–162.

Zabrodska, K., S. Linnell, C. Laws, and B. Davies. 2011. 'Bullying as Intra-Active Process in Neoliberal Universities'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 17 (8): 709–719. 10.1177/ 1077800411420668.

2 The essence of action research

2.1 The concept, types and characteristic features of action research

The term *action research* entered the glossary of terms used by theoreticians and practitioners in the 1940s. The first association it evoked was solving social problems and ensuring social development. Action research itself was understood as a social process through which values, attitudes and social institutions, including education, family, religion and industry, undergo changes (Cordeiro, Baldini Soares, and Rittenmeyer 2017). Kurt Lewin – a German organisation psychologist recognised as one of the 20 greatest psychologists of the 20th century – is considered the founding father of action research. It is Lewin who is credited with coining the term action research, and it happened exactly in 1944 when he headed the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology – one of the few universities where he taught and conducted scientific research.

There is also a less popular alternative view that action research was originally used by John Collier in connection with the need to improve communication processes when he served as Commissioner of Indian Affairs during World War I (Tripp 2005). Fuzzy traces of action research can also be found in 1926 Buckingham's *Research for Teachers*, where he outlines educational practices focused on their improvement, based on the methodological approach recognised as action research.

The thought of the aforementioned Kurt Lewin, related to the introduction of action research, was born based on his extremely critical attitude to Taylor's concept, expressed in *Theory of Scientific Management*, as well as to the dominant positivist trend of practising science that is based on neutrality, reducing bias, and also on strong references to the tradition of natural sciences (Lewin 1946, 26). In opposition to these unacceptable ways of doing science, he proposed a participatory and knowledge-generating approach to creating effective practices based on a constant process of social planning, taking action, and evaluation of undertaken activities. The version of action research pursued by Kurt Lewin concerned, in particular, problems such as segregation, discrimination and assimilation as well as supporting people in solving cases and initiating changes,

DOI: 10.4324/9781003227069-3

including individual ones, and the consequences of their occurrence (MacDonald 2012, 37). Lewin's original ideas continue to strongly influence researchers who organise their work and prepare research reports, by including observation, reflection, action, evaluation and modification, as a universal functional framework, in their conduct. Heather Skinner (2017, 12), analysing Lewin's trendsetting concept, points to its limitations resulting mainly from the author's views. First, the standpoint of this concept as a democratic process, and through interventions in existing practices even democratising, referred essentially to the workplace. Secondly, the restrictions perfectly illustrate the famous statements: *No action without research* and *No research without action* – showing Lewin's scientific preferences and his faith in the value of applied research, which results in the use of mainly quasi-experimental research methods.

Narrowing the description of many years of action research tradition solely to Lewin's role would be a considerable overuse, regardless of his prominent place in the creation and enrichment of that tradition described above.

Wilfred Carr (2006, 422) indicates that there is a compromise in the literature on the genesis of action research. Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart (2005, 272) distinguish two basic stages of its development. The first phase covers the period between the 1920s and 1950s. There are two basic trends here. On the one hand, they are positive and consist in the interest and initiation of the use of action research by researchers other than Lewin and its allocation in various applications, such as Corey's research in education in the USA. On the other hand, there is a formal confrontation of action research with the positivist current dominating in the American social science community, which leads to its temporary marginalisation and holding of development (Carr 2006; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005).

The period between the 1950s and 1970s is a relatively dead time for action research. Beginning in the early 1970s, it gains new momentum. The revival of interest in action research was influenced by the search for more effective than conventional ways to study the problems of British education. The latter, as it turned out, did not suit the realities of school and teacher work. Favouring an interpretative methodological convention, primacy of the qualitative approach in relation to the quantity, orientation to the perspective of participants and social actors, attachment to case studies and usefulness for practitioners (Wallace 1987) should be considered as a fundamental British contribution to the development of action research. Parallel to the pragmatic development of action research, theoretical arguments are being sought and built, both strengthening the formal status of the approach and creating a matrix of activity of researchers using it.

As an interesting factor for increasing interest in action research, Cathy D. MacDonald (2012, 37–38) indicates the emergence of active researchers with relatively new and bright profiles of interests and views, which include, for example, feminising researchers. For them, action research has become almost a dream research approach, extremely facilitating cooperation between the researcher and the participant. The root causes of this trend include: the emergence of radical, reformist concepts of support for international economic

development, a look at adult education in a formula negating the traditional approach, and ongoing discussion about the dominant social science paradigm. The listed factors (and other similar ones) are significant drivers of the development of action research within the dimensions of theory, concept, methodology and application.

Searching for scientific texts devoted to action research is not particularly difficult, mainly because of their great wealth. For example, in one of the most popular EBSCO databases, from 1965 to 2019, there are 3123 publications that have this term in the title. Despite this, there is not as many definitions of action research as one might think based on the number of indicated publications. In addition, as Mohamed Fawzy Afify (2008) writes, there is a lack of compromise in the literature on the commonly used definition of action research. David Tripp (2005) sees problems in this respect for two related reasons: firstly – due to the completely natural process of creating definitions in different formal forms, and secondly – because these definitions were created differently and adequately to their various applications. However, assuming the attitude of pluralism in scientific research, this lack of compromise can also be explained, e.g., by the complementarity of these definitions, although this kind of argument should be confirmed in the analysis of selected definition proposals. Table 2.1 includes part of the definition of action research considered valuable.

The specification in Table 2.1 is initiated by the classic Lewin's proposal, which constitutes two components of action research in the form of generating knowledge and modifying social systems. Successive authors are gradually expanding defining expressions, thus modifying the scope and meaning of the defined expression.

Trying to find common features of the above definitions, it can be stated that (Afify 2008, 153; Jedynak 2018, 62):

- the term action in the definition of action research results in directing its scope to changes in the real world that researchers and other research participants aspire to
- in action research there is a specific subordination of the research procedure to various forms of practical demand
- for reasons arising from the requirements of scientific regime, researchers strive for equality of theoretical reflection and practical application
- to promote research results among various stakeholders is typical for action research

An interesting supplement to the above definitions may be the working definition by Herbert Altrichter et al. (2002, 154), which characterises action research in an original way (see Figure 2.1).

Davydd Greenwood (2007) precedes discussing the essence of action research with an argument about a kind of forum for dialogue between theory and practice, which has always occupied the world of science. He formulates

Table 2.1 Selected definitions of action research

Author	*Definition*
(Lewin 1946)	The path of generating knowledge about the social system and at the same time attempting to change it.
(Bradbury and Reason P. 2003)	An approach that overcomes the traditional separation between objectivity and subjectivity, and looks for important subjects of research and influences decision making because of its own aspirations.
(Surdyk 2006)	A form of research based on self-reflection, undertaken by participants of a social situation to strengthen the rationality and justification of their actions, and to improve understanding of these activities and the situations in which they are undertaken.
(Greenwood and Levin 2007)	A way of working in the area of using various research techniques aimed at facilitating changes and generating data for creating scientific knowledge. Action research is based on the processes of joint knowledge building and designing activities absorbing local stakeholders as full partners in mutual learning.
(MacDonald 2012)	Systematic collection and analysis of data to take action and make changes by generating practical knowledge.
(Wittmayer et al. 2013)	A broad, multilateral approach to joint research, referring to various traditions such as political economy, pragmatic philosophy, social development, education and rural development.
(Wittmayer et al. 2013)	Joint creation of scientifically and socially relevant knowledge through participatory processes.
(Cordeiro, Baldini Soares, and Rittenmeyer 2017)	A family of approaches and practices in which we meet a wealth of areas of knowledge, such as social development, organisation management, education, health care, medicine, social work, as well as psychological sciences and others.

Source: Own study.

the original idea that an *action research researcher* experiences one of the most exciting experiences, which is to learn the true power of dialogue between theory and action. This thesis correlates with the recommendation by John Drummond and Markus Themessl-Huber (2007) that action research projects should not be based solely on theory or practice, but on a kind of balance of these. Tripp (2005) also devotes a lot of space in his considerations to unravelling the identity of action research in relation to theory. When reviewing the positions of other authors, he notices several characteristics in them. The extreme position is that action research as a practical improvement process is atheoretical. The less radical position says that although theory does not have priority in action research, it can be important in understanding the situation, planning effective improvements and explaining the results achieved. And finally, the third, significant point of view is one according to which practitioners willingly reach for theories with practical values, and through

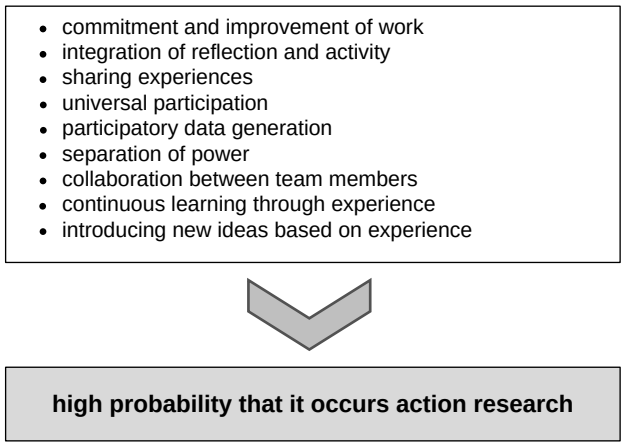

Figure 2.1 Components of the working definition of action research.
Source: Own study based on: (Altrichter et al. 2002, 154).

subsequent experiments make a significant contribution to the future development of these theories.

John Drummond and Markus Themessl-Huber (2007) see four levels of the relationship between theory and action research. First, researchers in action research apply, develop and build the research process on theory. Second, the theory used in action research projects is formed by the research process, the subject of research, and the reflections of the various professions involved. Third, explanatory theories are used to consider the hypothetical meanings that people perceive. And finally, fourth, the theory can be shaped by method systems in the formula of emancipation and empowerment.

Davydd Greenwood (2007) argues that action research is based on the Aristotelian understanding of the theory, which makes researchers perceive it as being superior to other forms of knowledge, being more useful with the use of more sources. Speaking of sources of knowledge, the said author meant more interdisciplinary science (especially all social sciences) than problematic. Also, Kurt Lewin (1946, 36) in the work titled *Action Research and Minority Problems* refers to social sciences. Namely, he believes that the basic goals of these sciences, i.e., the study of the basic laws of social life and the diagnosis of specific situations, translate into the objectives of action research. This reasoning is difficult to refute, although the catalogue of indicated goals has some shortcomings, disregarding e.g., the projective nature of many scientific disciplines and research programs.

The *action research* description also includes a reference to the paradigm category. Siyu Chen et al. (2018, 345 et seq.), who systematically reviewed the literature devoted to action research from 2000 to 2014, which is

relatively recent, distinguished eight paradigms on which the examined approach is based. These paradigms have been used in the sense of a kind of a fundamental behaviour pattern within a narrow reach. Among them were: internal action research, collaboration-based action research, participatory action research, system action research, ethnographic action research, network action research and anticipatory action research. The authors of the studied texts were most often stuck in cooperation-based action research and participatory action research, which may indicate some kind of priority values.

The focus point in action research is the problem that requires solving. As Gilles Delezue writes (1994), the problem cannot be treated in a simplified way, using the concept of a gap or obstacle that requires constant overcoming. According to this author, the problem also has no negative connotations. It is a form of knowledge, an idea that interacts with reality. The problem is an attribute of the source of the activity. When we think in terms of change and the emergence of solutions, this is probably inevitably associated with a problem. Interestingly, the problem in action research goes through various phases of its own life cycle. It requires to be entirely positioned in the action research project. At the beginning of the project, the problem is often virtual and hypothetical. Then, however, it is updated and confirmed or denied. Problems invite solutions as much as solutions solve and change aspects of the problem (Drummond and Themessl-Huber 2007).

The nature of action research causes ethical behaviour, which becomes an imperative, becomes very special. Mary Brydon-Miller (2012) identifies nine components of ethical behaviour that have the nature of principles that require adaptation at every stage of action research projects. These are: autonomy, independence, generosity, justice, care, respect, commitment, transparency and democratic practices. The same author (Brydon-Miller 2012) lists three issues that are key references for ethical behaviour in relation to action research projects: humanistic treatment of participants, responsible data collection and dissemination, and socially responsible behaviour of the researcher.

Skinner (2017) lists three complementary dimensions of action research: methodological, philosophical and practical. The methodological dimension includes a reference to the purpose of the research, the methodological perspectives adopted and the instruments used. The philosophical dimension reveals the basic features of action research aggregating its nature. The practical dimension refers to the process approach of action research including recommended stages of the conduct.

In the following years in which action research developed, a number of other terms closely correlated with it grew around this concept. As noted by Luciana Cordeiro et al. (2017), some of them are semantic substitutes of action research (e.g., mutual inquiry, co-operative inquiry, collaborative research, participatory research), *de facto* describing the same research processes even though they have been slightly differently named. The multitude of concepts

accompanying action research may suggest the occurrence of many types. Literature review often indicates the lack of compliance by the authors of the common canon in the field of action research classification, and thus the shortage of universal and generally accepted criteria for describing its types.

For example, Mohamed Fawzy Afify (2008, 154–55) and Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt (1996, 4) distinguish three types of research in operation: technical, practical and emancipatory. These types differ at the same time in three characteristics: the goals of conducting the research, the role of the facilitator, and the nature of the relationship between facilitators and study participants. In the case of the technical variety of action research, the goal of research is the efficiency and effectiveness of selected practices and their professional development. The facilitator's role comes down to being an external expert. In turn, the relationship criterion reflects the situation of co-opting practitioners to participate in the project and their dependence on a facilitator. In practical action research, the above-mentioned goal is complemented by practitioners' understanding and awareness of the need for transformation. The facilitator plays a Socratic role in this case, mobilising participants to participate and self-reflection. Relationships are characterised by cooperation having the nature of a consultation process. And finally, in emancipatory action research, these goals are enriched by the need to emancipate participants from the dictates of tradition and self-deception, the compulsion to criticise the bureaucratic model of action, as well as the transformation of the organisation. The facilitator is the process moderator in this version, and the responsibility is divided proportionally among the participants. The relationships take the form of close cooperation. A similar division of action research, as the initial division, is drawn by Heather Skinner (2017), which, however, indicates, based on a review of the literature on the subject, that these types of action research have their own terminology equivalents. Technical action research is therefore synonymous with technical and collaborative or scientific and technical action research. The equivalent of practical action research is mutual and collaborative action research as well as practical and thought-based action research. In turn, emancipatory action research is the same as empowering action research and critical emancipatory action research.

Referring to Lewin's pioneering considerations, due to the scientific approach used in action research, we can distinguish (Skinner 2017, 14):

- diagnostic action research, which involves diagnosing a problem and helps in generating suggested solutions that would be acceptable to everyone associated with the problem situation
- participatory action research, in which all those involved in the problem are engaged from the beginning in the process of searching for a solution, which often leads to restrictions in the form of its local applicability and the inability to generalise results
- empirical action research that does not use control tests but requires the collection and consolidation of daily group experiences; knowledge

generated in this way is not representative, but it can be used in relation to similar groups
- experimental action research, which uses tests to check hypotheses in quasi-experimental conditions; although this form seems to be the most comprehensive, it is difficult to understand and adapt

The above, still quite orderly and coherent classifications of action research complement other classifications with a hybrid, ambiguous nature, which display not so much criteria of division, but some specific features of conduct. Such classifications not only result in a collection of action research varieties distinguished in a fairly loose way but also they are overlapped with the results of earlier classifications. An example of the not very restrictive approach to classifying action research under discussion is the proposal of Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart (2005, 272 et seq.) who differentiate the following:

- participatory research, which is an alternative philosophy of conducting research compared to traditional social research, and is characterised by: the division of rights to conduct a research project, collective analysis of social problems and orientation towards joint activities
- critical action research, which expresses the need to engage in conducting joint, multidimensional social analyses, the need for self-reflection and collective study of practical solutions using the appropriate narrative language
- educational action research, typically used by teachers using qualitative and interpretive data measures
- learning through action whose fundamental idea is to encourage people to learn together through mutual experiences
- action-based learning that reveals the study of practice in various organisational areas as a source of new discoveries and improvements to the same
- soft systems-based approach, which is a methodological approach using analogy to the functioning of living systems; the researcher works with participants to develop models that identify the situation and indicate modified lines of action
- industrial action research, rooted from organisational psychology and organisational development; in typical situations, projects are led by organisational advisers

The above proposal to specify the types of action research was therefore made using both the dominant methodological orientation and the area of application. The analysis of action research features supplements its generic characteristics. Table 2.2 presents a review of the positions of several authors illustrating the characteristic properties of action research in a complementary way.

Table 2.2 Basic features of action research

Group of features	*Detailed features*
Conceptual matrix	• Researcher's own inquiries
	• Ethical character
	• Diverse researcher roles
	• Problematizing
	• Based on understanding
	• Located between the micro- and macro-perspective
	• Social
	• Practical
	• Emancipatory
	• Future-oriented
	• Content-specific
Approach	• Open communication space
	• The need to deal with an open communication space
	• The need to deal with an open communication space
	• The need to deal with various entities of power
	• Participatory
	• Prudent
	• Based on compromise
	• Based on experience
	• Results-oriented
	• Reflective
Methodology	• Continuous (more than occasional)
	• Proactive and strategically determined
	• Documented
	• Qualitative
	• Mixed
	• Based on cooperation
	• Critical
Impact on practice	• Innovative
	• Interventionist
	• Transforming
	• Integrating
	• Explaining
	• Standardising

Source: Own study based on: (Jedynak 2018).

The authors cited in Table 2.2 formulated a total of 42 action research features. Of these, only two were repeated, which indicates a large diversity of views of these authors on the tested approach. In the presented set of features, one can distinguish subsets referring to such aspects as: strictly formal issues related to the principles of research conduct, conditions for conducting action research, the results of using action research, identity issues deciding about the diversity of action research as a research procedure. On the basis of these features, the picture of action research emerges as a research approach with a diverse, rich character, the use of which does not remain neutral towards all stakeholders involved and the practices of conduct covered by it, as well as various result categories.

A useful procedure complementing the specification of action research features is its confrontation with other research approaches. Mohamed Fawzy Afify (2008, 155) conducted such a comparison, using four criteria. In his opinion:

- while action research undertakes real problems and is limited by context, other research approaches take real problems, as well as strictly scientific problems, and try to discover general principles and possible consequences
- while action research is based on the joint venture of researchers, participants and practitioners, other research approaches provide for a clear separation of the roles of these individuals
- while action research is a continuous, reflective process of research and action, in other research approaches there is usually a clear division between the research process and the implementation process
- while the value of action research is measured depending on whether actions solve problems and whether the desired changes are implemented, the value of other research approaches is demonstrated by statistical measures and successful replications

The indicated comparison, although obviously simplified, eloquently illustrates the methodological difference of action research.

The culmination of characterisation of action research as a research approach is to show its strengths. Cathy MacDonald (2012, 39) synthesised the proposals of various authors, listing the following advantages:

- strongly value-oriented
- addressing issues of significant importance for the functioning of people, communities and the wider space in which they are active
- treating participants not as the subject of the study, but as active co-actors of all phases of the study
- supporting the reconstruction of individual skills to be a creative citizen of the world and an active participant in significant decision-making processes
- providing general access to information and building trust
- strengthening the role of people as partners in the processes of social change
- arranging cooperation possibilities between people as well as exchange and co-creation of knowledge
- strengthening people's faith in their own skills and creating conditions for the development of competences

2.2 The emancipatory role of action research

To characterise the emancipatory role of action research, it is first necessary to refer to the original concept of emancipation. As Ben Boog (2003) writes, emancipation was a kind of liberation from constraints, control or power of someone else, especially to distance oneself from any kind of bondage. As a kind of attitude, emancipation targeted numerous social, political or religious

groups from the 18th to the 20th century. Emancipation was also a key component of critical theory and action research theory. In this approach, emancipation also gained a second dimension, i.e., it was not limited to the criticism of arbitrary, undesirable states but also aimed at bringing about their transformation into more just or rational ones (Boog 2003).

The strong influence of the concept of emancipation in action research has led to the popularisation of defining AR as emancipatory action. This can also be seen in some definitions. For example, Omar Esau (2013) considers emancipatory AR to be a participatory as well as a democratic process linked to the development of practical knowledge in pursuit of valuable human goals, which is based on a participatory worldview. Emancipatory action should be linked to reflection, theory, practice, participation of others and the pursuit of applied solutions to significant problems. It is firmly grounded in the empirical analytical paradigm because it is consistent with the fundamental nature of AR. Emancipatory AR is not so much to meet various research rigours (quality, relevance, rigourism, reliability, methodological objectivity), but rather to lead to new, good and sustainable solutions (structures, processes, methods) (Buskens and Earl 2008). The development of the idea of emancipatory AR also had its "geographical colours". E.g., in South African countries it significantly supported the reform of education in opposition to apartheid (Esau 2013).

The strategy of emancipatory research is similar to the critical approach inherent in AR and its roots can be found in critical hermeneutics, neo-Marxist theories in sociology, psychology and education. The presence of influential emancipatory, critical and participatory practices in action research is particularly evident in Australia and New Zealand, Austria and South Africa (Esau 2013).

It should also be mentioned that emancipatory AR has influenced a change in the perception of the specificity of academic research. Traditionally, these studies were perceived as a somewhat impersonal activity, and researchers were expected to take an objective approach to their research and to adopt an attitude of detachment and non-involvement in the research subject (O'Shea 2013).

Meanwhile, the aims of emancipatory research are formulated differently and are devised specifically to increase awareness of contradictions obscured or distorted by everyday understanding, thereby directing the optics towards existing opportunities to effect social transformation (Lather 1986).

The institutional interpretation of conducting emancipatory research is particularly interesting. This research, like no other, strongly promotes the formation of diverse research coalitions. The idea of such coalitions was described and popularised by John Baker et al. (2004). They have constructed a set of the following directives:

- as part of the coalitions formed, participants can be involved in the research from its initial planning; to its implementation and monitoring; and even commenting on the results

- it is recommended that members of a particular community be given the opportunity to define research programmes that (potentially) affect their lives
- in order to improve the effectiveness of collaboration, it is worth establishing its various forms, such as educational partnerships, or collaborative networks, which can act as forums for mutual education for scientists, researchers and community members
- the role of educational partnerships and research coalitions can extend beyond the research process itself and provide a hub to support the implementation of change and the dissemination of research findings

From the perspective of our book on the use of AR as a tool for collaboration between universities and their stakeholders, it is worth formulating a postulate to complement the above-mentioned forms of practising emancipatory AR with the presence and active participation of these stakeholders, especially external ones.

Emancipatory AR, implemented on the basis of organised forms of support, should respect several key rules (O'Shea 2013). The first is compliance with the rules of ethics, understood, however, as recognition of the respondents' right to control the knowledge generated about them, i.e., in terms of confidentiality. The second is reciprocity among AR participants. Reciprocity means changing the status of the relationship from being strangers to friendship, as well as developing trust resulting from the involvement of all research participants from the very beginning and the integration of the mutual education process. Next, the third rule says that the theory should be built through dialogue rather than imposition by experts. Therefore, the study participants should be fully involved, including in the construction and validation of meanings. And finally, we come to the last, fourth rule – consistent reflection. It requires researchers to engage in change, but to do so democratically, that is, without being influenced by their own goals and prejudices.

Some authors (e.g., Kinsler 2010) see emancipatory AR as a complex weave of many different tendencies and ideas. Among other things, we encounter: pragmatism associated with the demand for effectiveness, aspirations concerning the desire to improve performance, the quest for freedom involving liberation from precepts, traditions, compulsions and habits, the pursuit of change through the reconstruction of practices and practitioners, as well as criticism that guarantees a continuous quest for improvement.

Ineke Buskens and Sarah Earl (2008) analyse the impact of emancipatory AR on the attitudes and characteristics of researchers. The starting point is the assertion that AR is learning-oriented, which may lead to changes in the research process itself. Such a situation forces researchers to have a high level of self-awareness about accepting the necessity of not only deep commitment but also openness to self-change.

Researchers using emancipatory AR have two main objectives, the first of which is to deepen the proximity between the actual problems encountered by practitioners in a particular setting and the theory used to explain and solve the problem, while the second is to help practitioners identify and formulate the underlying problems by raising their collective awareness (Masters 1995). This second objective extends the roles of emancipatory AR beyond other varieties such as technical AR or mutual–collaborative AR. Furthermore, emancipatory AR aspires to transform the practical environment of the research conducted (Kinsler 2010).

Antwi Akom (2011) points out that emancipatory AR projects benefit from specific methodological knowledge, which means that we are not dealing with a methodological "black box", i.e., a mixture of chaos and lack of awareness. Methodological inputs for emancipatory AR come from, among others: structural models, institutional analyses, systems theory, complexity theory, behavioural approaches.

Methodological propositions called paradigms have also arisen around the emancipatory AR. They are usually sets of postulates, addressed to certain specific applications. An example may be one of the proposals of the paradigmatic emancipatory approach to AR, which assumes that (Akom 2011, 119–20): (1) the researcher uses a kind of interpretive "lens" directed at the centre of the problem, (2) stakeholders control the research process, (3) stakeholders are involved in the research at every stage, (4) the researcher has a deep knowledge of the determinants of the problem under study (e.g., historical, linguistic, cultural issues).

An in-depth study of emancipatory methodology in AR was conducted by Margaret Ledwith (2007). He distinguished its following features (Ledwith 2007, 599–600):

- the emancipatory methodology emerged from the participatory paradigm
- the emancipatory methodology is not so much about the symptoms as the causes of the problems
- universally recognised values (respect, dignity, reciprocity) are the ideological lens of the emancipatory methodology
- the emancipatory methodology seeks to involve everyone in the process of change
- the emancipatory methodology identifies and challenges all unequal power relations
- the emancipatory methodology is rooted in dialogue
- the emancipatory methodology emphasises openness to change
- all participants act in the interests of the whole
- fundamental questions are formulated through consensus
- participants perceive themselves as co-researchers
- during the research the nature of the shared experience is discovered
- overcomes competing thinking about the suitability of different types of knowledge

For emancipatory AR to achieve its ambitious goals, certain conditions must be met. The empowerment of participants is particularly important here (Hay and Fourie 1999). Attempting to solve complex problems in new situations (e.g., reconstruction or social transformation) must be accompanied by organising work in the form of teamwork.

Omar Esau (2013) points to the need to prepare "emancipatory" researchers. It means comprehensive preparation, covering conceptual, cultural and methodological aspects. Gerry Roberts and Bob Dick (2003) make a similar point when considering the competencies of practitioners in emancipatory research. Above all, they recognise that the skills and experience of practitioners, normally considered strengths, may be their limitations in the case of emancipatory AR. Key ways to deal with these potential limitations are for practitioners to understand the importance of collaboration, to accumulate experience as projects progress, and to reduce the tension caused by the collision between the goals of the emancipatory approach and the precepts of prior experience.

Previous experiences of using emancipatory AR have shown which cases are worth addressing, by virtue of the success of the projects. One can mention, for example, the improvement of the self-assessment processes of the quality of education in universities (Hay and Fourie 1999) or the improvement of working conditions in various organisations, e.g., NGOs. Regardless of the variety of applications, they are oriented towards solving more or less wide-ranging problems, but mostly addressed either to universities or other organisations. In this context, the approach presented in our book, in which we want to adapt AR, including emancipatory AR, to the problem of relations between universities and stakeholders, should be considered relatively novel.

The successful application of emancipatory AR needs to be supported by various tools that, on an operational basis, help to face the sometimes-difficult challenges. One such tool is the results mapping methodology, including planning, monitoring and evaluation (Buskens and Earl 2008). In general, it can be said that AR needs professional and application-proven methodologies. The more their construction corresponds to the logic and sequence inherent in emancipatory AR, the more useful they are.

2.3 The conduct of action research

2.3.1 Principles applicable in action research

The concept layer of action research is based on the basic principles of conduct that set the formal framework for more detailed models or tools more closely related to ongoing projects. Various configurations of action research principles can be found in the literature. The most popular is Lewin's proposal, treated as an original conceptualisation of action research (see Figure 2.2).

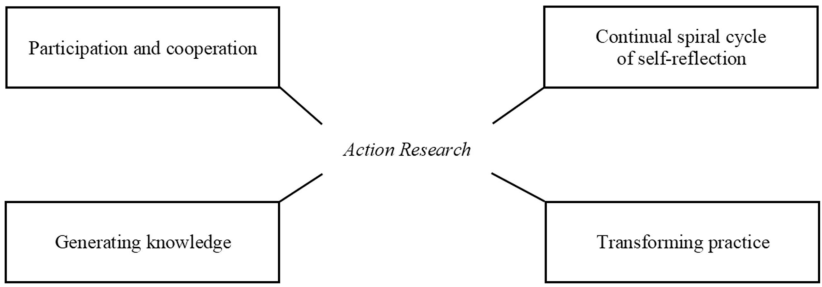

Figure 2.2 Basic principles of action research by Lewin.
Source: Own study.

The principle of participation and cooperation is based on the assumption that all internal and external action research participants have numerous, often unique assets, and the ability to participate in problem solving and decision making. Andrea Cornwall (2008) indicates that the levels of participation of action research participants should be varied due to the different levels of their competences and aspirations.

Another principle of action research is the continuous cycle of self-reflection. This cycle is not linear but is a fluid, iterative, open, complex and sensitive process. The phases of the procedure depend on the collaboration of researchers and reflect the objectives of the study (Cordeiro, Baldini Soares, and Rittenmeyer 2017).

Finally, action research principles also generate knowledge and transform practice. Knowledge and practice are somewhat an input resource for both external and internal researchers. Together, they are able to generate additional knowledge about real and specific practices in a specific context through mutual dialogue, interaction and action. This kind of process has an impact on improving existing practices, better understanding of the situation and reflection on ethical dilemmas (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). The creation of knowledge and the transformation of practice are closely and dialectically related principles, which suggests that one cannot be changed without changing the other.

The literature on the subject also includes other approaches to the principles of action research. They are usually less universal than Lewin's proposal and are formulated in relation to the intentions of their authors. An example is the proposed principles by John Mackenzie et al. (2012). This is a proposal in which the main goals of action research are of paramount importance. However, the principles are assigned to specific goals, they are subordinated to them, and compliance with them increases the likelihood of achieving those goals (see Table 2.3).

The principles contained in the second column of Table 2.3. are formulated in a manner resembling a catalogue of good practices.

Table 2.3 Objectives of the action research project and corresponding rules

Main goals	*Principles adequate to the action research projects*
Pluralism and compliance	1 Comprehensive compliance of the project with the requirements
	2 Stakeholders engagement in pilot actions
	3 Full transparency of decision making
	4 Neutrality of project participants
Continous, mutual learning	1 Respecting the diversity of stakeholders
	2 Creating conditions for cooperation
Wide cooperation and participation	1 Stakeholder participation based on belief
	2 No barriers for stakeholders participation
	3 Stakeholders are involved at every stage
Time and efficiency	1 Time and resources are planned and provided
	2 The process is efficient
Tools	1 Using numerous verified tools
	2 Knowledge of the tools by participants

Source: Own study based on: (Mackenzie et al. 2012, 17).

These principles create conceptual foundations for action research. Action research, as a specific research procedure, is defined by designing the research. This study usually consists of three recurring phases: inquiry, action and reflection (Lewin 1946; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Through repeated cycles of conduct covering the mentioned phases, increasing the quality of available knowledge and better understanding of existing conditions, social activities are undertaken, reflection on these activities are made, which in turn affects further deepening of the understanding of reality, as well as opening new areas of doubt (Greenwood and Levin 2007). Such a repeated and interactive process creates the basis for continuous improvement. Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart (2005) believe that the number and range of individual action rese*arch* phases may vary slightly each time because it is an emerging result through learning.

Regardless of whether we assume that action research phases are to be more determined or more incremental, it should be clearly noted that once they are included in certain coherent cycles of action, they are for all participants of action research a kind of framework models, almost direction indicators ordering and facilitating work. These cycles, presented below, are often a generalisation of the experience associated with the use of action research as a research approach dedicated to extremely diverse problems.

2.3.2 Cycles of conduct in action research

a Basic approach to the cycle of conduct

As previously noted, the cyclical nature of the conduct is an essential and key feature of action research. Characteristics of action research cycle

propositions should be started with the basic Lewin proposal outlined in the classic text *Action Research and Minority Problems*.

Kurt Lewin (Lewin 1946, 38) perceives action research as a process of an action based on a plan. Preliminary planning should, according to this author, be accompanied by some general idea, which should complement some research goal. At this stage, the initial testing of ideas also takes place based on a fairly simple verification mechanism, i.e., checking the availability of necessary data. The measurable result of the first phase of action research should be a general plan containing the specification of objectives and constituting the basis for making decisions in relation to the action. The modification of the original idea under the influence of identified conditions is typical.

The next stage of action research is devoted to the initial steps in the implementation of the plan, in close connection with the search for facts. Recognising relevant facts has several functions:

- first of all, facts have the ability to evaluate the actions taken, indicating how achievements are positioned in relation to expectations
- second, facts give those responsible for the plan the opportunity to learn and create the opportunity for detailed insight into the study area
- third – facts form the basis for modifying the planning of activities in the next stage
- fourth – facts provide an opportunity to improve the overall plan

The next stage of the procedure consists again of the planning cycle, implementation of the plan and recognition of facts and data, accompanied by the above-mentioned intentions.

As David Tripp writes (2005), it is important to consider action research as one of the many types of investigations in action. Investigation in action should be treated as a general term referring to all processes using a cycle in which the practices of conduct are improved by systematic oscillation between taking action in the area of practice and formulating questions.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the basic approach to the action research cycle, referring to the reasoning presented above.

The presented approach has universal values and applies to most improvement processes. Problem solving begins with their identification, followed by solution planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of operations. In the presented cycle, one can often find traces of such methodological approaches as learning by doing, reflective practices, designing activities, experience-based learning, PDCA, PLA, PAR, PAD, PALM, PRA cycles, thoughtful practices, habits research, conscious questions, diagnostic practices, evaluation of activities, soft systems method systems, transformational learning.

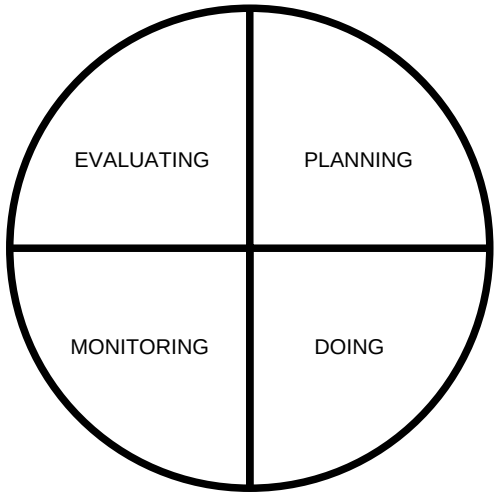

Figure 2.3 Basic action research cycle.
Source: Own study based on: (Tripp 2005, 2).

b Data-based approach to the cycle of conduct

A slightly different approach to the action research cycle is proposed by Nancy Padak and Gary Padak (1994, 2–5). These authors propose a course of conduct in which they highlight the role of data accompanying the studied problem. The cycle of conduct in this case includes several important steps, which are: (1) identifying topics or issues deserving to be examined; (2) collecting data related to the selected topic or issue; (3) analysis and interpretation of collected data; (4) planning actions, which incorporate conclusions drawn from the results of implementing the plan.

What might be a good topic or issue for action research seems to be an important question. The answer to such a formulated question is relatively uncomplicated – the topic or issue should be relevant for stakeholders, i.e., in the case of organisations, e.g., employees, managers, owners, customers or suppliers. Most often, however, action research deals with problems requiring an urgent solution or strategic and instrumental aspects in which researchers see the potential for improvement. Already at this stage, researchers need to consider whether the necessary data required to solve the problem is available. A typical example of troublesome research problems in action research is addressing issues related to university graduates, and this is due to often imperfect relationships with them.

