# The challenges and benefits of involving Public Administration students in interdisciplinary Living Labs

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**Abstract:** Driven by major 21st-century forces—including new competitors, evolving political landscapes, and technological leaps like AI and social media—universities are under immense strain. Educational organizations must therefore intensify their efforts to adapt, stay competitive, and ensure students receive high-value experiences throughout their studies.

This paper explores the challenges and benefits of involving Public Administration students in interdisciplinary Living Labs ( together with Communication, Political Sciences, and Journalism students).

Challenges include navigating inter-specialization communication, managing real-world project complexities, and overcoming students' initial theoretical focus.

Benefits for students are unparalleled experiential learning, co-creation skills, and trans-disciplinary problem-solving, enhancing career readiness. For teachers, benefits lie in generating real-world research data, promoting innovative pedagogy (co-creation), and strengthening the institution's civic engagement and relevance. The model offers a critical platform to bridge theory and public sector practice.

The paper focuses on perceived and observed benefits for students , teachers and organizations that benefited from the experience and compares them with the results of a study which investigates the projections of students (future employees) and employees in the Cluj-Napoca labor market (individuals employed at corporations in fields such as ICT, finance & banking, services, and industrial production) in an effort to understand the factors that influence the employee's relationship with the organization, professional identity, satisfaction, and commitment to their workplace.