

5 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE HEIS TO TWENTE'S SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

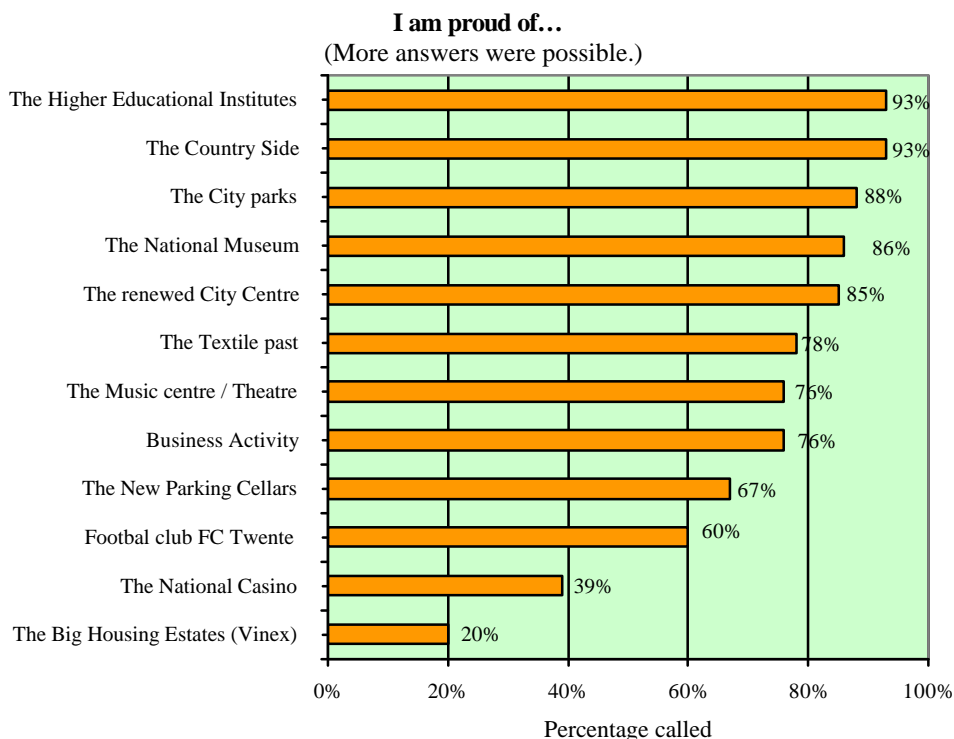
Gert-Jan Hospers

The social, cultural and environmental effects of higher education institutions on their region have been studied for a long time. Around 1611, Thomas Sagittarius, a learned man in Jena, was a pioneer in this field. According to him, universities and schools provided a higher level of regional health care provision, better marriage opportunities for girls and more piety among the population. Now, nearly four centuries later, higher education institutions still contribute to the social, cultural and environmental development of the areas in which they are located. It has to be said, however, that it is difficult to evaluate or even measure this contributory role. In turn, it is also hard to assess what the regional society would have been missing if one or more of the higher education institutions were absent in the region under study. Below, we will focus only on the direct and visible expressions of regional engagement of the higher education institutions in Twente, while keeping in mind that their indirect effects might be much larger.

5.1 The higher education institutions and their social role

A recent survey of the regional newspaper indicated that the citizens of Enschede are most proud on their HEI's and the social-cultural facilities (see figure 5.1). The higher education institutions in Twente offer a number of facilities to the regional community. This is done by sharing not only their 'physical capital' (e.g. buildings, leisure infrastructure), but also their 'human capital' (personnel, students). Especially in the social domain it is thanks to their students that the higher education institutions can provide a number of community services. In different stages of their bachelor and master courses, students carry out commissioned research on social issues in the region.

Figure 5.1 The results of an enquiry "where the citizens of Enschede are proud of".



Source: Twentsche Courant Tubantia / Newcom Research & Consultancy, 2005

5.1.1 Projects

Projects range from applied research by students in public policy on the political and social participation of citizens in Twente to medical support in hospitals by nurses under training and community work by trainees studying socio-pedagogical support.

The restructuring of *Roombeek*, Enschede's neighbourhood that was severely damaged after the fire works disaster in 2000, is a telling example of a project that benefited from the knowledge brought in by students from the regional higher education system.

Often, such expertise support takes place within the framework of professional internships and final thesis projects in municipalities, health care organizations and other public service bodies in Twente.

