



Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development



Case Study Report

Goth Village

**A Thematic Village in Maslomecz as an Anchor for New Local Identity
and Multifunctional Development of Rural Areas, Poland**

Authors: Paulina Tobiasz-Lis, Karolina Dmochowska-Dudek, Marcin Wójcik,
Pamela Jeziorska-Biel, Tomasz Napierała, Anna Janiszewska (ULODZ)

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Authors:	Paulina Tobiasz-Lis, Karolina Dmochowska-Dudek, Marcin Wójcik, Pamela Jeziorska-Biel, Tomasz Napierała, Anna Janiszewska (ULODZ)
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Abbreviations

EFRD	European Fund for Regional Development
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SGI	Services of general interest

Abbreviations for interview quotes and references

GV Number	Interview belongs to the Goth Village case study Number of the interview partner (see also Annex 8.1)
Civ Pub Priv Sci	Civil actor Public actor (including political actors and the municipal administration) Private actor Scientist/ academic
L R	Local: Actor's main activities are on the local level Regional: Actor's main activities are beyond the local level
I E	Internal to the action under study External to the action under study
FG Number	Focus Group Number of the focus group (see also Annex 8.1)

Example: GV1 CivLE = Interview partner number 1 in the case study Goth Village is a civil actor on the local level, who is external to the action

Executive Summary

The history of Poland still influences its regional socio-economic diversification, including conditions and the quality of life but also to uneven formation of community values based on awareness and territorial identity of the population which leads to the problem of spatial injustice and cultural non-adjustment to the local space, to be revealed within this research. The mixing of people coming from different regions, a result of decisions after the World War II was a well-thought-out strategy aimed at increasing the effectiveness of instruments for controlling and manipulating the local communities.

Within the last 30 years, the core process of cultural transformations in rural areas is the empowerment of local communities and thus reinforcement of social and territorial identity. The landscape dimension of changes consists in, *inter alia*, the strive to improve the aesthetics of space, in particular public space, and various forms of settlement revitalisation. Some of them originate from ideas aimed at highlighting the main subject, topic, around which the ideas are implemented.

This study, under the framework of the RELOCAL Project aims to contribute to the discussion on the impact of place-based local actions and strategies on spatial justice understood as a fair and equitable distribution of resources within a locality. It presents activities undertaken by the Goth Village Association, established in the village of Masłomęcz, in Hrubieszów commune, lubelskie voivodeship, Poland. It is an interesting example of practices applied in the process of thematisation of rural space as a result of mobilisation and coordination of own resources and energy, creativity and hard work of people, supported by various external incentives.

The focus on social activities, grass-roots initiatives of residents and diversity of local resources require new interpretations and presentation of analysed issues in research on local systems (villages, settlement systems). It should be first assumed that every village is unique and specific, has its own original development path with a great role played by local knowledge available only to the members of a particular community. In social relations, a very important role is played by leaders who have knowledge and skills to lead the action group and stimulate its work at various stages of implemented initiatives. Also important is social partnership understood as a set of various relations, more or less formal, between stakeholders of local development processes.

The Goth Village Association has a specific potential for promoting spatial justice in the locality through activating localised resources and involving the whole community into common activities and interests. The Association runs a Goth Village – the most important tourist attraction in Hrubieszów commune, employs staff, engages volunteers, secures funds, carries out educational programmes and has become highly professional thanks to the engagement of external organisations – the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University of Lublin and Regional Museum in Hrubieszów. In pursuing their activities, the action has benefitted from the regional, national, and EU funding. These funding opportunities have been taken up strategically by the association and adapted (as far as the funding requirements allow) to their already existing activities.

The Goth Village as a new theme for the local development, tackles perceived injustices on various spatial levels. The first form of injustice takes place at a national level, as eastern Poland is regarded as disadvantaged in contrast to other Polish regions. Local development is perceived as a pre-condition for long-term positive development in relation to both, quality of life in Masłomęcz as well as the position and perception of this village in the wider regional and national context. The action's aims respond both to issues of procedural and distributive justice.

1. Introduction

In Poland, just like in other countries, rural areas are in the time of transition. Facing challenges among which the most important are declining and ageing populations, problems with youth retention, limited economic and social opportunities for residents, loss of local services and higher costs of living, rural communities reposition themselves through diversifying their economic base, enhancing the quality of life, and seeking for new functions and roles.

This study focuses on the development of the thematic Goth Village in Masłomęcz – a small rural settlement located in the remote, easternmost part of Poland (see Map 1, p. 7), with a complicated post-war history and suffering from outmigration, high unemployment and weak economic infrastructure, especially since the political and economic transitions of the 90s. **This particular action was chosen as the example of place-based strategy for local development and spatial justice understood as a fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them.** The case study results are subsequently clustered into eight research dimensions, exploring the local context, the implementation, and the impact of the action in relation to spatial justice.

Thematic villages, showing a relatively long history of both successes and failures in local development (RZEŃCA, 2015; ATKOČIŪNIENĖ, KAMINAITĖ 2017), reflect both the emergence of multifunctional rural areas and the search for new anchors of local identities and place attachment. The ways the community defines, celebrates and expresses itself are major contributing factors to its ability to withstand economic, political, and cultural transitions. Culture, and heritage which often bring ideas of particular themes for developing thematic spaces are described not only as features used to improve the quality of life but as a basis for the future of rural communities (CUESTA, GILLESPIE, LILLIS 2005; DUXBURY, CAMPBELL 2011).

