

CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTAL DIRECTIONS OF REVITALIZATION PROJECTS: POLISH EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

Nowadays revitalization is often defined as a comprehensive effort including revalorization, restoration, reconstruction, modernization and actions aimed at the revival of a building, a district or a town devastated in different aspects, also the economic and social ones. The social aspect is among the most significant ones. In other words, there is no complete revitalization without solving social problems. The presented study discusses problems related to the broadly approached revitalization projects and their main directions of development, based on the example of Polish revitalization programmes of territorial self-governmental units. The first part of the paper presents the definitional aspects of revitalization taking into account social, economic, environmental, spatial, functional, cultural and technical dimensions. Moreover, the definition, structure and purpose of a revitalization programme was characterized. Next the primary objectives and current developmental directions of revitalization in Poland were discussed based on the selected applicable revitalization programmes. Today the main directions of revitalization processes in Poland cover: the reduction of poverty and social exclusion, supporting local business, cleaner environment activities, sustainable spatial and functional development, supporting technical infrastructures, promoting culture-based socio-economic development.

Key words: socio-economic development, revitalization, revitalization programme, development policy

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Introduction

Revitalization activities result in higher living standards experienced by the local community residing in a degraded area. The quality of life should be approached, in this case, as the combination of material aspects of life and the components related to the general sense of

satisfaction from the existing life situation (e.g. feeling the prestige of the place of residence, health condition, opportunities for fulfilling professional and personal aspirations, positive relationships between people). Revitalization activities should be carried out in a comprehensive and consistent manner, both internally and externally, considering, to an appropriate extent, e.g. social consensus, the level of local identity, the process of place brand creation, unique individual values, the importance of culture sector, the potential of creative human capital. Moreover, the implementation of revitalization projects should be covered by the civic control. Such control is manifested by performing supervision over the functioning of public institutions, public trust institutions, increasing their transparency and observing the rules of good governance (Raszkowski, 2014; Raszkowski & Głuszczyk, 2015; Florida, 2014; Mellander et al., 2012).

Referring to the aforementioned analyses it can be stated that the revitalization programme, which takes the form of an official strategic document, represents the tool aimed at the implementation of revitalization activity goals. The purpose of this study is to present the predominant modern development directions, goals of revitalization projects based on the selected revitalization programmes of Polish territorial self-government units.

1 Theoretical aspects of revitalization

Revitalization can be approached as e.g. a coordinated process carried out jointly by the local authorities, local community and other actors, representing the component of development policy and aimed counteracting space degradation and crisis phenomena, stimulating development and the quality oriented changes through higher social and economic activity, improving the living environment and preserving the national heritage, along with maintaining the principles of sustainable development. The sustainable development itself, in terms of territorial units, can be defined as an effect of quality and quantity transformations processes in an economic, social and natural sphere, having assumed effective space management. In simplified terms, it results from positive changes in the level of economic and social development, which do not degrade the quality of natural environment. As a result of the occurred changes the condition of the discussed environment should continuously improve. One of the most common inaccuracies and simplifications is reducing sustainable development to environmental or ecological aspects only (Pawłowski, 2011; Blair & Carroll, 2009).

From another perspective, revitalization can be defined as the process of bringing the degraded areas out of crisis, performed in a holistic way, through integrated actions for the benefit of local community, space and economy. The aforementioned actions should remain territorially concentrated, cover the defined area or areas and be carried out by the stakeholders of revitalization based on the developed revitalization programmes. In this context such programme should be approached as long-term, interdisciplinary, integrated operational programme based on the cooperation of diverse entities in the process of their preparation, development and implementation (Ruffin, 2010; Sutton, 2010; Wang et al., 2013).

The reason underlying the discussed programme development is the observed need for bringing the degraded areas out of the crisis situations in the social and economic sphere (Mitchell, 2001), as well as in the environmental, spatial and functional and also technical one. The implementation of programme assumptions is focused on reducing the scale of crisis phenomena, thus resulting in higher living standards of the local community. In the current situation the revitalization programmes most frequently represent the natural continuation and extension of the strategic documents referring to the revitalization of territorial self-government units from previous years.