Studying literature on the subject can be helpful in correctly identifying issues or themes. This applies especially to those problems that were subject to scientific research and which are characterised by a fairly high level of

complexity. Less sophisticated problems may not require literature review, and their formulation may be intuitive.

On the other hand, operationalization of selected issues or topics in the form of research questions is an absolutely necessary procedure. Well-formulated questions should meet the following conditions (Padak and Padak 1994, 3–4):

- relate directly to the identified issue and be precise
- be associated with the point of view of action research participants
- not be excessively general, which would be in contradiction with the action research approach
- create enough space to answer, which means replacing questions that can be answered in the affirmative or negative, with questions starting with: why, how, what

The second stage of action research is data collection. In principle, all information that can help you answer your questions can be considered valuable data. If possible, a diverse set of data collection tools, including qualitative and quantitative ones should be used. The triangulation approach is particularly desirable because it seeks to systematically collect data, for example by comparing the visions of different participants, reference systems and activities, which can lead to an increase in the value and reliability of these data. Among numerous data collection techniques, observational techniques (participant and non-participant observation, researcher's logs, research notes, recordings and their transcriptions, photographs, diagrams, maps and diagrams illustrating structures) and non-observational techniques (interviews, discussions, original documentation) (Chen, Huang, and Zeng 2018, 346; Surdyk 2006, 914–15) can be found. Easily and widely available data, e.g., on demographic issues can also be used. Data collection in action research is spiral (see Figure 2.4).

The researcher observes the examined area and participants (looking), interprets observations (considering) and identifies solutions (action).

Despite the often encountered suggestion about the advantages of having excess data in action research, there is a moment when the researcher becomes convinced that successively obtained data does not bring anything new. Then the researcher should proceed to organise the collected data (e.g., to categorise or aggregate it) and carry out an appropriate analysis. The analysis should be supplemented with interpretation and drawing conclusions, which is the basis for making decisions but also to facilitate deeper understanding of the studied problems among the participants.

The final result of the study should be a recommendation for an improvement program. Sometimes the result is also an increase in the number of questions and doubts. The essence of action research, however, as its name indicates, is to take the required actions to improve and deepen the knowledge of analysed practices.

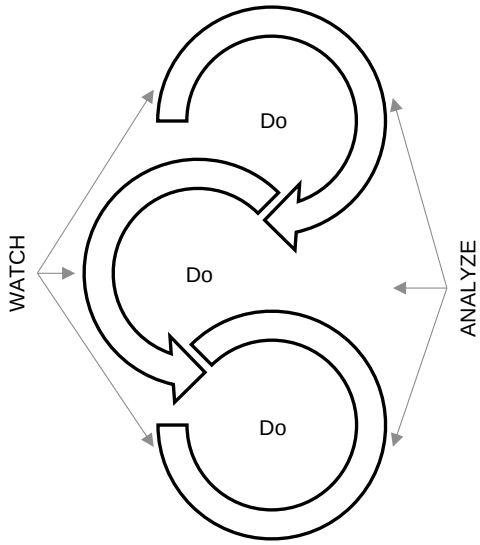

Figure 2.4 Action research interacting spiral.
Source: Own study based on: (Stringer 1996, 167).

c Adaptive approach to the cycle of conduct

Next, the adaptive approach to the cycle of conduct strongly emphasises the fact that all undertakings appearing in the action research formula often run in an extremely dynamic context. Such dynamics may e.g., be a consequence of frequent legal changes. It does not remain neutral for recommendations resulting from action research, putting their validity and relevance into question.

The answer to this contextual instability can only be adaptation based on flexibility (see Figure 2.5).

The workflow shown in Figure 2.5 assumes the occurrence of seven reference steps, the last of which does not ultimately end the efforts to find paths to solve the problem. It is assumed that the researcher will return to step one, which involves re-delving into the process of identifying problems and needs. While most of these steps can be considered relatively standard, it is worth paying attention to Step 3 – building a research partnership. As part of this step, relationships with a variety of stakeholders, including experts, can be formed. This is to reduce the risk of designing solutions and recommendations that will become inefficient as soon as they are promoted. A valuable supplement to the set of people involved in action research can be experts with competences related to e.g., knowledge of advanced analytical methods (Carmona et al. 2011) or with knowledge

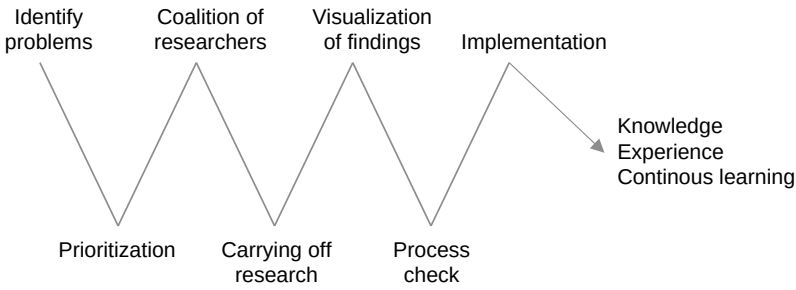

Figure 2.5 Adaptive cycle in action research.

Source: Own study based on: (Mackenzie et al. 2012, 17).

of the sector (Molina et al. 2011) or persons who participate in networks and cooperation platforms (Hoverman et al. 2011).

d An approach to the cycle of conduct based on the role of the researcher

The proposals for formalising the process of action research also include those that put the researcher in the centre. The researcher, through active participation in a given situation, learns about its specificity and also has the opportunity to verify the adopted research design (Ćwiklicki 2014, 155).

As shown in Figure 2.6, in the first phase of their activity, the researcher defines the initial framework conditions and method system of conduct. Then the actual situation closely correlated with the problem is identified.

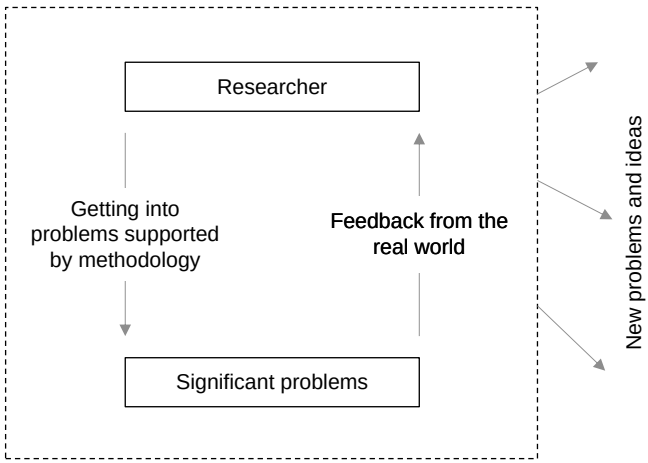

Figure 2.6 Action research cycle based on the person of the researcher.

Source: Own study based on: (Checkland and Holwell 1998, 15).

The researcher has the task of participating in this situation, which creates the opportunity to reflect on the application of a predetermined method system and adequacy to the framework conditions. The reflection leads to various conclusions confirming or modifying both the research area as well as the framework conditions and method system. One particular result could be specifying new research topics. Therefore, in the discussed version of the approach to action research, the researcher does not play the role of a passive observer, but behaves actively, participating in solving the existing problem, and at the same time considering the attributes of the applied research design (Ćwiklicki 2014, 155). As with previous approaches in the discussed cycle of conduct, it does not end with one iteration, but it continues, taking into account the probability of continuing the researcher's activity. It is worth noting that the declaration of the continuity of the research process is intentional. After all, whether the procedure will be continued does not depend solely on the researcher, but primarily on persons with decision-making powers, e.g., the management of some organisation in which the examination takes place.

e An approach to the cycle of conduct with elements enriching the base approach

The cycle of actions in action research can also be presented in a way that – although it is founded on a basic proposal – contains elements that determine its enrichment. One of these approaches by Gilles Deleuze (1994) is shown in Figure 2.7. At the centre of this approach is the classic cyclic

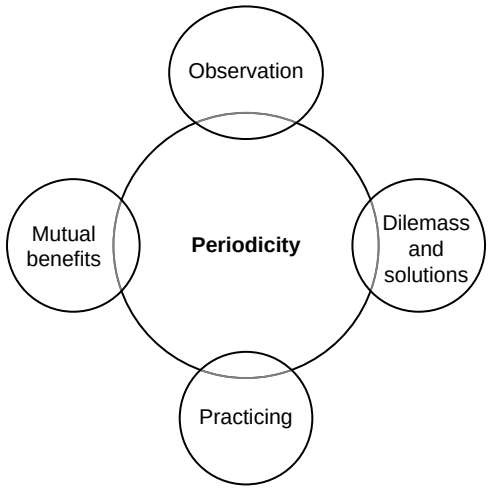

Figure 2.7 The cyclical process of action research with elements of enrichment.

Source: Own study based on: (Drummond and Themessl-Huber 2007, 444).

action research process by Lewin. The other elements are the result of Deleuze's research and encourage you to look at action research a little differently than in the basic proposal but not in confrontation with it.

The first element refers to the metaphor of a farmer who is constantly forced to look after their crops. The researcher and other participants of action research, directly and permanently involved in the whole project and in all its parts should behave in the same way. The second, additional element is the relationship between problems and solutions. In this case, the example of a garden is cited, in which situations and challenges that are completely new to the gardener appear constantly. The action research project is about the need for continuous learning and the frequently encountered requirements for discovering new dependencies and experimenting in a way that is not only based on history. The next, third element concerns the confirmation by strictly practical and symbolic activities of what is desirable as an action and what is not. In this case, the researcher confirms (or not) the observed activities. And finally, the mutual, dialectical adaptation process reminiscent of the relationship between the garden and the gardener in the case of action research is not only about the actual relationship of the researcher and the area under study, but should also enter the seemingly virtual sphere, e.g., covering deeper spheres of organisational culture.

f Domain approach to the cycle of conduct

An alternative version of the action research cycle is a phase approach, consisting of several stages and occurring in specific areas. David Tripp (2005, 8) recommends that the action research cycle be included in three successive phases (planning, implementation and evaluation) and in two areas (practice and research procedure) (see Table 2.4).

The discussed convention of conducting action research, although it refers to earlier ones, shows more clearly that in this research approach practical and research threads, including methodological ones, are parallelly interwoven. Actions taken in both areas are subject to similar steps. The planning phase is extremely strict with regard to the need to evaluate the results of change. The importance of data, its analysis and reporting in the implementation phase is

Table 2.4 Areas represented in the action research cycle

Stages of research	*Practical actions*	*Research actions*
Planning	Planning change	Forecasting the effects of change
Doing	Designing a change	"Working" with data
Monitoring	Observation of the effects of change	Organisation ethnography
Evaluating	Assessment of change and results	Evaluation of the research methodology

Source: Own study based on: (Tripp 2005, 8).

also highlighted. Both designed and implemented changes as well as the research procedure are subject to evaluation. An extremely important component of the first phase, i.e., planning, is situational analysis in the form of reconnaissance, which aims to reveal the widest possible picture of the context of action research – ongoing activities, action research stakeholders, as well as all sorts of dilemmas, concerns, and contentious issues that could constitute the research problem. This approach to action research also assumes iteration and cyclicality, although the tabular form used does not clearly illustrate this.

g Spiral approach to the cycle of conduct

In one of the previously discussed approaches of the action research cycle, the spiral of interactions taking place in this research approach was presented, but in relation to the issue of data generation. However, the entire AR process is also spiral (see Figure 2.8).

One of the most important achievements of the first cycle of action research should be the initiation of each subsequent cycle. Commenting on the spiral nature of action research, Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart (2005, 277) indicate the basic value of such an illustration consisting in revealing the relationships and interdependence between individual cycles of conduct as well as the continuity and inclusiveness of the learning process. At the same time, they formulate the following complementary thoughts (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005, 277 et seq.):

- the implementation of individual action research cycles and their combinations requires close cooperation between all stakeholders, otherwise the next cycle may be infected with significant mistakes
- the action research process should combine the educational dimension with the social dimension

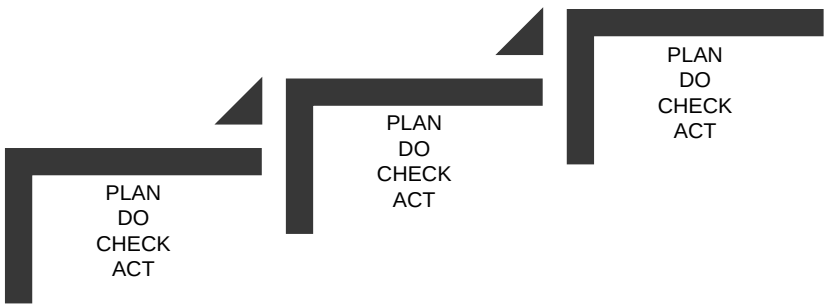

Figure 2.8 Action research as a spiral process.

Source: Own study based on: (Afify 2008, 156).

- in fact, the conduct does not always have to be in a way strictly in line with the projected steps, often – under the influence of circumstances – it is much more fluid, open and responsive
- the social dimension dominates in action research processes, regardless of whether the research concerns material or symbolic matters because the basic constructs under examination are: communication, culture, language, work, power, values
- socialisation should be an integral part of the transformation of existing practices

The selected approaches to the action research cycle presented above are partly similar. At the same time, they strongly emphasise, more than other, selected dimensions or ways of using this research approach. Treated complementarity, rather than as a substitution, they better reflect the relatively rich and complex shape of the method system and procedures.

2.4 Action research used in cooperation between universities and other organisations

As we proved in the previous chapter, the cooperation of a university with the environment includes a wide range of forms, programs, projects, and many institutional and organisational actors can participate in it. There are no general rules for creating such cooperation – it all depends on the cooperating organisations, assuming that cooperation is a means to achieve specific goals on both sides of the cooperation. Hence, now we want to draw our readers' attention to the use of action research in cooperation between universities and cooperating organisations.

At the beginning, one should refer to the relations of the university with the environment mentioned at the beginning of the chapter and the implementation of the so-called third mission of the universities. There are opinions emphasising that universities have become less involved in the affairs of their communities and society as a whole, in real problems of people, due to their growing corporatisation and commercialisation, as well as involvement in the needs of the labour market, and not the entire society (Ospina, Hoffman-Pinilla, and El Hadidi 2008). Still others emphasise that universities strengthen social hierarchy by controlling knowledge and claiming the search for the truth (Deer 2003; Ospina, Hoffman-Pinilla, and El Hadidi 2008). Universities as ivory towers are recognised as those that "produce" knowledge, while practitioners and the environment are the subject of research and its consumer, that is, they consume knowledge produced by universities (Gibbons et al. 1994; Bradbury 2007). This production of knowledge and the manner of its dispersion is therefore a downstream journey to practitioners who are largely excluded from its generation in this system, but then they are expected to try to make knowledge work in the real world (Ospina, Hoffman-Pinilla, and El Hadidi

2008). This is the source of accusations against universities for creating elite knowledge, sometimes of no use to anyone, the exclusion of those who are de facto its users.

Action research, in particular some types of it, has become a remedy for this schism of science and practice, a way to leave this metaphorical tower of ivory, emancipation of knowledge, its democratisation, de-prioritisation, co-creation and sharing. Both research and practice, i.e., application or implementation, are equally important as part of action research, as we have already written in detail in the first chapter. And most importantly, action research at its root is based on the assumption that research as part of this approach is always carried out together with or by persons to whom the study relates, i.e., groups, organisations or communities, and is never conducted on them (Herr and Anderson 2015). Therefore, generating knowledge within them is never an external observation, when the researcher is not involved, does not cooperate, does not interact with the subjects. The production of knowledge is of a community nature, thus contradicting the criticism of the work of university scientists in this sense. In other words, action research is a specific path down the metaphorical tower, an approach that brings theory closer to praxis.

It is worth noting that due to the nature of action research, when research based on precise methodology is important, as well as taking into account the practical issues of designed solutions (Coghlan and Brannick 2014), the concept of AR is based on cooperation. It perfectly reflects the relationship or cooperation process – where the university represents the research side and the cooperating organisation the practical and implementation side of this approach. This, of course, does not apply to all types in action research – rather those that we call collective action research (when a group is involved in the research process, e.g., co-operative inquiry) or, above all, social action research (Góral et al. 2019) i.e., *3rd person Action Research*, in which many people are involved and can have the character of larger projects (Reason and Bradbury-Huang 2013).

Action research, despite the usually small scale, may refer in their motivations to all three levels of collaboration identified at the beginning of the first chapter (see Figure 1.1). From the perspective of metagoals, action research (in particular the so-called social action research) refers to problems of social groups or entire local communities – problems that cannot be solved by the actions of only selected social actors or institutions, or these solutions may not give the expected results or may be rejected by the community. Cooperation within action research creates a synergy effect, but – as we have already mentioned – it rejects technocratic solving of social problems, offering instead a joint action, which additionally creates opportunities for building social capital.

On the other hand, at the meso-level, cooperation in action research can relate to organisational problems, using collective approaches, as well as types of action research, such as collaborative management research. Finally,

the micro-level refers to the cooperation of people who, in various forms, can look for common solutions to various problems that afflict them.

Action research can occur (or can be used) in the following formal forms of cooperation between universities and potential cooperating organisations. First of all, cooperation can occur in the following areas of education:

- enabling students to participate in activities related to action research, including projects implemented by universities, including research in other organisations; involvement of employees of cooperating organisations in the development of study plans and programmes taking into account their experience in implementing research
- joint teaching – when representatives of cooperating organisations participate in activities involving action research (both theoretical and practical)
- lifelong learning – representatives of cooperating organisations participate in a variety of classes, courses and programs using the action research approach (including studies on their own professional practice or collective action research)

Cooperation in research and development provides the most opportunities for action research development. First of all, it is about joint research activities of scientists and practitioners, formed on the basis of informal and formal contacts and networks. Action research can also be carried out as research and development consulting, conducting joint projects using AR, as well as broader programs that involve entire communities, establishing partnerships using this approach, as well as new organisational units dedicated not only to action research but also to work with specific communities, social groups, or devoted to some social problems. Research within the framework of doctoral programmes is also popular.

When presenting the forms of cooperation in detail, we will indicate some of the most common ones – in particular in countries where action research is most developed. World-wide forms of university collaboration with action research include (Catelli, Costello, and Padovano 2000; Strier 2014; Lucio-Villegas 2016; London et al. 2017):

- scientific and implementation projects – carried out by university teams, in cooperation with other organisations, using action research. It is important to emphasise here that they are of a formal nature – the university or its organisational unit as a leader or partner participates together with other organisations in the implementation of projects that address problems important for local communities or organisations
- community-university partnerships – use action research created at universities using many fields of social sciences, including public health, spatial planning, education and social psychology. These partnerships involve people from all walks of life, disciplines, organisations and

institutions that work together to solve social problems relevant to the community. Partnerships can carry out various tasks, e.g., exchange information and knowledge, jointly implement projects or programmes. The most popular in the US are educational partnerships of universities and schools, under which the action research approach is one of the most used and valued

- special organisational units dedicated to action research – named differently as centres or schools separated in organisational structures but also frequently occurring as informal groups, teams within organisational units or scientific and research units. Their participation in action research is of a formal nature – the university cooperates (through its units), although the cooperation can be permanent with some organisation or local community; or ad hoc – depending on the needs. In such a situation, organisational units are a kind of consultant in action research who provides assistance in this type of research
- developed, formal cooperation networks covering universities that are interested in strengthening their potential in the field of action research, while also building their own networks of cooperation with the university environment. As part of the university, a cooperation network is created, consisting of scientists, enterprises and other organisations, organised around the university. On the other hand, the universities themselves create a second cooperation network and exchange the knowledge needed to build a cooperation network. The essence of these networks is not only to develop their abilities in the implementation of action research but above all to solve the social, environmental or economic problems of those communities or social groups that they consider important for their mission. It is also important to involve their own students
- doctoral programs – entirely dedicated to the action research approach, where doctoral students carry out their research in local organisations or communities

It should also be added that action research may also occur as part of informal cooperation, when individual university researchers, thanks to their relationships and cooperation networks, participate in action research carried out in the environment. They can take the forms already mentioned here of ad hoc advice and cooperation between scientists and practitioners, as well as participation in major projects.

Regardless of whether cooperation in action research is formal or not, there are three vitally important roles that university researchers can take in the implementation of this type of research. The first is the role of the initiator – it dictates that a university researcher is the initiator of research ventures in a group, organisation or in particular in the local community (Stoecker 1999), and this role raises many doubts, especially in the case of participatory action research, when it is assumed that the initiative leaves the

environment to which the research relates. Practice, however, proves that research rarely occurs without someone who is involved, experienced and with appropriate knowledge. For this reason, sometimes communities invite a leader/educator to cooperate, who initiates action research, using their privileged position – the one who has knowledge. Another possible position is the role of a consultant; here a university representative is an advisor at every stage of implementation of action research, and they are associated with the organisation and community in which the research is carried out, and feel responsible for it (Stoecker 1999). It should be added that there are also opinions criticising both the role of the initiator and consultant from the university, because – having knowledge – they also have a kind of power and can still be leaders of research processes and maintain a dichotomy between those who produce knowledge and those who obtain it. Finally, the last dimension – the role of a collaborator, participating in action research, at every stage of research, having deep knowledge of the group, organisation or community, using their competences and knowledge not to gain advantage or power, but rather for service, building a community, for a common understanding of the problems to which this research relates (Stoecker 1999). It is noted that the role of the collaborator is extremely difficult because it requires time to build mutual trust, break scepticism towards scientists and activate the inhabitants or participants of the organisation in research.

It is worth mentioning here again that the literature in the field of action research indicates many benefits that can be obtained by organisations that carry out action research. First of all, it is noted that action research (Eden and Huxham 1996; Cuoghlan and Coghlan 2002):

- uses activity as an integral part of research; combines research logic and action
- focuses on the researcher's professional values and not on methodological reasons, which is the main accusation against representatives of the academic world
- allows practitioners, representatives of the organisation, to study their own professional activity
- helps improve workplace practice and organisation
- helps managers in their professional development, by critically analysing their own beliefs and practices
- helps managers look at the organisation and their own activity in a multidisciplinary manner and work across technical, cultural and functional boundaries
- supports managers in the effective implementation of changes, when they become part of the processes of these changes, while they are able to understand these processes thanks to research
- is oriented on problems, organisational improvement, context and future
- can use various methods of data collection that suit the organisation's environment

Action research has gained importance over the past 50 years. They have been included in the whole stream of research, in the offer of many organisations, not only universities but also *think tanks* and commercial companies (Theiss 2008). This prevalence, especially of participatory action research (e.g., World Bank (Godinot and Wodon 2006)), raises researchers' anxiety. It is based on the growing tendency to change the scale of action research when participatory action research is adequate for the study of small groups and serves emancipatory purposes. Meanwhile, it is increasingly used by think thanks, international organisations or research companies that carry out extensive research at the request of the public sector to serve the interests of clients (Gaventa and Cornwell 2008). The issues of pro-social "colonization", emancipatory research approaches by business and by the public sector are raised, where instead of emancipating disadvantaged social groups, highlighting their problems, giving voice to the respondents, we have decorative research that seems to democratise life at the local level (Theiss 2008). They are often carried out as a façade, decoration, image building by the organisation that conducts in order to gain social support for unpopular reforms. As Maria Theiss writes (2008, 80):

> *It has been pointed out that the support of residents for local governments or other local institutions obtained through participatory action research (PAR) is useful in times of crisis, for necessary financial cuts or making unpopular decisions. Participatory action research thus fulfils the function of an apparently increasing legitimacy of local government policy, including programmes undertaken in other spheres than the implemented PAR and established with the help of quite non-participatory mechanisms. However, the most emphatic argument in favour of the thesis about the façade role of PAR are the conclusions supported by empirical research that increased interest in the use of PAR, promotion of other forms of civic participation "on call" of local governments (organizing councils of residents, civic committees, appointing social consultative bodies, etc.), and also developing a debate on revitalization in the local community, coincides with financial limitations and economic instability of self-governments undertaking such "pro-civic" activities.*

Therefore, when referring to the criticism of action research, it is worth noting that action research performed by cooperating universities and its scientific representatives together with representatives of the organisation is one of the most important ways to avoid the criticism described above in relation to action research. The scientific goals that guide scientists, the desire to present their own research and high publishing standards support the proper performance of research, while maintaining strict research design in implementation, as well as high ethical standards. In addition, the trend observed in recent years at universities relates to the creation of strict ethical procedures for conducting research. The codes of ethics created at the best universities make unethical research not so much impossible as it is unprofitable from the perspective of an academic career (Greenwood and Levin 2003; Christians 2014).

References

Afify, M.F. 2008. 'Action Research: Solving Real-World Problems'. *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 8 (2): 153–159.

Akom, A.A.A. 2011. 'Black Emancipatory Action Research: Integrating a Theory of Structural Racialisation into Ethnographic and Participatory Action Research Methods'. *Ethnography and Education* 6 (1): 113–131.

Altrichter, H., S. Kemmis, R. McTaggart, and O. Zuber-Skerritt. 2002. 'The Concept of Action Research'. *Learning Organisation* 9 (3): 125–131.

Baker, J., K. Lynch, S. Cantillon, and J. Walsh. 2004. *Equality: From Theory to Action*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Boog, B.W.M. 2003. 'The Emancipatory Character of Action Research, Its History and the Present State of the Art'. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 13 (6): 426–438.

Bradbury, H. 2007. 'Quality and "Actionability": What Action Researchers Offer from the Tradition of Pragmatism'. In *Handbook of Collaborative Management Research*, edited by A.B.R. Shani, S.A. Mohrman, W.A. Pasmore, B. Stymne, and N. Adler, 583–600. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Bradbury, H., and Reason P. 2003. 'Action Research: An Opportunity for Research Purpose and Practices'. *Qualitative Social Work* 2 (2): 155–175.

Brydon-Miller, M. 2012. 'Addressing Ethical Challenges of Community-Based Research'. *Teaching Ethics* 12 (2): 157–162.

Buskens, I., and S. Earl. 2008. 'Research for Change: Outcome Mapping's Contribution to Emancipatory Action Research in Africa'. *Action Research* 6 (2): 171–192.

Carmona, G., J.L. Molina, J. Bromley, C. Varela-Ortega, and J.L. García-Aróstegui. 2011. 'Object-Oriented Bayesian Networks for Participatory Water Management: Two Case Studies in Spain'. *Journal of Water Resources: Planning Manage* 137 (4): 366–376.

Carr, W. 2006. 'Philosophy, Methodology and Action Research'. *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 40 (4): 421–435.

Catelli, L., J. Costello, and K. Padovano. 2000. 'Action Research in the Context of a School-University Partnership: Its Value, Problems, Issues and Benefits'. *Educational Action Research* 8 (2): 225–242.

Checkland, P., and S. Holwell. 1998. 'The Nature and Validity of Action Research'. *Systemic Practice and Action Research* 11 (1): 9–21.

Chen, S., F. Huang, and W. Zeng. 2018. 'Comments on Systematic Methodologies of Action Research in the New Millennium: A Review of Publications 2000–2014'. *Action Research* 16 (4): 341–360.

Christians, C.G. 2014. 'Etyka i Polityka w Badaniach Jakościowych'. In *Metody Badań Jakościowych*, edited by N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, translated by K. Podemski, 207–245. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Coghlan, D., and T. Brannick. 2014. *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organisation*. London–Thousand Oaks–New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Cordeiro, L., C. Baldini Soares, and L. Rittenmeyer. 2017. 'Unscrambling Method and Methodology in Action Research Traditions: Theoretical Conceptualization of Praxis and Emancipation'. *Qualitative Research* 17 (4): 395–407.

Cornwall, A. 2008. 'Unpacking "Participation" Models, Meanings and Practices'. *Community Development Journal* 43 (3): 269–283.

Cuoghlan, P., and D. Coghlan. 2002. 'Action Research for Operations Management'. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management* 22 (2): 220–240.

Ćwiklicki, M. 2014. 'Granice Stosowania Action Research w Naukach o Zarządzaniu'. In *Zarządzanie Organizacją z Perspektywy Metodologicznej. Wybrane Zagadnienia*, edited by P. Kuźbik and M. Szymankiewicz, 153–162. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Deer, C. 2003. 'Bourdieu on Higher Education: The Meaning of the Growing Integration of Educational Systems and Self-Reflective Practice'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 24 (2): 195–207.

Delezue, G. 1994. *Difference and Repetition*. London: Athlone Press.

Drummond, J.S., and M. Themessl-Huber. 2007. 'The Cyclical Process of Action Research'. *Action Research* 5 (4): 430–448.

Eden, C., and C. Huxham. 1996. 'Action Research for Management Research'. *British Journal of Management* 7: 75–86.

Esau, O. 2013. 'Preparing Pre-Service Teachers as Emancipatory and Participatory Action Researchers in a Teacher Education Programme'. *South African Journal of Education* 33 (4): 1–10.

Gaventa, J., and P. Cornwell. 2008. 'Power and Knowledge'. In *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*, edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 172–189. London: Sage Publications.

Gibbons, M., C. Limoges, H. Nowotny, S. Schwartzman, P. Scott, and M. Trow. 1994. *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publication.

Godinot, X., and Q. Wodon, eds. 2006. 'Participatory Approaches to Attacking Extreme Poverty: Cases Studies Led by the International Movement ATD Fourth World'. In *World Bank Working Paper*, 1–132. 77.

Góral, A., B. Jałocha, G. Mazurkiewicz, and M. Zawadzki. 2019. *Badania w Działaniu. Książka Dla Kształcących Się w Naukach Społecznych*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Greenwood, D.J. 2004. 'Action Research: Collegial Responses Fulfilled'. *Concepts and Transformation* 9 (1): 85–92.

Greenwood, D.J., and M. Levin. 2003. 'Reconstructing the Relationships Between Universities and Society Through Action Research'. In *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, edited by N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 131–136. London: Sage Publications.

Greenwood, D.J., and M. Levin. 2007. *Introduction of Action Research, Social Research for Social Change*. Thousand Oaks–London–New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Hay, D., and M. Fourie. 1999. 'Using Emancipatory Action Research for Implementing Self-Evaluation in South African Higher Education Quality Assurance'. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 13 (2): 44–53.

Herr, K.G., and G.L. Anderson. 2015. *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Hoverman, S., T. Chan, H. Ross, and B. Powell. 2011. 'Social Learning through Participatory Integrated Catchment Risk Assessment in the Solomon Islands'. *Ecology and Society* 16 (2). https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol16/iss2/art17.

Jedynak, M. 2018. 'The Use of Action Research in Diagnosing and Improving Cooperation Between an Enterprise and Its Suppliers'. *International Journal of Contemporary Management* 17 (1): 59–75.

Kemmis, S., and R. McTaggart. 2005. 'Participatory Action Research: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere'. In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, 559–603. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Kinsler, K. 2010. 'The Utility of Educational Action Research for Emancipatory Change'. *Action Research* 8 (2): 171–189.

Lather, P. 1986. 'Research as Praxis'. *Harvard Educational Review* 56 (3): 257–278. 10.17763/haer.56.3.bj2h231877069482.

Ledwith, M. 2007. 'On Being Critical: Uniting Theory and Practice through Emancipatory Action Research'. *Educational Action Research* 15 (4): 597–611.

Lewin, K. 1946. 'Action Research and Minority Problems'. *Journal of Social Issues* 75 (1): 34–46.

London, J., K. Schwarz, M. Cadenasso, B. Cutts, C. Jr. Mason, J. Lim, K. Valenzuela-Garcia, and H. Smith. 2017. 'Weaving Community-University Research and Action Partnerships for Environmental Justice'. *Action Research* 16 (2): 1–17.

Lucio-Villegas, E. 2016. 'Building Knowledge Democracy from the University: A Case Study in Spain'. *Action Research* 14 (1): 3–18.

MacDonald, C. 2012. 'Understanding Participatory Action Research: A Qualitative Research Methodology Option'. *Canadian Journal of Action Research* 13 (2): 34–50.

Mackenzie, J., P. Tan, S. Hoverman, and C. Baldwin. 2012. 'The Value and Limitations of Participatory Action Research Methodology'. *Journal of Hydrology* 474: 11–21.

Masters, J. 1995. 'The History of Action Research'. In *Action Research Electronic Reader*, edited by I. Hughes. Sydney: The University of Sydney.

Molina, J.L., J.L. García-Arostegui, J. Bromley, and J. Benavente. 2011. 'Integrated Assessment of the European WFD Implementation in Extremely Overexploited Aquifers Through Participatory Modeling'. *Water Resources. Management* 25 (1): 3343–3370.

O'Shea, E. 2013. 'First Steps to Developing Service Learning Initiatives Using Emancipatory Action Research'. *Australasian Journal of University Community Engagement* 8 (1): 25–49.

Ospina, S., A. Hoffman-Pinilla, and W. El Hadidi. 2008. 'Cooperative Inquiry for Learning and Connectedness'*Research and Practice*. 5. 10.1080/14767330802185673

Padak, N., and G. Padak. 1994. 'Guidelines for Planning Action Research Projescts'. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED380699.

Reason, P., and H. Bradbury-Huang, eds. 2013. *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*. London: Sage Publications.

Roberts, G., and B. Dick. 2003. 'Emancipatory Design Choices for Action Research Practitioners'. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology13* 13 (6): 486–495.

Skinner, H. 2017. 'Action Research'. In *Formative Research in Social Marketing*, edited by K. Kubacki and S. Rundle-Thiele, 11–31. Singapore: Springer Science i Business Media.

Stoecker, R. 1999. 'Are Academics Irrelevant? Roles for Scholars in Participatory Research'. *American Behavioral Scientist* 42 (5): 840–854.

Strier, R. 2014. 'Fields of Paradox: University – Community Partnerships'. *Higher Education* 68 (2): 155–165.

Stringer, E.T. 1996. *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Surdyk, A. 2006. 'Metodologia Action Research i Techniki Komunikacyjne w Glottodydaktyce'. In *Oblicza Komunikacji 1: Perspektywy Badań Nad Tekstem, Dyskursem i Komunikacją*, edited by I. Kamińska-Szmaj, T. Piekot, and M. Zaśko-Zielińska, 912–923. Kraków: Krakowskie Towarzystwo Popularyzowania Wiedzy.

Theiss, M. 2008. 'Participative Action Research. O Roli "partycypacyjnych Badań w Działaniu" w Polityce Społecznej'. *Problemy Polityki Społecznej. Studia i Dyskusje* 11: 65–85.

Thiollent, M. 2011. 'Action Research and Participatory Research: An Overview'. *International Journal of Action Research* 7 (2): 160–174.

Tripp, D. 2005. 'Action Research: A Methodological Introduction'. http://www.scielo.br/pdf/ep/v31n3/en_a09v31n3.pdf, accessed.

Wallace, M. 1987. 'A Historical Review of Action Research Some Implications for the Education of Teachers in Their Management Role'. *Journal of Education for Teaching* 1 (2): 97–115.

Wittmayer, J.M., N. Schäpke, G. Feiner, R. Piotrowski, F. van Steenberger, and S. Baasch. 2013. 'Action Research for Sustainability'. Reflections on Transition Management in Practice, Research Brief.

Zuber-Skerritt, O. 1996. 'Introduction: New Directions in Action Research'. In *New Directions in Action Research*, edited by O. Zuber-Skerritt, 3–9. London: Falmer Press.

3 Action research in processes of cooperation between universities and their stakeholders

3.1 Determinants of the implementation of cooperation processes using action research

After 1989, Polish higher education institutions were affected by changes resulting from the political transformation and new policies pursued by the democratising state. They were caused by growing problems of financing of the expanded public sector, which was at the same time criticised for both low efficiency and quality of management, as well as insufficient focus on the recipient of the offer (Giza 2021). Hence, the state gradually introduced policies, on the one hand, making the amount of university funding dependent on measurable achievements and gradually reducing the decision-making power of collegiate bodies, and on the other hand, strengthening professional management power and opening up to the inflow of private finance (Ferlie, Musselin, and Andresani 2008; Giza 2021). Apart from public universities, non-public higher education institutions began to appear and develop – this was primarily the result of the growing educational needs of society (Kapiszewska 2011).

