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Towards sustainable development of territorial units – the case of revitalisation projects in Jelenia Góra Agglomeration municipalities

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Abstract: The article discusses the problem related to sustainable development of territorial units. The introduction covers the theoretical aspects of revitalisation and sustainable development, including the significant role of revitalisation programmes. The primary purpose of the study is to identify and analyse the categories of revitalisation projects in Jelenia Góra Agglomeration municipalities in the context of supporting and deepening sustainable development. Next part of the analysis outlines the establishment and functioning of Jelenia Góra Agglomeration. The presentation of revitalisation projects, carried out in the agglomeration municipalities, grouped by the order of sustainable development remains the core of the study. Five relevant orders were distinguished, i.e. social, economic, environmental, spatial and institutional-political ones. Within the framework of general conclusions it can be stated that the presented revitalisation projects, carried out by the local governments, exert an impact on the implementation of sustainable development principles and their substantive scope corresponds well with its spectrum.

Keywords: revitalisation, sustainable development, territorial unit, local government, Jelenia Góra Agglomeration

JEL codes: O 10, R 00, R 11

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1. Introduction

Revitalisation can be defined, in the simplest terms, as a process aimed at recovering degraded areas from crisis conditions. It should be carried out in a comprehensive manner, based on integrated activities dedicated to the local community, space and economy. The above-mentioned activities should be focused substantively and be territorially defined, should cover an indicated area or areas and be carried out by revitalisation users based on a developed and implemented revitalisation programme. Following such an approach, a revitalisation programme can be understood as a long-term, integrated, multidisciplinary operational programme based on cooperation of various environments in the process of its preparation, development and implementation.

It should be pointed out that a revitalisation programme represents one of many strategic documents dedicated to local government units, having an actual impact on influencing the policy aimed at supporting sustainable development. Beyond any doubt, the strategy of sustainable development of a municipality represents one of the basic documents in this respect, along with the environment protection programme, tourism development strategy, promotion strategy, branding, care programme covering relics of the past, the study of determinants and directions of spatial development, the low-emission economy plan, or the strategy for solving social problems, which are also of great importance.

One of the main objectives underlying the development of a revitalisation programme is the diagnosed need to get the degraded areas out of crisis situations in social, economic, environmental, spatial-functional, technical and cultural spheres. The implementation of both assumptions and objectives of the programme is supposed to result in reduction of the crisis phenomena scale, contributing to higher life quality of the local community. The quality of life can be approached as a combination of material aspects of life and elements related to an overall feeling of satisfaction with the existing life situation.

In the current situation, revitalisation programmes usually represent a natural continuation and development of strategic documents, referring to the revitalisation of territorial units, prepared in previous years. It should be mentioned that in the presented study a territorial unit is understood as a municipality, i.e. a territorial local government unit. In other studies, the term territorial unit, apart from its reference to municipalities, is also used in the context of counties, voivodships (provinces), or other areas separated in accordance with the specific criteria, such as e.g. sub-regions.

A presupposition can be adopted that the concept of sustainable development covers many components and assumptions stimulating the socio-economic development of territorial

units. The growth of gross domestic product is expected within the framework of this development as well as higher expenditure on innovation oriented activities, counteracting poverty, reducing unemployment rate and employment rate increase, higher fertility rate, care for natural environment issues, including selective waste collection, renewable energy, legally protected areas, or the effective functioning of non-governmental organizations and nurturing civil liberties. In other words, the implementation of sustainable development concept supports harmonious development of territorial units.

Sustainable development, or rather striving for its overall accomplishment remains one of the most important challenges of the modern world. It is also observed as the key trend of global environmental policy and socio-economic development. For the purposes of this study the concept of sustainable development can be defined, in accordance with one of the first presentations of this term, as the right to satisfy developmental aspirations of the current generation without limiting the rights of future generations to meet their needs. The aforementioned definition assumes that both economic and civilization development of the present generation should not be carried out at the cost of depleting non-renewable resources and destroying the environment, for the benefit of future generations, who are also entitled to their own development (The World Commission ..., 1987; Pawłowski, 2008: 81-90).

With reference to territorial units, sustainable development can be defined, e.g. as the effect of qualitative and quantitative transformation processes in the social, economic and natural sphere, having assumed proper space governance. In simplified terms, it is the effect of positive changes in the level of economic and social development, which do not deteriorate the quality of natural environment, but should rather result in its gradual improvement (Stimson et al., 2006: 6-7; Bartniczak and Raszkowski, 2017: 133-142).