Revitalization activities assume taking optimal advantage of a particular territorial unit values and strengthening its local potential, including social and cultural aspects. Revitalization usually represents a long-term process, carried out by the stakeholders in a given area, including also local authorities, NGOs, entrepreneurs and performed in cooperation with local community.

2 Current developmental directions of revitalization in Poland

Due to the synthetic, overview nature of the study the current developmental directions of revitalization in Poland are presented based on the example of local revitalization programmes developed by the territorial self-government units of the Jelenia Góra Agglomeration. This agglomeration, located in the area of Lower Silesia region, in south-western part of the country, covers the total of 18 territorial self-government units (urban, urban-rural, rural municipalities and a city with county rights). 14 revitalization programmes were analysed, since not all agglomeration members adopted their own as at the day of conducting the analyses. It is worth emphasizing that the planned revitalization activities are to be performed within the framework of Integrated Territorial Investments of Jelenia Góra Agglomeration (ITA JGA). The Integrated Territorial

Investments themselves represent a new instrument, which was not functioning in the previous European Union budget perspective. In simplified terms, the idea of ITA is to expand integration, cohesion and complexity of undertaken activities, sustainable development of urban areas and their functional space. In this perspective cities are supposed to play the role of leaders, the engines of socio-economic growth disseminated over larger territory.

In the nationwide perspective the implementation of Integrated Territorial Investments aims at: promoting the partnership model of cooperation between different administrative units in urban functional areas; promoting the development of cooperation and integration within functional areas of the largest cities by implementing integrated initiatives comprehensively meeting the needs and responding to problems of cities and their functional areas; higher impact of cities and the functionally related areas on the shape and method of implementing actions supported in their area within the framework of cohesion policy.

Each analysed revitalization programme (tab. 1) includes a certain part devoted to the objectives of revitalization activities and the followed development directions. Specific projects or activities, taking the form of goal trees, presented in other strategic studies dedicated to territorial self-government units, are assigned to the particular goals at strategic or operational level (e.g. municipal development strategies). The identified directions resulted most frequently from the carried out social consultancies, complex socio-economic desk research covering a municipality, survey studies, indicator method based research, SWOT, PEST, problem trees analyses or carried out strategic workshops.

The standard structure of a revitalization programme covers the following parts: socio-economic diagnosis of a municipality; the diagnosis of crisis factors and phenomena; designation of degraded areas; designation of revitalization areas within the degraded areas; vision of the area status following revitalization; revitalization objectives; planned revitalization effects; the list of basic revitalization projects; the list of other (complementary) revitalization projects; mechanisms for ensuring complementarity between the specific projects in revitalization areas; social participation in the process of revitalization; combining programmes with other strategic and planning documents; the system of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Tab. 1: Developmental directions, revitalization goals of territorial self-government units in Jelenia Góra Agglomeration

