

## THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF REVITALIZATION – THE LODZ CITY CASE STUDY



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### Abstract

**The purpose of the article** is to present the essence and significance of social participation in the revitalization process as well as the implementation of its objectives by territorial self-government units.

**A hypothesis** was advanced for the purpose of the article that without social engagement the achievement of the desired goal which consists in restoring the area subjected to regeneration will be very difficult.

**Methodology** – The study was based on the survey of the literature on the subject, legal acts as well as the information obtained by the author of the article on the activities with regard to social participation carried out in territorial self-government units.

**Results of the research** – The concentration of social problems in the inner city of Łódź is of a multifaceted character (it refers to various aspects of life concerning inter alia education, financial stabilisation, the level of affluence, the occurrence of pathological phenomena) and at the same time progressive (the social problems which emerged were not systematically solved and thus there was an escalation of negative phenomena over the course of time). The conducted study indicates that the current level of involvement of the inhabitants of Łódź in the affairs connected with revitalization is relatively low. From year to year the awareness regarding the important role of society in the revitalization process is rising. It is reflected in the increasing number of inhabitants who participate in the social activities offered by the self-government. The City inter alia organises meetings, workshops, and consultations. The global Covid-19 pandemic has not resulted in giving up the said activities.

**Keywords:** territorial self-government, revitalization, revitalization projects, social participation, the Ladder of Citizen Participation.

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## INTRODUCTION

The future belongs to cities. This statement shows what the global trend is. Cities accumulate an increasing amount of people, functions and capital. Therefore, it can be undoubtedly stated that good organisation and, consequently, an effectively functioning city means a very high standard of living for its inhabitants. Unfortunately, the centres of most Polish cities are in very poor technical condition. The buildings situated therein often date back hundreds of years. The standards binding decades ago, which were an indicator of comfort and opulent lifestyle, are presently unacceptable. The renovations, extensions and modernisations conducted in the past, which were often of a makeshift nature, failed to solve the growing problem of continuous deterioration of the standard of living of the inhabitants of these areas. The complex activities undertaken within the framework of revitalization constitute a reaction to this state of affairs. This solution is actually the best possible one taking into consideration the fact that revitalization is not limited solely to the technical aspect, which consists in renovation activities performed in the buildings themselves, but it also engages local communities in a skilful manner with the use of the disposable financial means.

The purpose of the article is to present the essence and significance of social participation in the revitalization process as well as the implementation of its objectives by territorial self-government units. A hypothesis was advanced for the purpose of the article that without social engagement the achievement of the desired goal, which consists in restoring the area subjected to regeneration, will be very difficult. In order to verify the aforementioned objective, the article was divided into three parts. In the first section revitalization was characterised and its significance in improving the quality of life of the city dwellers was expounded. The second part focuses on the issues concerning social participation, in particular from the point of view of the undertaken revitalization projects. In the third section the findings of the study were presented in which the activities carried out by the territorial self-government aimed at engaging local communities in the whole process of regenerating degraded urban fabric were evaluated. This was done on the basis of the example of the Łódź City.

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## 1. REVITALIZATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE INHABITANTS OF DEGRADED AREAS

Currently there is hardly any person who has not encountered the term 'revitalization'. It is defined as a comprehensive process of regenerating targeted at the areas which are in a critical condition (Ziobrowski, 2000: 23; Skalski, 1996: 15; Kaczmarek, 2011: 23). The said process is particularly costly and time-consuming. It engages many different entities ranging from public bodies to private investors and the inhabitants of degraded areas. The major objective of the process is to improve the standards of living in the devastated areas by means of reconstructing it or by assigning new functions to the regenerated quarters. The aforementioned process requires the formation of partnerships of both economic (public-private partnership) and social nature (social participation in a wide sense) (Hajdys and Ślebocka, 2021: 16).

Revitalization is thus treated as a range of activities which transform degraded areas in the following spheres: a spatial one (this usually involves changes in terms of town-planning and infrastructure), an economic one (it concerns investments in a wide sense), an environmental one (it encompasses the activities aimed at reclamation of the natural environment) and a cultural one (it involves the activities aimed at enhancing the local identity of the inhabitants and at their activation) (Kopeć, 2011: 7). However, it has not always been like that. The attitude towards this phenomenon has been changing over the years. In the early stages revitalization was associated solely with the regeneration of urban fabric. A renovation, adaptation or modernization of devastated buildings were commonly regarded as revitalization activities. Currently the technical aspects of revitalization are moved to the background, nevertheless, without decreasing their importance and the economic and social aspects are gaining significance.