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the challenges related to the globalisation processes faced by higher education became one of the most important impulses strengthening the role of states in the management of higher education and science (Altbach 2004). Currently, in Poland, as in Western Europe, there are two paradigms of thinking about the mission of universities and the role of higher education. These paradigms contradict each other in different countries with varying degrees. The first is the global paradigm, which concerns the directions of reforms strongly supported by the ideas of New Public Management (Kwiek 2017). It is expressed in education policies and forms a practical set of global and transnational recommendations regarding the directions of systemic reforms of higher education (Lawn, Lingard, 2002). The second is the traditional academic paradigm, which stems from thinking about the academic community about the role of the academy as an institution and is rooted in the values and norms of an elite Humboldtian university (Kwiek 2012; 2017).

Thus, considering the activities of the Polish state in relation to Higher Education Institutions from the perspective of the New Public Management

DOI: 10.4324/9781003227069-4

paradigm, particular operational goals are implemented by means of achieving measurable indicators by Higher Education Institutions. This is the case even if we assume that public authorities still see the pursuit of scientific truth or educating students with desired competences among the main objectives of the activities of Higher Education Institutions (Giza 2021). These indicators are usually the number of students educated, the size and structure of the staff, the position held in rankings of international importance and the effectiveness in securing funds for scientific research (Giza 2021). Researchers do not have clear results assessing the impact of the New Public Management philosophy on the increase in outcomes achieved by universities. However, some other consequences of New Public Management in Polish higher education have been identified, such as reducing university funding from public funds and the simultaneous massification of higher education or a very strong influence on internal organisation and organisational processes at universities (Giza 2021).

Polish Higher Education Institutions are therefore the arena of

> clashing transnational processes pushing 'from above' (aiming at the convergence of national systems of higher education) and influencing 'from below' (aiming at divergence) deeply entrenched organisational patterns based on academic myths and traditions, which for decades have had a significant impact on the functioning of Polish Higher Education Institutions.
>
> (Antonowicz 2015, 14)

The researchers' attention is focused primarily on the issue of mechanisms of controlling higher education in Poland, where the conflict between modern global trends and traditional local order is most present (Antonowicz 2015). Clark wrote as early as 1983 that "the clash of social values in higher education will require considerable adjustments, and the systems most likely to prosper will be those that divide power, support variety, and allow ambiguity" (Clark 1983, 1). One of the main conclusions from this researcher's considerations, which can be applied to understanding today's higher education systems and institutions in Poland, is the weakening of boundaries both within higher education institutions and between them and other social institutions (Brennan 2010). Hence, the social functions performed by higher education institutions may be one of the reasons why the academic authority held and its maintenance, becomes an important challenge coming from outside the university walls (Brennan 2010).

Moreover, among the numerous problems that have been faced by higher education in Poland for years, the following can be mentioned (Kudrycka 2011; Kraśniewski 2006; 2009; Wilkin 2013; Pakuła 2015):

- increase in mass education
- increased mobility of people wishing to study outside their home country
- consideration of the need for lifelong learning

- financing of science and higher education, including tuition fees
- frequently introduced legal changes binding higher education institutions
- creating an education system tailored to the needs of the labour market, aimed at improving the employability of graduates
- positioning universities in prestigious rankings and internationalisation of activities
- increasing and improving the attractiveness and competitive position of the system of higher education in Poland
- commercialisation and popularisation of results of scientific research
- extensive diversification in research activity, quality of research and education between universities and research institutions in the country

Therefore, for some time now, Polish scientists have also been raising voices about the need to introduce changes at universities, which would be a response to the challenges faced by universities in the face of progressing globalisation and information processes (Henry et al. 2001; Dziewulak 2013; Pakuła 2015).

The last act introducing significant changes in Polish law on higher education was the Act of 20 July 2018, Law on Higher Education and Science, i.e., Act 2.0 or the so-called Constitution for Science. This Act, due to the scope and depth of changes, is considered to be a measure that opens a new period in the running of the system of higher education and science (Woźnicki 2019). Considering the regulatory scope of the current act, its main areas of change are deregulation (systemic), evaluation (of the quality of education, scientific activity, doctoral schools) and consolidation (with many references) (Woźnicki 2019). However, it should be noted that already during the work on the draft of the new act and the discussion that took place around it, questions were raised as to whether the reform proposed by the Polish government was a proposal for change that would foster the development of science and education in higher education or, on the contrary, a threat to destroy the existing achievements and academic tradition in Poland (Kromolicka 2017). These questions remain relevant even today when it seems that the higher education system in Poland is unstable and uncertain, and the effects of the introduced changes are still difficult to assess. Hence, researchers wonder "whether the new act addressed the most pressing problems faced by higher education institutions and whether it enabled the invalidation of the often-dysfunctional mechanisms and processes launched earlier" (Giza 2021).

The structural reforms implemented in Poland in recent years are part of global changes, as well as the dynamics in relations between the state and universities (Kwiek 2015). The same discussions about relations between national governments and higher education institutions in Western Europe have been ongoing for more than three decades (Kwiek 2017; Toyibah 2018; Amaral 2008). This is the result of using the activities of higher

education institutions to generate knowledge and strengthen European economies (Kwiek 2017; Leydessdorff 2006). Thus, academic knowledge begins to play a new role, serving to meet the new economic challenges of modern society (Kwiek 2017; Leydessdorff 2006). The proposed changes include both those relating to the need to redefine the social role of higher education, the changing expectations of female and male students, and the revision of the teaching offer (Wroczyńska 2013). This discourse is consistent with the attempts made by scientists to re-imagine higher education, including indicating future directions of development (Chmielecka and Kraśniewska 2019). This vision is dominated by neoliberal positions. From their perspective, education at universities is a form of educating the next generation of graduates/employees. Its result is a "mutually-constitutive relationship where limited visions of future needs and demands serve to constrain present educational offerings: a self-reinforcing dynamic admitting little disruption" (Gayá and Brydon-Miller 2017, 36).

The relationship between research and education itself has also long been of interest to researchers. It is pointed out that research determines, among other things, modern education, which influences the teaching content, and that research conducted at a university is a guarantee of its autonomy and academic independence. Moreover, scientific research activates the process of creating a knowledge-based society, and the very participation of students in research develops in them the ability to independently pose and solve research problems, which in turn contributes to the employability of graduates on the labour market (European Commission 2003; Kraśniewski 2006). As Marcin Geryk (2019) writes, this perspective can be extended by transferring this responsibility of the university for the graduate to a society-wide level – each graduate of a higher education institution can significantly influence the quality of life of the society. To be able to fulfil the tasks as described, higher education institutions in Poland should conduct long-term activities in line with the needs of the environment in which they operate. It requires the involvement of universities in activities developing cooperation with the social and economic environment.

From the perspective of university education itself, universities face further challenges in terms of reconciling different expectations of different stakeholders, which are reflected in the university's designated mission and vision. As Jan Jacko, Iwona Maciejowska and Ewa Okoń-Horodyńska (2017, 1) write, in Poland

> companies expect that the university will prepare staff capable of undertaking entrepreneurial activities, the research and development sector after university education expects elites capable of taking on the challenges of science, industries technological people expect to educate experts, administration structures need people from the university with managerial competences, the cultural sector requires the university to develop sensitivity to ethical and aesthetic values, local governments

> need specialists who designate and implement a smart specialization strategy, the economy as a whole expects competent implementers of the intelligent development program.

The problems related to the adopted model of the university and the university education itself may be supported by looking at Polish universities from the perspective of the idea of a socially responsible university (University Social Responsibility – USR). This approach points out that in order for a university to become an organisation serving its environment, it must respond effectively and positively, but not uncritically, to the expectations of its stakeholders, and the degree to which these expectations are met is a measure of its social responsibility, thus emphasising its role in conducting dialogue with university stakeholders (Leja 2008; Jastrzębska et al. 2019). USR is

> the ability of the University to disseminate and implement a set of general principles and specific values, using four key processes: Management, Teaching, Research and Extension, through the provision of educational services and transfer knowledge following ethical principles, good governance, respect for the environment, social engagement and the promotion of values.
>
> (Giuffré and Ratto 2014, 233)

This is why the missions of Polish higher education institutions raise, among others, the need to strengthen social engagement and civic activity of university students and employees by promoting the provision of services to the local community and promoting sustainable development or environmental activities (Jastrzębska et al. 2019; Vasilescu et al. 2010). In this sense, the activity of Polish higher education institutions becomes the collection, enrichment and dissemination of knowledge (Cybal-Michalska 2015).

The implementation of the assumptions of a socially responsible university are activities resulting from the concept of the third mission (Morawska-Jancelewicz 2019). Within the framework of the third mission, the university remains in constant dialogue with its stakeholders. The relationships it creates with the environment are conceptualised in various ways. One such classification identifies three types of activities undertaken within the third mission of HEIs (Morawska-Jancelewicz 2019). The first type is the transfer of technology and innovation, where the knowledge produced within the academic walls is transferred to the external environment. The second type is lifelong learning, which requires various forms of education to be conducted at universities to meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Finally, the third type is social commitment supporting the production of knowledge corresponding to contemporary challenges and its popularisation.

With the growing interest in the idea of a socially responsible university, which takes into account university stakeholders in a special way in its activities, researchers are looking for new research approaches that would include

representatives of the environment in their activities. As participatory researchers emphasise the importance of implementing well-thought-out activities, legitimate research is considered to be the participation of members of social groups in the process of knowledge creation. In our view, action research, which takes into account the interrelationship between the political, economic, ideological and scientific dimensions of knowledge and the ideological and scientific dimensions of the problem under study, is such a proposal for research designs (Gianotten and de Wit 1982, 8–16; after: Selener 1997). Since a key feature of action research in organisations is the close relationship between the generation of knowledge and actions taken to improve organisational performance, according to the definitions of AR, the role of the researcher is to obtain relevant information and create knowledge to solve practical problems as part of a planned effort to bring about change (Selener 1997).

In most definitions that explain the concept of action research, four main areas can be identified: empowerment of participants, collaboration through participation, knowledge acquisition and social change (Ferrance 2000). AR is a research process in which researchers together with practitioners collaborate to achieve two goals, namely to solve an organisational problem and, as a result, to generate scientific knowledge (Coghlan, Cirella, and Shani 2012). There is a close relationship between knowledge generation and actions taken to improve organisational performance (Selener 1997). It is important to take actions that are planned and well thought out, as this approach rejects knowledge creation for the sole purpose of creating it (Selener 1997). Therefore, participatory research is "legitimate if, in the process of knowledge generation, members of community groups participate in the implementation of reflected actions, considering the interrelationships among the political, economical, ideological, and scientific dimensions of the problem being addressed" (Selener 1997, 35).

Action research, in the perspective of the indicated challenges, can mean a specific practice that is an invitation for open and emancipatory thinking about what can be the future of education in Poland, at the same challenging the assumptions of what is the current education, the higher education system and the organisations from the university environment, in a manner that sustains a diverse and democratic social dialogue in this area (Gayá and Brydon-Miller 2017). We believe that conducting research in an AR approach allows the creation of an emancipatory space that shapes the entrepreneurial skills of students (Zawadzki et al. 2020). This space enables understanding complex organisational problems with the support of tutors. In the context of business and management issues, action research operates primarily in the realm of strategy, practical tasks, as well as structured, hierarchical organisational systems (A. B. Shani and Coghlan 2021). The contexts of business research and management are rapidly changing through factors such as:

> the impact of emerging technology, social media, and social tools; the role of new alternative work and organisational designs embedded in

> design thinking and agility orientations; the increasing emphasis on innovation leadership and leadership capabilities; the impact and increasing global emphasis on sustainable development and sustainable organisations; the emerging role and potential impact of collaborative communities of inquiry, and progressing beyond the traditional mechanisms of change with opportunities for action research to contribute to their implementation and the generation of useful knowledge.
>
> (A. B. Shani and Coghlan 2021)

Our project was an invitation to students, organisations and promoters to jointly develop entrepreneurial skills based on both emancipation and the development of practical reasoning (Zawadzki et al. 2020; Gayá and Brydon-Miller 2017; Kemmis 2008; Winkler, Saltzman, and Yang 2018). By providing a description and presenting our experiences, including research findings and conclusions, we aim to help encourage and support other partnerships in their research applying the AR approach (Platteel et al. 2010). Abraham Shani and David Coghlan (2021), referring to the way AR is conducted in business and management and pointing out the evaluation characteristics of well-conducted research, refer to Shani and Pasmore's (2016, 1985) theory of four factors that can help in such evaluation. These are:

> how the context is assessed, the quality of collaborative relationships between researchers and members of the system, the quality of the action research process itself as cycles of action and reflection are enacted and that the dual outcomes reflect some level of sustainability (human, social, economic and ecological) and the development of self-help and competencies out of the action and the creation of new knowledge from the inquiry.
>
> (Coghlan, Cirella, and Shani 2012, 52)

By conducting research in the AR methodology, the university invites stakeholders to dialogue and, together with them, develops proposals for change. As part of AR, research is conducted jointly by theoreticians and practitioners, which is why, in our opinion, this methodology can become its model of cooperation and constitute a bridge between the university and the environment.

3.2 Launching cooperation processes: diagnosis, initiation, adaptation

Cooperation between organisations and universities – undertaken at many organisational levels, inspired by different motivations – can take place in various forms and also lead to different goals. One of the factors connecting the organisation's activities with universities is the common need and interest in introducing changes in a specific area of the organisation's functioning. Therefore, organisations decide to cooperate with universities as part of action research serving the development, expectations and capabilities of both

partners. The strategy of action research in our project was proposed to organisations as a way to develop relations between the university and organisations, identify organisational problems and solve them. This kind of cooperation was a proposal to engage three parties (representatives of organisations, thesis advisors and students) and have them participate in action research. Thus, it became an opportunity to observe one's own practice, efficiency of activities, achievement of benefits and mutual learning.

The stages of cooperation between organisations and universities as part of conducting action research that are indicated below are the next steps that all partners can take to achieve the assumed goal of cooperation and to improve and develop their organisational skills. It is worth noting that these stages are the authors' own model of cooperation in action research. These stages focus on the most important issues from the organisation's point of view, taking into account the organisation's relationship with the student and the thesis advisor as part of the research. They also indicate the possibilities and limitations of each stage. Therefore, these stages show student, thesis advisor and organisational activities, factors and processes, which are a model of cooperation in action research.

Among the stages of cooperation between the organisation and the university as part of action research, we have distinguished: diagnosis, initiation, adaptation, scientific research, recommendations and action plan, evaluation. All these stages are discussed below (see Figure 3.1). Diagnosis, initiation and adaptation refer to the conditions that must occur for participants to recognise the need for cooperation, to take the initiative to

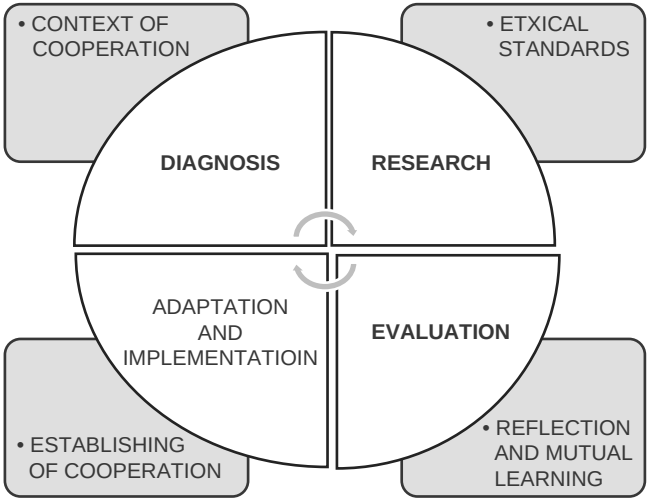

Figure 3.1 The stages of cooperation between the organisation and the university as part of action research.

Source: Own study based on: (Jałocha et al. 2021).

establish cooperation and to successfully go through the period of adaptation to it. Then the next stages are: planning and implementation of scientific research, with particular emphasis on posing a research problem, implementation of the research plan, description of results and ethical aspects of the research. After completing the data collection, analysing and processing the results, the conclusions, recommendations and the action plan are formulated. When an organisation has an action plan, it can proceed to its application, i.e., implementation, and evaluation – the process of introducing changes begins.

3.2.1 Diagnosis

The diagnosis and recognition of cooperation needs are a critical assessment of the organisation's needs for its further development. For example, it may be the recognition of organisation-inhibiting activities and their methods. At this stage, the effects, symptoms of the problems are recognised, and not their causes, so there is no need to worry if a deeper analysis is not done – this task usually rests on the cooperation partner, i.e., the university, and will be discussed in further stages. At this point, a critical assessment of needs concerns determining whether the organisation has any unmet needs and whether starting cooperation with the university will help meet these needs, i.e., whether it will be an appropriate solution. It is also worth considering whether an attempt to meet these needs through an external source will be suitable for all members of the organisation. Perhaps the organisation at this stage sees communication and information problems, maybe wants to understand the expectations of recipients – recognition at such a general level is enough; during the implementation of cooperation, the research tools developed with the partner will serve to deepen the understanding (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013; The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004).

Interested members of the organisation have the opportunity to express their opinion thanks to information about planned cooperation. The organisation can provide its staff or members with the opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of cooperation and provide feedback. It will help to engage employees in cooperation, give time to accept any changes related to it and develop a sense of responsibility for the decision. Effective and accurate intra-organisational communication prior to collaboration is key to its long-term success (The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004).

Importantly, organisations can provide their representatives with information on the most important problems, or select among themselves those who can diagnose and analyse the needs that satisfy most organisations. In addition, it is worth assessing the organisation's possible contribution to cooperation, recognising organisational resources, capacities and capabilities. First of all, organisations can use leadership skills, especially

those that are cooperating once again. For example, if in previous years they took part in cooperation processes, they are probably aware of its advantages and weaknesses (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013). It should be mentioned here that both experienced organisations and beginners try to convince students to deal with cooperation issues that have not yet been covered by their joint activity. The method of cooperation in action research, however, frees these organisations from the need to formulate a research area that they think the university should deal with, as its selection is determined jointly. Understanding and agreeing to the application of participatory standards allow to creatively address the topic of searching for important research problems from the point of view of both partners.

Therefore, negotiating skills may also be useful, which can be considered as an element of both managerial skills and cooperation (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013). Organisations at many stages of cooperation as part of action research have the opportunity to negotiate actions undertaken by universities. Negotiations may relate to:

- the undertaken research problem – the purpose of research and research questions (all aspects, their details and limitations)
- selection of research methods and their scope (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods and selection of a research sample)
- constructing research tools, especially their content
- the method of presenting the results of research material (language, form of presentation)
- the action plan (forms of presentation and points which according to the organisation must be in a well-prepared plan, such as: alternative proposals, milestones, identification of resources needed for its implementation)
- proposed evaluation method, selection of indicators, proposed methods of verification of given indicators

Usually, activities related to the development of an appropriate theory, conclusions and recommendations, as well as the structure of work is the independent task of the student, who is supported by the thesis advisor and does not require the participation of the organisation in its construction. The student may ask the organisation for suggestions on what methods of presenting content are most relevant to the individual, what their expectations are in this respect, and then decide to include them. However, it should be borne in mind that the report is based solely on the concept of the student, and they are the only originator and author, so their intellectual work cannot be interfered with because it is their property. The ethics of the researcher's work assumes that for both parties the final report on the conducted action research is to be primarily reliable and comprehensible. This means that the report must be written in such a way that the organisation can assimilate it after cooperation without having to consult the

author for clarifications. In addition, the thesis advisor ensures that the anonymity of the persons covered by the research is maintained throughout the work and, if requested by the organisation, also the anonymity of the organisation covered by the research. The certainty and trust of organisations in this area are important because they allow students to carry out research more freely and effectively.

It is also useful for the organisation's ability to position its activity in the area of cooperation – that is, the detailed identification of its own area of activity – which allows it to be found in teams in which their skills and intellectual capital will prove useful (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013). For this reason, organisations with a well-diagnosed need for cooperation will be able to choose the right university as a partner, or more precisely the appropriate institute, so that their mutual interests and needs can be satisfied above all, and that thesis advisors and students have knowledge and competence in the given sector and functioning organisation. This will help to avoid many disappointments and conflicts (and of course failures) with regard to the initially assumed goals of cooperation. Collaborative abilities are also important – in particular, communication methods, a positive attitude to the process, as well as individual cooperation skills of the organisation's members.

In diagnosing and recognising the needs of cooperation, organisations can also use their absorption capacity, i.e., learning, expanding knowledge and experience. Knowledge can be acquired during a diagnosis – depending on how it is organised. Group meetings and consultations with stakeholders allow identification and obtaining new information, acquiring knowledge (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013). Of course, organisations can use absorption capacity at each stage, and this is one of the greatest benefits for organisations undertaking collaborative action research – learning through experience and observation, opportunities for participation, and confronting new challenges. Thanks to its absorption capacity, the organisation identifies valuable knowledge, recognises its benefits and processes it for its own use.

Diagnosing and recognising the needs of cooperation is also the right time for the organisation to think carefully and understand its core values. For example, what does organisation really mean for their members, what is most important for the organisation, what is unacceptable for the organisation (The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004; Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013).

Very often there is a situation in which it is very important for both the organisation and the university to have social legitimacy, i.e., social support (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013). Therefore, values such as a sense of community, integration, citizenship, and quality of education are common to all organisations and universities operating in a specific local community, as they help to maintain and expand trust and credibility. Because organisations need employees, it seems important for a future employee to be

educated in the values that guide the organisation (The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004).

Action research relies on the participation of everyone interested in solving the problem. That is why it is important to understand the idea of cooperation in action research, where working with people, not for people or on people is the most important thing (Fine et al. 2003; Reason and Bradbury 2008). Participation, understood also as research with others, may mean that the research is based on the participants' understanding of the developing process, its stages, joint creation of meanings and actions taken, and not on the individual worldview of the main participant. Participation requires full commitment to knowledge development and sharing, both at the individual level and at the group level (Reason and Bradbury 2008; Hynes, Coghlan, and McCarron 2012). Participation as the basic principle of action research (Reason 2006) takes into account the multi-voiced nature of the process in which each participant has a different perspective and thus engages their voice as an opinion but also knowledge while accepting and appreciating related inequalities.

This is directly related to the concept of social trust, which means showing confidence to a wider group of people, to other people. Confidence and faith in the sense of joint actions are a contribution and a premise to undertake all activities in organisations and cooperation. Collaboration contributes to the development of social capital, whose "sources are the networks of connections with symbolic goods (information, values, ideas and others), material goods (things, money) and emotions (approval, respect, sympathy, etc.)" (Kaźmierczak 2007, 47). Social capital understood in this way conditions reciprocity and trust, affects readiness to cooperate and its effectiveness. It allows participants in the cooperation process to achieve goals that are only achievable by undertaking joint actions because otherwise they would remain unfulfilled or would be more resource-intensive (Kaźmierczak 2007).

The stage of diagnosis and recognition of cooperation needs is so important that it is a kind of contract that the organisation concludes with itself. It is a certain test assessing the maturity of an organisation, which it carries out on its own, and its degree of readiness to cooperate with the university, awareness of its causes and consequences, benefits but also limitations. Awareness of cooperation needs will help determine the type of partner sought for cooperation.

Before we started the implementation of the project *Research for Practice*, we also diagnosed and identified the needs of cooperation. Long-term discussions and observations of the development of competences and knowledge of our students, especially in the application of methodology, as well as observations and discussions between thesis advisors, allowed to determine the research and scientific and didactic area requiring improvement in two institute units: The Institute of Public Affairs and the Institute of Culture at the Faculty of Management and Social Communication of the Jagiellonian University. This

area was then identified as an organisational need. We knew that we wanted to improve students' practical skills in the field of research. Until now, most of the theses, which were created in our institutes, had an empirical dimension. The students also conducted various research projects as part of practice exercises, but always ended their work before or at the conclusion or recommendation stage. We wanted to enable students to learn about organisational reality, confront their knowledge and ideas about organisations with real organisational culture, we wanted them to learn – not as an intern or trainee, but from the position of an organisation researcher – responsibility and commitment and ultimately with these values, feel that they have a real impact on the direction of changes in the organisation. The need for supervising implementation master's theses based on action research and conducted in cooperation with the socio-economic environment of the university was our diagnosis of the need for cooperation.

After a detailed identification of needs, the project team began preparations for establishing appropriate cooperation, for example, through:

- indication of the benefits of undertaking cooperation for all cooperation partners
- preparing future academic MA thesis advisors for the advisory process
- identifying gaps in material resources that need to be filled
- writing a work schedule taking into account the steps to be taken to initiate cooperation
- setting cooperation goals aligned with project goals (short and long term)
- establishing lasting results of cooperation

3.2.2 Initiation

The initiative to start cooperation is usually supported by a diagnosis of the needs of the organisation, which reassures your conviction in your own ideas. The most important role at this stage is the catalyst for cooperation, which can be a specific person, organisation, information exchange platform or instrument. Organisations, deciding to cooperate with universities, choose a partner in so that cooperation brings benefits. So they look for signals sent by potential partners (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013).

However, undertaking cooperation depends largely on the organisation itself. In this phase of the process, selected organisations present their own activities and achievements in order to convince potential partners of the need to undertake specific cooperation activities. Or, they are persuaded to cooperate with the universities through the presentation primarily of benefits that may arise from starting cooperation, and explain the prepared assumptions in detail (The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004).

Organisations can initiate contact and then cooperation with the university through:

- personal contact between people in organisations and people at universities. Meeting a potential partner will, among other things, allow to discover common interests (The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004)
- checking whether there are networks, business groups, federations, agreements, forums and partnerships already set-up in the environment that could be helpful as a source of information about organisation-university relations, or joining which might help in finding the right partner (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013; The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004)
- identifying whether there already exist specific organisations, teams or organisational units that offer the possibility of contacting the university and help in initiating cooperation (The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004)
- allowing students to do an internship or apprenticeship in the organisation. This will allow organisations to know their own requirements for students, specify the needs for cooperation, learn about the organisational culture of the university, the competences and skills that students have and how the university works in the cooperation process
- participation in scientific-research conferences, scientific seminars, training sessions, workshops, open lectures, scientific festivals, job fairs, open days. The organisation then gives universities the opportunity to "get to know each other". If the organisation has not undertaken activities offered by universities so far, it is worth considering whether this type of educational offer of the university would not be an appropriate opportunity for them to take a close look at the work of students and academic staff. Perhaps it is also an opportunity to learn about the activities undertaken by universities, and specific people whose research interests will be compatible with the activities of the organisation
- arousing interest of students as well as research and teaching staff due to the organisation's openness to sharing knowledge with students. This may be done by the organisation of study visits, telling a story about the organisation on one of the subjects conducted in the university, co-organisation of a scientific, research or educational event, training sessions or workshops, taking the patronage of scientific conferences
- preparation of a cooperation proposal and presenting it to a potential partner. It may take the form of an official written proposal for consideration, a question, an invitation, a letter of request (The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004)

All initiatives allowing the organisation to cooperate with the university that have achieved its goal end with the conclusion of a partnership agreement. This stage requires a high concentration of partners, the ability to compromise and negotiate the conditions. At the very beginning it is

worth presenting the assumptions that are most important for each of the parties, and mentioning the restrictions caused by internal organisational conditions on which the persons responsible for drawing up and signing contracts do not have influence. Clear and comprehensible presentation of points dependent on and independent of the organisation's representatives will help to avoid disappointments, misunderstandings, regrets or conflicts in later periods.

In the case of the project *Research for Practice*, talks about the organisation's ethics and the ethics of students and thesis advisors were important moments. If an organisation collaborates in action research for the first time, talking about a researcher's ethics might help avoid many misunderstandings and dispel doubts. Certainly, students and thesis advisors will talk about what the research strategy in action is all about, discuss the anonymity of research participants and the organisation itself, as well as sensitive data, explain the decision-making processes regarding placing content in reports and using the recorder. And they will also present the most important principle of the researcher: no damage to the organisation in which we conduct research, and describe the role of the student and the role of the thesis advisor.

When concluding the agreement, it is also worth remembering to specify the effectiveness and expected ways of communication, including determining the most desirable model for both parties. Understanding your partner's availability will help you use your time in the most productive way (The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004). The most important points in the cooperation schedule (e.g., organisation meetings with university representatives, planned workshops, training sessions, conferences, organisational and information meetings, regularity of correspondence or conducting discussions, as well as circumstances of urgent contact) can be identified along with a description of the role of each partner and the deadlines for partners (e.g., start and end of studies, sending completed master thesis) can be established to help achieve the goal of cooperation (e.g., solve a research problem, write a master thesis).

One of the actions initiating the work in the project *Research for Practice* was the organisation of the first meeting inaugurating the project for all members of the project team. The meeting was an opportunity to integrate the participants and discuss individual expectations and ideas about joint work and work as part of action research. In addition, after the presentation of the participants in the project and the definition of their functions, the organisation of work was agreed, i.e., subsequent dates of mandatory and additional meetings were given, and the main channels of communication and exchange of documents were established. A work schedule was developed, a division of work allowing for the implementation of the first task and its result, and work began on the promotional activities of the project.

In *Research for Practice* we had a special case of initiation, consisting in recruiting organisational partners for the project. To this end, detailed

criteria for the selection of the organisation and the organisation database were created. This database consisted of new organisations with which the thesis advisors had cooperated so far only individually, from organisations in which students had conducted research, traineeship or internship so far, as well as from organisations that had indicated their willingness to participate in the planned project. In this process, factors motivating the organisation to start cooperation as part of the project were trust and credibility of the university, especially individual scientists, as well as previous experience of the organisation in collaboration with universities. Organisations participating in our research indicated that they had previously cooperated with universities. Among the motivations to participate in the project, organisations also mentioned: personal acquaintance with a specific employee of the Institute of Public Affairs or the Institute of Culture, interest in the method of action research, expectations of development and changes in the organisation, mutual benefits – for the organisation and the university, the need to get a person from outside to take a fresh look, establishing deeper or new relationships.

In the case of our project, the organisations that decided to cooperate with the university were to support students looking for organisations in which they could carry out action research. If the student found an organisation outside this list and justified their choice, and the thesis advisors considered such cooperation to be of no concern (e.g., sudden withdrawal of the organisation from the project), their choice was taken into account by the university. The *ongoing* evaluation of the project showed that this somewhat one-sided choice of a particular partner raised some reservations from the organisation. As students or thesis advisors chose the organisation to cooperate, the decision-making of the organisation was very limited. In the course of cooperation, students or organisations that showed a commitment far below the expectations of the other party caused the cooperation partner to feel a sense of disappointment and untapped potential.

In addition to organisations, students were also recruited for the project. Thanks to numerous messages issued by the institutes participating in the project (information on the university/institute website, in social profiles, posters, announcements during classes), it was possible to disseminate information about the initiation of the project by the university. Then we organised the second stage of recruitment, which involved students' talks with a commission consisting of three members who are representatives of the organisation and thesis advisors. We set the date and place of recruitment. During recruitment, each student was assessed on the basis of meeting (or not) the criteria previously adopted by the commission according to the applicable regulations. The criteria were as follows: being a first-year postgraduate Master's student in the fields covered by the project (prerequisite), motivation to start work on the implementation of the diploma thesis, interest in action research, undertaking to defend the master's thesis on time.

After the recruitment process, we planned a series of meetings of university representatives with representatives of organisations, during which we discussed the details of the project, but more importantly, we shared knowledge about action research. A common understanding of the idea of action research was important for initiating cooperation. In the initiation phase of cooperation, an important activity was the meeting promoting the project, which allowed all potentially cooperating parties to get to know each other. Representatives of the organisation (owners, leaders, people representing the management board, decision-makers in organisations or delegates) and university representatives (thesis advisors, students, doctoral students, project-administrators) took part in it. The main meeting presented the main assumptions of the project, the benefits of participating in the project, the ideas of action research and further cooperation plans.

During the first workshop, which was organised for thesis advisors and students we prepared a block devoted to communication in order to support students in the initial meeting with the representative of the organisation. Students had the opportunity to talk about preparations for meeting the organisation.

3.2.3 Adaptation

Assuming that the organisation has started cooperation with the university as part of the action research considered in this book, the stage of student initiation, which is visible to the organisation, occurs at the time of conclusion of the agreement. The organisation's initiation of cooperation with the university involves a series of steps invisible to the student, therefore the student should be perceived as having knowledge of conducting scientific research and the functioning of organisations in a given sector, but not having knowledge of the details of the functioning of this particular organisation. Typically, the student has knowledge of the organisation consisting of information to some extent controlled by the organisation. It is knowledge coming from outside, from the image that the organisation has in the media, publishes on the websites, social networking profiles or advertisements. It should be remembered that this ignorance of the specifics of a given organisation is precisely the advantage of the researcher. In their further work, organisations will have the opportunity to recognise the value of a fresh outlook of a person who can see things, contexts, nuances, which employees immersed in the organisation no longer recognise, take as a routine or property the culture of the organisation.

Knowledge about the organisation that a student acquires in accordance with the assumptions of action research, is received from people who have it. The exchange of knowledge in the process of action research is diverse and multilevel. The principle of participation in action research by people affected by the research problem is based, among others, on the ownership of knowledge. In such a situation, each person contributes "their" knowledge to

action research – it should be assumed that nobody is an expert on everything, but only an expert on a certain slice of organisational reality (often subjective). Only the combination of the knowledge of people participating in action research gives a full picture of the organisation, on the basis of which it is possible to draw conclusions, create recommendations and action plans.

An organisation after starting cooperation usually appoints a person responsible for the process of initiation and adaptation of the student in the organisation. It would be most beneficial for the quality of cooperation if this person were a link between the organisation and the university in the sense as presented above. Such a person plays the role of their mentor throughout the entire duration of the study. It often indicates the success of a student's work, which in the initial period of recognising the functioning of the organisation relies on contact and support of the newly appointed mentor. Students coming to the organisation for research present different attitudes. Some show an attitude of independence and self-confidence, know what to ask, and are not afraid to ask questions, while others, fearing to make a mistake or not wanting to impose themselves, will adopt the proposed method of communication and support without any reservations. Therefore, the mentor should be prepared to cooperate with the student in the following matters:

- help in familiarising the student with the organisation, entering the organisational culture, familiarising the organisation with the student and introducing them
- facilitating contact with the organisation, maintaining regular communication, acting as an intermediary in communication with other employees
- determining the research problem, consulting research tools, advising on the action plan
- giving advice, consulting student ideas, providing information, clarifying internal organisational processes

The person appointed by both the organisation (mentor) and the university (thesis advisor) to keep in touch with partners is the person responsible for emerging problems hindering the achievement of the set goal, for monitoring and assessing the progress of activities and final assurance that the cooperation objectives have been achieved. This evaluation of work during collaboration should be an ongoing process.

In addition, to maximise the support provided to students during their research work, it is important for members of organisations at all levels to be informed about the partnership and encouraged to participate in it. The organisation can also provide regular updates of cooperation progress and familiarise employees with collaborators, which will help maintain enthusiasm and promote a culture of participation (The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships 2004).

Appropriate introduction of the student to the organisation will facilitate their future research. The challenge of the organisation is to be open to sharing information with the student, showing the student around the organisation premises, clarifying solutions incomprehensible to outsiders, as well as being prepared for a situation where during each visit the student can ask about things that are banal and unnecessary from the organisation's point of view, they will also note down what they have heard and observed. The more time a student spends in an organisation, the better they will understand its needs and logic of operation. The significance of these activities shows that organisations often expect the student to see both aspects that distinguish the organisation positively and those elements that need refining, and then to be able to describe holistically what they see and understand. Organisations committed to their mission and vision want the student to share it in some sense. There is nothing wrong with this, often students examine organisations close to their interest and want to learn the practical ways of implementing them that are behind the mission and vision, so they are happy to engage in various activities of the organisation. On the other hand, it sometimes happens that organisations misunderstand the role of a student researcher in an organisation, comparing it to the still popular stereotype of a volunteer student. Such incorrect recognition of the purpose of cooperation with the student often causes a lot of frustration and conflicts to both parties.

