

OECD/IMHE REVIEWS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2008-2010

Berlin



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Lena Ulbricht

City-region and governance structure

- capital of the Federal Republic of Germany
- one of 16 states (Bundesländer)
- substantial own authority, incl. legislative power and sole responsibility for educational provision at almost all levels
- composed by 12 boroughs
- area of 892 km²
- mayor of the city serves at the same time as prime minister of the state
- Senate → regional government
- Senators → state ministers



Population and economy

- 3.4 million inhabitants (population density: 3818 inhabitants/km²)
 - ageing population
 - high unemployment and large percentage of citizens depending on welfare and transfer payments
 - substantial job cuts in the public sector since re-unification
 - attracts population
 - Berlin performs poorly compared to other major German cities like Hamburg, Frankfurt and Munich
 - breakdown of its former industrial base
 - Political aim to foster development of knowledge economy and creative industries
- ➔ Higher education and research are one of Berlin's main opportunities

Characteristics of the higher education institutions in the region

Higher education landscape in Germany

Binary system:

Universities

- research-oriented
- offer a wider range of studies

Fachhochschulen, non-university HEIs (e.g. polytechnics)

- shorter courses of study
- not allowed to grant doctoral degrees
- focused on teaching
- (less prestigious)

- compared to other OECD countries, low HE attainment rates, students are rel. old when they graduate, high drop-out rates
- HEIs of applied sciences show stronger inclination to address regional needs for knowledge and skills as well as services for local businesses - rather than universities

HEIs and research in Berlin

- ~30 HEIs:
- 4 public universities: Charité, Free University, Humboldt University, Technical University
- 7 public HEIs of applied sciences and/or social services (*Fachhochschulen*)
- public HEIs of music and fine arts and private HEIs
- ~133.000 students enrolled in HE
- rich landscape of research institutes



HEIs' engagement in regional development

Form and scope of these activities differ strongly between HEIs:

- HEIs of applied sciences show stronger inclination to address regional needs for knowledge and skills as well as services for local businesses.
- They play important role in granting access to HE to students from less advantaged SES



University of Applied Sciences



Focus of interest

Political priorities

Berlin's weaknesses:

- dire budget situation,
 - high unemployment
 - low economic growth
- ➔ Berlin needs to **profit from the city's attractiveness** due to its creative image and from its rich and broad landscape of research and HE to stimulate economic growth and fiscal recovery.



In higher education, the main goals are:

- widen access,
- reduce drop-out rates
- reduce the duration of studies
- stimulate cutting-edge research
- make curricula more attractive
- make curricula more professional and less research-oriented.

NB: If higher education is not adjusted to demographic change, the labour market will soon face serious shortcomings in skilled HR.

Why is the region participating in the OECD review?

- analyze and promote the economic and social potential of HEIs
- new incentives expected by international exchange and reviews
- Political priority : with the master plan "Knowledge creates Berlin's future" the state government is eager to tap into their economic, social, and cultural potential to foster prosperity and the well-being in the state



Main challenges in the review process and for regional development

Berlin's research and HE sector suffers from

- tough competition between HEIs
- lacking attempts to better coordinate different efforts in the best interest of regional improvement (HE, research, economy and also politics).



Potential difficulties:

- wish of research institutes (and also of HEIs) to stay independent from business and politics and to pursue their own institutional goals
- HEIs have been subject to that many evaluations that they feel tired and overburdened and may show little inclination to embark on regional issues.

Thank you for your attention!