The fundamental goal of revitalization is restoring a city to life in social terms since it is impossible to effectively carry out the revitalization process without direct engagement of the local community.

Until 2015 the process of revitalization in Poland was implemented without any systemic and legal solutions which could govern a number of vital issues concerning *inter alia* the identification of the stakeholders of the process, the basic sources of finance or the determination of the social participation level. It was only when the Act of 9 October 2015 on Revitalization (Journal of Laws of the year 2015 item 1777 as amended) entered into force that this state of affairs changed. It considerably contributed to putting the issues connected with revitalization in order. It moved revitalization to a new path of development by defining it as an organised process of recovering from the critical state of degraded areas, which is carried out with the use of appropriate legal, financial and

organisational tools dedicated to the revitalization needs. Article 2 Section 1 of the said Act stipulates that revitalization constitutes the process of recovering from the critical state of degraded areas conducted in a comprehensive way by integrating the activities for the benefit of the local community, space and economy which are concentrated on a particular local area and undertaken by revitalization stakeholders pursuant to the revitalization programme adopted by the *gmina*.

In simple terms, revitalization is viewed as the process of regeneration which refers not only to the infrastructure encompassing *inter alia* the processes of spatial development but also to the transformations occurring in the social sphere. The aforementioned Act gave revitalization a new direction. It should be a form of intervention in the social crisis and only then it should be supplemented with the economic, functional and spatial and technical aspect.

Degraded urban fabric should be looked at through the prism of the build-up of the following social problems in one particular area: poverty, unemployment, social pathologies, which necessitates the undertaking of activities aimed at social inclusiveness. The very revitalization process requires from the territorial self-government authorities the formation of a partnership model (a social profile), which appears to be a difficult task taking into account the low level of social trust. It is caused *inter alia* by the lack of role models of social activity among the inhabitants of revitalized quarters or the lack of information on the resources of urban communities and their potential (Rajek-Kwiatek, 2020: 120).

A well-organised and effectively conducted revitalization process is associated with the development of social relations which are characterised by the following positive aspects (Smagacz, 2008: 11–12):

- an increase in trust between collective and individual entities. As a result a change in the social relations takes place. The participants become increasingly open, are more daring in taking up challenges and any criticism becomes substantive,
- tightening of the cooperation between the parties to the process,
- a further increase in social activity. New contacts appear, groups are formed which have the goal of initiating new forms of activities, solving problems. The tasks become more numerous and varied and the operations more effective,
- reinforcing of the belief that a real impact on the direction of the transformation is exerted. Active participation in public life becomes a conscious choice and starts to substantially affect the quality of life.

Focusing to a larger extent on mobilizing the participants of the revitalization process is directly connected with commitment to social inclusiveness. Social participation is important not only for the public authorities which undertake the task of regenerating degraded urban fabric but also for the inhabitants of revitalized quarters. Their engagement encompasses both the right to information

and the right to discussion and dialogue with the entities which initiate the restoration process.

The undertaken revitalization activities should involve a number of entities ranging from the initiators of the very process, that is public bodies, through entrepreneurs, non-governmental organisations, owners of real property to the inhabitants of the degraded areas. The multitude of the said entities causes that the needs and goals represented by them are not only very diverse but often also opposing. Such differences should not, however, constitute an obstacle to undertaking the activities aimed at their mobilization. Although the engagement of such entities causes that the very revitalization process takes longer, the fact that they are involved guarantees the effectiveness of the undertaken activities. Social participation constitutes an important component of revitalization due to unique knowledge the inhabitants have as regards the problems they have to cope with and the needs which should be satisfied in the first place.

## **2. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE REVITALIZATION OF DEGRADED QUARTERS**

„The development of civic society, an increasing knowledge of law and technological advancement cause that today nobody (or hardly anybody) questions the need for the participation of the society in shaping the space surrounding it” (*Przestrzeń do dialogu...*: 12).

Social participation is treated as the foundation of contemporary democracy (Siemiński, 2007: 37). It denotes voluntary participation of citizens in managing the public affairs of the community of which they are a part, i.e. they belong to a given community or live in it on a daily basis (Hausner, 1999: 41; Brodie at al., 2009: 6]. Participation is aimed at initiating interaction between the authorities and society by creating a potential cooperation platform between the parties (Creighton, 2005: 7).