In the project we implemented, the adaptation of partners was multi-stage. This process was supported by:

- numerous formal and informal meetings of thesis advisors and representatives of organisations, students and thesis advisors, students and representatives of organisations
- maintaining direct and indirect contact (telephones, chats, e-mails)
- workshops organised for all project participants, during which all parties had the opportunity to make a presentation, often they appeared together, e.g., employers along with students described how they were able to identify the problem in practice
- developing specific forms of research tools: keeping a diary by a student researcher, to which only the student and their thesis advisor had access; self-reflection by thesis advisors
- regular consultation hours of thesis advisors, organisation of additional seminars
- role of the mentor in the organisation supporting the student throughout the entire duration of the study
- conference summarising the cooperation

During the first two-day workshop organised as part of the project, the adaptation of individual partners in the project took place between thesis advisors and representatives of the organisation as well as thesis advisors and

students. It was important for us to integrate representatives of non-governmental and public organisations and the students of the Institute for Public Affairs and the Institute of Culture participating in the project during this meeting.

The subject of workshops addressed to employers was their introduction to university reality, we discussed, among others, the assumptions of work at seminars and in cooperation between the organisation – student – thesis advisor. We also wanted to present the context of the idea of conducting action research by presenting the challenges of the future and how organisations change in this connection, as well as how to introduce organisational changes. We also had a discussion about the expectations of the organisations involved in the project.

During the second day of the workshop, we wanted to convey to students a sense of community of researchers. It was only at the next workshop that there was a joint meeting of all parties to the project.

3.3 Research and an implementation plan

3.3.1 Identification of the research problem

The formulation of the research problem, understood as a kind of task that cannot be solved with the possessed knowledge (Kozielecki 1969), is preceded by many activities, which partners partly perform together and in part individually. Before the research problem is raised, the partners conduct a series of discussions and observations in the research area, which is the organisation cooperating with the university. In this way one or more problem situations are identified (Nowak 2012) regarding the functioning of organisations on which partners focus their attention together to prioritise them according to their importance, determining the possibility of their resolution and adequacy to the research strategy, which is action research. Discussions at this stage will allow partners to isolate one significant practical problem regarding the organisation. The practical problem is not a research problem, it is only a determination of the needs and expectations of the organisation and scope of research. It is important that the practical problem is significant for each participant and solvable. Action research is dedicated to research problems that have a practical dimension, where all participants agree on the importance of the problem, it appears to be urgent and impeding the functioning of the organisation, but it is accompanied by the feeling that a properly prepared and well-carried out research plan will allow the right conclusions to be drawn and the problem to be solved.

The practical problem in the initial stages can be changed or remodelled many times. This is a completely natural situation because as the student gets to know the organisation both sides compile their stories about the organisation, which provokes more reflection on what we talk about and what we do. We also discover the next layers of a problem, which in the

first formula seems too capacious, concerning too wide an area of the organisation's activities, so we narrow it down to an investigable issue in the assumed format of the MA thesis. Problems that are too extensive and general must be divided into segments – detailed problems and subsequent research questions relevant to each specific problem, so they require the work of the entire research team, not just one student.

After determining the practical problem, the student works to formulate a research problem by: generalising the practical problem based on existing scientific literature and contributing to the development of scientific theories. This work makes it possible to understand that a practical problem is only a problem for this particular organisation under study, while the research problem can be referred to a larger number of organisations, but provided that it belongs to a given sector, still conducts activities with a similar profile or similar organisational structure. In this way, the research problem emerges from practice, but in its construct it gets much closer to scientific theory. Scientific theory "is the whole of logical, coherent and non-contradictory generalisations inferred on the basis of scientific facts and previously accumulated scientific knowledge" (Sułkowski 2012, 95).

Research problems are usually questions that indicate gaps in knowledge or its certainty. There are many similarities in the motivations for research problems, and the formulation of practical problems, because often practical problems in ordinary research are also an inspiration for scientists. The ways to find a research problem include:

- reading and reaching for other studies; we may want to continue someone else's research, we may notice new directions for their use
- searching for professional advice – among scientists but also experts in a given field, e.g., employees of the organisation
- searching through various sources: literature, newspapers, internet, archives, photographs; it's hard to pinpoint what exactly can arouse our scientific curiosity and intrigue us, so let's absorb the texts around us
- observing: the organisations we work in, the university where we study, our local environment; perhaps we will notice a problem that afflicts us and/or the people around us – "even accidental meetings or personal experiences can provide an opportunity and a big idea for research" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2000, 39)
- taking notes during all the above-mentioned activities; only in this way will we permanently remember what and where we saw and heard in order to be able to return to it; let us write down not only the facts we observed but also the emotions they arouse in us, and the first opinions
- curiosity – very often in search of scientific problems we are driven by ordinary curiosity, which makes us want to understand and/or solve a given problem; more and more often, as the knowledge is systematised within scientific disciplines, this curiosity is directed to a specific research area (Nowak 2012, 26)

- noticing the research gap, the white spot of regions that are undiscovered or rarely explored in scientific theory (Nowak 2012, 26; Niemczyk 2016, 109)
- interest, not so much in a specific area of knowledge, but methodological interest – the researcher looks for cases that allow testing a given research strategy or method (Flick 2012)

Motivations to undertake research by taking the first step understood as finding a research problem – have been developed in many definitions, where the research problem may mean the need to undertake research (Creswell 2013), as well as a certain question or a pool of questions, where the research is to provide answers (Nowak 2012).

Research problems always contain a certain level of generality, so from the formula of the research problem itself we will not find out what the specific objectives of the study are, or what its scope is, what the student will look more closely at and study and what will remain the context (see Table 3.1).

When using the qualitative procedure, writing research questions facilitates further work and makes it more methodical. Qualitative research questions must always relate to a research problem, they must be open questions, focus on one phenomenon or concept (Creswell 2013). From now on, we know what exactly will be tested and what we will look for answers to. However, once formulated, a research problem and research questions may evolve or simply change. During the research process, thanks to the data obtained and the broadening of our understanding of the research area, action research allows for the modification of the initial research problem. Students and thesis advisors think about how to look for answers to research questions when writing a research plan and choosing

Table 3.1 Examples of research problems

The research problem is to develop the financial capacity of the organisation by launching effective marketing campaigns to obtain revenues from one-percentage allocations. (Student 1)
The research problem is the broadly understood situation of LGBT employees at the place of employment. (Student 2)
The research problem is getting to know the effective way of activating and encouraging participation of various groups of recipients and recognising the actions taken by the library in order to activate its readers. (Student 3)
The research problem is building a dialogue between the school and the local community, taking into account their needs. (Student 4)
The research problem is shaping healthy attitudes in students and leading a healthy lifestyle. (Student 5)
The research problem is changing the name and image of an NGO in order to increase its social impact and attract new recipients of the organisation's activities. (Student 6)

Source: Own study based on master theses of students participating in the project.

research methods. Well-formulated questions will be the starting point for constructing research tools. Research questions also show organisations and future readers of the work what exactly we want to examine, they are also decisive for the content of research issues described in the thesis and the structure of the description of research results. When writing research questions, avoid using mental shortcut and define specific components of the subject of the study.

Quantitative questions and hypotheses are asked in the quantitative procedure. Quantitative research questions show what relation between variables the researcher would like to know about, while quantitative hypotheses are the student's assumptions about the relationship between variables. The mixed research procedure presents both qualitative and quantitative research questions or hypotheses (Creswell 2013). As in the case of qualitative research, they are designed to clarify and define the purpose of research, indicating what exactly we want to study.

During our project, workshops devoted to research problems took place many times. During the first workshop, the topic of one of the blocks revolved around searching for research problems. After a short presentation, we proposed group exercises on case studies with specific questions for each study. Students were to demonstrate finding a practical problem, then reformulating it into a research problem and showing the logic of this change.

The next workshop created an opportunity for employers and students to meet on the university premises. Students and their supervisors, with the support of the thesis advisors present in the room, talked about emerging practical and research problems.

One of the next meetings as part of the workshops was aimed at supporting students in describing the process of transition from a practical problem to a research problem in their master's thesis and in putting the research problem in the broader context – of scientific theories. This exercise consisted of the student answering the questions prepared on the worksheet. Then, through the technique of self-evaluation, i.e., entering the role of a critical friend, they had to write questions, hints and comments addressed to the author that could help them develop their understanding of the research problem.

3.3.2 Conducting research and description of results

At this stage, it is assumed that the student, together with the organisation and the thesis advisor, agrees on a research problem, which they will deal with in their research and which is listed on specific detailed research questions. The student, thus prepared, begins to draw up a research plan which will cover:

> *[…] decisions ranging from general assumptions to detailed methods for collecting and analysing data. The ultimate decision is the choice of the research*

> *scheme that the author intends to use. This choice depends on the ideological assumptions of the researcher, the planned procedures (called strategies) and the methods of collecting, analysing and interpreting data. The decision is also influenced by the nature of the problem or issue being studied, the researcher's personal experience and the category of recipients to whom the project is addressed.*
>
> (Creswell 2013, 29)

The goals of a well-structured research plan are: to achieve relative certainty that we have made an in-depth analysis of the research problem, understood the paradigmatic assumptions that guide us in the research process, and carefully considered the research design and its limitations.

In most scientific papers, the researcher also shows the research methodology, research design and research methods directly or indirectly chosen by them. Here, the methodology is "the science of methods, which enlists research methods, describes how to use them, characterizes the pros and cons of applying to research problems" (Czakon 2016, 10). So this is the theoretical awareness of conducting scientific research, which is also presented in scientific work. The method system, on the other hand, "means a standard approach for each of the detailed research areas" (Czakon 2016, 11), as well as "a set of rules and ways of doing some work and aiming at specific goals; as a consequence, methodological activity means: (1) a planned and systematic action also containing guidelines and procedures, (2) based on a specific method" (PWN Dictionary of Foreign Words after: Kawa 2013). The research design understood in this way requires the researcher to describe the selection of research methods they have made, as well as to derive arguments and conclusions about why these and not other methods will be in their opinion the most suitable to achieve the goal of the research. In addition, they must indicate the individual steps to examine a specific area of the research problem, including, but not limited to, how long the study will last, who will participate in the study, and how the research sample has been selected, how the reliability of the research results will be presented.

The method (Greek: *methodos*) means "consciously and consistently used way of conduct for a specific purpose, which in science means: (1) the method of examining things and phenomena, (2) the general rules used in examining reality, (3) the path to finding the truth" (PWN Dictionary of Foreign Words after: Kawa 2013) and "the composition and arrangement of the stages of the research procedure, repeatable in the study of a given class of problems due to its effectiveness" (Czakon 2016, 11). The researcher shows what research methods they will use and how they will do it.

When creating the research plan, the student will need information from the organisation: whether the methods they have chosen are feasible (e.g., whether the persons whom they would like to interview will be willing and available, whether organisational documents will be at their disposal);

specification of the time and availability of study participants; consents to the chosen method of documenting research material (e.g., voice recorder).

To support students in writing their master's theses, a team of thesis advisors prepared a proposal for a "scheme of designed action research". This scheme contained basic information for the Ethics Committee about the research used to write the thesis, carried out as part of the implemented project, such as:

- author of the study
- title of the study
- organisation(s) examined
- research participants
- objective of the study
- research problem or hypothesis
- research questions
- type of research project
- data collection procedures
- data documentation procedures
- anticipated ethical issues

After establishing the research plan, the student starts research, during which communication with the organisation and its support are necessary for the research success, because the student:

- prepares research tools (e.g., scenarios of individual or group interviews, observation reports, questionnaires, instructions for document analysis), in consultation with the organisation and the thesis advisor
- prepares the necessary equipment to register and document research material (e.g., voice recorder, office software packages, including Microsoft Office package, interview transcription programmes, camera, camcorder, notebook, laptop)
- contacts the research participants and arranges meetings during which they will be able to conduct the interview(s); asks about events organised by organisations suitable for conducting observations; acquires or creates a stakeholder database to be able to distribute surveys or send them by email; photographs and/or films, e.g., organisational situations or organisational space; receive access to internal documents of the organisation
- using adequate research methods, collects research material: conducts interviews and transcribes them, receives completed surveys, and enters their results into appropriate computer programmes, analyses online sources and existing documents, creates research notes, records the conducted observations
- during and/or after collecting research material, performs its analysis and interpretation; in the case of qualitative research, thanks to repeated

reading and comparison of research results, they are able to identify repeated research categories, recognise their context, understand their meaning from different perspectives (through the use of many research methods); in quantitative research, the student quantitatively analyses the research material, creating charts, drawings and tables from the obtained data; mixed research combines both methods of analysis and interpretation

- presents research results in a scientific study, describing them and illustrating them with relevant, processed or raw data (i.e., the description of the results is somehow intertwined with charts and tables or relevant quotes from interviews or observations, hence the structure of the resulting chapter is created on the basis of a description of the results – data presentation – entered alternately). This way of describing the results should not contain conclusions, but only what the researcher reads in the received material. Only the research results answering the research questions and necessary to solve the research problem are presented

As demonstrated in the points listed above, the organisation is an important partner for students in conducting scientific research. It is true that the student collects data, but without the organisation's openness, trust and commitment, they would not be able to obtain comprehensive research material.

Understanding the purpose of the research that the student conducts is crucial in this matter, in our research we received feedback that when conducting research in the organisation, students are often accompanied by feelings of: alienation, lack of trust, desire to over-control, mounting difficulties, ineffective communication, disparity in understanding goals of applying the research method and the role of the student in the organisation.

3.3.3 Research ethics

Ethical issues in scientific research require reflection in the entire research process of all cooperating parties. In action research

> *[…] a professional researcher participating in such a project is therefore neither a boss, nor an independent intellectual, nor a team leader. They are a specialized member of the group that provides training, techniques, theories and methods as needed, thus supporting the efforts of the whole group. They are also a facilitator of the joint learning process of group members.*
>
> (Greenwood 2012, 125)

Students and thesis advisors are responsible for compliance with scientific ethics, while organisations can support (or not) the ethics of conducting action research. The research plan is created in consultation with representatives of the

organisation and so they can comment on feasibility of the planned research, as well as describe the regulations or rules by which the organisation operates, and which may cause only a partial solution to the problem of research. If they accept the research plan, the student counts on support in the research process and positive cooperation. The representative of the organisation certainly cannot predict everything, but can in most important areas ensure the smoothness of research.

First, it sometimes happens that organisations impose a research problem on students without any explanation or unconvincing arguments. Putting pressure on a student to take care of something may be the reason for discouraging him from further cooperation. The research problem should be "common", meaning everyone considers it important and understands the motives behind it. Second, in order for student's work to be accurate and reliable, he/she needs access to data that was planned to be collected in the research plan. Therefore, by blocking access to it, organisations could contribute to obtaining an incomplete or distorted picture of the organisation's operation. Third, the student, using research methods (interview, survey) to obtain information about the research area, would like to receive real opinions, judgements and observations that are subject to research. The influence of decision makers on the content of information obtained is problematic for the student at the stage of data analysis and interpretation. They must then take into account all elements interfering with the course of the study, and the influence of the leaders belongs to one of them. Fourth, censorship of an MA thesis by organisations. Representatives of the organisation, having received the final version of the thesis from the student, have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with its content and decide on the possible anonymisation of the organisation. It is unethical for the organisation's representatives to exert influence on the content and form of work (such as suggesting the removal of some results from surveys or quotes from interviews). Not all sensitive data of the organisation will appear in the study just because they cannot -the researcher's ethics do not allow it. Fifth, organisations misunderstand the role of a student researcher and treat them as employees of the organisation, trainees, apprentices or volunteers. Such conduct of the organisation influences the student's identity and their importance for cooperation. It causes a conflict of roles accepted by partners whose function is drastically changed for both sides.

The role of the student as a researcher is (Kostera 2003; Silverman 2009; Ciuk and Latusek-Jurczak 2012; Christians 2014):

- understanding the functioning of the organisation under study
- trying to tell the truth
- questioning the obvious, pointing out hidden assumptions, critical approach and reflectiveness
- introducing themselves as researchers in the organisation
- being vigilant for differences in understanding words and phrases

- obtaining informed consent from research participants to participate in it, ensuring voluntary participation
- providing relevant information on the research to persons participating in it
- protecting the identity of the organisation and the anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of interlocutors
- documenting research material, ensuring the accuracy of the obtained results
- presentation of field research results
- opposing fraud and abuse
- proper maintenance of on-site relationships – starting, maintaining and terminating relationships with research participants

As a researcher, the student is guided by research ethics to ensure credibility (accuracy and reliability) and quality of research. It is the reliability and attitude of the researcher that guarantees the credibility of the research. The researcher must try to convey the truth, they are required to be highly self-aware, self-reflective and alert. Their most important task is to understand (Kostera 2003).

In order to avoid accusations of low research reliability and quality, the student applies appropriate research standards. To be able to effectively respond to accusations, the researcher:

- justifies the choice of the research problem and the formulated research questions, determines the purposefulness of the subject matter and the choice of the research area
- performs multiple triangulations (Flick 2011)
- collects data in a systematic and planned manner, documents research, keeps evidence of research (interview recordings, survey responses)
- prepares an accurate description of methodological choices and demonstrates methodological awareness
- describes the ethical aspects of the research carried out, including the dilemmas they faced, as well as the limitations of the research
- ensures the participation of all action research participants, confirms the results of the participants and recipients of the research
- maintains the transparency and clarity of scientific argument
- refers to the research of other scientists, shows their knowledge and creatively uses it
- demonstrates a contribution to the development of science and the research gap filled
- uses research methods and presents their results in a comprehensible and replicable way

Maciej Grabski (2009) presented his assessment of the honesty and credibility of science as follows:

> *Until now, we shared the right belief that science is one of the few successful adventures of humanity, and we believe that it brings good in itself. Our well-being is improved by the fact that scientists are still enjoying social recognition. We also believe that this reflects faith in the presence of high ethical standards and principles in science that guarantee its integrity. It is thanks to the observance of these standards and the specific, almost caste-like, elitism that science retains its integrity and exhibits greater resistance to fraud and forgery than other areas of human activity. What's more, we consider high standards of honesty and meticulous observance of a system of values appropriate for science to be an inseparable attribute of a scholar's work, whose main inspiration is to increase the resources of proven knowledge and share it with others.*
>
> (Grabski 2009, 37)

The issue of research ethics is part of the concept of good scientific practices (Grabski et al. 2004, 8–10):

- adherence to the basic principles of scientific work: adequacy and standardisation of methods, diligence and accuracy of documenting results, scepticism about the obtained results, honest recognition of the input of participants, competitors, predecessors, reliable assessment of others
- proper leadership and cooperation in research teams
- taking into account the needs of young researchers
- preservation and storage of research results
- compliance with the principles of authorship of scientific publications
- avoiding conflicts of interest: when assessing other organisations, people, projects, publications, conflicts of obligations with others, financial benefits of dishonest activities

During the meetings organised as part of our project, two workshop meetings were devoted to research ethics. The first concerned ethics, values, communication and the role of the researcher in action research. Students participating in these workshops deliberated what was most important to them. We commented together on the differences between life goals, tasks, plans, dreams and values that we recognise as a good in itself. We proposed a catalogue of selected values and considered their importance in conducting scientific research.

The second workshop, conducted in the form of a *world cafe*, focused on groups of people interested in the topics proposed by the thesis advisors. Students and employers chose from five table topics. The aim of this workshop was to create the right space and opportunities for all project partners to discuss critical situations. The suggestions were as follows:

- how to talk about difficult matters of the organisation? (internal limits of responsibility), assertiveness

- differences in status (knowledge, experience), power relations in student-member dialogue
- ethical aspects of disclosing injustice
- the role of the researcher – the interest of the student, the interest of the organisation (co-research, participation)
- to what extent does the theory serve the practice of research? What does a good, useful research problem mean?

The provision regarding the ethics of conducting research was also included in the terms and conditions of students' and thesis advisors' work developed at the beginning of the project as part of the master's seminar. It contained information on:

- implementation of master's theses in accordance with ethical standards of research, including: voluntary participation, ensuring the well-being of people and organisations, ensuring anonymity or confidentiality, compliance of the presentation of results with reality
- deadline for preparing a research project that is the basis for writing a master's thesis
- the functioning of two ethics committees consisting of five thesis advisors and employers, its tasks and deadlines

3.3.4 Conclusions, recommendations and action plan

If we have completed research in the organisation, collected data and described the results of the research, the next stage of the work will be the formulation of conclusions. However, how will we know that we should finish the research stage and start making conclusions? The researcher can use the assumptions of grounded theory and apply the approach called theoretical saturation. Saturation means that in the research area the data obtained by the researcher begins to repeat, the researcher no longer learns anything new. After completing the data collection, the student may proceed to the next research activity: data analysis (developing category properties), because they are convinced that the category they are looking for is saturated, as they see the persistent emergence of similar examples (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 61). The moment of completion of the research stage, however, usually depends, e.g., on the chosen research strategy, sample selection or the conditioning of the research area itself.

In the project we ran, the duration of our stay in the organisation was significantly limited, because we were obliged to meet the deadlines for examinations and master's theses defence. The moment of leaving the research area had to be planned in advance in such a way that each partner could manage to get their own work done. Master's theses ended with designing the action plan or action. The pace of work and its duration were uneven. The nature of cooperation in action research was determined by

numerous internal and external circumstances, which should be taken into account at the beginning of cooperation, when we determine the benefits but also short and long-term goals for our organisation.

In action research, we also need to be sure that we have solved the practical and research problem. When formulating conclusions, we must first evaluate the following:

- do we understand what is happening in the organisation? Have we identified the most important organisational issues/issues that are relevant to our practical problem? Have we recognised the microcosm of the organisation?
- is the research we have carried out so far sufficient to solve a practical problem?
- do we have a feeling that we can find a solution?

If we answer these questions in the affirmative, we will be able to propose practical solutions at a later stage of the master's thesis. We seek answers by cooperating with action research participants. When drawing conclusions, we check and maintain the reliability of our research.

The conclusions of our action research contain solutions to practical and research problems through:

- developing an answer to the research questions formulated at the beginning and assessing any restrictions (reasons why we failed) to verify the research hypothesis
- for qualitative research, selecting the particularity, not universality, of the obtained results (Creswell 2013)
- preservation of the scientific context, relating our research to scientific theory/concepts (generalisation)
- providing information regarding limitations of our research, outlining their exact scope; attempt to prevent possible misuse of interpretation
- justification for each conclusion, laying out of the detailed grounds for a given conclusion (Babbie 2013)
- demonstrating and filling the research gap
- reference to possible political implications (Silverman 2012)
- indication of good practice
- suggesting a direction for further research

The prepared conclusions will then be used to develop a set of recommendations for the organisation. On the basis of all the knowledge acquired during the study, students offer organisations some tips on what the latter could do to improve their organisational situation. If the conclusions are a re-diagnosis and confirmation or contradiction of the proper recognition of the organisation's needs – by answering the practical and research problem posed, they are descriptive and summarising, and the

researcher tries to maintain possible objectivity in their formulation, reflectively and carefully, and not too hastily, by making assessments – these recommendations go a step further. Recommendations are made on the basis of conclusions, they are a real and concrete proposition of change, they are a form of solving the problem; the student's subjective opinion prevails in them and they should be treated as premises for action. There are several suggestions of scientists regarding the postulates that the recommendations should contain, the most frequently mentioned are (Kossakowski and Nowiński 2015):

- treating knowledge as a foundation, which means relying on research (empirical knowledge)
- confronting empirical knowledge with contextual knowledge in order to preserve realism of implementation
- estimating the consequences of the proposed changes
- seeking experiences and good practices that other people have: experts, scientists, consultants, members of the organisation
- conducting *ex ante* evaluation of the proposed recommendations – determining the degree of reality of the proposed changes, taking into account the greater precision and detail of the proposed changes
- creating specific recommendations covering tangible, evident, diagnosed issues "with greater saturation of indicators, tips, examples and prescriptions" (Kossakowski and Nowiński 2015, 5)
- proposing indicators to show whether the change has taken place
- constructing a recommendation table covering the details of the proposal

The above proposal of the recommendation scheme converges in many places\with the action plan, where in the process of writing master's theses as part of action research, recommendations are translated into such a plan. At this point, the partners are involved in joint design of corrective actions – preparing a plan for specific actions to implement a change. An action plan (action program) means the order of steps or actions that must be taken for a strategy to be successful (*Business Dictionary*2019). The action plan contains three elements (*Business Dictionary*2019):

- specific tasks: what will be performed and by whom
- time horizon: when will this happen
- resource allocation: what specific funds are available for specific actions

When creating an action plan, we are often accompanied by reflections on whether the designed solutions can really be implemented, and a reflection on how to evaluate or assess – whether we know how to evaluate the implemented solutions. Hence, a certain model of action plan is the assumption that the action plan is a description of the action with key moments, taking into account variants of individual solutions.

In our project, during one of the working meetings, all research participants, i.e., representatives of organisations and university representatives, started a discussion on what are recommendations and what are the conclusions, and what are the differences between them; how the conclusions and recommendations for implementation should be developed as part of the action; how to create an action plan based on the recommendations and what elements are included in the action plan. Thanks to the work in groups, several visions of this action plan were developed, and then a decision was made on the most important points that should be included in the plan. The resulting action plan was an obligatory attachment to the implementation master's thesis. This document included:

- situational description of the proposed change and main conclusions
- recommendations
- action plan and its description – what action?
- people responsible in the organisation, involved in implementation – who?
- cost, material, information, technology resources, stakeholders (defined as "allies in implementing a change"), competences (needed to implement the plan)
- schedule
- analysis of factors threatening and favourable to the implementation project and their consequences, listing of anticipated barriers in the environment of the organisation
- success rates, compliance with the objectives set

When creating an action plan, one of the biggest challenges for a student is to make it accurate enough for the organisation to see in it the next steps of actions necessary to achieve the intended goal – to introduce a change, but at the same time general enough so that unforeseen, sudden situations do not spoil the final effect, but only modify the way to achieve it.

3.4 Introducing changes in an organisation: implementation and evaluation

3.4.1 Implementation

Implementation means turning the plan into action. This is taking further steps to help achieve strategic goals through the action plan (Shapiro 2001).

The stage of implementing and evaluating the action plan is somewhat beyond the university's control. It is the organisation who decides when, how and if – it implements the prepared plan and whether it decides to regularly monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. Implementation, however, can be managed by the students themselves, by the organisation itself or jointly. However, if a student, according to a previously concluded

agreement, finishes cooperation at the stage of planning the action plan, they may be invited by the organisation to further cooperate under the new agreement. Either way, – whether the student continues the cooperation or not – the plan created by the student is characterised by the detail and clarity of the message. If the representatives of the organisation want to get a plan that they can introduce on their own, without consultation with the author, they discuss and consider what information they need to make this possible.

There is not any proven formula that would ensure implementation of the action plan. There are, however, a few tips, which can make it easier (e.g., Shapiro 2001, 38):

- creating effective work plans at the team/department level
- formulation of individual plans based on the team action plan and organisational priorities
- good management

Individual plans of employees are to help in the integration of individual activities that make up the expected final effect of implementation. If a member of the organisation is involved in more than one key area of results, then the following can be helpful: an individual work plan for each set of activities they undertake, as well as having one integrated work plan for everything they are involved in so that they can see a broader purpose. This will help to set priorities, reschedule and allocate organisational resources in a way so as to enable the action to be carried out. The integrated plan of each member/organisational group is then introduced into the overall action plan so that managers can monitor developments, anticipate crises or prevent disruptions. In this way, the action plan becomes an invaluable management tool (Shapiro 2001).

To design an implementation, which we also call a change in the organisation, partners participating in action research together discuss how it is possible to go from a completed research project to a designed action plan up to the implementation itself. After determining the need for a research project, it is worth working on articulating the desired future, the expected transformation, before getting into the details of what actions to take and how to develop people's involvement in action (see Table 3.2). Therefore, it is important to remember that everything you do is an intervention, and you need to be sensitive to its impact, e.g., asking questions and observing participants. Situation policy management is a challenge in this situation. Political situations arise when a person or group feels that someone has power over them, dominates. Our most political form is conducting research in our own organisation. While the diagnosis of action research is a collaborative activity, asking some questions and applying judgements on individual issues can have serious political consequences (Coghlan and Brannick 2014, 70).

Table 3.2 The process of implementing change through action research

Step 1 Determining the need for change
What are the external forces driving change? What are the internal forces driving change? How influential are these forces? What choice do we have?
Step 2 If things are going on in the same way as before, without any significant intervention, then:
What will be the expected result? What is our alternative desired outcome?
Step 3 What do we need to change in the current situation to achieve the desired result in the future?
What has been done? How is the work done? How are structures created? What are the attitudes and mindsets of people in the organisation? What is our organisational culture? What needs to be done? How is this to be done?
Step 4 What are the main roads that will lead us from the position we are now in to the destination?
Which individual projects should be carried out (short, medium and long term)? How will we involve the organisation in the project? What are we going to start from? What actions will we take for the minimum, medium, maximum effect? How will we manage change/transformation? How will we build people's involvement? How will we recognise who is or is not ready/able to change? How will we manage resistance? Who will help us with this? Do we need additional help (consultant, facilitator)?
Step 5 Have we considered all possibilities to support the process of action research?
What verification procedures do we need to establish a change? How should we communicate and share what we learn?

Source: Own study based on: (Coghlan and Brannick 2014, 106).

Case studies in the fifth chapter of this book show the process of the *action research* carried out – from research initiation to implementation. In this chapter, readers can find examples of implementations carried out in cooperation between the student and the organisation.

3.4.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is "organized and systematic analysis and determination of the degree of implementation by the organisation or group of its requirements arising from the objectives, assigned tasks and customer expectations" (Bogacz-Wojtanowska et al. 2017, 17). Continuous internal evaluation is the basis for action research, where the goal of evaluation is to constantly improve implementation (Khan and Tzortzopoulos 2016, 119). Evaluation, which is a part of the cycle of action research, is a reformulation of traditionally understood evaluation practices. Evaluation as part of action research puts more emphasis on using the research process itself to generate an organisation's learning ability (Preskill and Torres 1999; Coghlan and Brannick 2014). Action research draws on the *experiential learning model* proposed by David Kolb (1984). This scientist shows, among others, the Lewin model. David Kolb argues that the data collected during the study and subsequently analysed as well as the conclusions derived from this analysis are fed back thanks to the experience of researchers, and they are used to modify their behaviour and select new experiences (Kolb 1984, 21). So knowledge is acquired through practice (Koźmiński, Jemielniak, and Latusek-Jurczak 2014).

Many action research processes, such as joint research, joint planning, joint operation and reflection are used as interventions to shape the way projects are evaluated to stimulate organisational learning (Coghlan and Brannick 2014).

The effects of the action, both intended and unintended, in the evaluation process can be identified according to the proposal taking into consideration (Coghlan and Brannick 2014, 23):

- the correctness of the initial diagnosis
- the correctness of actions taken
- the appropriateness of the way the research was undertaken
- the impact on the next cycle of diagnosis, planning and action

In our project, we carried out several types of evaluation. *Ex ante*, *ongoing* and *ex post* evaluations. We conducted *ex-ante* evaluation using various research methods, each of which had a different recipient. Surveys addressed to students after the implementation of the first methodological workshops served to learn of their opinions on the form and content of the proposed topics. The analysis of these surveys allowed us to discuss the changes that we can make while organising the next workshop, as well as maintain positively assessed components.

To plan *ex-ante* and then *ex-post* research, we have put the main project goals on the matrix and proposed measurement indicators. We wanted to agree on what we need to learn in order to be able to measure the way in which we realised our project assumptions in relation to three groups:

students, organisations and thesis advisors. As a result of our work, we conducted two different surveys addressed to representatives of organisations and students, the purpose of which was to learn the opinions and expectations regarding cooperation: in the case of the first respondent with the university and the student, in the case of the second respondent with the organisation and the thesis advisor. The third group of respondents – thesis advisors – were asked to complete a self-reflection form, which contained a list of questions to help in self-evaluation. These questions concerned work at seminars, communication with project partners, our role in cooperation, development of competence and knowledge.

We conducted the ongoing evaluation through interview methods and surveys. The survey addressed to thesis advisors concerned the ongoing assessment of the model of work we tested based on action research. In addition, surveys were conducted on students, organisations and thesis advisors and concerned conclusions about cooperation between partners participating in the study suggested changes and recognition of the benefits of working in the model of action research. Interviews with thesis advisors were the first part of interviews. Their goal was to learn about the opinions and reflections of the thesis advisors about the way of working in action research, its opportunities and limitations as well as the benefits and difficulties of cooperation. Interviews with students and employers concerned the assessment of relations between cooperation partners.

Ex post evaluation included the surveys which were compatible with *ex ante* surveys. Thesis advisors, students and organisations evaluated the project activities and opinions on the barriers to and possibilities of inter-organisational cooperation.

References

A How-To Guide for School-Business Partnership. 2004. The Council for Corporate & School Partnerships. http://www.nhscholars.org/School-Business%20How_to_Guide.pdf

Altbach, P.G. 2004. 'Globalisation and the University: Myths and Realities in an Unequal World'. *Tertiary Education and Management* 10 (1): 3–25.

Amaral, A. 2008. 'Transforming Higher Education'. In *From Governance to Identity*, edited by A. Amaral, I. Bleiklie, and Ch. Musselin, 81–94. Springer.

Antonowicz, D. 2015. *Między Siłą Globalnych Procesów a Lokalną Tradycją. Polskie Szkolnictwo Wyższe w Dobie Przemian*. Toruń: Wydnictwo Naukowe UMK.

Babbie, E. 2013. *Podstawy Badań Społecznych*. Translated by W. Betkiewicz. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Bogacz-Wojtanowska, E. 2013. *Zdolności Organizacyjne a Współdziałanie Organizacji Pozarządowych*. Monografie i Studia Instytutu Spraw Publicznych UJ. Kraków: Instytut Spraw Publicznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Bogacz-Wojtanowska, E., A. Góral, J. Meisel-Dobrzański, and S. Wrona. 2017. *Dialog Obywatelski w Krakowie. Ewaluacja Centrum Obywatelskiego*. Nowy Targ: Wydawnictwo ToC.

Brennan, J. 2010. 'Burton Clark's "The Higher Education System: Academic Organization in Cross-National Perspective'. *London Review of Education* 8 (3): 229–237.

Business Dictionary. 2019. http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/action-plan.html

Chmielecka, E., and N. Kraśniewska, eds. 2019. *Edukacja Dla Przyszłości – Jakość Kształcenia*. Warszawa: Fundacja Rektorów Polskich.

Christians, C.G. 2014. 'Etyka i Polityka w Badaniach Jakościowych'. In *Metody Badań Jakościowych*, edited by N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, translated by K. Podemski, 207–245. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Ciuk, S., and D. Latusek-Jurczak. 2012. 'Etyka w Badaniach Jakościowych'. In *Badania Jakościowe. Podejścia i Teorie*, edited by D. Jemielniak, 1: 23–40. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Clark, B.R. 1983. *The Higher Education System. Academic Organization in Cross-National Perspective*. Berkeley, LA: University of California Press.

Coghlan, D., and T. Brannick. 2014. *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organisation*. London–Thousand Oaks–New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Coghlan, D., S. Cirella, and A. Shani. 2012. 'Action Research and Collaborative Management Research: More than Meets the Eye?' *International Journal of Action Research* 8 (1): 45–67.

Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Projektowanie Badań Naukowych. Metody Jakościowe, Ilościowe i Mieszane*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Cybal-Michalska, A. 2015. 'Społeczna Odpowiedzialność Uczelni Wyższych. Polskie Szkolnictwo Wyższe – Stan i Perspektywy'. *Rocznik Lubuski* 41 (2): 89–96.

Czakon, W. 2016. 'Wstęp'. In *Podstawy Metodologii Badań w Naukach o Zarządzaniu*, edited by W. Czakon, 9–15. Piaseczno: Wydawnictwo Nieoczywiste.

Dziewulak, D. 2013. 'Wprowadzenie'. In *Studia BAS. Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe*, edited by D. Dziewulak, 3 (35): 5–9. Warszawa: Biuro Analiz Sejmowych Kancelarii Sejmu.

European Commission. 2003.'The Role of Universities in the Europe of Knowledge - Communication from the Commission'. European Commission.

Ferlie, E., Ch. Musselin, and G. Andresani. 2008. 'The Steering of the Higher Education System: A Public Management Perspective'. *Higher Education* 56: 325–348.

Ferrance, E. 2000. *Action Research*. The Education Alliance at Brown University.

Fine, M., M.E. Torre, K. Boudin, I. Bowen, J. Clark, D. Hylton, M. Martinez, R.A. Roberts, P. Smart, and D. Upegui. 2003. 'Participatory Action Research: From within and Beyond Prison Bar'. In *Qualitative Research In Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design*, edited by P.M. Camic, J.E. Rhodes, and L. Yardley, 173–198. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Flick, U. 2011. *Jakość w Badaniach Jakościowych*. Translated by P. Tomanek. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Flick, U. 2012. *Projektowanie Badania Jakościowego*. Translated by P. Tomanek. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Gayá, P., and M. Brydon-Miller. 2017. 'Carpe the Academy: Dismantling Higher Education and Prefiguring Critical Utopias through Action Research'. *Futures* 94: 34–44. 10.1016/j.futures.2016.10.005

Geryk, M. 2019. 'Społeczna Odpowiedzialność Uczelni w Polsce w Badaniach Naukowych'. In *Społeczna Odpowiedzialność: Znaczenie Dla Uczelni i Sposoby Wdrażania*, edited by E. Jastrzębska, M. Przybysz, and M. Wróbel, 18–23. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego, Deklaracja Społecznej Odpowiedzialności Uczelni, Ministerstwo Inwestycji i Rozwoju.

Gianotten, V., and T. de Wit. 1982. 'Participatory Research and Popular Education in a Context of Peasant Economy'. Centre for the Study of Education in Developing Countries:: Netherlands Study- and Development Centre for Adult Education.

Giuffré, L., and S.E. Ratto. 2014. 'A New Paradigm in Higher Education: University Social Responsibility (USR)'. *Journal of Education & Human Development* 3 (1): 231–238.

Giza, A. 2021. 'Modernizując Uczelnie. Polskie Szkoły Wyższe Po Roku 1989.' In. Kraków. https://oees.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/modernizujac-uczelnie.pdf

Glaser, B.G., and A.L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Grabski, M. 2009. 'Uczciwość i Wiarygodność Nauki. Praktyka'. *Nauka* 2: 37–59.

Grabski, M., T. Dybowski, K. Gibiński, A. Górski, W. Karczewski, H. Samsonowicz, J. Szacki, and S. Wielgus. 2004. 'Dobra Praktyka Badań Naukowych. Rekomendacje'. Ministerstwo Nauki i Informatyzacji. Zespół do Spraw Etyki w Nauce.

Greenwood, D.J. 2012. 'Action Research, Czyli o Badaniach w Działaniu'. In *Badania Jakościowe. Podejścia i Teorie*, edited by D. Jemielniak, 1: 115–140. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Hammersley, M., and P. Atkinson. 2000. *Metody Badań Terenowych*. Translated by S. Dymczyk. Poznań: Zysk i S-ka.

Henry, M., B. Lingard, F. Rizvi, and S. Taylor. 2001. *The OECD, Globalisation and Education Policy*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Hynes, G., D. Coghlan, and M. McCarron. 2012. 'Participation as a Multi-Voiced Process: Action Research in the Acute Hospital Environment'. *Action Research* 10 (3): 93–312.

Jacko, J.F., I. Maciejowska, and E. Okoń-Horodyńska, eds. 2017. *Edukacja Uniwersytecka a Oczekiwania Społeczne*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Jałocha, B., E. Bogacz-Wojtanowska, A. Góral, G. Prawelska-Skrzypek, and P. Jedynak. 2021. 'Opening the Doors of the Ivory Tower: Action Research as a Tool Supporting Cooperation between Universities and External Organizations'. In *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, edited by A.B. Shani (Rami) and A. Noumair, 143–171. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Jastrzębska, E., H. Brdulak, P. Legutko-Kobus, and T.J. Dąbrowski. 2019. 'Społeczna Odpowiedzialność Uczelni. Perspektywa Strategiczna'. *Zarządzanie Publiczne* 4 (48): 285–297.

Kapiszewska, M. 2011. 'Uczelnie Niepubliczne – Sukces Czy Niechciany Produkt Wolnego Rynku'. In *Myśl i Polityka: Księga Pamiątkowa Dedykowana Profesorowi Jackowi Marii Majchrowskiemu*, edited by B. Szlachta, 3: 466–480. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM.

Kawa, J. 2013. 'Metodologia, Metodyka, Metoda Jako Podstawa Wywodu Naukowego'. *Studia Prawnoustrojowe* 21 (1): 69–188.

Kaźmierczak, T. 2007. 'Kapitał Społeczny a Rozwój Społeczno-Ekonomiczny – Przegląd Pojęć'. In *Kapitał Społeczny. Ekonomia Społeczna*, edited by T. Kaźmierczak and M. Rymsz, 41–65. Warszawa: Fundacja Instytutu Spraw Publicznych.

Kemmis, S. 2008. 'Critical Theory and Participatory Action Research'. In *The Sage Handbook of Action Research*, edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 121–138. London: SAGE.

Khan, S., and P. Tzortzopoulos. 2016. 'An Evaluation Framework for an Action Research Study on Lean Design Management'. In *Proc. 24th Ann. Conf. of the Int'l. Group for Lean Construction*, 113–122. Boston.

Kolb, D.A. 1984. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Kossakowski, R., and J. Nowiński. 2015. 'Schemat Konstruowania Rekomendacji Dla Badaczy'. http://raportoraportach.bibel.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/RK_JN_Schemat-rekomendacje.pdf

Kostera, M. 2003. *Antropologia Organizacji. Metodologia Badań Terenowych*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Kozielecki, J. 1969. *Rozwiązywanie Problemów*. Warszawa: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych.

Koźmiński, A.K., D. Jemielniak, and D. Latusek-Jurczak. 2014. *Zasady Zarządzania*. Warszawa: Oficyna a Wolters Kluwer business.

Kraśniewski, A. 2006. *Proces Boloński: Dokąd Zmierza Europejskie Szkolnictwo Wyższe?* Warszawa.

Kraśniewski, A. 2009. *Proces Boloński to Już 10 Lat Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji*. Warszawa.

Kromolicka, B. 2017. 'Konstytucja Dla Nauki - Ustawa 2.0' Szansą Czy Zagrożeniem Dla Rozwoju Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego?' *Pedagogika Szkoły Wyższej* 2: 77–90.

Kudrycka, B. 2011. 'Dlaczego Wprowadzamy Krajowe Ramy Kwalifikacji w Szkolnictwie Wyższym'. In *Jak Przygotowywać Programy Kształcenia Zgodnie z Wymaganiami Krajowych Ram Kwalifikacji Dla Szkolnictwa Wyższego?*, edited by A. Kraśniewsk. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego.

Kwiek, M. 2012. 'Uniwersytet Jako "wspólnota Badaczy"? Polska z Europejskiej Perspektywy Porównawczej i Ilościowej'. *Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe40* 40: 71–102.

Kwiek, M. 2015. *Uniwersytet w Dobie Przemian. Instytucje i Kadra Akademicka w Warunkach Rosnącej Konkurencji*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Kwiek, M. 2017. 'Wprowadzenie: Reforma Szkolnictwa Wyższego w Polsce i Jej Wyzwania. Jak Stopniowa Dehermetyzacja Systemu Prowadzi Do Jego Stratyfikacji'. *Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe* 2 (50): 9–38. 10.14746/nisw.2017.2.0

Lawn, M, and B Lingard 2002.' Constructing a European Policy Space in Educational Governance: The Role of Transnational Policy Actors'. *European Educational Research Journal* 1(2):290–307.

Leja, K. 2008. 'Uniwersytet Organizacją Służącą Otoczeniu'. In *Społeczna Odpowiedzialność Uczelni*, edited by K. Leja. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Politechniki Gdańskiej.

Leydessdorff, L. 2006. *The Knowledge-Based Economy: Modeled, Measured, Simulated*. Boca Raton: Universal Publishers.

Morawska-Jancelewicz, J. 2019. 'SOU i Koncepcje Pokrewne – Społeczna Odpowiedzialność Nauki, Trzecia Misja i Zaangażowanie Społeczne'. In *Społeczna Odpowiedzialność - Znaczenie Dla Uczelni i Sposoby Wdrażania*, edited by E. Jastrzębska and M. Przybysz, 14–18. Warszawa: Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego, Ministerstwo Inwestycji i Rozwoju.

Niemczyk, J. 2016. 'Formułowanie i Wartościowanie Problemów Badawczych'. In *Podstawy Metodologii Badań w Naukach o Zarządzaniu*, edited by W. Czakon, 103–119. Piaseczno: Wydawnictwo Nieoczywiste.

Nowak, S. 2012. *Metodologia Badań Społecznych*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Pakuła, J., ed. 2015. *Współczesne Problemy Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego*. Toruń: Continuum, Pracownia Wydawnicza EIKON.

Platteel, T., H. Hulshof, P. Ponte, J. van Driel, and N. Verloop. 2010. 'Forming a Collaborative Action Research Partnership'. *Educational Action Research* 18 (4): 429–451.

Preskill, H., and R.T. Torres. 1999. *Evaluative Inquiry for Learning in Organizations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Reason, P. 2006. 'Choice and Quality in Action Research Practice'. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 15 (2): 187–203.

Reason, P., and H. Bradbury. 2008. 'Introduction'. In *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*, edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 1–10. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Selener, D. 1997. *Participatory Action Research and Social Change*. N.Y.: Cornell University Ithaca.

Shani, A.B, and D. Coghlan. 2021. 'Action Research in Business and Management: A Reflective Review'. *Action Research* 19 (3): 518–541.

Shani, A.B. (Rami), and W.A. Pasmore. 2016. 'Organization Inquiry: Towards a New Model of the Action Research Process'. In *Action Research in Business and Management*, edited by D. Coghlan and A.B. (Rami) Shani, 1: 191–200. London, UK: Sage. [Original publication: D.D. Warrick (Ed.) (1985). Contemporary organization development: Current thinking and applications. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman and Company].

Shapiro, J. 2001. *Action Planning Toolkit*. Johannesburg: Civikus.

Silverman, D. 2009. *Interpretacja Danych Jakościowych. Metody Analizy Rozmowy, Tekstu i Interakcji*. Translated by M. Głowacka-Grajper and J. Ostrowska. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Silverman, D. 2012. *Prowadzenie Badań Jakościowych*. Translated by J. Ostrowska. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Sułkowski, Ł. 2012. *Epistemologia i Metodologia Zarządzania*. Warszawa: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne.

Toyibah, D. 2018. 'Neoliberalism and Inequality in Higher Education'. In *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Recent Innovations (ICRI 2018)*, 1590–1597. 0.5220/0009932415901597

Vasilescu, B., C. Barna, M. Epure, and C. Baicu. 2010. 'Developing University Social Responsibility: A Model for the Challenges of the New Civil Society'. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2: 4177–4182.

Wilkin, J. 2013. 'Finansowanie Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego w Polsce. Wybrane Problemy i Postulowane Kierunki Reform'. *Studia Biura Analiz Sejmowych* 3 (35): 51–70.

Winkler, C., E. Saltzman, and S. Yang. 2018. 'Improvement of Practice in Entrepreneurship Education through Action Research: The Case of Coworking at a Nonresidential College'. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy* 1 (2): 139–165.

Woźnicki, J. 2019. 'Sto Lat Działalności Ustawodawczej w Szkolnictwie Wyższym w Polsce, Ze Szczególnym Uwzględnieniem Okresu Trzydziestolecia Transformacji'. In *Transformacja Akademickiego Szkolnictwa Wyższego w Polsce w Okresie 30*-Lecia *1989–2019*, edited by J. Woźnicki. Warszawa: Konferencja Rektorów Akademickich Szkół Polskich.

Wroczyńska, A. 2013. 'Oczekiwania Współczesnych Studentów Wobec Uczelni Wyższych –Prezentacja Wyników Prowadzonych Badań'. In *Studia BAS. Nauka i Szkolnictwo Wyższe*, edited by D. Dziewulak, 3 (35):249–272.

Zawadzki, M., B. Jałocha, G. Mazurkiewicz, A. Pluszyńska, and G. Prawelska-Skrzypek. 2020. 'Unrooting Management Education and Entrepreneurial Self From Neoliberal Demands: An Action Research Approach'. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy* 3 (3): 265–290. 10.1177/2515127420912399

4 Conditions and benefits of, as well as barriers to, the use of action research

4.1 Organisational conditions for cooperation between universities and their stakeholders based on action research

The success, satisfaction and expected durability of the university's cooperation with its stakeholders based on action research depends on many factors. When considering the issues of success, it should be emphasised once again that its source is always the very fact of its initiation. It is also necessary to recognise the organisational and communication conditions, both on the part of the university and the cooperating organisations, which are crucial for success.

As mentioned above, in the organisational sphere, cooperation can be understood as a process occurring between two or more organisations pursuing common or at least compatible goals that are mutually beneficial while sharing and exchanging resources (Hoffmann et al. 2018; Gnyawali, Madhaven, and He 2006). In the case of cooperation using the action-research approach, the goal is particularly important in order to unite all participants in the research process or, conversely, if organisations focus solely on their own interests, it leads to rivalry and conflict between organisations (de Witt and Meyer 2007, 238–42). The aim of action research is to jointly solve problems that are important to the organisation as well as to learn from each other and generate new knowledge (Coghlan 2003, 452). This approach is in line with the ideas of Kurt Lewin, who advocated: "no action without research, no research without action" (Adelman 1993, 8). This approach assumes that participants in the collaborative research process should strive to understand and jointly solve specific problems, but they should also perceive the research process as a value that contributes to the improvement of the collaborating organisations. Thus, the first challenge in the process of building collaboration is the right attitude of all parties to the project, which will influence both the process and the results of the research. Closely related to this is the willingness to take joint action, understood as the ability to go beyond one's own interests.

The efforts of the university and the stakeholders to build cooperation are conditioned by perceiving the benefits that can be obtained through it.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003227069-5

Benefits that are more difficult to achieve on their own (Lank 2006, 7). From the stakeholders' point of view, the force that stimulates cooperation based on action research is the acceptance of the legitimacy of implementing changes. Changes are an inseparable element of functioning of every organisation, because as Peter Drucker wrote "the only thing that is constant is change" (Drucker 1994). In this sense, planning change in accordance with the idea of AR is a conscious attempt to improve the organisation's operations and an effort to transform it into a constantly learning organisation. "Learning", in fact, should not be understood only as "assimilation of information", its goal should not be only "survival", but development and a greater ability to create (Senge 2012). Thus, it is essential to create the conditions for change through active and participatory adaptation and to create a climate that encourages learning and fosters knowledge sharing by involving employees at different levels of the organisation in the research process.

An obstacle to the implementation of changes is the unwillingness and opposition to such changes by the members of an organisation (this is mentioned e.g., in Le Châtelier-Braun's rule of contrariness or Adamiecki's law of inertia (Le Chatelier and Adamiecki 1926)). Sources of resistance include fear of the unknown, doubt about the need for change, uncertainty due to fear for one's own place of work or current status, reluctance to enter new areas, and threats to personal interests. Therefore, an important role in the research process in the action research approach is played by the so-called *gatekeepers* - these are people who introduce the researcher to the organisation (Góral et al. 2019). They are people who help employees understand the need for research and future change, who explain the idea of action research, and who encourage collaboration. *Gatekeepers* are in a sense, leaders of change, setting an example of expected values. They are also regulators of interpersonal relationships because they are often the ones who help bring the researcher into contact with other employees of the organisation. Finding the right people in the organisation to act as *gatekeepers* is therefore important for the success of the research, especially because the research process itself is lengthy and requires considerable effort.

In the project and research that we carried out, it was the university that acted as the initiator of the collaboration. It fell to the university and the students to find organisations, practitioners and to encourage them to participate in the project, using various ways to motivate them to participate. Initiating cooperation is not an easy task, especially since in Poland there are still many barriers to establishing cooperation between universities and stakeholders, with the most significant ones being the lack of previous experience or experience of past failures in cooperation, complicated procedures and bureaucracy, as well as conflicts of interest and obligations (Bryła 2014). In our project, an additional difficulty in establishing cooperation was the insufficient knowledge of the organisation's employees about the action research method, the point of the research and the role of the researcher in the process of change.

Among the twenty-five organisations which took part in the project, there were both those that were open to change and understood the idea of participating in action research and those that hoped for spectacular results without much input from themselves and, over time, were reluctant to create the conditions for change. Furthermore, our experience confirms that the person introducing the researcher to the organisation plays an important role in the process. In a situation where the *gatekeeper* was not a decision-maker in the organisation, the introduction of change was either not possible at all or was very difficult.

Establishing mutual trust is crucial to the success of a project. A major obstacle to trust is that the researcher is often an outsider. Colleen Reid (2000) points out that the researcher is then often automatically assigned the role of a consultant – in other words, a provider of specific services, which imposes a certain distance between them and the (co-)participants in the study. Our project experience also shows that a big barrier is that students (researchers) are treated as inexperienced and incompetent by organisational staff. A different, seemingly simpler situation may appear in the case of insider researchers, members of the organisation under study. They have knowledge about the organisation and know their colleagues and their functions well. Nevertheless, the difficulty may be, for example, for employees to accept the new role played by the researcher and to clearly separate it from regular their employee duties (Góral et al. 2019). This duality of role may also require building new relationships or changing the nature of existing relationships with colleagues (Adler and Adler 1987). It is therefore hardly surprising that inhibition and limited trust prevail in the initial phase of collaboration. To counteract this, patience, openness, flexibility, a positive attitude towards people combined with mutual understanding and acceptance of the diversity of knowledge and competences as well as not allowing the role of any one party in the project to be marginalised are required from all involved.

During the research process in the action-research approach, many people interact: from the researcher, the thesis supervisor accompanying the researcher throughout the entire process, to the organisation under study and its members, and perhaps to the organisation's environment, the environment in which it operates. The challenge is not only to identify all the people but also to establish and maintain harmonious and equal relationships. The nature and quality of relationships built between the researcher and the (co-)participants in the study who represent different interest groups in the research have an indisputable impact on the final outcome of the project (Gray et al. 2000). It is important that the building of relationships is based on openness and honesty, which will enable mutual expectations to be clearly defined from the outset. Therefore, the process of negotiating the principles of cooperation is important, allowing for the implementation of research that will be important and valuable for each party involved in the process (Góral et al. 2019). When building relationships, it is important to detail the common standards that will

guide the members of the research team and to establish the goals that the team will pursue. This stage can be formal, culminating in, for example, the signing of a written agreement setting out the mutual expectations and responsibilities of the parties. It can also be informal, meaning that the details of cooperation will be worked out naturally through regular meetings and discussions. Therefore, there is no single pattern that the process of establishing cooperation should follow. Regardless of the nature of the collaboration, the building of the university's relationship with its stakeholders must be based on mutual honesty, which according to Jill Grant, Geoffrey Nelson, and Terry Mitchell (2008) fosters genuine engagement, emancipation and democratisation of the research process, which is also the concept of action research.

When negotiating the terms of cooperation, it will be helpful to clarify the role played by each participant in the research project and the division of tasks. The main duty of the researcher is looking after the benefit of the organisation and its stakeholders. One should also not forget the responsibility the student has towards their thesis supervisor and the university, guarding their own interests. The task of the employees of the organisation, in turn, is the participatory participation in the research process through, among others, providing access to information, assistance in contacts with other stakeholders or active participation in the process of creating recommendations and their implementation. No less important is the role of the Master's or Bachelor's thesis supervisor. David Coghlan (2019) proposes that the supervisor should take on the role of a so-called *critical friend*, whose task is not limited to supporting the researcher in conducting the research, but above all to initiate the researcher's critical reflection on the observed phenomena, the experiences gained and the data acquired in the course of the research.

In the case of our project, a written agreement was signed setting out the mutual expectations and obligations of the parties. At this stage, a special role was played by the university, as it was responsible for developing the content of the agreement and undertaking any negotiations. It is worth noting at this point that although the aim of action research is to make recommendations and introduce changes in the organisation, the role of the university was to specifically safeguard the interests of the student, who regardless of the development of events, will have the opportunity to take part in the defence of his master's thesis, and thus complete his studies.

Dialogue plays a key role in the relationship between researcher, promoter and stakeholders in the process of action research. This implies the relationship should be one of partnership, based on constant conversation and an uninhibited exchange of ideas. Regular meetings and informal discussions are conducive to this. It is especially worth nurturing the cyclic meetings of all people involved, for example in the form of systematically organised workshops, supporting the exchange of knowledge and experience, but also the acquisition of practical skills. Meetings of the researcher with members of the organisation take on a slightly different character, and

the frequency of these contacts is an individual matter, which is influenced, among other things, by the degree of hierarchy in the organisation or the nature of the relationship between the employees of the organisation. However, it is worthwhile for the researcher to have the opportunity to participate both in formal and regular meetings of the members of the organisation, as well as to take part in informal events such as having a meal together or going out for a coffee after work. The activities described above are conducive to building relationships, and although at first glance they may seem like a waste of time as they are not related to conducting actual research activities as known in traditional methodological approaches, the time spent in meetings or exchanging pleasantries promotes the strengthening of bonds, something extremely important when conducting action research (Góral et al. 2019).

The experience of our project has shown that the regular workshops, which were attended by all the people involved, were very helpful. The main aim of the workshops was to exchange knowledge and experience acquired in the course of the conducted research. Each party could not only share information on what difficulties related to the research process they were struggling with at the time but also obtain feedback on how to mitigate the difficulties encountered. In addition, regular meetings of supervisors were organised to discuss the use of the AR approach in academic practice and in cooperation with the world of practice. In addition, informal meetings and discussions between the various parties to the project were of considerable importance and served as a basis for building closer relations.

The idea of participatory AR research is understood as conducting joint research with people rather than researching people (Hynes, Coghlan, and McCarron 2012; after: Reason and Bradbury 2008). Participation understood in this way means full engagement combined with mutual understanding. Communication plays an important role in this process, which – referring to the etymological meaning of the Latin word communicatio – means entering into a community, maintaining relations with someone, participation. In the literature on the subject, "communication" is also understood as a dynamic, two-way process of transmitting information between the sender and the receiver, conducive to establishing contact with each other (Kania 2006). The exchange of thoughts, sharing of knowledge, information, ideas between (co-) participants in a study can occur overtly, directly as well as often unconsciously, indirectly during the joint performance of various tasks. Both verbal and non-verbal communication, which is much more difficult to control, are important and therefore seem more genuine. In the research process, it is therefore important for the researcher to be in the organisation as often as possible and, using various communication techniques, to solve problems together with the stakeholders and seek to deepen knowledge through mutual learning. The research process should also make use of technology and IT tools that, from a practical point of view, significantly facilitate communication and information

sharing, such as the Internet, social media for creating discussion groups, or tools for storing and sharing resources. However, the most important thing is to ensure the quality of communication and that it is constant. It is also important to create appropriate conditions conducive to communication, including: accepting the diversity of knowledge, education and experience of individual members of the research team, avoiding conflicts and encouraging cooperation rather than competition. It is also important to ensure freedom in presenting one's own ideas and tolerating mistakes, which should not be treated as failure, but as an opportunity to discover a better solution.

The communication process during our project was varied. Some researchers (students) were frequently present in the organisation and took part in meetings outside working hours, which fostered closer, also less formal, relationships. There were also situations where the organisation operated mainly remotely and live staff meetings were rare. In such conditions, despite constant communication (e-mail, telephone), it was much more difficult for the researchers to establish closer cooperation. The difficulty was also related to the lack of possibility to make observations and thus to get to know the organisation better. It is also worth noting the key role of the student, who often acted as a liaison between the thesis supervisor and the organisation's employee in the project. This role posed additional communication challenges. Communication between thesis supervisors and representatives of the organisation was also varied: from email correspondence, through telephone conversations to formal meetings (e.g., during workshops) or less formal meetings (e.g., during chats over coffee).

The essence of the university's cooperation with its stakeholders, in organisational terms, boils down to the exchange of resources with the intention of achieving the goal in an efficient and effective manner. In the research process, particular importance is attached to intangible resources – i.e., all values that do not have a physical form, but are identifiable such as human capital, information or knowledge. The measure of human potential is primarily the competences of (co-)participants in the research process, their knowledge, experience and ability to think creatively and solve problems. Equally important are their individual behaviours and attitudes that determine their openness and willingness to cooperate. Intangible resources are also information, i.e., selected, systematised and interpreted data that can be used for decision-making, and knowledge, which also includes experiences and beliefs, values and attitudes, hunches and intuition.

Cooperation between the university and its stakeholders fosters the exchange of resources through mutual learning outcomes. The joint acquisition of information and knowledge not only serves the purpose of having up-to-date and possibly complete data but also significantly reduces the costs of their acquisition, interpretation or later use in implementing changes. Therefore, from the very beginning it is worth defining the scope of knowledge and competences, which will be shared within the framework of cooperation. The formal and legal conditions for the exchange of

resources are also of considerable significance. Internal regulations and their interpretation, especially by administrative employees performing control functions at the university or management staff in an organisation, may both favour as well as hinder cooperation and resource sharing.

Evaluation activities are also an important stage of cooperation, as they provide knowledge about the extent to which the results of research work contribute to real change in the organisation. The function of evaluation is both informative (it provides information on tasks performed, results and irregularities), corrective (it helps to eliminate errors in the pursuit of previously set goals) and stimulating/inspiring for further changes and deepening of knowledge. The purposefulness of evaluation should not be undermined, even though it may not be properly carried out. Due to the participatory nature of action research, it is important to restrict supervisory systems in favour of self-monitoring and developing accountability and trust between (co-)participants in a project.

While carrying out the project we undertook verification activities. We collected time sheets as well as student progress reports, diaries and research notes. In addition, we conducted a number of surveys: (1) interviews and (2) surveys (a) *ex ante* among organisations and students, (b) *ongoing* among thesis supervisors and (c) *ex post* involving all partners participating in the project. Through such extensive empirical research, we were able to identify and understand the importance of action research in collaborative processes between universities and organisations.

4.2 Benefits from the application of action research

Action research enables collaboration between theoreticians and practitioners. In the literature on the subject, action research is often compared to professional consulting. However, the differences relate to both the research process and the role of the researcher. The idea of consulting is to implement change, but without introducing it together with the organisation's employees. In turn, in the process of diagnosing and solving a problem, action research includes the management and employees of organisations, in the case of non-governmental organisations also members or volunteers. Action research, besides merely problematising organisational needs, goes a step further, where representatives of universities and organisations design a joint solution and implement it.

One of the more frequently mentioned benefits of participating in research using the *action research* approach is a new perspective on the organisation by an outsider who is not involved in internal organisational processes. The organisation participates in the research process, which allows it to acquire knowledge about its own capabilities and limitations, organisational culture or cooperation practices, located in a broader research context. Since the researcher is not formally associated with the organisation, their ties and commitment are developed and influenced, while they gain the opportunity to learn about the

organisation by immersing themselves in the research area. The researchers' "extraneousness" is adapted by themselves and by the organisation, but is also a catalyst for reflection on their own practice, because it breaks out of the ritual, allows them to see a problem that was unnoticed, marginalised or to which employees got used to. Participants of the project *Research for Practice* emphasised that thanks to the approach using action research they gained valuable knowledge about how the organisation is perceived from inside and outside. The researcher's conversations with employees make the organisation aware of its pros and cons, and in consequence of how it can self-perfect.

The main result of action research is to know the problems of the organisation or to confirm speculations about the problems that the organisation is facing. The process of awareness and the presence of a researcher is the first step towards further changes. The most important thing is to create opportunities for employees of the organisation to better understand the situation in which they find themselves, and consequently to help them solve their problems or improve processes in the organisation. Problems or areas of improvement noticed together can have a very different nature, level of significance or weight, they can also be prioritised. The selection of the most important area or the area requiring rapid changes always takes place in agreement with and with the consent of the organisation. Constant and active participation of employees or members of the organisation in the entire research process is on the one hand the attribute of action research, and on the other an asset from the perspective of the organisation. Importantly, neither party has a privileged position, and each stage of the study is consulted (MacDonald 2012). The name itself indicates that the study requires direct involvement of the participants (active action) and effort to diagnose the phenomenon (research).

Mutual learning is also a benefit of action research. People who had the opportunity to participate in action research emphasised that it was an opportunity for their opinion to be heard and proposed ideas of changes taken into account. Action research requires the engagement of employees of the organisation – to a greater or lesser extent. Their opinion is particularly important when developing the action plan. Also, ideas formulated together must be adapted to the capabilities and needs of the organisation. Thus, the benefit of action research is an action plan that describes how to solve a problem or improve certain processes. The described remedial ideas are another highlight of the work of the partners. At this point it should be emphasised that the researcher formulates recommendations, taking into account the suggestions of partners, while the stage of their implementation can take place together. In order to gain a common understanding of the proposed solutions, the participation of all stakeholders is important.

The research process is creative, where many jointly developed concepts are tested and sometimes, if necessary, modified. The entire research process requires constant planning, operation, observation and reflection. Each of these activities should be performed systematically and critically. The advantage is the

lack of restrictions on the types of research techniques used. When selecting them, the opinion of all study participants and the usefulness of the technique in exploring the outlined research problem should be taken into account. The use of action research strategies requires creativity and flexibility from students, for example, because it is not formalised. Researchers must learn quickly and change their approach (to confirm this statement, selected case studies will be presented in the next chapter). A key issue in the course of research is also that the researcher repeatedly appears in the organisation and talks to employees about issues that bother them. Standard research contains traps and temptations for the researcher to arrive at the organisation infrequently, what is more, with predetermined research questions – action research allows for a more thorough and detailed analysis. In case of any doubts, the researcher has the opportunity to specify the areas that interest him. It is not without reason that multiple iterations are used throughout the research process. Objectives are constantly being redefined, rediscovered and sometimes even completely changed. The possibility of changing the research problem during the course of the research should also be considered a positive value of the whole process. All these activities are carried out precisely in order to make the appropriate changes (Chrostowski and Jemielniak 2008, 48–49).

The essence of action research is also pragmatism understood here as the art of effective action, based not only on knowledge, but also on intuition, the system of values or preferences, and experience. It seems that the practical goal has sometimes higher priority than the theoretical ones. However, as Stefan Cronholm and Göran Goldkuhl (2003) rightly point out, the essence of the action research approach is interest in both activities and research. The research goal is to develop new knowledge, which in turn is acquired by designing the process of change in the organisation. In the course of research, the problem is analysed from many sides, and the work is reflective and task-oriented. Participation in the research therefore implies understanding the problem and acquiring knowledge of how other organisations deal with similar difficulties. Understanding the problem forces the researcher to look for different solutions and assumes constant checking whether similar mechanisms will work in a particular organisation. Understanding the problem based on acquired theoretical knowledge is of great benefit to the organisation in the form of real implementation ideas. The vision of the possibility of solving a real problem is therefore crucial.

During the research, employees of the organisation acquire knowledge – not only about the method of solving organisational problems. "The feature of such research is the assumption that as the work progresses, the problem is understood better" (Chrostowski and Jemielniak 2011, 26). In addition, employees of the organisation acquire up-to-date substantive knowledge related to the indicated problem. The important role of the thesis advisor, whose task is to inspire and supervise the substantive side of research is also worth mentioning. Therefore, know-how on the part of the university, the knowledge of the student and thesis advisor also involved in the project area a

great theoretical support. The research process has a large scientific dimension. Employees of the organisation acquire knowledge about various trends and new perspectives in management. Action research is also an opportunity to exchange experiences through joint discussions. They are "aimed at combining actions and reflection, theory and practice in cooperation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to problems, and in a more general context develop individuals and their communities" (Reason and Bradbury 2008, 1). The benefit of participating in action research is therefore the acquisition of knowledge useful for people in their daily lives. It is worth mentioning that the use of action research has another practical advantage compared to other research strategies. Researchers, regardless of their individual experiences, are more willing to share knowledge. Unlike the career counsellor, their involvement and motivation are more influenced by intangible factors, such as cognitive curiosity, good contact with the employees of the organisation, a pleasant atmosphere, the opportunity to test themselves or to acquire new experiences (Chrostowski and Jemielniak 2011, 125).

Special attention is given to the person who is responsible for regular contact with the student. As part of the project *Research for Practice*, we called them mentors, emphasising their role in the entire research process. The mentor was the person who gave the student the most information about the organisation but also was the liaison between its employees. In interviews, mentors emphasised that participation in research is also beneficial for them. First of all in a professional sense, because they acquire knowledge on a specific topic. In individual cases, the culmination of the cooperation of the mentor, student and thesis advisor was even the joint preparation of a scientific article. It seems that participation in e.g., conferences is also possible. Mentors also mentioned that contact with young researchers and mutual exchange of experience broadened their knowledge about issues that they had not noticed before. The presence and constant contact with the student forced them to reflect because they had to show and explain what they were doing, who to talk to, what documents should be read. The mentors also had a sense of prowess, their opinion was crucial both at the stage of searching for the problem and its exploration or formulation of solutions. They had a big impact on the shape of the proposed changes, which is due to the fact that they know the organisation better than the researcher. Such inclusion of employees in the research process directly increases their motivation. Equally importantly, it often gives them a sense of shared responsibility, which in turn curbs or eliminates resistance to future changes. The feature of action research is not the imposition of ideas on the organisation. The idea is to direct the work of researchers, provoking discussion, so that the employees themselves feel as creators or co-creators of solutions. In addition, action research "promotes the assessment of employees' potential in the organisation and better use of their knowledge and skills than before. Full participation in action research consultations prepares people from the organisation for the role of internal advisor" (Chrostowski and Jemielniak 2011, 208).

The mentors also emphasised students' involvement, which was key from the organisation's point of view. Students automatically cease to be passive observers of the organisation's activities. They are not anonymous, they penetrate the structure of the organisation and are much more involved in the research process. "Permitting the student to 'enter' the organisation allows them to feel its atmosphere, character, not only understand the mechanisms, but also certain non-verbal, indescribable, unspeakable mechanisms, habits, etc." (Organisation employee 8). Students themselves also notice measurable benefits of their active presence in the organisation: it is an opportunity to "get rid of certain beliefs, often illusions about working in an institution" (Student 5).

This collaboration with young, promising people who are just starting their careers is an opportunity to meet potential job candidates. Often, during research, students were also involved in the organisation's activities as apprentices or volunteers, acquiring not only additional knowledge about the organisation but also work experience. In turn, for organisations, this is an additional opportunity to check the student's skills and knowledge in practice.

Lewin is considered a precursor of action research in the literature on the subject. He claimed that the best way to understand something is to try to change it (Greenwood and Levin 2007). The research process often ends not only with recommendations but also with the actual implementation of the changes. Solutions formulated by students, even minimal ones, encourage the organisation to test new ideas. As the participants of the project "Action research" rightly point out, the basis for such a position is the awareness that "development and change are the essence of the «vitality» of the organisation" (Organisation employee 2). Getting to know new scientific solutions and their implementation help improve already developed and applied mechanisms in the organisation. Thanks to this, organisations can self-improve. The inevitability of changes, occurring quickly and unexpectedly, means that people and organisations are forced to act.