5.1.2 Facilitating structures

The region has some facilitating structures that try to match the educational supply and regional demand for social expertise, like the *Wetenschapswinkel* (Science Shop – WeWi) at the UT, the *Kennis Instituut Stedelijke Samenleving* (Knowledge Institute Urban Society – KISS) and the *Henk Pronk Identiteitscentrum* (Henk Pronk Identity Centre – HPIC). KISS – a partnership of Saxion, the UT, several cities and (semi)public bodies in the East of Netherlands – offers research support to parties involved in the improvement of the quality of city life in the region. For this purpose, KISS organizes conferences, provides information and supervises urban research projects. In a similar way, HPIC, which is based at Edith Stein, offers advisory services on religious and philosophical issues. Apart from that, Edith Stein and Onderwijscentrum Twente jointly offer further training for teachers in the region, such as producing educational websites and philosophy with children. It was KISS, for example, that commissioned the research on the restructuring of the Roombeek neighbourhood by asking students do write their MA-thesis on possible futures for the neighbourhood.

KISS, see appendix G 7

The expertise centre for urban society and development (*Kennis-Instituut Stedelijke Samenleving*) is an association bringing together public and private interests around specific urban issues within the province of Overijssel. It aims at the mobilisation and diffusion of expertise in urban society and development. The centre mainly focuses on the topics of social integration/ safety/regional cooperation and urban development. Its main outputs are symposia and workshops on these topics in which academics and practitioners share their know-how and experience.

All members are committed to investing in a common exchange programme of information. The centre has existed for over three years now and has twenty-three member organisations: the five major cities of the region of Twente and the province of Overijssel, the province itself, housing corporations, police, institutes for higher education (Saxion, Twente University, Windesheim) and private companies. During this time, over fifty projects (workshops, discussion groups, symposia and site tours) have been discharged.

5.1.3 Occasional support

Besides these structural facilities for expertise support, the higher education institutions in Twente provide community services on a more occasional or seasonal basis. At their campuses, both Saxion and the UT organize public debates when controversial issues in the region emerge, like changes in the administrative system of Twente, the restructuring of the *Roombeek* neighbourhood or the forthcoming closure of the regional airport. Incidentally, also the ITC with its specific geo-information expertise offers advisory services in Twente, like recently, when it provided tsunami disaster information. Next, employees of Twente's higher education institutions often figure in regional media: lecturers and researchers in social or political sciences regularly act as commentators in regional broadcasting services (*TV Oost*) and newspapers (*Twentsche Courant Tubantia* and the weekly journal *De Roskam*).

5.1.4 Seasonal services by providing expertise

In addition, the higher education institutions in Twente provide services on a seasonal basis. At Saxion, for example, students in economics and finance help elderly people in completing their tax declarations. Also the younger generation in Twente benefits from the presence of the regional knowledge infrastructure: at the annual *Twente Summer Campus* in May secondary school students

from the region can get coaching at the university to prepare themselves well for their final examinations.

5.1.5 Associate professorships and knowledge circles

Thanks to the recent introduction of *lectoraten* (lectureships) and *kenniskringen* (knowledge circles) in which lecturers and practitioners disclose professional knowledge for societal purposes this regional engagement is growing. For example, there are active knowledge circles with regional spin-

Interestingly, the Dutch government has allocated an above average number of *lectoren* (lecturers) to the higher education institutions in Twente: per 10,000 students there are 10.5 *lectoraten*, while the Dutch average is 5.8. This indicates that Saxion, Edith Stein and the AKI are considered to have a high innovation potential.

off in the field of Health Care & Welfare (Saxion), Physiotherapy & Paramedic Professions (Saxion) and E-Learning (Edith Stein). The associate professorships and the related knowledge circles have been in operation for only two years now. Therefore, it is too early to draw definitive conclusions about their effectiveness.

5.1.6 Partnerships for social services provision

Since the last few years, the higher education institutes in Twente have been actively engaged in partnerships aimed at social services provision in the region. Especially Saxion has developed initiatives in this field, like the organization of business and management games with members of local Rotary Clubs and joint projects to improve the regional labour market (see chapter 6).

5.1.7 Platform Enschede studentenstad

Finally, the City of Enschede and the local higher education institutions regularly meet in the *Platform Enschede Studentenstad* (Enschede City of Students Platform – PEST). The platform coordinates a fund that financially supports activities that promote Enschede as a vibrant place to study. The initiatives of PEST increase the quality of places for the youngsters studying in Twente. Obviously, this is also in the interest of the higher education institutions themselves.