It could be considered as the participation of citizens in managing the public affairs of the community of which they are members (Kaźmierczak, 2002: 18). It can be viewed as the accomplishment of the need of self-fulfilment of an individual in society (Kaczmarek, 1993: 62). This notion is also looked at through the prism of the possibility for the society to identify with the problems faced by the authorities. The attention is also paid to the aspect of co-management or at least of providing information and explanations by the authorities as regards the solutions adopted by them. This is undoubtedly an organised process which should take into account the problems which are vital for the society and the values which are taken into consideration when making public decisions. What is important in social participation is the space for cooperation with the authorities,

building up of trust and the possibility of exerting a real influence on the decision making (Creighton, 2005: 8).

Its interdisciplinary character is the common feature. It should be remembered that participation is viewed through the prism of citizen power. It is equated with the process of power distribution. Its fundamental goal is to include the people who are currently excluded from political and economic processes. It is a long-term strategy thanks to which the excluded will be able to co-decide about, for example, the allocation of resources, the functioning of the development programmes, about the political goals (Arnstein, 2012: 13). The necessity of involving the society is significant from the point of view of the quality of social life. This phenomenon is often at the forefront when the authorities and the activities undertaken by them aimed at social activation are evaluated. For this purpose a ladder was created which depicts the rungs of citizen participation. It was put forward by S. Arnstein. She described the development of this process (Figure 1) by presenting eight levels of participation and corresponding to these eight rungs degrees of citizen participation.

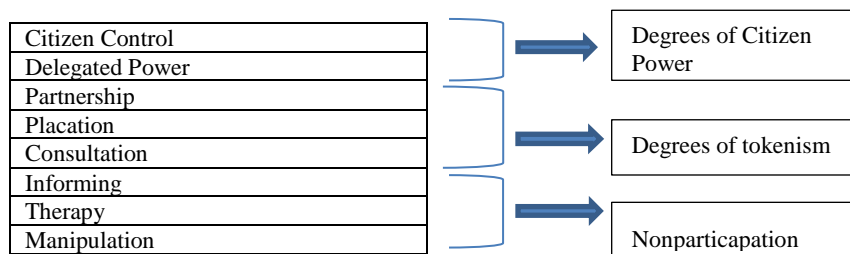


Figure 1. The Ladder of Citizen Participation by S. Arnstein

Source: Arnstein, 1969: 217. In: Gaber, 2019: 189.

In the Ladder of Citizen Participation eight rungs presented above were assigned to three general forms describing the degree of social participation. The two lowest rungs, that is manipulation and therapy are characteristic of a complete lack of participation and no interest whatsoever displayed by the local authorities as regards social affairs. The three following rungs, that is informing, consultation and placation are three activities which form part of the phenomenon called tokenistic participation which gives citizens a sense of having an impact on the kinds of and quality of initiatives undertaken by the local authorities. Only the last three rungs encompassing partnership, delegated power and citizen control constitute actual participation which entails a 100% influence exerted by the citizens on the direction and shape of the local policy.

‘Participation’ in other words is ‘taking part in’ and in this case taking part in the events concerning a given collective. It is a broad notion which refers to every field of activity of an individual including revitalization. Participation in revitalization specified in Article 5 Section 1 of the Act on Revitalization consists *inter alia* in (Przywojska, 2016: 106):

- recognising the needs and expectations of stakeholders and striving for the consistence of the planned activities with these needs and expectations,
- conducting educational and informational activities concerning the revitalization process targeted at stakeholders,
- initiating, enabling and supporting the activities aimed at fostering a dialogue between stakeholders and their integration centred on revitalization activities,
- ensuring the participation of stakeholders in drawing up documents regarding revitalization, in particular the *gmina* revitalization programme,
- supporting the initiatives aimed at enhancing the participation of stakeholders in drawing up and implementing the *gmina* revitalization programme,
- guaranteeing stakeholders the possibility of having a say in the stages of preparing, carrying out and evaluating revitalization.

On this basis it is possible to distinguish four areas of citizen engagement in local affairs concerning revitalization projects, which was set out in Table 1.