Cooperation under action research can also indirectly bring financial benefits to public and non-governmental organisations. Research needs in organisations are usually quite large, but rarely professionally implemented. Research is done for (or as part of) public or social services, while research that leads to change and improvement in the organisations themselves is less practised. This is primarily due to the constant shortage of resources, the need to allocate financial resources for actions strictly related to the implementation of objectives and specified whether it be regulations or the statute of tasks. In this case, however, the organisation gains a free analysis of some processes and, with the support of researchers, additionally acquires the most up-to-date university knowledge, supported by the latest research in a given area. It is also worth noting that these studies can – or maybe should – be carried out repeatedly. Each time they may relate to a different area of the organisation's activity, project, task force, department, etc. They can also be repeated at certain intervals.

Employees of the organisations with which we had the opportunity to work on the project *Research for Practice* also argued that the benefit of participation in research is to improve the image of the organisation and increase its recognition among young people.

4.3 Weaknesses and difficulties in using action research

Action research is not without its limitations and weaknesses. They have their source both in a different understanding of the cooperation process and its components under *action research*, as well as in the ambiguity of approaches and ways of learning. According to Davydd Greenwood and Morten Levin (2007), action research consists of three elements: an action that aims to change the initial situation of a group, organisation or community; research, understood as a way of generating new research knowledge, as well as from participation, which emphasises the essence of participation in the research process of all stakeholders, in particular, employees of the organisation and the researcher. This means that everyone takes responsibility for the research process. The lack of any of the elements means that the research process is not action research.

In action research, it is important not so much to learn objective knowledge as to identify the problem in such a way that it is possible to introduce a real and practical solution. Action research is partly open-ended research, where research questions are often vague and out of focus, mainly due to the nature of the system/organisation being studied. This also means that the methodology used by the researcher using action research is not pre-planned or unchangeable. Usually, the research questions are unspecified because the researcher is in a somewhat unknown situation. Therefore, the researcher is expected to be focused at all times throughout the research process. This situation, although desirable, is often difficult to achieve (Chrostowski and Jemielniak 2008, 49).

Aleksander Chrostowski and Dariusz Jemielniak (2008) argue that the reason for the creation of the *action research* trend was somewhat the competition and lack of trust between scientists and practitioners. The former criticise practitioners that they manage organisations without using – in their opinion – the best the existing methods. In turn, practitioners accuse scientists of creating theories detached from the real problems of the organisation. According to the authors, a partial detachment of theory from practice is the aftermath of continued cultivation of science that is not related to the real problems of organisational actors. From the organisation's point of view, therefore, there is a risk of research failure due to over-theorisation and focus on the organisation's unreal problems. However, there is a strong demand for scientific advice, as evidenced by the still considerable interest in consulting. The difference between consulting and action research is primarily that the latter approach takes into account the activity of the staff members of the organisation in the research process.

The main barrier in the research process is the lack of involvement of any party – the organisation/community, student or thesis advisor. What is more, it is about the engagement of the people affected by the problem, if not the whole organisation, otherwise, a change cannot occur. The active role of employees of the organisation should be clearly emphasised, which should take the form of cooperation with the student; contributing to and deciding on the action plan. And most importantly, the organisation and its employees must be involved in the change itself. The researcher is, in fact, a part of the process, a research participant, following Randy Stoecker (1999) the initiator, consultant or co-operator. Different levels of researcher involvement, resulting from the role agreed with the organisation, still require strong involvement of organisation representatives in research and then improvement processes.

At the same time, conducting action research has a certain risk that the researcher will become excessively involved in the life of the community or organisation under study and, as a consequence, lose his scientific distance. Such reservations about action research also result from the experience of anthropologists of the organisation (Kostera 2003), who postulate that the scientist be constantly "professionally alienated" (Agar 1980/1996). On the one hand, the allegations against the method, that the researcher may be too biased and, consequently, may have a distorted picture of the organisation, are not unfounded. On the other hand, when entering the organisation, the researcher's task is to help it solve the problem. Without their personal involvement, the identified problem may seem trivial to the organisation, and subsequently the solutions proposed useless. The systematic presence of the researcher in the organisation means that they engage in relations with employees and gain access to information and knowledge, usually hidden from researchers. Commitment, devoting time, credibility and confidentiality allow the researcher to build trust, although this is one of the biggest research challenges.

During the project *Research for Practice*, we noticed another, recurring situation, in particular in non-governmental organisations. It turned out that the shortage of resources, including human resources, induced the heads of these organisations to design certain tasks for students, which were not included in the cooperation agreements. Hence the proposals for voluntary involvement of student researchers, especially in areas that were jointly diagnosed as organisational problems. In most situations, these problems were solved by the students themselves, sometimes with the support of thesis advisors.

Still, other situations were created by the action research approach itself. The relatively poor recognition of action research among the cooperating organisations resulted in initial anxiety and fears of employees regarding the research process itself as well as possible changes in the organisation. Hence, initially, students and thesis advisors focused on explaining the specifics of action research, the need to engage in research, as well as dispelling the

emerging fears of members or employees of the organisation. Employees' concerns were mainly connected with the evaluation process and planned changes.

The fear of evaluation often resulted in the desire to present the organisation in the most favourable way. During our project *Research for Practice*, there were also situations in which employees of the organisation were reluctant to host students, which was manifested in particular in the reluctance to provide information about the organisation. Perhaps this was due to a lack of knowledge about the role of the student, or also the belief that the researcher – and in particular the student – is not able to actually help the organisation. This attitude of employees, in turn, induces a passive attitude in students.

Another barrier in conducting research also resulted from the attitude of employees that the student is not able to recognise the specifics of the organisation's functioning well, and therefore will not prepare real proposals for changes. Of course, there is a risk that the researcher will misunderstand something, formulating unreal problems, but in the case of properly conducted action research, this is basically impossible. However, there is a conviction that confirms the statement of one of the employees participating in the project *Research for Practice* that "symmetrical partnership between the employees of the organisation and their practice and students detached from the real restrictions in which the organisation works and operates is barely attainable" (Organisation employee 2). This approach often corresponds to the attitude of employees of the organisation to treat students as incompetent persons. It is not easy to argue with such conviction because of course, it depends very much on the individual case. This is evidenced by, for example, opinions completely extreme and different from those quoted above, which also appeared as part of our project.

Our project experience shows that the term we created – "mentor" – for employees of organisations directly cooperating with students has certainly been missed. As one student has rightly pointed out, "the term «mentor» is quite unfortunate. because due to its connotations, it can affect the relationship between us as researchers and the institution – putting us in a worse position" (Student 3).

Action research does not have anything in common with the approach in which "initiative is understood as an attempt to lead a researcher and impose topics" (Thesis advisor 3). A big risk in conducting research is imposing on the student what the problems in the organisation are that should be addressed or the solutions themselves. On the other hand, the examples cited in the next chapter show that it is worth it for the organisation to first talk about the problems it notices and which, for various reasons, cannot be solved at the moment (e.g., housing problems), also so that the researcher does not waste time needlessly exploring such difficulties.

When employees of the organisation sweep the problem under the carpet or avoid conversations about difficulties, it is a big barrier. Diagnosing problems in

the organisation alone is not enough. It is important to explore the problem, find out its causes, and this is only possible if the management and employees of the organisation diagnose that such a problem exists and will seek to change this state. If at the beginning the organisation denies that the problem exists, then a change in the organisation is not possible either. Research can improve the situation in an organisation, but only if the tested groups are interested in change and strongly involved in implementing a recovery plan.

It should also be noted that not all organisational problems can be solved by using action research and collaborating on a limited-time project with students. In particular, this applies to problems that are systemic and very complex. A strong polarisation of opinions on the proposed corrective ideas will also constitute a risk of not achieving research success and the implementation of solutions.

The weakness of the research process is certainly the fact that participation in the project is an additional obligation for employees of the organisation at work. In particular, when the person directly cooperating with the researcher helps in setting milestones and in contacts with other employees, e.g., in order to encourage them to participate in the project. Another difficulty is that it is not easy to determine in advance how much time an employee will take to work on a project. The participation of other people is also necessary because the researcher should obtain heterogeneous, multilateral information and opinions about the organisation studied in order to develop useful recommendations. However, the implementation of a recovery plan can be the most time and effort-consuming, which everyone should also be aware of.

The other problem is the organisation's fossilised and passive system. Lack of commitment and the will to engage in dialogue are further barriers that prevent action research. It is argued in the literature that the negative effects of research and implementation may also result from people's attitudes, behaviours and emotions. For example, depending on the scope of changes, they may cause, internal personnel movements, new scope of rights and competences. And these types of activities always carry a certain risk, because they generate a variety of attitudes – from complacency to discouragement and refraining from talking about problems (Chrostowski and Jemielniak 2011).

Action research is based on the participation and cooperation of all external and internal participants. There is a certain risk that employees of the organisation recognise that their involvement may be limited to participating in discussions and arrangements, and in the event of difficulties, the researcher will help. It may also happen that the researcher treats employees of the organisation in a similar way, and instead of deepening their knowledge on a given topic, they assign many tasks to employees from the organisation. "The reason for such actions may be simple convenience and the desire to minimize the amount of work involved" (Chrostowski and Jemielniak 2011, 181).

A big barrier in conducting action research is the fact that many employees or volunteers of the organisation may not know who the researcher is and why they come to the organisation. The following are important: both providing employees with information about the nature of the research conducted by the student and the manner of doing this.

When planning the entire research process, the organisational form and size of the organisation need to be kept in mind. Due to the time-limited research process, the researcher may sometimes acquire only partial knowledge about the organisation. Especially if the organisation in which the research takes place is large and has a complicated organisational structure. Difficulties also arise when the nature of the organisation makes it impossible to observe some phenomena. An example would be organisations that employ people working remotely. In such a situation it is difficult to talk about spontaneous meetings or conversations.

Action research is carried out by purposeful cyclical processes, which include: joint research, joint planning, joint action and reflection, which are to lead to designing the next cycle. These cycles are repeated until an optimal solution is found (Coghlan and Brannick 2014). At the beginning, it is difficult to determine how much time it takes to prepare this solution. During the project *Research for Practice*, we set a deadline to diagnose and describe the problem and formulate recommendations for the organisation. It was the day of thesis defence. Our surveys and interviews show that both students and employees argued that this time was not enough. When the project was implemented, we did not impose the obligation to implement the plan before defending the thesis. This was mainly due to two facts: the fact that the organisation was responsible for implementation, and besides – depending on the problem diagnosed – it could take a long time. Since neither situation is usually under the researcher's influence, imposing such an obligation would pose a certain risk that the student will not defend their thesis within the indicated period. This resulted in the fact that in most organisations it was not possible to implement the plan in the presence of the student. This was not the rule, but some of the employees we worked with argued that the student's absence during the implementation of the plan was a weakness in the whole process. Mainly because there is a risk that the original action plan will cease to be feasible and would require modification due to the constantly changing environment. Implementation can also be long-term, and therefore the researcher is not always in the organisation at this stage. This means that in the event of a change in internal or external situation, the organisation will have to adjust the action plan itself.

References

Adelman, C. 1993. 'Kurt Lewin and the Origins of Action Research'. *Educational Action Research* 1 (1): 7–24.

Adler, P.A., and P. Adler. 1987. *Membership Roles in Field Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Agar, M.H. 1980. *The Professional Stranger*. New York: Academic Press.
Bryła, P. 2014. 'Możliwości Współpracy Polskich Uczelni Wyższych Ze Sferą Biznesu'. *Studia Edukacyjne* 31:95–112.
Chrostowski, A., and D. Jemielniak. 2008. 'Action Research w Teorii Organizacji i Zarządzania'. *Organizacja i Kierowanie* 1 (131): 41–56.
Chrostowski, A., and D. Jemielniak. 2011. *Skuteczne Doradztwo Strategiczne. Metoda Action Research w Praktyce*. Warszawa: Poltext.
Coghlan, D. 2003. 'Practitioner Research for Organizational Knowledge. Mechanistic – and Organic – Oriented Aproaches to Insider Action Research'. *Management Learning* 34 (4): 451–463.
Coghlan, D. 2019. *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
Coghlan, D., and T. Brannick. 2014. *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organisation*. London–Thousand Oaks–New Delhi: Sage Publications.
Cronholm, S., and G. Goldkuhl. 2003. 'Understanding the Practices of Action Research'. 2nd European Conference on Research Methods in Business and Management. 1–13. UK.
Drucker, P.F. 1994. *The Age of Discontuity*. New Brunswick: NI Transaction Publisher.
Gnyawali, D.R., R. Madhaven, and J. He. 2006. 'Impact of Co-Opetition on Firm Competitive Behaviour. An Empirical Examination'. *Journal of Management* 32 (4): 507–509.
Góral, A., B. Jałocha, G. Mazurkiewicz, and M. Zawadzki. 2019. *Badania w Działaniu. Książka Dla Kształcących Się w Naukach Społecznych*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
Grant, J., G. Nelson, and T. Mitchell. 2008. 'Negotiating the Challenges of Participatory Action Research: Relationships, Power, Participation, Change and Credibility'. In *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*, edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 2nd ed., 589–601. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
Gray, R.E., M. Fitch, C. Davies, and C. Philips. 2000. 'Challenges of Participatory Research: Reflection on a Study with Breast Cancer Self-Help Groups'. *Health Expectations* 3: 243–252.
Greenwood, D.J., and M. Levin. 2007. *Introduction of Action Research, Social Research for Social Change*. Thousand Oaks–London–New Delhi: Sage Publications.
Hoffmann, W., D. Lavie, J.J. Reuer, and A. Shipilov. 2018. 'The Interplay of Competition and Cooperation'. *Strategic Management Journal* 39 (S1): 3033–3052.
Hynes, G., D. Coghlan, and M. McCarron. 2012. 'Participation as a Multi-Voiced Process: Action Research in the Acute Hospital Environment'. *Action Research* 10 (3): 293–312.
Kania, J. 2006. *Komunikacja Społeczna w Zarządzaniu*. Warszawa: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna TWP.
Kostera, M. 2003. *Antropologia Organizacji. Metodologia Badań Terenowych*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
Lank, E. 2006. *Collaborative Advantage. How Organizations Win by Working Together*. New York: Palgarve Macmillan.
Le Chatelier, H., and K. Adamiecki. 1926. *Filozofia Systemu Taylora*. Warszawa: Instytut Naukowej Organizacji.

MacDonald, C. 2012. 'Understanding Participatory Action Research: A Qualitative Research Methodology Option'. *Canadian Journal of Action Research* 13 (2): 34–50.

Reason, P., and H. Bradbury. 2008. 'Introduction'. In *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*, edited by P. Reason and H. Bradbury, 1–10. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Reid, C. 2000. 'Seduction and Enlightenment in Feminist Action Research'. *Resources for Feminist Research* 29 (1/2): 169–188.

Senge, Peter M. 2012. *The Fifth Discipline. The Art & Practice of Learning Organization*. Polish edition. Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer.

Stoecker, R. 1999. 'Are Academics Irrelevant? Roles for Scholars in Participatory Research'. *American Behavioral Scientist* 42 (5): 840–854.

Witt, B. de, and R. Meyer. 2007. *Synteza Strategii*. Warszawa: PWE.

5 Case studies for the project "Research for Practice. The Use of Implementation Master's Theses Based on Action Research for the Development of Organisations"

5.1 The Cracow City Museum

5.1.1 Presentation of the organisation – organisational and legal form, area of activity

The Cracow City Museum is a local government cultural institution, which is organised by the municipality in one of the large Polish cities. The museum is entered in the State Register of Museums kept by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.

The museum systematically conducts exhibition activities, and its main task is to "take care of preserving local traditions, rituals and customs". The scope of activity also includes an educational function. Organising research and scientific expeditions is also an important activity of the museum. Equally important are artistic activities, disseminating culture as well as publishing activities.

The museum has 18 branches. It employs over 300 employees. The organisation of work is based on four main administrative pillars managed by: Deputy Programme Director, Deputy Basic Operations Director, Deputy Administrative and Technical Director and the Chief Accountant who reports to the director appointed by the organiser.

The museum's funding sources are primarily: revenues from its operations, specified-user and designated subsidies from the state budget or local government unit, as well as funds received from natural and legal persons.

5.1.2 Situation in the organisation – defined problems or needs for improvement in the organisation

A museum employee who works as a specialist in supporting management processes became the student's mentor on behalf of the organisation. Research began with observations that were conducted in two ways. First of all, thanks to the access card received from the museum employee, the student visited all departments to look at the organisation from a tourist's perspective. Usually, these observations were covert – the student did not reveal her identity as a researcher. The aim was to learn about the organisational structure, museum

DOI: 10.4324/9781003227069-6

offer, quality of service, information system in the facilities, and the age structure of visitors. Secondly, she conducted overt observations in the organisation as a student involved in research at the museum. They enabled her to deepen her knowledge about the structure of the institution, to learn about the work system of employees and to become familiar with their tasks. Coming to the institution many times, she also had the opportunity to talk to employees on various topics. Often these conversations were informal. Based on these observations, she built her image of the organisation. Importantly, the observations could only be selective in nature, due to the size of the organisation, the extensive structure and number of employees.

The research also involved the analysis of existing data, i.e., organisational strategies and other documents regulating the museum's activities. An important source of information was also data on organisations found on the Internet, social networks and local media.

Observation was time consuming and the process of reaching the research problem in its final form took up to seven months. This process took so long because the student was forced to change the practical problem twice, which was worth addressing – mainly due to the resistance of museum staff and their reluctance to implement changes in a given area. Below, the diagnosed problems in the organisation and the research problem for which the student prepared the action plan will be described.

The first practical problem recognised by the student was a very poor offer of projects addressed to the elderly. Therefore, pilot studies were conducted: observation, three qualitative interviews and many informal conversations with potential recipients of this offer. This research showed that older people were not aware that the museum had a special offer prepared for them. They did not even know that there were museum branches in their immediate surroundings. In connection with the diagnosed problem, a meeting between the student and a person working in the education department took place. The aim of the meeting was to present research results and propose initial ideas to solve the problem. However, the student's initiative met with great resistance and reluctance. The museum employee recognised the student's proposal as a critique of their actions, at the same time not wanting to cooperate.

In this situation, further exploration of the problem was recognised – by the student together with the mentor and thesis advisor – as pointless. The student therefore continued her research, taking part in events related to the life of the museum. She held talks with museum technical staff and continued talks with museum workers and project team members.

As a result of further research, another practical problem was diagnosed. From the observation of the student, as well as individual, informal conversations with employees, it appeared that there were communication difficulties among employees implementing individual projects in the museum. The mentor in the organisation also confirmed the accuracy of the student's observations, encouraging her to do more detailed research. Wanting to look at the communication process in the organisation's

projects and preserve the reliability of the study, the student, in consultation with the mentor, selected one project from the several dozen implemented at the Museum. The choice of project was also dictated by the time limitations of the research process. The selected project had to last no more than a year, so that during the timely planned research it was possible to observe the whole project implementation, that is from the moment of planning, through implementation, to evaluation.

So the next stage of the research was started. The student participated in meetings of the project team and conducted interviews with the employees of the institution involved in the project. To the surprise of the student and her mentor, the research did not confirm the previous observations. Nobody during official talks admitted that the problems occur, and if there are any, they are only minor ones, which are solved inside the project group. Conversations heard by the student during informal meetings and observation were insufficient research material to be able to be referred to. The student, therefore, for the second time had to give up further analysis of the problem. At this stage, it was important to support the thesis advisor, who argued that if the employees of the organisation do not notice the problem and/or do not want changes, then further research in a given area is pointless. Therefore, she motivated the student to continue observation and intensive work.

The student, conducting further research, remained on the subject of project management because she noticed that the museum is a project-oriented organisation, where a number of basic functions and activities, including strategic ones, are implemented through projects. Each of the museum's activities: events, book publishing, temporary and permanent exhibitions, construction of new buildings or renovations is treated as a project. Each exhibition is both an educational and exhibition project. Events are planned over a two-year period and exhibitions over a three-year period. During one year, about 90 projects are implemented.

In the course of the study, it was also observed that due to the museum's project orientation, project teams play an important role in the structure of the entire institution. Different persons are responsible for different projects, often carrying out many projects at the same time, while also performing their duties resulting from the functional structure of the organisation.

> *Project teams appointed by the Museum usually include technical staff, administrative staff, accounting staff, employees responsible for procedures of public procurement, marketing and publishing. This means that most departments and sections of the institution are involved in the implementation of projects, depending on its subject matter and method of implementation. […] In addition to activities resulting from their work positions, the institution's employees also become members of project teams.*
>
> *[…] there is a structure of multiple subordination, which enables employees to be subject to the functional superior and project managers at the same time. This*

> *allows the use of the knowledge of employees from various areas, which results in faster task completion.*[1]

During the analysis of the collected material, it was noticed that projects are implemented without sufficient knowledge of the research design, i.e., the level of knowledge about project management among employees varies considerably. There is a one-person unit in the museum – the project monitoring department. However, there is no project office responsible for substantive and organisational support of projects implemented in the institution, ensuring efficient circulation of information, employee improvement and development, and project knowledge management. A few years ago, a project management procedure was developed for the needs of the museum and with the support of a professional project manager. However, due to the fact that the organisation has since then been greatly expanded, the number of employees has increased significantly and the number of projects has increased, certain assumptions of the formulated document have become outdated.

The organisation has software (Limfo Lotus) for group work and document circulation. In this system, according to the project management procedure, employees place information about completed and ongoing projects. However, observations showed that the information entered there was disorderly. Employees complete data files in accordance with the applicable template, with some of the information entered being unnecessary or entered with errors. What is more, individual project teams are reluctant to use information provided in the system and do not learn from each other.

Student research shows that the museum faces several practical problems in the area of project management. Firstly, the procedure developed a few years ago does not meet current needs and requires improvement. This problem was also noticed by the museum administration, which is why – during the research process – a special team was established to develop a new system for project management in the organisation. Other difficulties include: no project office, insufficient knowledge of employees in project management, lack of coordinated activities related to gathering knowledge about already implemented projects and problems with communication between departments and sections within implemented projects. The issue of project knowledge management seemed particularly important to the student, and the employees of the organisation also recognised it as a current one. Finally, the student formulated the research problem in the form of a question that read: "How can the process of sharing project knowledge in a museum be improved?"

5.1.3 Research conducted and its results

The method of collecting, analysing and interpreting data was quantitative and qualitative.

After formulating the research problem, the student carried out observations of the project teams, without entering into the role of a participant in the project process. She also examined project and organisational documents, presented publicly on the museum's website and in the Public Information Bulletin, as well as internal ones, made available solely for the purposes of the study. These were in particular: procedures and schedules for the implementation of exhibition activities and events, programs of individual events or documents appointing project teams.

The student conducted individual interviews with employees implementing projects. If consent was given, the conversations were recorded. The student tried to obtain information on employee opinions on the idea of sharing knowledge about completed projects; she also tried to examine the degree of knowledge of tools existing in the organisation for supporting communication and knowledge sharing, and check whether the tools used are considered useful by employees.

The researcher also developed a questionnaire sent by the mentor to 100 people working on projects. The survey was designed to check which competences employees lack, what tools to share knowledge are most useful and whether there are any activities that could be improved. The student received 22 returned and completed surveys.

As a result of interviews and surveys, the student confirmed that the process of sharing project knowledge in the museum needed to be improved. The employees of the organisation claimed that they do not derive knowledge from already implemented projects. Communication runs only vertically – up. There is a lack of practices for sharing knowledge within projects and between teams. Often, people in the project team themselves do not know at what stage their colleagues are. Many people have confirmed that they informally inform each other, but they also do not know where to look for such information, whether there is a compilation of good practices. In individual cases, employees argued that they consciously do not share knowledge for fear of loss of their position in the organisation.

Museum employees most often used knowledge sharing tools such as telephone conversations, e-mails, final reports of completed projects, work in a task team and formal and informal personal contact. Workshops, trainings and document management systems were used less frequently. Interestingly, a large proportion of employees found the final reports of projects not useful enough, although they were used often. The vast majority of employees stated that to perform their tasks in the project, they had to independently search for the necessary information.

Research has shown that people implementing projects at the museum do not have sufficient knowledge in project management and often act intuitively. Employees are selected for projects due to their interests and/or knowledge in a given field of culture.

An important role in the student's research was played by the mentor who was ready to support her at every stage of the research. She met the student regularly and had frank discussions with her. She never imposed her opinion. The mentor assisted in contacts with employees of the organisation, organised meetings, also sent requests to selected people to complete the survey and provided various materials regarding projects.

5.1.4 Brief presentation of the action plan

During the co-creation of the action plan, the student repeatedly analysed the book of project implementation procedures in the museum, the organisation statute, the Museum Law so as not to formulate ideas that could not be implemented in accordance with the law.

Among the corrective ideas developed, she proposed organising employee training in project management to assist in planning and managing teamwork or in subsequent project evaluation. The solution could be cascade trainings, which consist of the fact that a dozen or so employees would be sent to external training, and then they would pass this knowledge on to others inside the organisation.

Another suggestion was to make employees aware of the importance of sharing knowledge that success in one project can translate into the success of another team. Therefore, it was proposed to create a system of good practices, i.e., a system in which project teams would share their experiences. The software (Lotus Notes) that the museum owns could be used for this. The information contained therein should be related to, for example, greatest successes and challenges as well as ways of overcoming problems. The entered data should be tagged so that the necessary information can be quickly found. Thanks to this, the search for information would also be significantly facilitated.

It was also recognised that the organisation should develop a system of motivating employees to share knowledge with other colleagues and organise team meetings to integrate and facilitate knowledge sharing.

Another recommendation was organising regular project meetings. For each project, there should be at least two meetings – the project initiating meeting and project closing meeting. To this end, it was also suggested to organise a physical space that is necessary to organise project team meetings but is missing.

The postulates also included the creation of a project management office, whose tasks would include: project documentation management, supervision of work progress, development of project management in the organisation, compilation of good practices and organisation of employee training in project management.

The recommendations were divided into short and long-term. Persons responsible for the change were identified and necessary resources were

determined. A change implementation schedule and success rates were also developed. In addition, an analysis of factors conducive to and threatening the implementation of changes was prepared.

5.1.5 Implementation results – what did the organisation achieve from the action plan?

Recommendations for the museum were prepared, but ideas were not implemented during the project. Initially, it was planned to organise a meeting at which the student would present the assumptions of the action plan to the employees. However, due to the current situation of the museum, i.e., changing the structure and name, the issue of project management was deferred.

The conversation with the mentor shows that implementation was a challenge, also because in such a large, multi-department organisation, making changes is a long-term process. Characteristic for this institution is that the changes are introduced rigidly, by means of a formal order, with a set deadline for implementation/validity. In the organisation, attempts are made to introduce changes in a slightly different way, less prescriptive, by developing books of good practice in various areas, and ideas developed in the course of research will probably be introduced in the same way. Suggestions on how to share knowledge will be presented to employees as a suggestion that they can use.

5.1.6 Evaluation of the research and implementation process

When assessing the entire research process, the attitude of employees and distrust of some people towards the student were crucial. Consequently, it was not possible to explore the noted practical problems, i.e., the lack of an offer addressed to the elderly and communication difficulties in the project teams. It seems that some of the museum employees did not understand the student's role in the organisation, and they were worried about their own position in the organisation. Since the unwillingness to cooperate and resistance to change is a big barrier in conducting action research, eventually other topics that were equally important and perceived by museum staff as an organisational problem had to be addressed.

Due to significant barriers in the initial phase, the preliminary research took a lot of time. The student also devoted a lot of attention to explaining her role in the organisation. The barrier was also suggesting problems that could be solved, as well as the assumption that the ideas would be implemented by the student herself. Undoubtedly, this attitude resulted from misunderstanding what action research is.

Ultimately, the practical problem, which was delved deeper, was accepted by the organisation's employees. However, there is a risk that the plan will not be fully implemented.

5.2 Association "The Małopolska Tourist Organization"

5.2.1 Presentation of the organisation – organisational and legal form, area of activity

The association "The Małopolska Tourist Organization" was founded in 2001 and has its headquarters in one of the large Polish cities. It operates in accordance with the Association Law Act (Polish Journal of Laws 1989 No. 20, item 104, as amended) and the Polish Tourist Organisation Act (Polish Journal of Laws 1999 No. 62, item 689, as amended). Its main goals are in particular: creating and promoting an attractive image of the region in domestic and foreign tourist markets, supporting the development of tourism in accordance with the region's development strategy, integration of tourist environments, managing the regional tourist information system and providing information on the region's tourist offer, creating conditions for the creation of, development and promotion of tourism products, organisation and coordination of activities in the field of planning and implementing tourist events, striving to provide high-quality tourism products as well as initiating, providing opinions and supporting plans for the development and modernisation of tourism infrastructure (Organisation Statute).

Ordinary members of the Association, acting through their representatives, are primarily communes, also communes with district rights, districts, provinces, associations operating in the field of tourism, natural persons, organisations of entrepreneurs in the field of tourism, including economic and professional self-governing bodies and other legal persons.

The authoritative power, as in all associations, is exercised by the general meeting of members, the management board and the audit committee. According to the statute, there is a 15-member management board in the organisation, headed by the president (together with the vice president, secretary and treasurer), while the office is managed by the director. The association employs a total of 20 employees. The association's assets come from membership fees (the district government pays the highest one), revenues from business operations as well as public subsidies and private donations. The membership fee and entry fee are revalued annually.

Among the association's activities, one of the most important is managing the cultural trail, commissioned by the district self-government. The trail consists of 255 historic buildings, such as churches, manors and open-air museums. Several of these sites have the distinction of being included in the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List. In the period from June to September, some of the sites on the trail are open to visitors, and the guides employed by the Association show tourists around free of charge. UNESCO sites are open to visitors throughout the entire calendar year.

5.2.2 Situation in the organisation – defined problems or needs for improvement in the organisation

The student's mentor under the project was a person working in the association as a specialist for the district tourist information system. The first meeting of the student with the mentor in the organisation involved the exchange of information on the student's interests and experience as well as the needs of the organisation. The student indicated that she was interested in the subject of communication and promotion and, more broadly, in the field of heritage management. She also had experience in cooperation with people with hearing disabilities, and also knew sign language. Especially these skills aroused interest on the part of the association representative, who pointed out that the organisation from the beginning of the existence of the cultural trail, which it operates, had the problem of adapting the facilities to the needs of people with disabilities. She also drew attention to the insufficient human and financial resources of the association, which made it impossible to gradually adapt the trail facilities to the needs of this social group.

From the point of view of the student's research work in the organisation, it was important to introduce the association's employees to the principles of action research, the method of conduct, the role of the student researcher and the expected results of the research. The student spent a lot of time explaining the specifics of action research.

The main research method was observation and analysis of existing data, including the association's statute and other documents regulating the organisation's work. At this stage, the student identified areas of improvement in the association in the field of communication and work organisation. She also attempted to search for a practical problem based on information obtained outside the organisation. She pointed out the relatively poor recognition of the organisation in the environment While its products and activities were better, including the cultural trail, they were rarely associated with the association. From conversations with people with hearing disabilities, she concluded that their needs are poorly recognised and understood in the trail sites.

After initial research, the mentor and student decided that the process of working out a practical problem together would be closely related to the organisation of the cultural trail. The mentor organised a joint trip to one of the sites on the trail, during which the student had the opportunity not only to visit the site but also to talk to the guide about his work. The student also analysed publicly available documents regarding the trail.

During the preliminary analysis, the student drew attention to several practical issues regarding the cultural trail managed by the association. First, it identified instability in the area of funds raised for the organisation and promotion of the trail. The amount of subsidies awarded is determined every year and depends on many factors, and obtaining funds from other

sources is not always possible. Another problem is the rotation of guides in trail facilities, which are employed only on temporary contracts. Lack of job security in subsequent years often results in resignation from the position. Only UNESCO site guides are in a favourable position because they are employed on full-time contracts for an indefinite time.

Second, the student drew attention to the difficult communication of the association with the certain owners of the sites, which are usually municipalities or parishes, as well as the large dispersion of the sites and the considerable distance between the association's headquarters at individual points on the trail. This, in turn, means that monitoring the work of guides (including checking the quality of their services), as well as ad hoc support, is not always possible. Thus, the responsibility for the services provided as part of the trail is blurred.

The student also recognised difficulties in adapting the trail to the needs of people with disabilities. Some of the facilities cannot be adapted to the needs of people with mobility impairment due to the historic nature of the facilities and the inability to make the necessary changes in architecture. The association attempted to adapt the facilities to the needs of people with hearing and visual disabilities. Adequate financial resources were even obtained for this purpose, but the student did not manage to find out the reasons for the failure to implement these projects.

As a result of the preliminary analysis, the student, in consultation with the organisation's employees, finally formulated a research problem in her work, relating to the barriers and restrictions on access to cultural facilities for people with hearing disabilities. Then the student started the actual research and attempted to develop an action plan.

5.2.3 Research conducted and its results

As part of her work, the student carried out qualitative research, mainly participatory observations (during visits to trail sites), analysis of internet discussion boards and websites dedicated to cultural trails, and non-standardised interviews with:

- employees of the organisation (Association Director, Artistic Director of the event organised on the cultural trail, Promotion Coordinator)
- guides within the cultural trail (in particular with those who work for sites adapted to the needs of those with hearing loss or hearing disabilities, as well as for the sites which were not adapted to such needs)
- people with hearing impairments who have visited the trail

Their goal was to identify restrictions on the organisation and sites of the cultural trail in creating access to people with disabilities, as well as to recognise the needs of this social group to be able to benefit from the touristic and cultural values of the trail.

Studies have shown that the association lacks sufficient experience in cooperation with people with hearing disabilities, as well as solutions that increase their access to cultural trail sites. The situation on the trail was also not favourable in the opinion of the respondents: basically, they pointed out the lack of accessibility to the cultural heritage of this social group, emphasised the lack of tolerance towards people with hearing disabilities among the guides, prevalent stereotypes about them as well as a lack of knowledge about their needs.

5.2.4 Brief presentation of the action plan

The goal of the action plan being developed was to propose solutions that would make it easier for people with hearing disabilities to visit the trail sites. The first idea was to create an application that would be a kind of portable guide, containing films with a translation into Polish Sign Language on the architecture of the sites available on the trail. However, this idea would require funds and high employee involvement in obtaining them. There were also technical obstacles, such as the age of the sites, the inability to modernise them (due to legal restrictions on the conservation of monuments) and the fact that the facilities are often located in hard-to-reach places without access to the Internet. Therefore, this idea was rejected.

There was also a proposal to conduct sign language courses for guides. This solution, however, turned out to be impossible to implement mainly due to the large number of sites and too frequent rotation of people working on the trail and the high costs of such training.

Finally, it was decided to develop a handbook for trail guides concerning contact with people with hearing disabilities. It was based on the belief in the need for education of people associated with the trail in terms of the needs of people with hearing impairments, and increasing knowledge should improve the quality of their service. The idea was positively evaluated in the organisation because it was tailored to the needs of the association. Preparation of the handbook was twofold: the student developed its contents, and the mentor – because of her skills – its graphic side. In addition, the content was consulted with people with hearing disabilities who repeatedly submitted comments, until the text was fully accepted by them. A jointly prepared handbook was presented to the organisation, which also proposed some changes.

The handbook is prepared in a very accessible and interesting form. It describes the proper conduct of guides towards people with hearing impairment. In addition, the student described the specific needs of people with hearing disabilities, while refuting stereotypes about them. The handbook also includes excerpts from the statements of people who took part in its research.

The student also proposed that the association establish cooperation with other non-governmental organisations, supporting people with hearing

impairments, in order to jointly develop, e.g., materials popularising knowledge about sites on the trail, and at the same time adapted to the needs of people with hearing loss. She also noted that such cooperation would only make sense if the guides were prepared for a specific audience.