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No.	<i>Revitalization programme</i>	<i>Major directions/goals of revitalization</i>
1	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Kowary Municipality for the years 2016-2023</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing unfavourable social phenomena in the degraded area of Kowary Urban Municipality, • degraded area revival, also by adjusting technical infrastructure to the existing needs and preserving cultural heritage, • adjusting public space to the needs of residents and tourists, effective use of tourist potential.
2	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Piechowice Municipality for the years 2016-2020</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving life quality of the local community through the holistic revitalization of the degraded municipal areas in social, economic, environmental, spatial and functional and also technical dimensions, • counteracting the dissemination of socially unfavourable phenomena, • technical infrastructure condition improvement, including residential housing, • natural environment condition improvement, • spatial and functional cohesion improvement, • stimulating the development of local entrepreneurship sector.
3	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Jelenia Góra City for the years 2016-2023</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing degraded city areas and high living standards of local communities, • counteracting urban degradation and its management, • ensuring sustainable development of degraded areas, • supporting local entrepreneurship development, • integration and activation of urban community.
4	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Mirsk Municipality for the years 2016-2023</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intensive and sustainable socio-economic development, creating attractive living space for the residents of degraded areas, • higher employment and entrepreneurship development, • reducing pathological phenomena, social exclusion elimination, higher level of social participation and civic involvement of residents, • improving social and economic public space attractiveness and the improvement of technical condition of residential and public buildings, • improved tourist, sport and leisure and also cultural potential.
5	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Wojcieszów City for the years 2016-2023</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the living standards of Wojcieszów city and municipality degraded areas and counteracting the marginalization of socially, spatially and economically degraded areas of the city and municipality, • counteracting pathological phenomena within the local community, • contracting unemployment effects, • living standards improvement of local community, • leisure, sport and tourist infrastructure development • upgrading settlement and investment attractiveness of the city, • higher access to educational services, • integration and activation of local community, • modernisation and extension of technical infrastructure.
6	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Wleń City and Municipality for the years 2016-2023</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher living standards of Wleń City and Municipality residents through the holistic revitalization of the degraded area, • reducing the social exclusion phenomenon, • higher economic activity in the area of the municipality, • natural environment protection, • spatial and functional sustainable development, • technical infrastructure quality improvement.
7	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Świerzawa Municipality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving quality and aesthetics of historic and architectural resources, • developing service offer addressed to residents, • higher social activity and awareness of residents, • leisure infrastructure improvement, • tourist and leisure offer development using the available resources, • living standards improvement through technical infrastructure development,

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher social integration of residents, higher economic activity, • tourist and social infrastructure development, • environment quality and its protection improvement, reducing emissions, • settlement activity improvement.
8	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Gryfów Śląski Municipality for the years 2016-2020</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the living conditions of municipal residents in household, ecological and social sphere, • improving aesthetical and functional quality of public space, • counteracting social exclusion and unemployment, • maintaining, protecting, promoting and developing cultural heritage, creating new standards and cultural competencies for the residents, • environment protection and promoting effective management of the resources and renewable energy sources.
9	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Szklarska Poręba for the years 2016-2023</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the living standards of Szklarska Poręba municipality residents, in particular the users of degraded areas by establishing conditions for the municipality development using its endogenous characteristics and reducing social, spatial, economic, environmental and cultural problems, • counteracting the dissemination of socially unfavourable phenomena, • technical infrastructure condition improvement, • natural environment condition improvement.
10	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Podgórzyn Municipality for the years 2016-2023</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socio-economic revitalization of the degraded areas in Podgórzyn Municipality, • improving the living standards of the municipality residents, • improving aesthetical and functional quality of public sphere, • developing functional and attractive tourist areas, • improving quality and higher accessibility of tourist infrastructure, • counteracting social exclusion and pathology, • counteracting unemployment, upgrading vocational qualifications of residents, • maintaining, protecting, promoting and developing cultural heritage, creating new standards and cultural competencies for the residents, • establishing social bonds and activating residents of the municipality, • environment protection and promoting effective management of resources and renewable energy sources.
11	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Karpacz Municipality for the years 2016-2020</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher social activity, • counteracting negative social phenomena, • strengthening local economy, • improving public space functionality and attractiveness, • improving transport conditions, • modernization of urban development (residential buildings, public utility buildings, historical buildings).
12	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Lubomierz Municipality for the years 2015-2020</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher social activity and creativity of residents, • reducing social exclusion, integration and better social cohesion, social and vocational activation, • modernization of social and cultural infrastructure, improved safety, • city centre functionality improvement, higher attractiveness of public space, • improving the quality of technical infrastructure, spatial aesthetics, halting the city degradation processes, • modernization of public utility buildings, residential buildings, • higher entrepreneurship, employment level, economic and tourist attractiveness, city brand strengthening.
13	<i>Local Revitalization Programme of Złotoryja City for the years 2015-2020</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving life quality of the residents, counteracting unemployment, activation of senior citizens, promoting equal chances and social involvement, preventing social pathologies, safety level improvement • promoting entrepreneurship, opening new jobs, preserving cultural heritage through renovations and modernizations of objects, strengthening trade and service functions, public infrastructure improvement, residential housing resources improvement,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting energy efficiency and pro-environmental solutions, reducing air pollution, urban environment improvement.
14	<p><i>Local Revitalization Programme of Mysłakowice Municipality for the years 2017-2023</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving life quality of local community, halting crisis phenomena, expanding leisure facilities adjusted to the needs of residents and tourists, • developing entrepreneurship and opening new jobs, improving economic attractiveness of the municipality and attracting new investors, • obtaining high quality natural, landscape and cultural values of the revitalized objects and areas, • ensuring spatial order, technical condition improvement and high aesthetic level of buildings and their environment , • modernization of transport system, including primarily the facilities aimed at improved safety of pedestrians and internal commuting.