Table 1. Levels of social participation in revitalization

Levels	Characteristics	Tools
Access to information	Disseminating information by the local authorities and the passive access to information of the inhabitants	The Public Information Bulletin, noticeboards, websites, press, television, press conferences etc.
Consultation	A bilateral relation, in which citizens express their opinions and start a dialogue with the local authorities	Surveys, consultation meetings, info lines, internet forums, formal and informal meetings
Action	Platforms of partner dialogue which enable individuals and private entities active engagement in carrying out revitalization activities. They constitute a foundation for forming a partnership between the parties.	Fairs, local events, walking surveys, trips, field visits, dialogue with the inhabitants
Co-decision-making	Partnership in the framework of which citizens take part in the co-decision-making	Participatory budgeting, local initiatives, participatory planning.

Source: own compilation on the basis of Gralak, 2018: 155; *DiverCity2...*, 2016: 3.

Informing constitutes the simplest form of participation which involves the citizens to a small extent. Their role in the whole decision-making process comes down solely to passive participation. In general, the activities of the authorities consist in conveying information to the inhabitants about the undertaken actions. The following information within the framework of this level is *inter alia* provided to the inhabitants who take part in carrying out and financing revitalization projects: guidance on formal procedures, data on the sources of finance and on the housing resources and their quality, updates on the activities undertaken in the degraded area.

Consultation constitutes the second level. This is the most popular in Poland and worldwide form of social participation in revitalization. It is characterised by a larger extent to which the citizens participate in the conducted activities in comparison to the previous level. It offers an active possibility of having a say on planned undertakings. The application of social consultations at the planning stage facilitates the implementation of projects, helps to mitigate potential conflicts and disputes. The role of consultations as a tool of social participation should not, however, be overestimated. Although the voice and opinions of the citizens are important, there is no 100% guarantee that they will be taken into consideration.

Another level is action. It enables active involvement in carrying out revitalization activities. The operations undertaken in this regard contribute to forming local identity and to including many social groups in carrying out of the projects and to encouraging them to active participation.

Co-decision-making constitutes the highest level of social participation as regards revitalization due to full partnership between the authorities and the citizens which consists in delegating a part of powers and sharing responsibility for the decisions made.

When positioning particular participation levels in revitalization, it may be noted that informing is the most popular technique applied by public entities, whereas consultation, especially the one conducted by means of open meetings with the inhabitants of revitalized areas, is ranked lower in terms of popularity (Siemiński nad Topczewska, 2009: 53–54; Noworól et al., 2012: 34–39; Długosz and Wygański, 2005: 23). In 2017 in the *gminas* which had their own individual revitalization programme 3 549 processes of social consultation on revitalization were carried out in which 285 thousand people participated. These were, first and foremost, meetings, sessions of collecting remarks in a paper and electronic version and surveys (*Dane statystyczne...*, 2018: 45–46). In conclusion, social participation in revitalization is becoming increasingly common and it entails numerous benefits such as:



- enhancing the actual control exercised over the activities undertaken by the local authorities,
- the activities carried out by the local self-government consisting in rehabilitating the degraded areas become much easier to understand for the inhabitants and thus an increase in mutual trust and rapport as regards the self-government-inhabitants relation occurs,
- as a result of active cooperation between public sector entities and the inhabitants the possibility of eliciting new and original solutions to numerous problems augments. This enables a more accurate identification of priorities and more effective disposal of the resources,
- mitigating and eliminating any controversies which emerge in the process of carrying out revitalization projects and any disputes by a better access to information.

In the literature on the subject the following statement can be found: „the higher the rates of social political involvement, the better the condition of the political system and the more powerful its social legitimacy. The greater the citizen engagement in the social life in the broadest sense, the higher the level of social capital, which is connected with a better level of economic development, greater access to higher ranks, goods and values, which should generally result in a higher level of the quality of life of individuals and societies” (Kinowska 2015: 11–12). This statement can also refer to revitalization. It constitutes an important component of the revitalization process. The involvement of the inhabitants in the said process enables the access to unique knowledge which usually is not available to public entities with regard to the needs, potentials and local resources.