5.2 The higher education institutions and their cultural role

The UT Campus *Drienerlo*, located between Enschede and Hengelo, and the city centre of Enschede are the main locations in Twente that show the significant cultural role of the regional higher education system. At the campus, we find the AKI, the university's Cultural Department *Vrijhof* and a large Sports Centre; in turn, the *Pakkerij*, the Saxion Campus and the Conservatoire are located in the heart of Enschede. These cultural facilities are mainly operated by bodies within the higher education institutions themselves. Still, however, there are opportunities to jointly manage and market the cultural supply for the benefit of the regional community.

5.2.1 AKI

As an art college, the AKI provides training at BA level in the practice of visual arts and design as well as an MA degree for fine art within the AKI's *Dutch Art Institute*. Apart from this student education, the AKI organizes festivals (e.g. the AKI Festival), exhibitions and courses for a broader audience. The *Hardy Foundation*, for example, which is housed at the AKI, aims to promote the functioning of art and design in society. Within the Foundation students, alumni and other experts carry out contract research for third parties, mediate between artists and clients and offer courses for artists and designers that strive to be self-employed. The *tART Foundation* ('Technology and Art') is of a more specialized nature and explores – in collaboration with the UT – the interface between art and technology by means of education, events

AKI Festival, see appendix G 2

The AKI Festival is a public festival that informs the public about and involves them with the various AKI types of art. For a whole week, AKI runs its day-to-day operation from a big tent in the centre of Enschede. AKI undergraduates are given assignments to be carried out in public in the course of the week. Parallel to this, the public are invited, without charge, to join any one of 27 different workshops - both in the tent and in other public areas, such as empty shops. Attendance at all the workshops and other activities averages over 300 persons each day.

and exhibitions in Twente. Artists also can consult tART for technical support. Last but not least, the AKI is well connected with the cultural institutes across the region: the work of its students and employees is regularly exhibited in cultural environments like *Rijksmuseum Twenthe*, *Concordia*, a number of local photo and sculpture galleries and even the green parks of Enschede (*Villa de Bank*). Apart from its role in the cultural domain, the regional role of AKI is limited though.

5.2.2 Vrijhof cultural department

The *Vrijhof Cultural Department* is the cultural heart of the UT Campus. The cultural associations in the Vrijhof, coordinated by the umbrella organization *Apollo*, initiate, organize and support cultural activities, often in cooperation with Saxion and the ITC. The cultural calendar consists of weekly and monthly cultural events (like the *Culture Burger* every Monday and the yearly *Culture Estafette*) and exhibition programmes. In addition, a number of seasonal courses and workshops are organized in the Vrijhof, varying from silk-screen printing, creative welding and designing furniture to oriental dance, theatre make-up and a capella singing. Most events and exhibitions taking place here are open to the public; for the courses and workshops, however, only students and employees of the higher education institutions (and their family members) can register. The same restriction applies for the rental of cultural facilities like training rooms for artists and musicians. The Vrijhof also provides accommodation to *Studium Generale* that organizes public lectures, debates, excursions and courses on topics of general academic and cultural interest. Obviously, it is difficult to assess what the impact of the Vrijhof Cultural Department and Studium Generale on the regional community is. The experience, however, is that with most courses and lectures special positions for students have to be reserved, because the interest from outside the university is mostly overwhelming. People read about the activities in the local newspaper and enrol. Over the last years, for example, mainly people from outside the university have participated in excursions that Studium Generale organized.

5.2.3 Sportcentrum

Next to the Vrijhof we find the *Sportcentrum* (Sports Centre) with a wide range of sporting facilities that are generally accessible for students and employees, not only from the UT, but also from the other regional higher education institutions. Those who buy a Union+Card get reductions in making use of the sports infrastructure at the campus. Special facilities in the sports centre include a dojo, an in-house and open-air swimming pool, cinder tracks and many fields for playing all kinds of ball games. The student associations in the Sports Centre, supervised by the *Sportraad* (Sports Council) play a key role in organizing the yearly *Batavierenrace*, a famous student run between the universities of Twente and Nijmegen in which also running groups from the region participate. All HEIs in Twente encourage the sporting development of their students. For those practising top sports there are adapted study programmes, while sports training and sporting days are sometimes part of the BA-degrees of normal students as well. In the regional community especially the University of Twente and Saxion help in organizing sporting events, such as the yearly FBK Games in Hengelo (athletics).