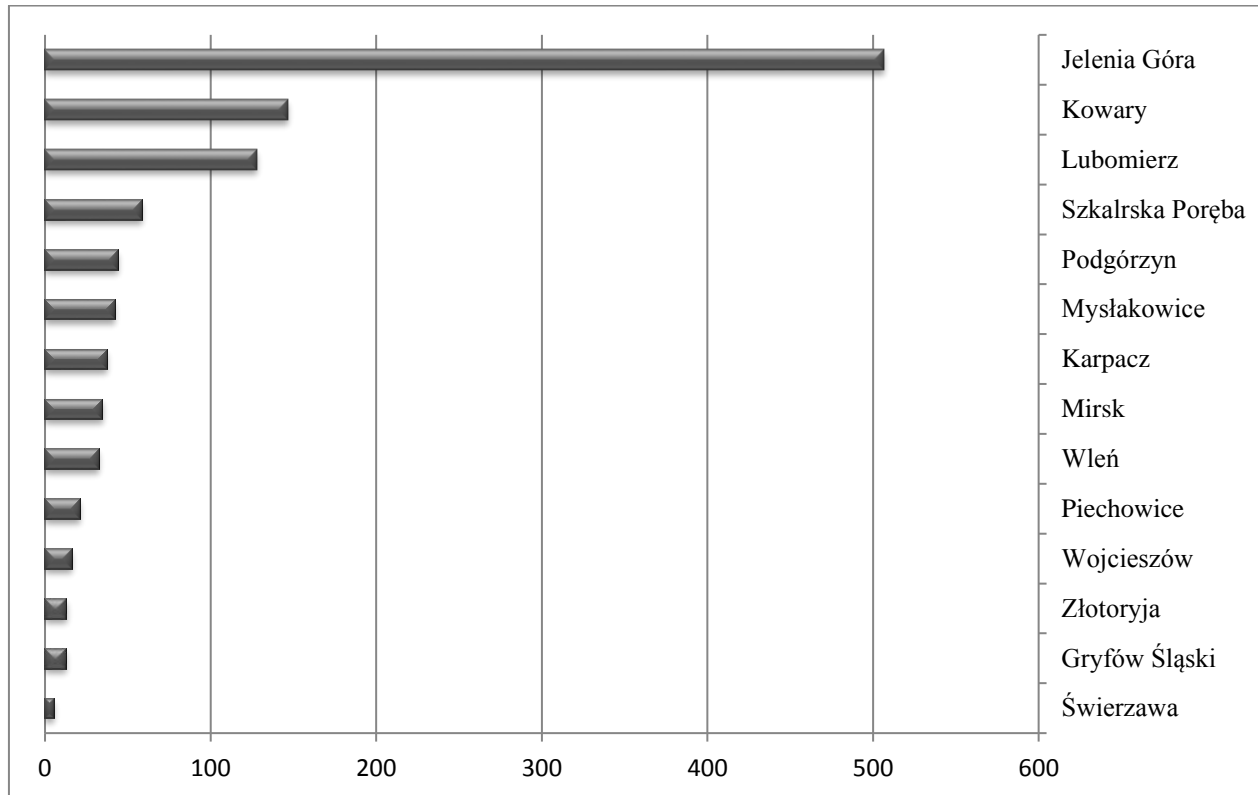
Source: author's compilation based on: Serwis Regionalnego Programu Województwa Dolnośląskiego [*Regional Lower Silesia Programme Service*] (2017, April 22). Retrieved from <http://rpo.dolnyslask.pl/o-projekcie/dowiedz-sie-wiecej-o-rewitalizacji-2/>