### 3. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN REVITALIZATION THE CASE STUDY OF THE CITY OF ŁÓDŹ

„Łódź Rewitalizuje” [„Łódź is Regenerating”] or „Rewitalizacja sama się nie zrobi” [„We have revitalization to carry out”] are just a few of the slogans which highlight the regeneration efforts undertaken in Łódź (*Program animacyjny...*). A particular emphasis is put on the social aspect. Due to the scale of the problem the city has to cope with and the specific character of factors which are responsible for the crisis situation connected with the decapitalization of urban fabric, which lead not only to the deterioration in the quality of life of the inhabitants of run-down areas but also to decreasing the attractiveness of the city for its inhabitants, the involvement of the local community in the restoration process becomes of vital importance. The degraded areas in Łódź are located in the inner city. They occupy the space of 17.83 km<sup>2</sup> which accounts for 6.08% of the total area of the city. These quarters are inhabited by over 150 000 people, which constitutes 22.83% of the population of Łódź (*Łódź rewitalizuje...*: 9). It is

primarily at those people that the proposals concerning the enhancement of the quality of life should be targeted. In the area subjected to regeneration efforts a substantial concentration of negative social phenomena in the scale of the whole city occurs. In the *Gmina Revitalization Programme* the negative phenomena which are encountered in the revitalized area were identified and discussed. They encompass (*Program Rewitalizacji...*, 2020: 33–40):

- unemployment,
- income poverty,
- deficit of security and order,
- low level of education and social capital,
- insufficient level of participation in public and cultural life.

The activities aimed at eliminating the aforementioned phenomena are undertaken within the framework of the so called „soft” investment (Hajdys and Ślebocka, 2021: 37).

Table 2 presents the amounts of outlays earmarked for regeneration efforts carried out in 8 priority projects in the inner city and the amount of funds allocated to soft measures including the activities aimed at enhancing involvement and social participation.

Table 2. The distribution of funds earmarked for revitalization activities and soft investment which contribute to an increase in the social involvement of the inhabitants of Łódź (in millions PLN)

Project number	Total value of the project	Financing		State public funds		Funds allocated to soft measures*
		State budget	ERDF	Own contribution	State budget/Partner's budget	
1	228.95	4.48	101.22	123.25	0.00	18.96
2	126.67	1.84	70.04	39.81	14.97	9.66
3	77.10	3.00	31.11	42.99	0.00	7.15
4	150.07	5.32	69.21	75.53	0.00	18.15
5	116.57	6.35	44.26	65.97	0.00	6.19
6	93.53	2.53	33.34	57.26	0.00	5.16
7	136.28	3.06	59.69	73.53	0.00	19.93
8	51.91	1.22	23.23	27.47	0.00	6.93
Total	981.08	27.79	432.10	505.82	14.97	92.13

\* An amount estimated on the basis of the list of planned tasks by courtesy of the Revitalization and Housing Bureau (as at 2016).

Source: own compilation on the basis of: *Rewitalizacja Obszarowa Centrum...*; *Łódź 2019 – Raport...*: 79.

The total budget of the regeneration undertakings carried out within the framework of the projects bearing the numbers 1–8 amounts to 981.08 million zloty, which accounts for 19% of the annual budget of the city. It is planned to earmark approximately 92 million zloty which constitutes 9.4% of the total amount of funds allocated to revitalization efforts and around 2% of the total revenues of the city for soft measures encompassing those aimed at enhancing the interest and activity of the inhabitants of the regenerated areas. The fact that the said soft measures were included in the planned budget of financing revitalization activities shows the importance of the problem. Activation of the society in this field entails not only a higher level of approval for the carried out activities but also a greater care for the common good in the longer term.

In Łódź the Revitalization and Housing Bureau is the unit which is responsible for involving the inhabitants of the areas subjected to regeneration in the restoration efforts and in particular the Social Activities Division which is tasked with the following: organising meetings, conducting consultations with inhabitants, communities or business entities which operate in the area subjected to regeneration. In the period from 2014 to 2020 numerous social consultations were carried out (Table 3).

Table 3. Social consultations in revitalization conducted in Łódź in the years 2014–2020

The subject of social consultations	The period of carrying out consultations	The form of consultations	Social interest – the number of participants, opinions, proposals, walking surveys, forms etc.
<u>Social consultations</u> of the projects bearing the numbers 1–8 of the Area-based Regeneration of the Inner City of Łódź	04–05.2014	Open meeting	378
		Walking surveys	55
		Consultation form	127
<u>Social consultations</u> of the priority projects of the Area-based Regeneration of the Inner City of Łódź for the years 2014–2020+ (Projects bearing the numbers 9–20)	08.05–05.06.2015	Consultation meeting	157
		Walking survey	39
		Consultation form	1 122
<u>Social consultations</u> concerning the Objectives of the Local Regeneration Programme of Łódź 2020+	05.04–05.05.2015	Consultation meeting	13
		Walking survey	4
		Opinions	67
		Proposals	29