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyse the categories of revitalisation projects in Jelenia Góra Agglomeration municipalities in the context of supporting and deepening sustainable development.

2. The outline of Jelenia Góra Agglomeration establishment and functioning

Jelenia Góra Agglomeration (JGA) covers the total of 18 territorial government units, i.e.: Karpacz, Kowary, Piechowice, Szklarska Poręba, Wojcieszów, Złotoryja (urban municipalities); Gryfów Śląski, Lubomierz, Mirsk, Wleń, Świerzawa (urban-rural municipalities); Janowice Wielkie, Jeżów Sudecki, Mysłakowice, Podgórzyn, Stara Kamienica, Pielgrzymka (rural municipalities) and Jelenia Góra (a city with county rights).

Among the main reasons underlying the establishment of JGA, the following can be listed: concern for sustainable development of the area and recognition of the need for carrying out joint actions aimed at life quality improvement of its residents, economy development also including the development of tourism. Another very important premise is the simplified procedure of applying for the European funds dedicated to the specific functional areas, partly identical with problem areas within the framework of regional policy, i.e. the Strategic Intervention Areas (SIA) (Urząd Marszałkowski ..., 2013).

The JGA area, within the meaning of the functional area covered by the support of the financial instrument, i.e. Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs), includes the aforementioned local governments, which have signed the document (Porozumienie ..., 2015) about entrusting the management of ITIs in JGA to the City of Jelenia Góra and the cooperation rules of the parties to the agreement in the programming, implementation, financing, evaluation, ongoing service and settlements of ITIs in JGA.

In the Spatial Development Plan of the Lower Silesian Voivodship (SDPLSV) 2020 Perspective JGA was separated as one of the twelve primary problem areas in the voivodship. SDPLSV defines JGA as the peripheral area, within direct impact of Jelenia Góra, concentrating the largest tourist centres of the voivodship, i.e. Karpacz and Szklarska Poręba.

Moreover, SDPLSV indicates the need to improve transport accessibility as well as the development of other functions of the main centre, i.e. the City of Jelenia Góra, apart from tourism (Raszkowski, 2011: 319-327; Instytut Rozwoju Terytorialnego 2014: 72-77; Urząd Miasta Jelenia Góra, 2015).

One of the major roles within the framework of JGA's sustainable development is undoubtedly played by the local government environments, as the natural creators of modern solutions and the source of inspiration for local and regional communities. Local governments are responsible for the broadly approached ecological education (Judson, 2017), for supporting the principles of sustainable development, or implementing the concept of good governance. It should also be observed that the cooperation between local government, business, science and non-governmental organizations increases the chances for the final success of the undertaken activities (Raszkowski and Głuszczyk, 2015: 1375-1385, 2017: 1305-1314).

The direct reference to the principles of sustainable development can be found in the next strategic document referring to JGA, i.e. Strategic directions of Jelenia Góra Agglomeration development in the years 2013-2020 (Raszkowski et al., 2013: 40). In the JGA mission it presents there is, among others, a reference to the creation of a modern European

community of counties and municipalities focused on tourism and recreation and also of settlement nature characterised by a well-developed entrepreneurship, especially in the field of tourism and small-scale production, carrying out the ambitions and expectations of its residents. In addition, the agglomeration implements efficiently the principle of sustainable development, supported by the outstanding tourist, natural, cultural, historical and transportation values in the context of the proximity of major European cities.

3. Revitalisation projects supporting sustainable development

For the purposes of this study, the revitalisation projects of Jelenia Góra Agglomeration local governments were grouped, based in accordance with the specific sustainable development orders. Five orders were distinguished (social, economic, environmental, spatial, institutional-political), constituting altogether a relatively well developed form of an integrated order.

In this case, an integrated order is understood as the benchmarking essence of sustainable development, as the positive targeted state of developmental changes combining the aforementioned component orders in a coherent way. The minimum axiological level of these orders' creation is characterized by, at least, moderate anthropocentrism. The manifestations of considering and deciphering sustainable development as an integrated order are generally very diverse in different scientific fields and disciplines (Borys, 2011: 75-81).