The assumption can be adopted that the goals of revitalization specified for the particular members of Jelenia Góra Agglomeration are generally related to the holistic approach towards the revitalization activities in social, economic, environmental, spatial and functional, technical and also cultural sphere. Moreover, the discussed goals refer to the implementation of municipal tourist potential. The references to cultural heritage and the importance of broadly understood cultural sector in revitalization and pro-developmental projects are also worth emphasizing. The social aspect, crucial for revitalization, remains visible in all analysed strategic documents.

It should be emphasized that apart from territorial self-government units, their relationships and associations, as well as the organizational units, the potential beneficiaries, within the framework of the discussed revitalization activities, can become the public financial sector units (other than listed above), residential communities and cooperatives, housing associations, NGOs, churches, religious associations as well as legal persons of churches and religious associations, cultural institutions, Local Action Groups (LAG), spa treatment establishments, medical entities.

The scale of demand for revitalization projects in Jelenia Góra Agglomeration can be investigated based on an in-depth analysis (fig. 1). The total value of projects, submitted by 14 out of 18 JGA members, amounts to over one billion PLN. The basic projects, eligible for support under the Regional Operational Program of Lower Silesia Region in 2014-2020 were estimated at PLN 485 889 406. If it is compared against the overall allocation addressed to ITA JGA for revitalization purposes, within the framework of Action 6.3 of the aforementioned program amounting to PLN 40 977 653 the difference between the actual capacity and the signalled needs is clearly noticeable. A similar situation is reported in other parts of the country.

Fig. 1: Municipal demand for revitalization projects within the framework of ITA JGA (PLN million)



Source: author's compilation based on: Serwis Regionalnego Programu Województwa Dolnośląskiego [*Regional Lower Silesia Programme Service*] (2017, April 22). Retrieved from <http://rpo.dolnyslask.pl/o-projekcie/dowiedz-sie-wiecej-o-rewitalizacji-2/>

The tendencies diagnosed in case of Jelenia Góra Agglomeration entities can be extrapolated to the national level. Problems and revitalization challenges observed in the studied cases are quite similar to the nationwide determinants and experiences. Therefore, the major directions of revitalization projects refer to the reduction of social exclusion phenomenon, decreasing poverty and unemployment (Głuszczyk & Raszkowski, 2015), supporting local entrepreneurship, cleaner natural environment, transition to low carbon economy, effective space management, technical infrastructure condition improvement (including residential housing), promoting culture and higher local community involvement or better condition of road infrastructure.

Conclusion

Referring to future plans related to revitalization it is assumed that the vast majority of projects included in revitalization programmes, in national dimension, will be implemented based on the funds originating from the 16 Regional Operational Programmes for particular regions within the framework of activities dedicated directly to revitalization projects. Moreover, the projects can be funded from other means of the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. Among other sources listed in revitalization programmes the following can be listed: applicants' own funds, municipal budgets, loans, the state budget, sponsors. After finalizing the current period of the European funds programming it should be expected that the main burden of revitalization projects' funding shall remain within the budgets of territorial self-government units.

Developing new or updating the existing revitalization programmes covering the 2014-2020 European programming period was an opportunity for the comprehensive inventory of the occurring needs, the designation of degraded areas requiring urgent revitalization, the identification of new objectives and directions for development. The positive component of the creation process, the implementation and evaluation of revitalization programmes, takes the form of covering these processes with the aforementioned so-called civic control. The relatively high thematic diversity of projects submitted by the potential beneficiaries to revitalization programmes can be attributed to high activity and social participation, involvement in local problems and scale of the existing needs.

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