<u>Social consultations</u> concerning the draft resolution of the City Council in Łódź on the delineating of the degraded area and the area of revitalization of the city of Łódź	26.11– 28.12.2015	Public debate	55
		Workshops	60
		Consultation form	31
		Opinions	155
		Proposals	182
<u>Social consultations</u> concerning the draft of the <i>Gmina</i> Revitalization Programme of Łódź 2026+	23.06– 22.07.2017	Public debate	30
		Workshops	35
		Consultation form and undertakings form	99
<u>Social consultations</u> concerning the draft resolution of the City Council in Łódź on laying down the rules regarding the composition as well as the rules of functioning of the Revitalization Committee	03.11– 06.12.2016	Open meeting	21
		Consultation form	10
		Minutes drawn up on the basis of oral remarks	2
<u>Social consultations</u> concerning the amendments to the <i>Gmina</i> Revitalization Programme of Łódź	19.04– 21.05.2018	Consultation meeting	80
		Workshops	50
		Consultation form and undertakings form	10
<u>Social consultations</u> concerning the amendments to the <i>Gmina</i> Revitalization Programme of Łódź	08.10– 30.10.2020	Consultation meeting	15
		Consultation standby	5
		Consultation form and undertakings form	9
		Form on the Vox Populi platform	8
<u>Social consultations</u> concerning the draft resolution of the City Council in Łódź amending the resolution on laying down the rules regarding the composition as well as the rules of functioning of the Revitalization Committee	06.03– 06.04.2021	Online consultation meeting	lack of data
		Consultation standby	lack of data
		Consultation form	lack of data
		Consultation centre	lack of data

Source: own compilation on the basis of the information about social consultations obtained from the Revitalization and Housing Bureau, the Social Activities Division.

The average time devoted to social consultations amounts to around 30 days. It is preceded by the period of intense work on the part of the people engaged in this process which often lasts a few months. One characteristic feature of the conducted social consultations is their diversity. A wide range of the forms of social involvement applied by the City depends on the subject of consultations and on the aim to attain. The objective of a walking survey is to show the proposed changes in the revitalized areas to the widest possible group of recipients and to look at the spaces which are well known from everyday life as well as to diagnose them through immediate experience. Workshops are devoted to common effort aimed at working out the solutions which will be satisfactory for both parties of the revitalization process. Consultation forms constitute a written form which encompasses remarks and petitions regarding the proposals of revitalization activities to be carried out.

A variety of instruments guarantees the possibility of reaching the largest number of people or entities potentially interested in revitalization undertakings. They made it possible to collect valuable information which will enable the people in charge to effectively carry out the revitalization process, i.e. adjusting it to the needs and expectations of the inhabitants. Altogether 2 848 forms of contact with the society were used.

The consultations which were carried out concerned various aspects: ranging from the meetings aimed at delineating the degraded area in the city, through identifying priority revitalization projects, drawing up and amending the *Gmina Revitalization Programme* to working out, together with inhabitants of the revitalized quarters, the rules of functioning of the Revitalization Committee. The most interesting conclusions from the social consultations conducted in the specified period *inter alia* encompass (*Raport z konsultacji społecznych dotyczących projektu Gminnego Rewitalizacji Łodzi...*; *Raport z konsultacji społecznych dotyczących projektu uchwały Rady Miejskiej...*; *Raport z konsultacji społecznych dotyczących Założeń Lokalnego Programu...*, *Raport z konsultacji społecznych priorytetowych projektów Rewitalizacji...*):

- reporting the need to implement monitoring of social problems carried out not only in the area of the revitalized quarters but also outside it,
- a recommendation put forward by the participants of the consultation regarding the need to draft consistent housing policy of the city which would be founded on a variety of forms in terms of housing: own flats, rented flats, subsidized social housing or sharing flats characterised by large space,
  - decreasing the number of liquor stores and at the same time enhancing the access for the inhabitants of the inner city to fresh and tasty food,
  - the need to determine the role and place of non-government organisations in the process of revitalization,

- including in the revitalization area those spaces which, although neglected in the opinion of the inhabitants, are regarded as representative quarters of the city,
- preserving in the very inner city the so called small entrepreneurship in particular small businesses providing services,
- the necessity of increasing greenery in the city centre and creating community space which would be friendly to the elderly and those people who are less fit,
- drawing up a catalogue of good practices and legal grounds with regard to support for housing communities,
- a proposal of establishing mechanisms by means of which it would be possible to oblige the owners of neglected properties to improve their technical condition,
- solutions regarding the rules of functioning of the Revitalization Committee.