15 revitalisation programmes were analysed in the process of separating and grouping the relevant projects. It results from the fact that not all members of the agglomeration adopted such programmes as of the day of the discussed analyses development (such rural municipalities as Jeżów Sudecki, Stara Kamienica and Pielgrzymka were not included). The absence of a current revitalisation programme in the listed municipalities has a prosaic justification, namely the limited funds for revitalisation projects allocated to rural areas. For example, in these areas the investments in local roads, which rural municipalities would be potentially interested in, are not funded in the current financial perspective of the European funds. Despite certain limitations for rural areas, the situation is still better than in the previous programming period 2007-2013, where rural municipalities were not included in the context of funds for revitalisation projects.

It should be added that the anticipated revitalisation activities are planned under ITIs in JGA. The ITIs themselves are a new instrument which did not function in the previous programming period of the European funds. In simplified terms, the idea of ITIs is focused on

greater integration, coherence and complexity of undertaken activities, sustainable development of urban areas and also their functional areas. Following this approach, cities are supposed to play the role of leaders and locomotives of the socio-economic growth that spreads around a wider territory. In the analysed case, the role of the natural JGA leader is played by the City of Jelenia Góra.

At this point it should be observed that the majority of projects, referring to municipal declarations included in the local revitalisation programmes, will be implemented from the resources of the Regional Operational Programme for the Lower Silesian Voivodship 2014-2020, Activities 6.3 “Revitalisation of degraded areas” (Urząd Marszałkowski ..., 2014). Furthermore, revitalisation projects can be financed from other funds of the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. Due to the specific nature of ITIs in JGA, the Regional Operational Programme for the Lower Silesian Voivodship 2014-2020 remains the primary source. Other sources indicated in revitalisation programmes include own funds of the applicants, the municipal budget, loans, the state budget and funds obtained from potential sponsors.

Table 1. Revitalisation projects of Jelenia Góra Agglomeration municipalities in accordance with sustainable development orders

Sustainable development orders	Examples of project categories
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - socio-cultural integration of residents, - developing active forms of social integration, - activation of the unemployed, - supporting local events, - counteracting social exclusion, - improving residential conditions of tenants in social buildings, - increasing residential attractiveness of historic buildings, - improving access to childcare services, - improving residential attractiveness of social housing, - construction and reconstruction of playgrounds for children, - supporting the development of culture sector, - supporting voluntary and social activities of young people, - improving the quality of educational offer, - activation and education of senior citizens, - organization of specialist trainings for the professionally inactive population, - youth exchange between twin towns, - renovation of rural community centres, - carrying out addictions prevention projects, - collecting clothes and food for the people in need, - supporting students having special educational needs, - competence and social skills trainings, - strengthening the sense of territorial identity, - promoting healthy lifestyle.

Sustainable development orders	Examples of project categories
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - revitalisation of post-industrial areas, - revitalisation of degraded multi-family residential buildings (housing community projects), - revitalisation of municipal historical monuments, - modernization of the city stadium, - modernization of farm buildings, - reconstruction of swimming pools, - renovation of tennis courts, - preparation of investment areas, - providing consulting and training support for local enterprises, - improving the conditions for running a business, - developing business incubators (supporting the development of Lower Silesian smart specializations), - opening leisure and sports centres, - supporting the development of tourist infrastructure.
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduction of low emissions from transport, - thermomodernisation of public utility buildings, including educational ones, - energy-efficient retrofitting of buildings, - revitalisation of degraded areas in spa resorts, - thermomodernisation of residential buildings, - revalorization of green areas, - modernization of road lighting into energy efficient one, - elimination of illegal landfills, - extension of educational paths, including ecological education, - modernization of sanitary sewerage network, - promoting municipal natural values, - promoting the idea of sustainable development.
Spatial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - revitalisation of parks in city centres, - reconstruction of urban post-military spaces, - transformation of the degraded coastal areas, - reconstruction of the degraded urban streets, - reconstruction of bridges, - reconstruction of the downtown area, - modernization of village centres, - developing family recreation centres, - constructing video surveillance, - reconstruction of car parks, - construction of bike paths, - construction of pavements in the area of revitalisation, - revitalisation of city marketplaces.
Institutional-political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing the attractiveness and functionality of public buildings, - cultivating both cultural and historic heritage, - comprehensive revitalisation of public facilities, - supporting non-governmental organizations, - reconstructing facilities to adapt them to the needs of people with disabilities, - development of e-services in public administration.

Source: author's compilation based on: Serwis Regionalnego Programu Województwa Dolnośląskiego, <http://rpo.dolnyslask.pl/o-projekcie/dowiedz-sie-wiecej-o-rewitalizacji-2/> (20.01.2018). The total of 15 local revitalisation programmes covering Jelenia Góra Agglomeration municipalities were analysed in the study.