5.2.4 Student unions

In the city centre of Enschede especially the student associations and Saxion make a valuable contribution to the cultural development of the region. Student unions like Audentis, Taste, AEGEE and Alpha are housed in the *Pakkerij*, in which they organize their weekly (in)formal meetings (for members only). Although the cultural role of these clubs is not always recognized in the regional society, fact is that their members contribute to the creative and diverse climate of the cities in Twente.

This is clear especially during the Introduction Days of the higher education institutions at the end of the summer. The cities of Enschede and Hengelo are filled with prospective students, who take part in the leisure activities organized by the student unions. At Saxion's *City Campus*, students can watch cultural performances in the Harry Bannink Theatre and use a wide range of sport facilities. Regional artists can exhibit their work in the main entrance hall of the campus.

5.2.5 Conservatorium

The *Conservatorium* (Conservatoire), which is part of Saxion as well, is strongly embedded in Twente's classical and popular music scene. It closely cooperates with the *Nationale Reisopera*

(National Travelling Opera), *Orkest van het Oosten* (The Netherlands Symphony Orchestra), the *pop collective ATAK*, the *Enschedeese Muziekschool* (School of Music) and the cultural Podium Twente. The Conservatoire also houses a school where children from the region with extraordinary musical talent can take extra lessons (*Talentenklas Oost-Nederland*). The Conservatoire has an important public role as well: amateur musicians can make use of the academy's training rooms and citizens are invited to enjoy weekly lunch and examination concerts.

5.2.6 Architectural contribution

The cultural role of the regional higher education institutions is not limited to their facilities and events. The fact is that the buildings in which the institutions are housed mostly reflect original and modern architectural concepts. The UT, for example, is the only Dutch university with a campus, i.e. an extensive park-like area with a spatial separation between the functions of living, working and recreation. The campus is designed after functionalist principles and some of its buildings (e.g. Cubicus, Faculty Club and AKI building) count among Twente's best-known architectural highlights. Similarly, the ITC building and that of Saxion are known for their particular, nature-like architecture. In short, a tour through Twente's higher education landscape is an art and architectural tour at the same time.

5.3 The higher education institutions and environmental sustainability

5.3.1 Best practices to address environmental issues of concern to the regional community

All of the higher education institutions in Twente take into account the environment in carrying out their activities. Without exception, the facility departments of the institutions separate waste products and stimulate an environmentally conscious attitude among students and employees. Within its premises Edith Stein, for example, has an educational yard with special concern for the environment. In turn, the ITC building has been constructed as an energy-saving accommodation. The City Campus of Saxion – a recycled former hospital – has rooms that can be used for several functions and is strategically located near public transport facilities to discourage the use of cars. Moreover, on its building Saxion has a visible symbol reflecting environmental consciousness: that is the 'Turby', a vertical windmill to generate energy. Likewise, the green Drienerlo Campus, where the UT and the AKI are located, is designed as a low-traffic zone. Additionally, by means of attractive schemes and contracts with local bike shops, employees in the regional higher education system are stimulated to go to their work by bicycle more often. On its campus, the University of Twente has a Working Group on Development Techniques (WOT), which tries to raise ecological interest, especially when it comes to development issues. The WOT is a knowledge centre for small-scale applications of sustainable energy and hand pumps for developing countries. The WOT is run by volunteers.

5.3.2 Joint initiatives to demonstrate environmental sustainability possibilities for the region

Besides practical attention to the environment, the UT and Saxion show a theoretical interest in ecological issues. The *Centrum voor Schone Technologie en Milieubeleid* (Centre for Clean Technology and Environmental Policy – CSTM) conducts applied environmental research for third parties like (regional) companies and governments. The courses the CSTM offers are policy-oriented and focus on the governance of sustainable development, environmental quality and eco-technology. Saxion also recognized the importance of sustainability. At the end of the 1990s, Saxion started a unique study program for sustainable Energy production and marketing. Later, Saxion established special *lectoraten* (lectureships) and *kenniskringen* (knowledge circles) in Sustainable Energy Provision and Sustainable Development of the Everyday Environment. The participants in these expert groups provide expertise support to regional stakeholders and in the regional media when it comes to environmental sustainability possibilities. For the rest, there are no joint initiatives yet in the ecological domain.