As it can be noted, the range of problems touched upon within the framework of social consultations is wide. During the meetings, workshops, debates etc. the subjects differing in importance are discussed ranging from those insignificant from the point of view of the conducted revitalization undertakings such as a satisfactory number of grocery stores to the issues pointing to the necessity of sensitizing the society to the common affairs concerning revitalization.

Apart from social consultations in the broadest sense, the City of Łódź decided to conduct on a wide scale the informational and promotional campaign regarding revitalization. It was targeted first and foremost at the inhabitants of the run-down areas. „Communications focused on the residents of the tenement houses situated in the part of the inner city where revitalization is to be carried out (the Core of the Metropolitan Area) as well as at the people who inhabit the adjacent area (the space of the Metropolitan Area)” (*Raport z konsultacji społecznych priorytetowych projektów Rewitalizacji...*: 637). The primary aim of the campaign was to inform the inhabitants of the degraded areas and all the dwellers of the Łódź city about revitalization in the context of social participation and to encourage them to actively participate in the process. Popular information channels were used for the purpose of the campaign such as social media, posts or posters sponsored by the City which advertised revitalization and which were placed *inter alia* on noticeboards, in public spaces, means of public transport.

Active participation and involvement in the issues connected with the restoration process constitute an important aspect of revitalization efforts. The City does not resign from social consultations despite the Covid-19 pandemic and at the same time it has changed its form from the stationary to the online one.

Parallely, apart from social consultations conducted as part of revitalization efforts, numerous other initiatives are undertaken in cooperation with the City

which are organised by non-government organisations. These are projects concerning vocational activation, entrepreneurship support, social inclusion and social participation which are primarily financed from the European Funds.

In 2019 the „Incubator” foundation launched a project (it is supposed to end in June 2020) entitled „Łódzka rewitalizacja społeczna” [*„Social revitalization of the Łódź City”*] financed from the funds of the Regional Operational Programme for the Łódź Voivodeship for the years 2014–2020 which encompassed the activities aimed at supporting the professional activity of people aged over 29. 50 inhabitants of Łódź who resided in the revitalised area took part in the project. The undertaken activities focused *inter alia* on (*Łódzka Rewitalizacja Społeczna...*): organisation of vocational trainings and traineeships, vocational counselling or subsidising employment and equipping or supplying with additional equipment the worksites in the companies wishing to employ the participants of the project. The value of the project amounted to 977 000 zloty. Due to the fact that many people were interested in the project, currently the second edition is carried out. The scope of the project entitled „Łódzka rewitalizacja społeczna II” [*„Social revitalization of the Łódź City II”*] is convergent with that of the first edition. The objective of the project is to stimulate the vocational activity of 80 unemployed and vocationally passive people – the inhabitants of the revitalised area and the people relocated in connection with the implementation of the revitalization process. The project will be carried out in the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022. The total amount of the project amounts to 1 031 017.50 zloty including co-financing from the EU Funds totalling 927 915.75 zloty (*Łódzka rewitalizacja społeczna II...*).

Another project which refers to the community residing in the regenerated area of the city is called „Razem łatwiej – rewitalizacja społeczna i aktywizacja zawodowa” [*„Easier together – social revitalization and vocational activation”*] which is implemented in cooperation with the Polish Economic Society. As it was the case with the aforementioned project, currently the second edition is carried out. The objective of the project is social and vocational activation of the selected people by providing a comprehensive pathway of social and vocational support which ends in traineeships and gaining sustainable employment (*Razem łatwiej II – rewitalizacja...*). The total value of the first edition of the project amounted to 1 445 581.10 zloty (*Razem łatwiej...*), whereas in the case of the second edition the value totalled 1 132 508,94 zloty (*Razem łatwiej II*). The co-financing from the EU in both cases accounted for 95% of the total value of the project.

Until now 153 projects worth altogether 144 million zloty based on the principles of social participation have been implemented. The co-financing from the EU has amounted to 131 million zloty (90.97% of the total value of the projects). The funds obtained from the EU are usually allocated to educational programmes, vocational courses, foreign languages courses and their role is to

improve the life and everyday functioning of the people residing in the revitalized areas (*Kształcenie, aktywizacja, integracja...*).