Technical area (in particular the revitalisation of residential and public buildings), assigned to environmental, spatial and economic orders, depending on the specific nature of a particular group of projects, is the most extensive one in terms of numbers and the demand for financial resources. In the context of the implementation of sustainable development principles, technical order is not distinguished as there are, e.g. areas within the framework of economic order covering technical infrastructure and residential housing construction. Moreover, some studies separate residential housing as part of the social order, however, approached more as the analysis of selected housing policy areas, rather than renovation of degraded residential and public utility buildings (Borys, 2010: 217-234).

The presented project assignments are of conventional nature to a certain extent as the overall impact of planned initiatives on sustainable development of territorial units is far more important. Their conventional and flexible character results from the fact that not all categories of revitalisation projects refer directly to the adopted sets of sustainable development indicators assigned to individual orders, usually to the social, economic, environmental and institutional-political one (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 2015: 54-333).

A wide and diversified offer of projects indicated within the framework of social order remains an unequivocal positive phenomenon, even more so since the social sphere is crucial and obligatory for revitalisation processes. In other words, comprehensive revitalisation or revitalisation in general remain impossible without carrying out due activities in the social area. In case of this order, the most important groups of projects addressed to counteracting social exclusion and promoting social inclusion and integration seem to be the most important ones. In terms of economy, the groups covering the development of investment areas and revitalizing post-industrial areas are interesting from the perspective of sustainable development. In the case of environmental order the reduction of low emissions, with particular emphasis on transport emissions, remains at the forefront. In the area of space, the highest demand was reported by municipalities regarding the reconstruction of degraded urban streets and downtown areas. The institutional-political order depended on the needs of local governments and on the comprehensive revitalisation of public facilities. The assumption was adopted that the local government administration needs effective conditions, including adequate, modern and energy-efficient premises for efficient functioning.

4. Conclusions

Concluding, the assumption can be adopted that the categories of revitalisation projects in Jelenia Góra Agglomeration are related to increasing the sustainable development level of territorial units.

The relatively extensive thematic diversity of projects submitted by potential beneficiaries to revitalisation programmes may indicate high social activity and participation, the involvement in local problems and the scale of needs. It should be borne in mind that only effective implementation of individual projects can exert an impact on sustainable development. The revitalisation programme remains, in this case, an important tool, but it simultaneously plays the role of a development plan.

The development of new or updating the existing revitalisation programmes by the analysed local government units, in the context of the 2014-2020 programming period for the European funds, was an opportunity for preparing an overall comprehensive inventory of needs, identifying the degraded areas which require urgent revitalisation measures, defining new targets and development directions, taking into account the respect for sustainable development principles.

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W KIERUNKU ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU JEDNOSTEK TERYTORIALNYCH NA PRZYKŁADZIE PROJEKTÓW REWITALIZACYJNYCH GMIN AGLOMERACJI JELENIOGÓRSKIEJ

Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono zagadnienie odnoszące się do zrównoważonego rozwoju jednostek terytorialnych. Na wstępie poruszone zostały teoretyczne aspekty rewitalizacji oraz zrównoważonego rozwoju, z uwzględnieniem znaczącej roli programów rewitalizacji. Głównym celem opracowania jest wskazanie i analiza kategorii projektów rewitalizacyjnych gmin Aglomeracji Jeleniogórskiej w kontekście wspierania i pogłębiania zrównoważonego rozwoju. W dalszej części zamieszczono zarys powstania i funkcjonowania Aglomeracji Jeleniogórskiej. Rdzeń opracowania stanowi zestawienie projektów rewitalizacyjnych gmin aglomeracji pogrupowanych w przyporządkowaniu do łańcuchów zrównoważonego rozwoju. Wyodrębniono pięć łańcuchów, tj. społeczny, gospodarczy, środowiskowy, przestrzenny, instytucjonalno-polityczny. W ramach ogólnych wniosków można stwierdzić, że przedstawione projekty rewitalizacyjne samorządów mają wpływ na implementację zasad zrównoważonego rozwoju, dobrze wpasowują się swoim zakresem merytorycznym w jego spektrum.

Słowa kluczowe: rewitalizacja, zrównoważony rozwój, jednostka terytorialna, samorząd, Aglomeracja Jeleniogórska

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