5.2.5 Implementation results – what did the organisation achieve from the action plan?

The presentation of the handbook was planned during the annual meeting with guides, opening the new tourist season. Originally, during this meeting, the student was to present its content and conduct training for participants covering supporting people with hearing disabilities on the trail. It would be an unusual meeting of the association with guides, which usually relate to only organisational topics, such as: *dress code*, badges, etc. However, topics related to tourists' disabilities had never been raised. Ultimately, the idea could not be implemented, because, exceptionally, the meeting was to take place later than originally planned. The association, however, intends to prepare a paper version of the handbook so that it can be distributed to guides during the meeting, as well as disseminated in future years.

5.2.6 Evaluation of the research and implementation process

The difficulty that appeared at the beginning of the research process was the need for mutual learning of action research – both the student and the employees of the organisation used this research strategy for the first time. The student's arrival and conducting research in the Association were also new, at the same time, the student's interests aligned with the needs of the organisation.

The organisation's mentor emphasised that participation in the project was extremely beneficial for the organisation, because the guides gained new knowledge, thanks to which they would be better prepared to work with tourists, and improving the quality of tourist service is one of the association's goals.

The representative of the organisation assessed cooperation with the student well, emphasising her commitment and independence. At the same time, turning to future cooperation, she emphasised the need to better inform employees of the Association about the conducted research and the need for the entire team to be in agreement with the research. In her opinion, cooperation of employees and members of the organisation is required in projects of this type.

According to the mentor, it would be a great help if the student had been on an internship or apprenticeship in this organisation before the start of the project. Such activity would allow the student to additionally learn about the tasks and nature of the association's work, and would give employees

the opportunity to get to know the student better. In addition, they would have time to deepen the identification of practical problems.

5.3 The Karol Szymanowski Philharmonic in Cracow

5.3.1 Presentation of the organisation – organisational and legal form, area of activity

The Karol Szymanowski Philharmonic in Cracow is a public cultural institution entered in the register of cultural institutions kept by one of the Polish provinces. In accordance with the organisation's statute, its primary goal is to co-create and disseminate musical culture in conjunction with the artistic work of the symphony orchestra, choir, boys' choir, chamber ensembles and individual musicians.

The Philharmonic employs a total of 218 full-time employees, including orchestra and choir musicians. The organisation of work is based on three administrative pillars managed by: the Artistic Director, the Deputy Director and the Chief Accountant who report to the General Director, appointed by the organiser. The General Director is also the direct supervisor of the Legal Adviser, Human Resources Department, Music Education Department and Administration Office. The Deputy Director coordinates, among others, the work of the Administrative and Economic Department and the Promotion Department.

The main sources of the organisation's revenues are funds obtained from the organiser's core activities, specified subsidies and ear-marked subsidies, operating and financial revenues as well as windfall profits.

5.3.2 Situation in the organisation – defined problems or needs for improvement in the organisation

The mentor who was working at the Philharmonic in a managerial position in the Promotion Department, told the student about the organisation's problems right at the first meeting. They considered communication difficulties of some employees with the management as the most important. He also mentioned inadequate space related to the lack of sufficient equipment, elevators and facilities for people with disabilities. At the same time, they noted that these problems were so big that they could not be solved immediately, due to constraints of time, finances and formalities. The issue of expansion, change or modification of the program offer met with the same constraints. Such changes, according to the mentor, require long-term actions and competences of practitioners educated and experienced in this field. The student, being aware of these difficulties, did not try to explore them and focused on finding other problems related to the functioning of the organisation.

Before the student defined a practical problem, she analysed the existing data, conducted observations and conducted four unstructured interviews

(with the mentor, an employee of the Education Department, PR Department and Audience Services Department). Each of the people she spoke to had a different work experience and duties, which allowed her to get to know the organisation from different perspectives. During the interviews, issues related mainly to the characteristics of the interviewee's job position, the scope of their duties, including those related to broadly understood educational service support, communication with supervisors and colleagues, difficulties in organising work, or self-assessment of satisfaction and motivation to work were discussed.

Unfortunately, the conversation with the General Director of the Philharmonic could not be conducted. However, he was informed about the research being carried out and was aware of the student's presence in the organisation and the joint creation of an implementation master's thesis based on action research.

Based on the interviews carried out and observations, the student identified several areas of improvement within the organisation. It was characteristic that the conversations echoed the difficulties the mentor had talked about, i.e., disappointing communication within the organisation. "Relationships between employees, especially with the General Director, were not positive, but the sensitive nature of the issue did not allow it to be repaired as part of action research".[2] The student also drew attention to several other practical issues, such as insufficient number of employees in relation to the tasks and duties carried out as well as technical and housing difficulties (lack of space and conditions for work). These issues, however, would require long-term actions of the entire team, which is why the student decided not to deal with them.

During the conversations and observations, there was another practical problem, which concerned the inappropriate behaviour of children during concerts organised at the concert hall for children. Coincidentally, during the research, which the student conducted, parents called the philharmonic, complaining about these inconveniences and expecting that the institution to try and solve this situation.

The preliminary findings of the student showed that the identified practical problem of inappropriate behaviour of the youngest members of the philharmonic audience is so common that it is treated as a norm by many employees of the institution, and thus imperceptible. The diagnosed problem and the intention to attempt to improve the existing situation were accepted by the organisation's employees and were an additional stimulus for urgent change.

5.3.3 Research conducted and its results

After identifying a practical problem, i.e., inappropriate behaviour of the youngest members of the philharmonic audience, the student began the research stage for a deeper analysis and with the intention of formulating

ideas for improving the existing situation. The student carried out observations, taking part in all concerts organised by the philharmonic directed towards various groups of recipients: the youngest children (0–3 years), preschool and school children. The main objective of the research observation was to learn about the organisational environment and the involvement, interest and behaviour of the recipients – young listeners and their guardians.

In addition to observation, the student tried to conduct interviews with parents and guardians. However, they were not willing to talk. The student had only one interview with the teacher guardian, the results of which were not useful for analysing the problem.

On the basis of the observations made, a noticeable feature among the concert audience was not only the failure of children and young people but also their guardians, to observe the rules of good behaviour, such as while the concert is in progress, taking photos and audio-visual recording, eating, making noise or not being formally dressed.

In addition to analysing the practical problem, the student also began to analyse the scientific problem, looking for knowledge in the available literature on the subject. The purpose of this research was to obtain data on whether the diagnosed difficulties are common and prove the wider range of the observed phenomenon. These studies were to additionally help in developing the action plan.

The student also undertook field research, looking for information whether other philharmonics in the country or similar cultural institutions struggle with this problem and whether they undertake educational activities in the field of learning good manners matching the specificity of a given place. To this end, she sent an e-mail inquiry to several leading music and cultural institutions in Poland. The information obtained allowed her to formulate the following conclusions:

- the problem of bad behaviour among children occurs in institutions of art
- cultural institutions do not undertake educational activities that may solve the problem. An example worth following was one institution – the Silesian Philharmonic, which placed a short animated film on its website directed at the audience, in which, among others, the basic principles of good behaviour and issues related to classical music were presented

Having sufficient knowledge, the student, in consultation with the mentor in the organisation, decided that when planning the implementation, she would propose educational solutions and promote appropriate behaviour in the philharmonic. The institution's mentor was very keen to implement the solution, at least in its initial phase, while the student was still present – a fact the student had to take into account when preparing the plan.

5.3.4 Brief presentation of the action plan

While working on the action plan, with the main goal of educating and promoting appropriate behaviour in the philharmonic, the study participants asked themselves: Who should the message be addressed to? What should its content be? and In what form is the message to be sent?

There were several ideas for implementing solutions. The first was to create a book for children, encouraging them to collect badges for good behaviour during each educational concert. Collecting a set number of badges would be rewarded. Although the idea was interesting, it was rightly noticed that not all concert participants attend it regularly and as part of the subscription. This would mean that not all children would have the chance to earn more badges.

The second idea – following the example of one of the institutions surveyed – was to create a short film that would present the most important principles of good behaviour in the philharmonic, to be shown before the start of educational concerts. A preliminary estimate of making such a movie by a professional was made, but due to too high costs that the organisation did not have at the moment, the idea was abandoned. It was possible to raise funds for this purpose, but this would certainly postpone the implementation of the plan. Due to these financial difficulties, preparation of the animated film with the help of only the student and employees of the organisation was also considered. However, due to the lack of sufficient knowledge and experience in this area, this idea was also abandoned.

Ultimately, the idea to solve a practical problem was to organise a competition addressed to preschool and school children, in which the youngest were to submit two-minute films presenting the principles of good behaviour in the philharmonic. On the one hand, such an event would make it easier for the philharmonic to obtain audio-visual materials promoting good manners, and on the other it would have an educational dimension.

5.3.5 Implementation results – what did the organisation achieve from the action plan?

The organisation of the competition began with the preparation of the terms and conditions. The terms and conditions were developed jointly by the student and employees of the organisation. The first version of the terms and conditions was developed by the student, based on similar documents available at the philharmonic, made available by the mentor. This version was reviewed and corrected by employees of the organisation's legal department.

The student also prepared a leaflet design, which was also modified by qualified employees of the organisation. All changes were consulted with the researcher. The only task of the philharmonic was to choose prizes.

The competition was addressed to pre-schoolers and primary school students. Two categories were planned in the competition: individual and group (class). At the time that the research was being carried out and the thesis was being prepared, the competition had not yet been concluded, and the awards were to be presented at the beginning of the next artistic season.

The most important results of the action plan are the resulting films, which will be alternately and randomly presented before each concert addressed to children. Thus, they will play an educational role, teaching how to behave in the philharmonic.

However, before the conclusion of the competition, the organisation decided to take additional measures to address the practical problem. Employees recorded an audio message presented before each concert. In the content, in addition to greeting the audience, they are asked to turn off their mobile phones, not to record the concert, not to eat meals and to observe safety rules – including not running between rows. The organisation's initiative proves, among other things, that the problem diagnosed has proved to be current, but the need for a solution is also urgent.

5.3.6 Evaluation of the research and implementation process

The research problems undertaken by the student lie on the border of the issue of good behaviour in a cultural institution and the promotion of appropriate behavioural patterns. The starting point was to understand the organisational mechanisms operating in the organisation in the broadly understood service of the youngest recipients and their guardians.

The attitude of the organisation's mentor was extremely helpful in conducting research. They quickly trusted the student by providing her, at the first interview, with a lot of valuable information. According to the student, "regular contact, willingness to help, updating information, readiness to act and involvement in research activities were motivating to work for the organisation".[3] The fact that the mentor introduced the student to the whole team and explained her role also improved the research process.

A great role in the entire research process is assigned by the student and mentor to the thesis advisor, who not only spurred constant work but also helped in crisis situations and substantively supported both during the search for the research problem and during the formulation of solutions.

A certain limitation was the researcher's initial confinement to selected topics, looking for problems only within educational activities, as was the mentor's confinement, who had expectations to look for problems in the area of marketing activities. This approach made it difficult to see other aspects of the organisation's work and life. Ultimately, it was possible to diagnose a practical problem satisfying all survey members.

While preparing the action plan, some difficulties arose due to insufficient resources in the organisation. In particular, the lack of financial resources forced the organisation to modify the recovery plan. "The proposed implementation

was approved by the philharmonic employees, for whom the organisation of the competition may be an opportunity to improve working conditions, and also falls under the organisational ethos of building high culture".[4]

The most important aspect of all research was making the organisation sensitive to good behaviour. Regardless of the results of the competition, the organisation has, on its own initiative, introduced measures to mitigate the problem identified during the research, which had remained unnoticed until now – a fact that should also be considered a positive effect of the entire research.

5.4 The Diversity Hub Foundation

5.4.1 Presentation of the organisation – organisational and legal forms, area of activity

The Diversity Hub Foundation is a non-profit Think Tank that was formally established on April 13, 2015. The original name of the organisation was "Fundacja Wiek Rozwoju" (*The Age of Development Foundation*). After a year, this name was changed to its current one. Three people founded the organisation. The organisation is represented by a two-person board (president and vice-president), and the supervisory body is the Foundation Council, which currently consists of four people. At present, the organisation employs ten people on a permanent basis including the president, vice president, strategic director, director for grant projects, director for commercial projects, and five people who undertake various organisational and supportive activities. Moreover, the Foundation cooperates with a wide group of experts from Poland and abroad, almost 50 people, who are constantly or temporarily involved in the implementation of specific projects.

The activity of the Diversity Hub has been closely related to the world of business from the very beginning. The motivation to establish the Foundation was primarily the need to open up businesses to diversity and pay attention to the need to respect each employee. The goal of the Foundation is to help build an inclusive work environment. The organisation operates in two areas. The first is non-profit, by means of, for example, consulting, conducting scientific research, promoting the idea of diversity management and other good practices, organising D&I conferences, and publishing articles on this subject through open access. The organisation also provides commercial services – training, consulting and auditing, and developing Diversity & Inclusion strategies for various institutions. The current package of services offered by the Diversity Hub Foundation is classified into several thematic categories: building a D&I culture, gender balance, disability, cultural differences, mental health and wellbeing, Diversity and Inclusion Audit, mobbing/discrimination, SLOW – a partnership program of Zona Art Foundation,[5] and ERG Centre (Employee Resource Groups).[6]

Another important aspect of the Foundation's activities is international cooperation. Diversity Hub is the initiator and creator of the European Diversity &Inclusion Network, which focuses on promoting the idea of D&I in the business and socio-cultural environment. It cooperates with organisations from the UK, Ireland, France, Spain, Austria, Malta, Greece, Romania, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Iceland on a day-to-day basis.

5.4.2 Situation in the organisation – defined problems or needs for improvement in the organisation

As a rare occurrence, the research project was carried out by two students, who co-authored the final research paper. The mentor from the Diversity Hub Foundation was the president of the organisation, i.e., the person managing and representing the Foundation.

The process of searching for the problem of the analysed organisation started even before the meeting with the mentor from the Diversity Hub. The students started their work by analysing publicly available sources of information about the organisation, i.e., the Foundation's website and social media profiles. At this preliminary stage, they identified communication barriers with the outside world. These thoughts evolved as the main topic of the researchers' conversations during the first meeting with their mentor. The research area of the communication process was not only of interest to the students but also turned out to be important for the organisation itself. Therefore, it was collectively decided that the researchers would try to identify the needs for improving the organisation in this area.

By observing the activities of the organisation and the existing communication channels used by them, as well as many conversations with the representatives and associates of the Foundation, the students tried to detail the general problem identified previously. On this occasion, too many potential target groups of the Foundation were identified. After consultations with the thesis supervisor and the mentor, it was decided to focus on one group, the most important for the Foundation, namely communication with business entities. This is the group that most of the projects and ventures undertaken by the Diversity Hub are addressed to.

As a result of the initial diagnosis, the students, in consultation with the mentor, formulated the conclusive research problem of their work, which ultimately consisted of a lack of a clear model of communication between the Foundation and business entities. Then, they started the procedure of collecting, analysing and interpreting the data and made an attempt to develop an implementation plan.

5.4.3 Research conducted and its results

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to carry out data collection, analysis and interpretation. The following research methods were selected

to achieve the set research goals: interviews, participant observation, questionnaire, analysis of the website and social media profiles (Facebook, LinkedIn) and organisational documents regarding Diversity Hub, including, among others, the offers of the organisation. In addition, the name and logotype were analysed to be important image elements. In order to explore the subject matter, the activities of other organisations with a similar profile, which carry out their mission in other countries, were also studied.

Three partially standardised in-depth interviews were conducted with the co-workers of the Diversity Hub: a psychologist/psychotherapist, a project coordinator and a member of the Foundation Board. On the basis of the interviews and personal observations, the researchers developed a survey questionnaire. The defined group of addressees of the survey comprised business entities, i.e., clients, sponsors and partners of the Foundation's activities. The final version of the survey was developed with the use of Google Form tools and was anonymous –

> the survey was divided into three main parts: basic information, evaluation, and recommendations. Multiple questions types were also used: conditional, single-choice, multiple-choice, open-ended – with short and long answers. In the evaluation section, a five-point Likert scale was used for the convenience of the respondents.[7]

The Management Board of the Diversity Hub became involved in the distribution of information about the survey via e-mail and social media. The questionnaire was sent to 102 people, and the research sample was randomly selected. Finally, 22 respondents from Poland, Russia, the USA, Switzerland and the UK took part in the survey, and their statements were comprehensive and detailed.

The research shows that the activities of the Foundation are assessed positively by the respondents, and this is influenced by, among others, professionalism, commitment, openness, expertise, offer, founders, co-operation so far, credibility, taking up "timely" topics, networking and knowledge. At the same time, the respondents, as well as the researchers themselves, drew attention to aspects worth improving in the area of communication with business partners. Especially in terms of creating content for the website and social media – updating them, their frequency or detail and enriching the content with coherent graphics. Attention was also drawn to the need to build relationships with content recipients through constant interaction.

5.4.4 Brief presentation of the action plan

The purpose of developing the implementation plan was to identify the directions of development of the Diversity Hub with regard to its

relationship with business partners, through the creation of a communication model. The formulated comments related to the communication channels of the Diversity Hub Foundation with its business partners, such as: website, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, books, business offers, media relations. Importantly, the proposed recommendations were made in consultation with the organisation on an ongoing basis and the implementation plan included only those that were within the Foundation's reach.

The students developed a desired model of communication between the Diversity Hub Foundation and its business partners by using direct communication channels (e.g., during events organised by the Foundation, training sessions, consultations and business meetings) and social media (including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube). This model presents the shape of the organisation and the channels used, assuming the changes included in the recommendations are implemented.

The main recommendation of the researchers was to expand the organisation's team, specifically by adding two positions: a social media specialist and a media relations specialist, as well as to review the duties of already existing positions, especially those responsible for contact with business partners.

Many of the recommendations that were put forward pertained to the website. These include, for example: supplementing missing hyperlinks, adding and updating some tabs, expanding descriptions and databases of texts, increasing personal recommendations, adjusting the website to the mobile version, unifying the Polish and English versions of the website. A newsletter could also be a way to maintain lasting relations with business partners.

The recommendations regarding social media included: resuming the activity of the Twitter profile and creating an Instagram profile, standardising profile names in all web-portals, conducting regular moderation on its profiles, paying more attention to the quality of published content and increasing its frequency. The researchers also recommended avoiding mixing private and business communication between members of the organisation in the comments section under the Foundation's entries. In addition, they suggested communicating on LinkedIn in two languages (Polish and English) and expanding the network of employees/co-workers and contacts.

As the first book, which was published by the Diversity Hub during the research process, met with a positive reaction from the foundation's business partners, the recommendations included the publication of a second edition of the book, combined with its intense promotion. The implementation plan also included promotional activities for other publications of the Foundation, including the introduction of a more attractive form of presenting articles or excerpts of articles published in trade magazines. Among the recommendations in the field of media relations, the

researchers also suggested developing a partnership offer and acquiring new media sponsors for the events organised by the Foundation.

Apart from the recommendations, the students identified the resources necessary to introduce changes and the competences of the people responsible for implementing the improvements. They also drew attention to possible barriers inside and outside the organisation, hindering the implementation of the recommendations, and factors conducive to the implementation of the project. Moreover, they developed a timetable of actions, identified the people responsible for the implementation of individual tasks, and also established success indicators.

5.4.5 Implementation results – what did the organisation achieve from the action plan?

The Diversity Hub Foundation is a dynamically developing organisation, which is characterised by high flexibility and openness to changes. During the project, the Foundation was trying to find its place in the market. The topic proposed by the students regarding brand recognition and awareness was contemporary and important for the Foundation. All this influenced the way the proposed solutions were implemented. Even as the project was being carried out, the organisation tried to solve the problems, that were initially noticed by the researchers, on an ongoing basis. Although the proposed recommendations were adjusted in keeping with the Foundation's capabilities, not all of them were priorities, which is why the implementation of some of the proposals was postponed.

One of the first decisions the organisation made was to terminate its cooperation with the advertising agency previously responsible for running its social media. It was also decided to hire additional people, as a result of which the Foundation grew from a four-person team to a ten-person organisation. One of the most important changes was the creation of the Department of Marketing and Communication, comprising: a manager and two people – one is responsible for the management of social media, the second is tasked with event communication campaigns for events organised by the Diversity Hub, mainly the Diversity Changemakers Conference[8]. For selected, key events, the Diversity Hub cooperates with promotion agencies.

The Foundation has also invested in a coherent visual identity, which is consistently used in all initiatives undertaken by the Diversity Hub, including external communication. In addition, based on the comments of the researchers, the website of the organisation was regularly updated, and currently work is underway on a completely new version of the website, which will see the light of day as soon as in 2021.

Many of the recommendations identified were also relevant to social media. The Diversity Hub focused on professionalisation of the message, using suitable graphics and conscious communication about the offer and

increasing reach on Facebook and LinkedIn. As suggested by the researchers, English was also introduced as an additional language of communication on LinkedIn. The Foundation knowingly abandoned the medium of Twitter, claiming that it did not work well in communicating with the organisation's community. An Instagram account was also set up, but due to a lack of resources, activities are is carried out there with the intention of expanding it in the future.

There was also a second edition of the book – in English, widely promoted and distributed on foreign markets (e.g., among European partners, USA, Malaysia and India). The representatives of the Diversity Hub Foundation emphasise that the Action Research (AR) implemented and the recommendations proposed changed the approach of employees to promotion, they were greatly professionalised, they saw great value in communication and image building, which in consequence increases sales and builds the potential of the organisation.

5.4.6 Evaluation of the research and implementation process

From the point of view of the research process, an important, and also a unique aspect, was the fact that the process was carried out by two researchers. The use of such an approach – in this particular case – proved to be beneficial. The authors gained a broader perspective on the described phenomena by confronting two – sometimes different – points of view. Two researchers mean not just twice as many problems noticed or the possibility to conduct research on a larger scale with the use of various techniques but also more ideas and recommendations for the implementation of changes.

A big challenge for the researchers turned out to be

> the dynamics of the changes in the organisation that were introduced during the research. This required a constant redefinition of the problems faced by the Diversity Hub Foundation and a constant search for new proposals for recommendations (…) Due to the rapid response of the organisation to the suggestions regarding communication channels, new areas for improvement were constantly sought.[9]

The authors also emphasised that the research process proved to be very time-consuming and demanding. The research process was helped by numerous methodological workshops conducted as part of the project and the continuous substantive support of the thesis supervisor at each stage of the process. Frequent discussions and constant contact with representatives of the organisations, who approached the project with full commitment, were of key importance. Moreover, it was not without significance that these people had experience in scientific research work, so at each stage they not only provided assistance but also shared their knowledge. What is more, they understood the need to conduct research, seeing in it an

opportunity for the development of the organisation, and importantly, also of the students themselves.

Among the challenges, the students also indicated the fact that participation in the project involved additional responsibility towards the organisation, whose representatives devote a lot of their time and also care about the final outcome. Moreover, participation in the project required combining theory with practice, which turned out to be a formidable task requiring soft skills of each party involved in the research process.

Notes

1 An excerpt from an MA thesis by unnamed authors.
2 An excerpt from an MA thesis by unnamed authors.
3 An excerpt from an MA thesis by unnamed authors.
4 An excerpt from an MA thesis by unnamed authors.
5 Official website of the organisation surveyed: https://www.diversityhub.pl/web-services, accessed: 30.08.2021
6 Official website of ERG Centre: https://ergscenter.com/, accessed: 25.10.2021
7 An excerpt from an MA thesis by unnamed authors.
8 Official website of the 2021 Diversity Changemakers Conference: https://changemakers2021.diversityhub.org/ accessed: 25.10.2021
9 An excerpt from an MA thesis by unnamed authors.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 The social mission of universities and useful research

The social third mission of the university, as we have shown earlier, although not a new concept, is becoming more and more prominent in both the higher education debate and the practice of university managers. There are generally three trends that show the attitude of universities towards the third mission. The first, let us call it entrepreneurial, is centred around the thinking that the university should focus on forms of stakeholder relations that bring tangible, quantifiable benefits, particularly in the form of additional resources. This is also reflected in the favouring of more applied, business-oriented (especially industry) activities, supporting innovators and entrepreneurs, as well as those stakeholders who contribute more efficiently and effectively to economic development. In this sense, the third mission is mainly the relation between scientific and technological development, cooperation with co-operators in the production of business innovations. The main slogans that can be used to describe this approach to the third mission are: entrepreneurial activities and academic entrepreneurship. The most important activities are commercialisation of results of research and development – i.e., spin-offs, disclosing innovations, patents and licenses.

The second trend in the approach to the third mission, let's call it reciprocal, is related to the notion of "knowledge exchange" and goes beyond thinking about academic entrepreneurship or the financial benefits the university can achieve. This approach emphasises the two-way nature of the relationship with the environment and stakeholders, the commitment to building relationships with the public sector and NGOs and the impact on civil society. The most important activities are co-management or co-governance, lifelong learning or cooperation in research and development (*academic engagement*). Comprehending the third mission by HEIs in this way is clearly more social in nature, is intertwined with the scientific and educational function and does not represent only the activities that can bring quick and measurable benefits to the university. We are rather oriented towards long-term effects and change, the gradual building of relations and socio-economic changes in the university environment.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003227069-7

A third trend that seems to be strongly emerging today is related to the call for universities to take on new roles in society in order to create a sustainable future (Cuesta-Claros et al. 2021; Berchin, de Aguiar Dutra, and Guerra 2021). We can tentatively call it sustainable. It is acknowledged that universities have the right potential to influence the transformation in sustainability, to achieve sustainable development goals, as well as having to undertake this obligation as they are complicit in the current global socio-economic and climate crisis. From this perspective, the social mission of the university means adopting and implementing Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (Cuesta-Claros et al. 2021). For some, this means fostering economic development that is described as "green"; for others, it means going far beyond this, by combining and transforming all the functions of the university to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including the proposal of a new fourth mission, called co-creation for sustainability. Its aim is to co-create socio-technological and environmental changes that contribute to sustainable development in the geographical vicinity of the university.

To give an idea of the changes in the understanding of the role of contemporary universities in relation to sustainable development, Andrea Cuesta-Claro et al. (2021), identified four university models in the literature, understood as normative conceptualisations, showing a variety of understandings of the university function. These university models are: Human Development University; Developmental University; Post-Developmental University; and Transformative University. Each of them defines the third, social mission of the university slightly differently, however in each model, the university interacts in a close way with its environment or for the benefit of its environment. Details are presented in Table 6.1.

In conclusion, three points should be noted. First, there are various forms of implementation of the third mission depending on the situation and context in which a particular university operates. They are the product of both existing values, university culture, tradition and the current needs and obligations of the university. External factors – political and social expectations, pressures and demands from governments, as well as expectations from the strongest stakeholders – also play a significant role.

Secondly, the forms of the implementing of the social mission are constantly being expanded and redefined, as well as increasingly drawn in relation to universities in the future, in relation to new potential roles for it, depending on the adopted perspectives of the socio-economic development of the world.

Thirdly, in each of the trends and the ways in which the social mission of the university can be implemented that we have identified, there is room for action research. In all the approaches – entrepreneurial, reciprocal and sustainable, research of this kind can be carried out, although its significance will vary. So, if the entrepreneurial approach is chosen for the third mission, the importance of action research will be marginal, due to its characteristics.

Table 6.1 University models in relation to sustainable development transformations and the understanding of the third mission

University models	*Characteristics of the model*	*The role of the third, social mission*
Human Development University (HDU)	• The University enables people to live a life that, on the basis of reflection, they consider worthwhile. • It is based on three interrelated concepts: capabilities, functionings and agency. • The University supports a view of development in which human well-being is the primary goal.	• A university where its three missions: education, research and community engagement (third mission) are supported by the following values: equity and diversity; well-being freedoms; participation and empowerment; sustainability.
Developmental University (DU)	• The University aims to serve society as a whole but especially the most vulnerable (a call to contribute to the creation of social justice). • The University seeks to: focus on applied knowledge that enables solutions to societal problems and contributes to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals; strive to ensure universal access to higher education; and engage society in the production and diffusion of knowledge. • The university assumes a developmental role in society.	• With regard to the three missions of the university, five modalities are recognised in the DU model, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals: education; knowledge production; public debate (referring to the role of universities as "critical friends of society"); service provision; embodiment (meaning basing university activities and policy-making on Sustainable Development Goals).
Post-Developmental University (PDU)	• The university undermines the foundations of its functioning because it maintains and perpetuates erroneous assumptions of the concept of development-as-modernisation. As a result, new structures are created so as to engage the university in various ways of knowledge creation within the post-development movement. • Two features of university activities are ecology of knowledge and deinstitutionalisation – they allow universities to better support transformations beyond Sustainable Development. • The university plays a pluralistic role by providing spaces for learning and exploring alternative understandings of well-being.	• The three typical missions of a university do not necessarily work in a university. • Education is still present, but the roles of teachers and students are not conventional. • Research is linked to the educational mission and community engagement is part of the university ethos. • Universities are open to all who want to learn and continue their education.

(*Continued*)

Table 6.1 (Continued)

University models	*Characteristics of the model*	*The role of the third, social mission*
Transformative University (TU)	• A university that criticises the notion of the third mission of the university and proposes an additional – fourth mission, called co-creation for sustainability. • The aim of the fourth mission is that by creating socio-technological and environmental transformations that implement Sustainable Development in a given geographical neighbourhood, the university can solve local problems that are specifically related to Sustainable Development. • The University assumes the role of co-creator, together with other cooperating entities, creating solutions to achieve Sustainable Development.	• The university tries to balance four different missions (education; research; technology transfer; cocreation for sustainability). • An attempt to reconcile the third and fourth missions is incorporated in the combination of technology transfer and economic development as a way of implementing the new role of the university.

Source: Own study based on: (Cuesta-Claros et al. 2021).

In the case of the reciprocal approach, the role of action research increases. However, due to the need to build stakeholder relationships and often establishing those relationships point-by-point, their role can take a long time for universities to develop. To a large extent, in the reciprocal approach, the situation of action research depends on the strategic attitude of universities towards its implementation. In contrast, in a social mission-driven approach, action research can play a key role, especially in combination with the educational mission, the values underpinning the achievement of sustainable development goals as well as the university's participation in creating new development scenarios in its local environment.

In relation to action research, it is worth presenting another perspective on its role and importance in contemporary universities. Action research is considered to be one of the best, less formalised ways of developing actionable knowledge (Beer 2011). Actionable knowledge contributes to the ability of actors to redesign the system of practice to accomplish their purposes (Mohrman and Lawler III 2011). The search for Actionable knowledge is linked to the existing and persistent gap between theory and practice (Bansal et al. 2012), as researchers are more likely to create knowledge than translate and disseminate it (Van de Ven and Johnson 2006), or not necessarily translate it effectively into the language of practice (Nutle et al. 2003). Practitioners and academics use different languages and strategies to disseminate knowledge (Bansal et al. 2012), and often scientific knowledge does not fit the context in which it is implemented (Buick et al. 2016). Linking practice and research is also fraught with contradictions and paradoxes. Pratima Bansal et al. (2012) also highlight differences in the time orientations of practitioners and researchers. Practitioners tend to work in rapid timeframes, whereas researchers need time to research and draw conclusions. The research rigour of both sides of the collaboration is also different. All this makes maintaining a reciprocal relationship sometimes challenging. And yet, relatively long ago, Kurt Lewin stated that "nothing is as practical as a good theory" (1998).

The existing gap between the world of science and the world of practice is bridged by a concept that links the need for rigorous scientific research to collaboration with the world of practice. This is *useful research* – defined as a research that is useful and advanced for both theory and practice (Mohrman and Lawler III 2011). It thrives most strongly in organisational research and management, and although it is not a leading research area, it plays an important role in improving and shaping organisations that affect the quality of life and shape societies. Useful research has several important assumptions, features and values that are worth mentioning here. First of all (Mohrman and Lawler III 2011; Latham 2011):

- it is possible to combine practice and research; it just requires the use of different research approaches and different "creation" of practice. Furthermore, it is recognised that valuable knowledge is only created in close relationships between science and practice

- bringing practitioners and researchers closer together can be mutually beneficial and contribute to achieving the goals of both parties
- researchers are citizens and members of communities, including organisations, and are responsible for development, proposing innovations and choosing research fields that will not only be practical but also make the world a better place to live in
- organisations have a fundamental impact on people's lives and should be shaped by knowledge and not just research and understanding
- organisations and their members cannot be studied as entities in a way that distances the researcher from the context and its participants
- research should use interdisciplinary approaches that are more synthesising than analytical, that are immersed in context, and that take into account the complexities and characteristics of diverse social actors

Within useful research, several important approaches can be identified as "bridges" that "bridge" this gap between science and practice and include (Mohrman and Lawler III 2011; Bansal et al. 2012; Buick et al. 2016):

- co-productions – situations in which scientists and practitioners undertake research aimed at "producing" knowledge that can be used to improve practice
- evidence-based management – which involves the detailed analysis, review and synthesis of research with a view to putting it into practice, for example in the area of organisational effectiveness or practices in the field of human resources
- engaged scholarship – scientists and practitioners study complex social problems, cooperating at all stages of the research process
- relational scholarships – i.e., the creation of communities of researchers and practitioners (also by way of new organisational forms) that are democratic, mutually beneficial, focused on their own identity, with mutually agreed-upon goals that involve solving unique research and practical problems

How can useful research contribute to the development of the social mission of the university? First and foremost, useful research is often a response to social expectations, expectations of specific stakeholders who submit proposals to universities to conduct research for/with them. They are also often a way for universities to regain their position as a place for creating useful knowledge, which had been taken over by various consortia, companies and alliances, not necessarily related to universities. Secondly, useful research as a research practice mitigates organisational barriers and often causes certain structural changes in universities, which may open them to wider cooperation with the environment. The development of useful research means the creation of new organisational structures, dedicated to cooperation with the environment or launching management

processes, which move away from traditional scientific disciplines and siloed, single-discipline understanding of science. New structures and processes generate new projects and initiatives, which are communicated differently to the surroundings, have a wider audience (e.g., stakeholders of organisations cooperating with the university), whereby the competences of employees with both scientific and practical experience are used.

The place of useful research, and action research in particular, can also be seen in the perspective of the organisational development of the university, as well as the strategic management of the university.

6.2 The place of action research in university strategic management and organisational development

Universities, similar to and perhaps even more strongly than other organisations, seek their own paths of development. University communities and authorities are hardly inclined to imitate other universities and unreservedly copy their solutions. Rather, the predominant attitude is one of deep reflection and a search for one's own original recipes for success. Action research fits perfectly into this organisational climate. Dialogue, participation and problem-solving are features of this research methodology, which meet the university tendencies outlined earlier. From the perspective of university management processes, it seems important to demonstrate the usefulness of action research for those spheres of management which determine the directions and goals of university development. These are certainly domains such as strategic management and organisational development, which are intertwined with each other, remaining in a relationship of mutual dependence.

Demonstrating the potential of action research in university management should begin by considering its role in exploring the problems of relations between universities and their stakeholders.

6.2.1 Action research and strategic relationship with stakeholders

Research related to the presence of the stakeholder theory in university management has revealed trends partly similar to other organisations, i.e., (Llonch, Casablancas-Segura, and Alarcón-del-Amo 2016): there are numerous stakeholders, both individual and organisational, in the activities of universities; stakeholder relations differ in public and private universities due to the slightly different objectives of the activity; despite differing degrees of importance of individual stakeholders depending on the university, the management's optics cannot be limited to a single dominant one. In conclusion, therefore, university managers, are obliged to develop and foster a stakeholder orientation in universities. From a management perspective this orientation is variable, a construct that needs to be recognised, measured and explained. Action research, as a

method, research-oriented on the one hand and solution-oriented on the other, can be used to:

- formalise stakeholder orientation as a concept for strategic university management
- identify the costs and benefits of stakeholder orientation for the university
- profile stakeholder orientation in terms of its expected form and type
- build and validate tools for measuring stakeholder orientation (questionnaires, measurement scales, etc.)