Concluding the above deliberations, when conducting revitalization activities the City realised that „window dressing” projects which are implemented without taking into account the actual needs are misguided. The real participation of the inhabitants in the revitalization programme is of vital importance as only those spatial changes will be sustainable which are from the very beginning accepted by the residents or in which they take an active part.

## CONCLUSION

Revitalisation is not only the activity which is of a „hard” character and consists in investing in devastated buildings in order to restore them to their former „glory”. Revitalisation is also, if not first and foremost, concern and care extended to the citizens who live there. Currently it is hard to imagine a successfully conducted revitalisation process without the participation of inhabitants.

The concentration of social problems in the inner city of Łódź is of a multifaceted character (it refers to various aspects of life concerning *inter alia* education, financial stabilisation, the level of affluence, the occurrence of pathological phenomena) and at the same time progressive (the social problems which emerged were not systematically solved and thus there was an escalation of negative phenomena over the course of time). There is no long-term thinking focused on achieving the objective in a longer time perspective and at the same time there is also no sense of agency as regards exerting an impact on the environment in which one functions. Therefore, it seems to be vital to intensify the activities aimed at activation and social stimulation which will allow the inhabitants to fully identify with the needs ensuing from the place of residence. One of the activities which could facilitate the implementation of the aforementioned aims may be the fact of establishing a separate unit, i.e. the Social Activities Division affiliated with the Revitalization and Housing Bureau. The fundamental objective of the said unit is communication with the society.

The research hypothesis advanced in the article was verified. However, the conducted study indicates that the current level of involvement of the inhabitants of Łódź in the affairs connected with revitalization is relatively low. Nevertheless, since 2014 a systematic increase in the mobilization of the local community residing in the run-down area has been noted. From year to year the awareness regarding the important role of society in the revitalization process is rising. It is reflected in the increasing number of inhabitants who participate in the social activities offered by the self-government. The City *inter alia* organises meetings, workshops, and consultations. The Covid-19 pandemic has not resulted in giving up or even reducing the said activities.



In conclusion, the involvement of the inhabitants in the process of shaping urban revitalization policy is dependent, to the same extent, on the residents of the degraded quarters as well as on the attitude of the local authorities. It is certainly one of the tasks of the territorial self-government to consistently mobilize the community as regards taking an active part in the public life of the city and to raise awareness on the significance of social participation as a pathway to achieving better results of revitalisation. In contrast, as regards the inhabitants they should be willing to actively participate, implement the changes introduced by the local authorities and extend further concern for the revitalized space.

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## Społeczny aspekt rewitalizacji – studium przypadku miasta Łodzi

### Streszczenie

**Celem artykułu** jest przedstawienie istoty i wagi partycypacji społecznej w procesie rewitalizacji i realizacja jej założeń przez jednostki samorządu terytorialnego.

**Hipoteza.** W pracy przyjęto hipotezę, że bez zaangażowania społecznego osiągnięcie zamierzonego celu polegającego na odbudowie rewitalizowanego terenu jest bardzo trudne do zrealizowania.

**Metodyka.** Opracowanie powstało w oparciu o przegląd literatury przedmiotu, akty prawne oraz informacje uzyskane na temat działań z zakresu partycypacji społecznej przeprowadzanych w jednostkach samorządu terytorialnego.

**Rezultaty badania.** Koncentracja problemów społecznych w centrum Łodzi ma charakter wieloaspektowy (odnosi się do różnych aspektów życia dotyczących m.in.: edukacji, stabilizacji finansowej, poziomu zamożności, występowania zjawisk patologicznych) i postępujący w czasie (pojawiające problemy społeczne nie były na bieżąco rozwiązywane tym samym następowała eskalacja negatywnych zjawisk w czasie). Przeprowadzone badanie wskazuje, że obecne zaangażowanie mieszkańców Łodzi w sprawy związane z rewitalizacją jest wciąż relatywnie małe. Z roku na rok wzrasta świadomość znaczenia społeczeństwa w procesie rewitalizacji. Widoczne jest to we wzroście liczby uczestniczących mieszkańców w działaniach społecznych proponowanych przez samorząd. Miasto organizuje m.in.: spotkania, warsztaty i konsultacje. Nie zaprzestało tych działań nawet w dobie ogólnoswiatowej pandemii wywołanej przez Covid-19.

**Słowa kluczowe:** samorząd terytorialny, rewitalizacja, projekty rewitalizacyjne, partycypacja społeczna, drabina partycypacji.

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