5.4 Conclusion

All in all, the individual higher education institutions in Twente do make a positive contribution to the social, cultural and environmental development of the region in which they are based. Especially in the cultural domain, the UT, Saxion and the AKI offer a variety of infrastructural facilities, programmes and services, thus filling a regional gap indeed. At the same time, it must be said that the collaboration among the regional higher education institutions and with other stakeholders in the region stays behind what might be possible and feasible. Until now, there are only a few examples of joint initiative between Twente's HEIs in social, cultural and environmental development. As a matter of fact, only the Knowledge Institute Urban Society KISS, two municipal platforms (VOKT and PEST), the tART Foundation and the Vrijhof are initiatives with more than one regional knowledge institute participating.

In establishing links with other regional stakeholders for social and cultural purposes (e.g. business, local government and social partners) Saxion (the Conservatoire included) and the AKI have been the most active actors. KISS, Fast Forward, HBO Job Service are examples of such collaboration in the social domain; in the cultural field, the Conservatoire and the AKI have close societal connections. However, joint initiatives between the institutions and the regional community to demonstrate regional environmental sustainability possibilities are largely lacking. These considerations lead to a rather ambivalent SWOT analysis in terms of the social, cultural and environmental spin-off of the higher education system in the region of Twente. On the one hand, Twente's higher education system has a clear strength (i.e. a wide range of regional cultural facilities) which offers opportunities in today's society in which the 'creative class' is becoming more and more important. On the other hand, the present regional higher education system is still rather weak when it comes to social and environmental links with the regional community, which may cause threats. After all, there is a growing need for knowledge institutes to finance themselves with third-party funds coming from (regional) stakeholders and to attract students from the regional community. However, there are also opportunities: the HEIs can make use of their infrastructure (cultural infrastructure, lectureships, partnerships) to support the 'creative class' and become more deeply involved with the region. There are also possibilities for joint initiatives to demonstrate environmental consciousness in the region.

<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. wide range of regional cultural facilities to support development of the 'creative class' 2. (further) regional engagement via lectureships and knowledge circles 3. build upon successful partnerships aimed at social services provision in the region like <i>FastForward</i> and <i>HBO Job Service</i> 4. joint initiatives to demonstrate environmental sustainability possibilities for the region 	<p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. weak social and environmental links with the regional community, which may cause threats because of the growing need for knowledge institutes to finance themselves with third-party funds coming from (regional) stakeholders 2. lack of visibility of HEIs in the region, which might ultimately reduce student numbers
<p>Strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. positive contribution to the social, cultural and environmental development of the region 2. facilitating structures on social issues like <i>Wetenschapswinkel</i>, <i>Kennis Instituut Stedelijke Samenleving</i> and <i>Henk Pronk Identiteitscentrum</i> 3. offering infrastructural facilities, programmes and services in cultural domain 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. collaboration among HEIs and with other stakeholders in the region lags behind 2. only KISS, VOKT and PEST, tART Foundation and the Vrijhof are initiatives with more than one regional knowledge institute participating 3. joint initiatives between HEIs and regional community to demonstrate

4. established links of Saxion, AKI and Conservatoire with other regional stakeholders for social and cultural purposes	regional environmental sustainability possibilities are largely lacking
---	---

References

- Bakker, H. and P. Timmerman (2004), *Architecture & Art: A Walking Tour on Campus*, UT: Enschede.
- Florida, R. (2002), *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, Basic Books: New York
- Academie voor Beeldende Kunst en Vormgeving (2005), *AKI Enschede: Studiejaar 2005/2006*, AKI: Enschede
- Buursink, J. (2002), Regionale impact universiteiten overschat, *Geografie*, 11 (2), pp. 36-39
- Gemeente Enschede (2004), *Actieprogramma Hoger Opgeleiden*, Cluster Economische Zaken: Enschede
- Hogeschool Edith Stein/Onderwijscentrum Twente (2005), *Educatieve dienstverlening: Cursusaanbod 2005-2006*, HES/OCT: Hengelo
- Saxion Hogescholen (2004), *Jaarbericht 2003*, Saxion, Enschede/Deventer
- Schenke, W., R. Singeling and J. Slik (2004), Bewoners participeren bij herinrichting Roombeek, *Geografie*, 13 (3), pp. 10-14
- Universiteit Twente (2001a), *Van Landgoed tot Kenniscampus*, UT: Enschede
- Universiteit Twente (2001b), *Vademecum: Leidraad voor de Universiteit Twente*, UT: Enschede