On the other hand, from the perspective of comparisons within the higher education sector, action research activities can be focused on examining the position of the university considering its segmentation while taking into account stakeholder orientation (Casablancas-Segura, Llonch, and Alarcón-del-Amo 2019).

Another area of application for action research can be the integration of stakeholders with the university. The main intention here is to use action research to develop intergenerational relationships. As Fidel Molina-Luque et al. (2018) write, referring to the thought of Kurt Lewin, action research provides a global framework for analysing and modifying the relations of universities and their stakeholders. This predisposition of action research comes from the fact that it uses participant observation, which facilitates the discovery of the complexity of stakeholders and their motivations. Fidel Molina-Luque et al. (2018) mention all kinds of programmes built around lifelong learning as one of the more prominent examples of integrating universities with their stakeholders. Action research has an important role to play here, by:

- co-creation of programmes addressed to graduates and seniors, promoting the social dimension of education
- positioning senior students as stakeholders of the university and ensuring that their needs and expectations are not overlooked
- stimulating cooperation of internal and external stakeholders around socially important educational undertakings

As indicated by researchers, the perennial problem of the stakeholder approach is the subject of balancing stakeholders. Universities are not exempt from this problem either. Ensuring long-term sustainable relations between internal and external stakeholders seems to be a proven and risk-free approach. This is a goal so significant that thinking in terms of balancing stakeholders should be rooted directly in important components of strategic management such as the university's mission and vision (Kuzu, Gökbel, and Güleş 2013). At the same time, balancing stakeholders in the university is not understood as a static state but, on the contrary, as dynamic relationships that support organisational development

and making changes. Projects initiated by universities in the action research format can specifically contribute to the dynamic stakeholder balance by:

- using the action-research methodology in the work of creating the vision, mission and strategy of universities
- promoting the key principles creating the paradigm of development and change in universities managed in a modern way
- promoting the presence of stakeholders in co-creating the strategic framework for university management
- promoting and ensuring stakeholder participation in the day-to-day management of universities and decision-making processes
- revealing any kind of dysfunctional mistreatment or disregard of stakeholders

Today's classic stakeholder theories refer to the obvious fact that stakeholders have needs and expectations. Stakeholders also have different "advantages" at their disposal, which may allow them to enforce these needs and expectations (we are talking about e.g., power, legitimacy and insistence of stakeholders). This kind of stakeholder pressure is also exerted on universities (Sukoco et al. 2021). The forms of stakeholder pressure can be very different. Examples include: regulatory pressure, financial pressure, academic pressure, competitive pressure, quality pressure, global pressure, reputational pressure, labour market pressure. Action research projects, from the perspective of coping with the pressure of stakeholders, may address:

- determining priorities as to the need to meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders
- identifying the university's position in relation to its stakeholders
- selecting immediate and long-term strategies for meeting stakeholder needs and expectations
- testing the university's resilience to stakeholder pressure

The real challenge in the university's activities today is to meet the demands that make up the complex landscape of its social responsibility. Stakeholders are actually the recipients and reviewers of the university's CSR activities. As Khawaja Fawad Latif (2018) argues, analysing stakeholder perceptions is the essence of measuring a university's CSR performance. The problem is important because in universities, unlike corporations, management-oriented towards achieving CSR goals is not so professionalized yet. Universities, having pursued other directives so far, are only now paying more attention to CSR, yet the actual application of this concept requires its implementation in a wide variety of activities, especially responsible management, educational programmes and research (Latif 2018). The challenges of the holistic implementation CSR in universities outline the context for the possible use of

action research. The action research approach can significantly support the introduction of CSR in universities by:

- developing responsibilities, authorisations and schedules related to the implementation of CSR tools in universities
- developing internal CSR regulations (policies, regulations, codes)
- designing training programmes for university employees focused on promoting behaviour consistent with CSR assumptions
- involving stakeholders in both CSR implementation as well as measurement of university achievements

In a globalised world, changes to seemingly fundamental organisational attributes such as identity or organisational culture are happening faster than ever before. As far as universities are concerned, there is an ongoing debate about the "optimal" model of university functioning. International rankings as well as evaluation and accreditation processes are factors that influence directions that university development takes more strongly than in the past. They compel university authorities to constantly reflect on what should be changed and in what direction. The imperative for change and continuous improvement is basically unquestionable (Patrucco, Pellizzoni, and Buganza 2017). In conditions determined by the need for continuous change, the importance of action research for supporting university management processes appears to be of overriding importance. Action research can be applied for:

- testing stakeholders' opinions on planned changes in the university's activities
- supporting the planning and implementation of organisational changes, especially communicating them to stakeholders
- reducing the risk of failure due to lack of acceptance of changes by stakeholders
- codifying newly introduced solutions, based initially on the tacit knowledge of university employees
- harmonising the approach to change across all areas of the university
- ensuring organisational learning processes at the university

6.2.2 Action research in improving strategic management and development processes

The contemporary challenges facing the strategic management of universities are exceptionally large in number. First of all, it should be noted that strategic management is by no means an inherent component of university management systems. It is regarded by some scholars as a certain management model that competes with collegial university management (Rasmussen 2015). In the world of higher education, a particularly notable

concern is that the collegial leadership model will be replaced by a hierarchy of managers, typical of the corporate world. These concerns shed light on the potential role of action research in the processes of implementing strategic management. The highly likely need to transform the university requires dialogue, involving internal actors. Action research may be of great importance in this case, for:

- explaining the nature and advantages of strategic management for the university to its employees
- developing guidelines and procedures for the strategic management of the university
- stimulating academic discussion around classic management components such as mission, vision, strategy, objectives and actions

Although strategic management is usually formalised, it should be embedded in key organisational values. These values characterise each organisation individually and, in the case of universities, are not always named, often remaining hidden as a component of organisational culture. However, the professionalisation of university management compels the formulation of core values. Růžena Lukášová et al. (2015) rightly point out that organisational values reflect the university's priorities and provide a compass for other activities. The soft, social, sometimes difficult to quantify nature of values creates a large field for action research, the role of which may relate to:

- activities aimed at the formulation and publication of key values
- initiating academic discussion on the key values
- stimulating strategic initiatives in line with the adopted organisational values

The strategic management of universities is currently faced with a number of more or less standard tasks. Some of them concern the international positioning of universities. This is a natural consequence of globalisation processes, and especially in the field of research and education when it comes to universities. Universities, like corporations, must strive to be competitive. If the aspirations of their managers are not limited to the local or regional level, the perspective of competitiveness is on a global scale.

In this context, strategic management is treated as a tool for building the global competitiveness of the university (Parakhina et al. 2017). The tasks facing action research relate specifically to such support for strategic management processes that will allow universities to face numerous global challenges, including: a turbulent international environment, sudden increases in competition from other universities, frequent changes in expectations towards the educational services market, blurring of the existing boundaries in the educational market, weaknesses in terms of academic

staff, requirements to introduce permanent innovations and a growing imbalance of goals of various university stakeholders.

There is a close relation between a university competing internationally and its need to build global trust in the university (Rosyidah, Matin, and Rosyidi 2020). In this case, action research projects can be directed towards building promotional strategies aimed at building trust.

Strategic management, due to its prominence and the set of tools used, has the potential like no other management approach to contribute to organisational change of different kinds and scope. Strategic management can even be considered as a model for change management in universities (Penbek, Zaptçioğlu, and Günerergin 2011). The specific challenges that traditionally occur when implementing change justify reaching for action research, the applications of which may include:

- supporting the conceptualisation of organisational change
- examining the existing external and internal conditions for introducing change
- looking for existing barriers to change at the university and the reasons why they exist
- looking for change leaders in the university
- communicating the essence and goals of bringing about change to the university community

In a word, action research can create an ecosystem conducive to change in the university.

Nowadays, the organisational management model that is based solely on competition is being abandoned. Cooperation is no less important. In the case of a university, building strategic cooperation with other partners is particularly important (Gattringer, Hutterer, and Strehl 2014). Action research, as a solution-oriented methodology, can be used to:

- designing networks of cooperation between university and other entities, e.g., other universities, public institutions, NGOs and industry
- building an internal organisational structure of the university including the function of strategic cooperation (specialised roles, positions, departments)
- initiating cooperation agreements with external partners

Strategic knowledge management in universities should be an integral part of strategic management. Sara Fernandez-Lopez et al. (2018) point out that effective strategic knowledge management in universities requires the harmonisation of numerous elements. Those of particular importance are the proper design of the organisation, the acquisition of human capital and the required infrastructure. The complexity and difficulties of knowledge management pose real challenges to action research, which can be used to:

- planning group problem-solving processes
- use of good organisational routines
- design and implementation of infrastructure supporting decision-making processes (including IT)
- ensuring affective information flow
- encouraging cooperation and teamwork

Along with knowledge management, positive effects can emerge in terms of building and developing intellectual capital. However, these require considerable effort. Giustina Secundo et al. (2015) provide a synthetic recipe for success in building intellectual capital. In their view, the university should measure and dynamically manage its knowledge resources. The role of action research therefore boils down to developing tools to support university managers so that the practices of building intellectual capital move to ever-higher levels of maturity.

One of the broader goals set for the strategic management of universities is to build university capacity. Such a complex challenge requires appropriate management models and tools. From the perspective of improving university capacity, action research can have considerable influence on its design. Its main task will be to lead to the development and implementation of complex and sophisticated tools, which would cope with the challenge of planning and monitoring of achievements. The balanced scorecard, for example, comes to the fore (Brui 2018).

Finally, it should be recalled that strategic management also includes the stage of evaluating the strategy, measuring performance and drawing conclusions for the future. Action research, at this final stage of strategic management, can be extremely useful for (Lawrence, Elsayed, and Keime 2019; Angiola, Bianchi, and Damato 2019):

- building tools for measuring strategy
- defining key performance indicators
- building a model for reporting strategic results

6.3 Recommendations for practical cooperation between universities and their stakeholders

As we have shown in previous chapters, cooperation with the environment is associated with virtually every organisational process of a university, both with its scientific and educational functions, but above all with its social impact or, in other words, its third mission. Thus, the ability to cooperate, which can also be called cooperative ability, is extremely important for every university. Barbara Kożuch (2011) emphasises that it is an attribute of every organisation, and the level of these abilities may vary. She notes that this ability allows goals to be achieved more effectively and economically. She also notes that individual cooperative ability and organisational cooperative ability should be differentiated.

She also introduces the concept of an organisation's co-operative advantage as a way of achieving goals more efficiently and effectively, which results from having co-operative abilities.

According to Barbara Kożuch (2011, 121–23), the attributive approach to the cooperative ability of an organisation means that the individual cooperative ability of people in the organisation, as well as the organisational processes, competences and culture constitute the ability to cooperate. On the other hand, Oliver Schilke (2007) notes five dimensions of the ability to cooperate and form alliances, considering them as abilities of a dynamic nature, and these dimensions relate mainly to enterprises. These are:

- coordination of activities within the organisation
- portfolio of cooperation/alliances
- organisational learning
- proactivity in cooperation
- adaptation of alliances and different forms of cooperation

In the case of universities, the ability to cooperate means, above all, the ability to establish relations with various organisations in the environment and having a positive attitude towards cooperation, which stems from the conviction that it is easier to achieve goals by establishing relations with other organisations, including those, that do not conduct scientific and educational activities. This widespread conviction may result not so much from legal requirements and strategic solutions of individual universities (although, of course, strategic plans may also include provisions on the indispensability of cooperation), but is largely based on the organisational culture shaped with inbuilt readiness for cooperation. The following components, skills, characteristics of HEI can be distinguished, which, when combined, create the synergistic property of the organisation, which we call the ability to cooperate:

- missions and organisational goals complementary with the environment
- implementation of key processes in the organisation, taking into account the processes of cooperation, depending on whether the cooperation relates to the key areas of activity of the university or less important ones
- identity and image of the organisation
- negotiation skills
- ways of communicating in the HEI
- ability to shape organisational structures adapted to cooperation with other organisations (flexible, facilitating decision-making processes)
- individual cooperative abilities of university employees
- cooperative abilities of the members of the highest authorities of the university, as well as their attitudes towards cooperation

The culture of cooperation existing in a given community may be important for the shaping of cooperative abilities of universities. It should be understood as a set of moulded behaviours and their results, which are permanent, shared in a given community and transmitted among its members. These are not only institutions, values or well-developed courses of action but also attitudes, customs, rituals and language. Universities with a high culture of cooperation have, in a way, a certain level of cooperativeness built into their system of functioning, as other behaviours are not accepted by the organisational community, as being contrary to its culture.

This raises the question of how universities can strengthen their cooperative abilities or use them to cooperate with the environment? And we are not talking here about greater commercialisation of research and receiving additional income, nor about relatively well-recognised cooperation with business. Rather, we want to focus on how to strengthen the social mission of the university, its impact on the life of the community or the functioning of other organisations, especially public institutions and NGOs. Based on our experience, we would like to identify the ten most important recommendations for university managers, as well as indicate important areas for development or improvement of cooperation processes using action research.

1 The assumptions of the social impact of the university should be formally written into the mission and organisational strategy, especially with regard to undertaking useful research. The issues of the social impact of research, supporting stakeholders, in particular civil society and NGOs or public organisations, should be directly entered into the strategic documents of the university. This includes, for example, provisions in the area of co-creation and participation in local or regional public policies, providing advice and expertise in developing them in such a way as to ensure social or economic development of the environment, local communities or larger regional communities. Strategic provisions of the HEI should take into account an openness to conducting action research, changing the reality of stakeholders. Of course, the choice of areas and ways of implementing the social mission may be selected in various ways, in connection with the university's identity, tradition and custom of activity in this area or long experience. We propose useful research or more specifically action research, but other approaches can also be considered.
2 It is worth considering inviting social partners to university councils. Usually, there are prominent business figures on the councils, who reinforce the business message to the environment of modern universities. Meanwhile, the participation of representatives of civil society can be an excellent way of showing the university's openness to society and its structures, as well as its social roots.
3 It is important to communicate the university's mission and strategic goals to its stakeholders and the environment. Getting the message

across about social activism is extremely important as it can set in motion certain stakeholder expectations and identify potential partners that are often unaware of the university's availability in this area. Our research has shown that for many NGOs, cooperation with the university is prestigious, sometimes perceived as rare and inaccessible, so our invitation to cooperate was treated as an extraordinary distinction. Hence, in order to show greater openness of the university to its stakeholders, it is worth developing various communication channels, allowing for a greater perception of the university as a partner and a supporter of various organisational and social processes in the environment.

4 The university should be a facilitator and an active participant in various stakeholder networks: local or regional coalitions, groups, forums and platforms of cooperation. And this does not mean links with other universities, but those that relate to different areas of socio-economic life. These can be city advisory bodies, regional strategic groups or industry groups, strategic forums or consultation groups, where university representatives can share knowledge, participate in decision-making processes, consult on solutions important for the life of entire communities or society.

5 The university should create organisational conditions for freeing up employees in order to facilitate activity related to cooperation of academic teachers with stakeholders, activity within the social mission of the university or conducting various social activities outside its walls. It is not only about setting up specially dedicated organisational units where employees interested in cooperation will be able to conduct research using the action research approach. It is also about creating time which can be devoted to cooperation, relieving administrative duties or reducing the often significant teaching load. In other words, increasing engagement in collaboration with the environment should not be based on increasing the employee duties, but on balancing their activities. This postulate may be extremely difficult to achieve for public universities, which are often forced to look for additional sources of funding due to insufficient public financing of universities.

6 Cooperation of the university using action research, as an area of the university's mission and strategic goals, should be implemented in practice in such a way so as to take into account not only the needs of the stakeholders in the environment but also the scientific needs of employees who carry out their research within the framework of academic freedom. Hence the need to create a free space for scientific work of both scientists and organisations cooperating with them, as well as for the implementation of jointly agreed projects or undertakings, tailored to the expectations of both sides of the cooperation. In action research, cooperation can be organised at various ranks and organisational levels of the university, nevertheless, most often it concerns relatively small-scale

research. Hence university action research programmes may be prepared for the entire academic community, but in practice they will work well and make sense in small research groups, departments or chairs. Action research with stakeholders should be a free, flexible cooperation, for which organisational conditions should be created, and not bound by often rigid provisions of formal cooperation.

7 The university should collect and gather experiences of both cooperation with stakeholders as well as good practices in conducting action research with partners from the environment. In other words, this is the area where the university's absorptive abilities should be developed, i.e., learning, broadening knowledge and experience. Absorptive abilities in the university in terms of cooperation with the environment can lead to the creation of specific intellectual capital related to cooperation, conditioned by the association of the organisation with its stakeholders. In conjunction with the development of absorptive abilities in the field of interaction with the environment, the diffusion of university experience, i.e., desorptive capacities, should be consciously developed. And it is not just about the ability to transfer technology to other organisations (Lichtenthaler and Lichtenthaler 2010, 157–59). In the case of a university oriented towards cooperation with the environment, the ability to diffuse will mean identifying opportunities to transfer ideas or perfected ways of doing things to its partners and supporting the organisation receiving and absorbing the idea. These may be solutions for carrying out social change, devising ways to effectively solve problems in the local community, implementing ways to deliver a social service.

8 There is a need for constant monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation undertaken with stakeholders, its quality and the level of commitment on the part of the university. There is a need to constantly question whether the cooperation undertaken is justified, relevant, effective and useful, both for society as well as stakeholders.

9 Cooperation with the environment should be an element of the educational function of the university. In other words, the social mission should be intertwined with the educational mission, especially in the area of developing educational programs in close and effective cooperation with partners who are the real participants in the processes of educating students. This mainly applies to curricula in social studies. Joint implementation of university curricula means not only making them practical (although in the case of many professional universities, it may be one of the goals) but rather shaping appropriate attitudes of students, teaching them to understand the modern world, including the world of non-governmental organisations, and the logic of operation of public institutions or finally pooling theoretical and practical knowledge imparted to students.

10 The university, through its transparent organisational processes, should gradually become a leader of certain social and organisational changes spreading out to the environment. This may be particularly difficult, due to the usually complex organisational processes and structures. Nevertheless, we are convinced that despite the turbulent transformations of higher education in the last thirty years, the role of the university and its social mission to influence the progress of the world should be preserved. The university as a community of scholars makes sense when it "operationalizes" and transmits its values, such as truth, responsibility, benevolence, justice, integrity, tolerance, loyalty, to its environment.

During our research, we observed the university's cooperation with stakeholders using action research through the prism of our research group. The model of cooperation between universities and organisations in action research that we have developed is differentiated into: diagnosis, initiation, adaptation, scientific research, recommendations and implementation plan, implementation, evaluation. The first three stages relate to the conditions that help the participants to recognise the needs of the cooperation, to take the initiative to commence the cooperation and to properly adapt all participants in the cooperation. Once this is done, the next stages are: posing a practical problem and formulating a research problem, planning and implementing the scientific research, and describing the results of the obtained data. Once this is done, the next steps are to formulate conclusions, recommendations and to design an implementation plan (action plan). Once an organisation has an implementation plan, it can start the period of its application, i.e., implementation and its evaluation. This means starting the process of implementing the targeted and intended changes. While implementing the cooperation with stakeholders in this way, we recommend focusing on certain activities and processes specific to each stage.

The first stage in the process of cooperation between HEIs and public and non-governmental organisations is diagnosis. When using action research, it is necessary to conduct a fairly detailed diagnosis on both sides to identify the needs to be satisfied by the cooperation and the objectives to be achieved by both partners. In the case of universities and researchers involved, the objectives usually go beyond the specific process of collaboration and the action research carried out. They may concern a broader research context, the preparation of a grant or scientific publication, the implementation of a didactic practice or the possibility of involving students. The stage of diagnosis and identification of needs can also be used to check the actual readiness and intentions of stakeholders to engage in cooperation with the university, to mutually recognise and understand its implications, its benefits as well as its limitations.

In the next stage, i.e., the establishment of cooperation (initiation), many ways and solutions can be used from a university perspective. In the case of

the collaboration we described, we were dealing with the recruitment of organisational partners for a project using action research. Establishing cooperation involved creating a database of potential collaborators, including, specifically those who were informally connected with the university. We searched for them through individual contacts of researchers, among leaders of student internships or traineeships and also in larger scientific projects. Establishing cooperation in this way can be planned and organised in relation to possessed resources, experiences and traditions. At the same time, it is only the university that selects and invites collaborations, with regarding to its strategy or interests. Therefore, we can recommend a completely different way of initiating research jointly with stakeholders in the action research approach. It is possible, based on the existing university structures and cooperation networks, to make known the university's openness to all forms of cooperation, including those using our research method. In the light of trust in the university and its credibility, bridgeheads of cooperation are created among those entities from the environment, which previously were not perceived as cooperating entities from the university's perspective. At the same time, it is they who choose the university and thus the scope of the university's influence as well as contacts expand. This is a path that broadens the impact of the university, but may be difficult to weave into university processes. However, it can be successfully pursued with small research teams, using a variety of collaborative connectors (e.g., university people with professional ties to other surrounding organisations) or networks. The initiation phase must always include effective and multi-level communication between the university and potential collaborators as well as the sharing of knowledge about the action research approach.

The third stage of the cooperation process is adaptation, which in our project consisted in launching and "getting used to" the cooperation of researchers-educators, students, and representatives of NGOs and public institutions, who started the cooperation with the university. In the broader sense of the adaptation phase, constant communication should be borne in mind, including the need for formal and informal meetings, workshops and conferences. In the case of action research, the adaptation stage is the time to agree on the type of action research and methodology, preliminary research and discussions detailing the cooperation. From the perspective of university research and standards of research work, it is important to introduce the principles of scientific ethics at this stage, which may be a certain novelty for many stakeholders beginning their cooperation with the university. It is necessary to clearly present the position and ethical standards appropriate for research processes. Of course, it is also worth emphasising that adaptation may take different lengths of time, depending on common experiences and previous cooperation.

Stage four of the collaborative process is action research, which in our model is designed as the longest lasting part of the collaborative process. In

the case of our project, it included the following phases: identifying and formulating the research problem, conducting the research and developing the results, as well as preparing conclusions, recommendations and the implementation plan. Here, the type of action research used, its characteristics or duration remain an open question. Instead, we propose two solutions. Firstly, to use emancipatory action research, which can strengthen the implementation of the social mission of the university, enhance the closeness to real problems encountered by researchers in the environment, as well as support the development and change of research attitudes. Secondly, based on our own experience, we propose involving students and doctoral students in the research processes.

The fifth stage in our collaborative process is implementation, which means carrying out the implementation plan prepared in the research stage and introducing the planned changes into the life of the organisation. In the case of our project, the implementation stage taking place within the cooperating organisation was beyond the control of the researchers and the university. It was the organisation that decided when, how and if it would implement the prepared plan, and whether it would decide to evaluate the results of these changes. However, we believe that in most collaborative situations, the implementation of changes is an indispensable condition for the success of the cooperation, as it allows for a real exchange of knowledge. On the part of the university, we have a real opportunity to observe the effects of the research conducted, while on the part of the stakeholders there is the opportunity to observe the scientific research through to the expected results.

The last stage is the evaluation of the implemented changes in the cooperating organisations; in our project we also observed changes in the approach to research at the university. Here, we proposed several types of evaluation, i.e., ex-ante, on-going and ex-post. We recommend that each time the university cooperates with an organisation in its environment, a specific type of evaluation should be established, defining the main objectives of the research and changes to be made, and proposing indicators for their measurement. Additionally, it is worth considering conducting evaluation of the action research carried out by the university, collecting and exchanging experiences between particular research groups or organisational units.

As pointed out earlier, the collaboration of HEIs with stakeholders may also be accompanied by numerous pitfalls, barriers and hidden intentions, hence the features and conditions important for successful cooperation should be highlighted. Throughout the process, attention should be paid to and the continuity of activities that positively influence the success of the cooperation and they should be strengthened. In particular, it is worth noting and focusing on the initiative of cooperation, on (Bogacz-Wojtanowska 2013):

- taking the initiative for cooperation means appropriate selection and recognition of the partner, defining the principles, conditions and

obligations arising from the cooperation undertaken, choosing the direction of activities, mutual understanding and agreement to expressed expectations and needs. Collaboration facilitates sharing similar missions, complementing each other in action and their ways, complementarity, unleashing the potential arising from skills and knowledge that complement each other. At the same time, flexibility and negotiation skills, readiness for changes are essential: in the cooperation process, the established rules may change, the most important is the goal of cooperation

- defining and realising the purpose of cooperation, common understanding of what the success of cooperation is, determining mutual benefits, as well as identifying possible barriers and difficulties that may inhibit cooperation
- the assumption that trust, commitment and openness are the foundations of good cooperation, as well as learning pro-development behaviour from each other. Trust in a partner reduces the uncertainty associated with the risk of failure to implement the objectives of cooperation. Mutual reliability of cooperating partners refers to the partner's ability to comply with earlier agreements and takes into account predictability of behaviour, reactions, and partner's sense of reliability
- it is important to understand and be aware of your own methods of actions and organisational culture, hence the people who are helpful in overseeing cooperation are the connecting persons (so-called inter-organisational links) of both partners, who know the specifics of both organisations, understand their limitations and advantages. It is also important to be able to communicate, share information, create common tools, methods and forms of communication convenient and easy for both parties, having specific operating standards, observing organisational ethics and cooperation, taking care of the image
- cooperation can develop when it does not establish advantage for and dominance of just one of the partners. Building relationships is about balance rather than exploiting the partner's weaknesses and demonstrating strength

References

Angiola, N., P. Bianchi, and L. Damato. 2019. 'How to Improve Performance?' *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering* 8 (32): 625–629.

Bansal, P., S. Bertels, T. Ewart, T. MacConnachie, and J. O'Brien. 2012. 'Bridging the Research–Practice Gap'. *AMP* 26: 73–92. 10.5465/amp.2011.0140

Beer, M. 2011. 'Making a Difference and Contributing Useful Knowledge: Principles Derived from Life as a Scholar-Practitioner'. In *Useful Research: Advancing Theory and Practice*, edited byA.S. Mohrman and E. Lawler III, 147–168. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Berchin, I.I., A.R. de Aguiar Dutra, and J.B.S.O.A. Guerra. 2021. 'How Do Higher Education Institutions Promote Sustainable Development? A Literature Review' 29 (6): 1204–1222. 10.1002/sd.2219

Bogacz-Wojtanowska, E. 2013. *Zdolności Organizacyjne a Współdziałanie Organizacji Pozarządowych*. Monografie i Studia Instytutu Spraw Publicznych UJ. Kraków: Instytut Spraw Publicznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Brui, O. 2018. 'Implementation of Strategic Management Based on the Balanced Scorecard in a University Library'. *Library Management* 39 (8–9): 530–540.

Buick, F., D. Blackman, J. O'Flynn, M. O'Donnell, and D. West. 2016. 'Effective Practitioner–Scholar Relationships: Lessons from a Coproduction Partnership'. *Public Administration Review* 76: 35–47. 10.1111/puar.12481

Casablancas-Segura, C., J. Llonch, and M del C. Alarcón-del-Amo. 2019. 'Segmenting Public Universities Based on Their Stakeholder Orientation'. *International Journal of Educational Management* 33 (4): 614–628.

Cuesta-Claros, A., S. Malekpour, R. Raven, and T. Kestin. 2021. 'Understanding the Roles of Universities for Sustainable Development Transformations: A Framing Analysis of University Models'. *Sustainable Development*, 1–14. 10.1002/sd.2247

Fernández-López, S., D. Rodeiro-Pazos, N. Calvo, and M.J. Rodríguez-Gulías. 2018. 'The Effect of Strategic Knowledge Management on the Universities' Performance: An Empirical Approach'. *Journal of Knowledge Management* 22 (3): 567–586.

Gattringer, R., P. Hutterer, and F. Strehl. 2014. 'Network-Structured University-Industry-Collaboration: Values for the Stakeholders'. *European Journal of Innovation Management* 17 (3): 272–291.

Greenwood, D.J., and M. Levin. 1998. *Introduction of Action Research, Social Research for Social Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kożuch, B. 2011. *Skuteczne Współdziałanie Organizacji Publicznych i Pozarządowych*. Monografie i studia Instytutu Spraw Publicznych.

Kuzu, Ö.H., H. Gökbel, and H.K. Güleş. 2013. 'Developing Sustainable Relations with Internal and External Stakeholders in Universities: Vision And Mission Views'. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 103: 281–289.

Latham, G.P. 2011. 'Observations Concerning Pathways for Doing "Useful Research"'. In *Useful Research: Advancing Theory and Practice*, edited by A.S. Mohrman and E. Lawler III, 309–318. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Latif, K.F. 2018. 'The Development and Validation of Stakeholder-Based Scale for Measuring University Social Responsibility (USR)'. *Social Indicators Research* 140: 511–547.

Lawrence, R., M. Elsayed, and C. Keime. 2019. 'Evaluation of Environmental Design Strategies for University Buildings'. *Building Research and Information* 47 (8): 883–900.

Lichtenthaler, U., and E. Lichtenthaler. 2010. 'Technology Transfer across Organizational Boundaries: Absorptive Capacity and Desorptive Capacity'. *California Management Review* 53 (1): 154–170.

Llonch, J., C. Casablancas-Segura, and M.C. Alarcón-del-Amo. 2016. 'Orientación a Los Stakeholders En Las Universidades Públicas: Una Discusión Conceptual y El Desarrollo de Una Escala de Medición'. *Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC* 20 (1): 41–57.

Lukášová, R., and D. Kuchařová. 2015. 'Core Values of Czech and British Universities from the Perspective of Strategic Management and Stakeholder Theory'. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Organizational Studies* 10 (2): 33–50.

Mohrman, A.S., and E. Lawler III, eds. 2011. *Useful Research: Advancing Theory and Practice*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Molina-Luque, F., N. Casado, and I. Stončikaitė. 2018. 'University Stakeholders, Intergenerational Relationships and Lifelong Learning: A European Case Study'. *Educational Gerontology* 44 (12): 744–752.

Nutle, S., I. Walter, T. Huw, and O. Davies. 2003. 'From Knowing to Doing: A Framework for Understanding the Evidence-into-Practice Agenda'. *Evaluation* 9 (2): 125–148.

Parakhina, V., O. Godina, O. Boris, and L. Ushvitsky. 2017. 'Strategic Management in Universities as a Factor of Their Global Competitiveness'. *International Journal of Educational Management* 31 (1): 62–75.

Patrucco, A.S., E. Pellizzoni, and T. Buganza. 2017. 'The Design Process of Corporate Universities: A Stakeholder Approach'. *Journal of Workplace Learning* 29 (4): 304–318.

Penbek, Ş., D. Zaptçioğlu, and M. Günerergin. 2011. 'The Need of Effective Strategic Management during a Planned Change: An Example of Bologna Change Process from a Turkish University'. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 24: 649–662.

Rasmussen, B. 2015. 'From Collegial Organization to Strategic Management of Resources: Changes in Recruitment in a Norwegian University'. *SAGE Open* 5 (3): 1–11.

Rosyidah, N., Matin, and U. Rosyidi. 2020. 'Internationalization in Higher Education: University's Effective Promotion Strategies in Building International Trust'. *European Journal of Educational Research* 9 (1): 351–361.

Schilke, O. 2007. 'Organizational Routines as Alliance Capabilities: The Missing Link'. *Academy of Management Proceedings* 1: 1–6.

Secundo, G., S. Elena-Perez, Ž. Martinaiti, and K.H. Leitner. 2015. 'An Intellectual Capital Maturity Model (ICMM) to Improve Strategic Management in European Universities: A Dynamic Approach'. *Journal of Intellectual Capital* 16 (2): 419–442.

Sukoco, B.M., M.F. Mudzakkir, A. Ubaidi, M. Nasih, H.K. Dipojono, D. Ekowati, and B. Tjahjadi. 2021. 'Stakeholder Pressure to Obtain World-Class Status among Indonesian Universities'. *Higher Education* 82 (3): 561–581.

Van de Ven, A.H., and P.E. Johnson. 2006. 'Knowledge for Theory and Practice'. *Academy of Management Review* 31 (4): 802–821.

Summary

In most countries of the world, today's universities are in the eye of the storm when it comes to various global socio-economic processes. Regardless of their forms of ownership and resources, most of them are involved in a race, be it national or international, for grants and projects, prestigious rankings or the most talented students. Internally, the university grapples with many contradictions and processes that result from a variety of pressures, both external and internal. Increasingly, they resemble corporations or elaborate bureaucratic hierarchies. For example, dissatisfaction with employment conditions is widespread in Anglo-Saxon countries, while in Central Europe low state spending in research has been the case for years. In many countries around the world, officials are closing down areas of research and education that do not produce tangible results for the economy.

Meanwhile, in debates on the most important challenges facing the world today, the voice of university people is heard less and less. The human condition, climate change, pandemics and contemporary inequalities are more often discussed in public by writers, journalists or influencers. The voices of universities and scientists are less discernible. Their doubts, lack of categorical statements and saying that they do not know everything about social reality are perceived as weakness, ignorance or a desire to deceive the public. Universities "do not seduce" with concrete facts, but multiply questions, doubts. As one Polish philosopher wrote: "Science likes calm, altruism and time. This tardiness is paradoxically its greatest asset, because unencumbered by everyday life, it is able to create intellectual innovations that, over time, permeate into the external world, often changing it radically" (Szahaj 2018). This tardiness of the university, its detachment from the expectations of politicians or the economy makes it incomprehensible to society and it is accused of wasting money because it does not "produce anything" that can be quickly discounted.

Hence, we ask: How to deal with these phenomena? How to make universities a place for creativity and research and at the same time employee-friendly? In the same breath, how to turn them into institutions that have an impact on their environment, serve society, speak out on important issues and that are heard?

Our book proposes the use of action research as a sure tool to revitalise relationships and foster cooperation with various stakeholders, as well as to gradually (re)build the social impact and relevance of the university.

First of all, action research is done with people, not over people, and allows us to explore and change organisational and social realities for the better. In the last 50 years, they have become a way to combine theory and praxis, to emancipate and democratise knowledge, and also to co-create and share it. Thus, action research is a natural meeting ground for practitioners and researchers in social groups, organisations or local communities.

Secondly, in building relationships through action research we are not just concerned with combining theory with practice or the usefulness of research. AR initiates contacts, builds relationships, creates dialogue, makes researchers and stakeholders continually question the reality in which they find themselves.

Thirdly, action research, or more broadly useful research as a family of research approaches, is always collaborative and thus can underpin the social, third mission of a university. We believe that cooperation with stakeholders as part of the third mission of universities is now of strategic importance for their development. At the same time, for many universities, where the preeminence of research and student education has long prevailed, this cooperation is one of the major weaknesses of their management systems.

Fourthly, action research can serve to strengthen the role of stakeholders in the strategic management of the university as well as to provide support in meeting the demands that make up the complex landscape of its social responsibility.

Future research on the social impact and mission of the university, as well as its management processes, cannot just relate to the university's perspective. Research is needed on the perception of the role and impact of the university not only on business, public organisations and institutions but also on local communities, informal groups, community movements or activists. What do they need from the university, what should it be like for them?

Anyone who has ever come into contact with the university world remembers its unusual organisational climate and the unique atmosphere of seeking the undiscovered. Despite the fact that it is often a difficult organisation and increasingly resembles a corporation or a bureaucratic machine full of procedures, its impact on the world is still enormous. We hope that the reader will find a recipe for a university that is more open to the world, one that shows the paths of development or certain standards, one that dialogues with people … just the kind we need.

Reference

Szahaj, A. 2018. 'Uniwersytet Jest Po Nic, Rzeczpospolita'. https://www.rp.pl/opinie-polityczno-spoleczne/art1864731-szahaj-uniwersytet-jest-po-nic

Index

Note: *Italicized* and **bold** page numbers refer to figures and tables.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com