

## Foreword

The Jagiellonian University Institute of Public Affairs releases an electronic monograph entitled *Contemporary understanding of revitalization in Poland*. It includes six texts confirming variety of the revitalization process, and simultaneously presenting the tools and managing behavior specific to the recession of crisis area revival in Poland. The respective chapters are the fruit of scholarly reflection born after international conference entitled *Procesy rewitalizacji a rozwój lokalny i regionalny* (Processes of revitalization and the local and regional development), organized by the Jagiellonian University Institute of Public Affairs in Kraków on 18-19<sup>th</sup> November 2009. The conference, apart from its merit, was also an anniversary celebrating 10 years of activity in the Institute of the most prominent in Poland specialist in revitalization processes, our worker – Prof. Krzysztof Skalski.

The conference's merit, after its end, has been developed and transformed into many comprehensive scholarly dissertations. Therefore, we decided to devote a number of Institute's publications to revitalization issues, summarizing the contribution of research community, as well as the contribution of experienced persons who decided to gather their experience and reflections. Mentioned publications include articles bringing up theoretical and practical aspects of revitalization. Therefore, apart from this monograph, we devote a doubled issue of the Institute of Public Affairs Scientific Journal "Zarządzanie publiczne" (Public Management, no. 1-2/2010) to the subject of the socio-economic and spatial revival of territorial units. Dissertations were published in Polish language as an electronic monograph of our Institute.

This publication is related to methodology of the revitalization projects implemented in Poland. Each chapter presents understanding revitalization in the context of local or/and regional development in a different manner. Currently, a reflection arises in the local government community as well as in the world of science. It assumes more effective, that is, in different words, complex approach to the problems of local development. It is a reflection over the projects assuming the ability to integrate several characteristics at the same time:

- firstly – to find solutions for particular social problems (unemployment, labour market development, improvement of housing and living conditions, including the elderly),
- secondly – to ensure permanent natural and cultural environment protection in the crisis areas,
- thirdly – to enable economic growth in these areas by organizing and ensuring conditions for spatial order, public space esthetics and urban landscape improvement equally,
- fourthly – to ensure the feeling of local identity and to enhance the identity of inhabitants with the space which again becomes their "little homeland" during the process of revitalization.

It is obvious that such different and complex objectives require proper legal and financial tools, as well as managing skills. In the circle of local government people, but also in the scholarly assemblies a belief grows in popularity that only local community-friendly revitalization would have the chances to gain its approval and credibility, and success stems from the conviction about projects' reliability supported by evidence, and about the ability to use them for people's own objectives – personal, family or business-related. Many members of local governments believe that persuasion and gaining investors are much more effective than administrative coercion, which nevertheless is sometimes an essential tool of a competent program operator.

The presented monograph is characterized both by a certain extent of subjects related to classic problems of urban revitalization, as well as a fresh look on Polish revitalization conditions, ambitious reflections filled with meticulous nuances on domestic cultural, psychological and semantic conditions connected to urban space.

This publication depicts the multiplicity of angles from which revitalization is observed by representatives of different fields of science. It is also a review of methods used by the authors in their research.

**Aleksander Noworól** introduces the reader into research issues over relations between the territorial development policy and revitalization. He starts by postulating that the intensity of development should be enhanced, which sets re-urbanization of the cities, including revitalization of crisis areas, as a basic objective of development. He further claims that the territorial development policy requires a fresh approach, taking into consideration the scale of degradation of habitats and areas, mainly in the cities. In the scope of the revitalization process management subsystem he analyzes the actions that are related to each of the elements constituting a territory (of spatial environment, human and

social-economic capital) with the use of available means of public intervention in the area of regulation and animation of development.

**Krzysztof Skalski** adopts a similar view. However, he emphasizes the analysis of the barriers in revitalization programs development in Poland encountered and disclosed during the last 19 years of actions. In order to remove them, he indicates the missing instruments of operational urbanism, government and regional programs, because desistance and delays in this field reach a few dozen of years in comparison with the countries belonging to the European Union for a longer period of time. In his article he also searches for connections between science and operational practice, especially in the view of tasks of the Institute of Public Affairs as a didactic unit. He therefore draws attention to the necessity of education in new professions that will be needed in the next few years in the revitalization development in Poland. Starting the analysis with the internal, Polish barriers and problems that need to be solved to make revitalization programs more effective, he further describes the issue of academic education of the management staff. He points out the need of educating the heads of revitalization programs, managers of pre-operational studies – the professions needed on the developing labor market. Even in the next ten years a couple of thousands of workers with new occupational profile and new competences will be needed in Poland. They will be also needed in professions related to social policy execution in the crisis areas, and to real estate operations and local housing policy management.

The another two authors of this monograph do research on the problems of spreading the programs and projects preparation: **Renata Przygodzka**, aptly emphasizing the crucial role of the local action groups created or currently creating on the initiative of the local community in rural areas, and **Paweł Hałat**, who widely describes the role of social participation instruments in the local revitalization programs of the cities in Poland.

**Anna Lubecka** and **Roman Batko** look at the revitalization processes from the view of the humanities. They bring up the issues of semantics of the city, its identity, perception and assessment in public opinion. In this view, revitalization programs are a significant interference in the shaped over generations image of the city's space and its districts. They may disturb it, change it, improve it, or contribute to its further destruction. Thus, the psychological and semiotic perspectives, describing the relations between the inhabitant or resident and the changing space in the area taking part in the Local Revitalization Program, are so apt. They are the way to understand how to, during and after the intervention, create conditions for the inhabitants to root again, the inhabitants both

previously residing in the particular area, and those returning – often accompanied by new inhabitants, younger and more affluent. Hence there are the problems of identification with the place and Weber's issues of "membership group" and "reference group". Anna Lubecka analyzes these problems by using the notion of gentrification and its effects, and Roman Batko by the analysis of the particularly significant places, such as home, temple, or cemetery. The more or less realized symbolism of such places, in the author's opinion significantly determines the relations between the inhabitant and the space being subject to revitalization – also by the "memory of the place revitalization".

We therefore present this monograph volume to the Readers by means of an electronic carrier. The articles included result from taking up the subject of revitalization processes management in the Jagiellonian University Institute of Public Affairs. Interest in this issue by the scientific community is also worth emphasizing. While encouraging to get acquainted with particular works, it must be emphasized that the methodical depiction of revitalization means: different points of view, various research perspectives, and territorially diverse analysis scales. We also gain the ability to go deeper into the heterogenic nature of revitalization processes in which are reflected difficult – although unavoidable – challenges of territorial development management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Aleksander Noworól, Krzysztof Skalski*