This report aims to focus on the idea of thematic villages, which in this particular case, of the economically and socially impoverished area, have led to empowering local community, redefining local identity and strong place attachment as well as multifunctional development. We will identify practices applied in the process of positive changes: social, economic, and landscape-related, in a selected – active thematic village, as a result of mobilisation and coordination of own resources and energy, creativity and hard work of people, supported by various external incentives. The uniqueness of Masłomęcz residents' initiatives consists in achieving exceptional effects as a result of strengthening relationships between people and space and overcoming a problematic history of the post-war settling of newcomers (following the earlier resettling of the native residents) from various parts of the country, and adaptation to the new place of living.

The idea for the Goth Village in Masłomęcz emerged out of a 25-years long archaeological excavations which took place in the Hrubieszów Valley since the 1970s. As they have been finished, efforts have been made by the local community to bring archaeology back to the village. With professional help of University researchers and employees of Regional Museum in Hrubieszów, the Goth Village Association has been established.

The municipality of Hrubieszów is involved in the action insofar as they provide mandate and space for the Goth Village – an open space museum and a living skansen, becoming the most important tourist attraction of the area. Additionally, the action receives financial and conceptual support through the municipal administration and external sources (ESF, ERDF, Swiss Contribution).

The action responds to various national discourses and developments, although it is not directly guided or managed by them. Firstly, there is an ongoing debate on disparities in

terms of the quality of life between rural and urban areas in Poland and a growing interest in multifunctional rural areas. Secondly, an important political objective that emerged over the last years is the strengthening of regions in the east of Poland, especially peripheral or rural areas. As people increasingly move to metropolitan and urban centres, many less populated regions suffer from a lack of infrastructure, vacancies, and demographic change. The action is influenced by both these discourses, as they try to fight against these phenomena.

Stage	Tasks	Timing	Location
Stage I	Preparation of the concept and study plan	April-May 2018	Desk research, University of Lodz
Stage II	Study visits	June-July, September-October 2018	Masłomęcz Village, Hrubieszów Municipality
Stage III	Focused interviews with representatives of local community in Masłomęcz, Goth Village Association, Local Authorities from Hrubieszów Commune, Regional Museum	20th June 2018	Masłomęcz Village
Stage IV	Individual semi-structured interviews with representatives of local community in Masłomęcz, Goth Village Association, Local Authorities from Hrubieszów Commune, Regional Museum	June 2018	Masłomęcz Village
Stage V	Participatory observation of the Archaeological Fest	29th July 2019	Masłomęcz Village
Stage VI	Processing and summarising the material collected; preparation of the report	August-September 2018	Desk work, University of Lodz

Table 1: Schedule of stages and tasks

2. Methodological Reflection

To design the case study focused on Goth Village exemplifying place-based strategy in local development, preliminary desk research of literature and documents have been conducted. As a result, the timeline of all activities undertaken to establish the Goth Village in Maślomęcz has been prepared as well as the anatomy of the action has been analysed to distinguish main actors involved in its particular phases.

The collection of primary data was conducted in the summer and autumn of 2018. At the beginning, a Focus Group activity was organised and conducted in Maślomęcz to gather community members, local stakeholders and experts and observe interactions between these groups of people, 16 in total (Figure 2). Following the focus group interview, 9 semi-structured interviews were carried out. The interviewees were: local members of tourism sector (two women running agritourist farms), local leaders, leaders and members of local NGOs (firemen, Farmers' Wives Association, Goth Village Association), mayor; town councillor responsible for the tourism sector, director of Regional Museum in Hrubieszów (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Focus group activity in Maślomęcz



Figure 3. Individual semi-structured interview

The interviews were designed to take the form of a conversation guided by the researchers (KVALE, BRINKMANN 2009). Although the interviews were semi-structured, the respondents were encouraged to talk freely on the prepared discussion points. These included questions over the mental mapping of the village surroundings as well as about interviewees' level of involvement in the Goth Village action and a discussion of perceived strengths and weaknesses of undertaken activities. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed to be thematically categorised and interpreted later on.

Following the focus group activity and individual interviews, along with a research walk, the photographic documentation was collected. Finally, authors participated in Archeologic Fest – an annual one-day festival which takes place in the Goth Village on the last Sunday of July.

This primary data was further supplemented with quantitative and qualitative data from secondary sources, including existing statistical data, to contextualise local-level findings (Census data, local chronicles, newspapers, and municipality internet site). Multi-method studies, also referred to as mixed methods or methodological triangulation, allow for the generation of data from different sources (data triangulation) to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the research question (BREWER, HUNTER 2006).

Access to stakeholders of the action in general was easy. It should be stressed that the research team have already met people involved in the Goth Village along the Project fo-

cused on building the Network of the Most Interesting Villages in Poland framed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2015-2016. Leaders of the local community in Małomęcz, members of the Goth Village Association as well as local authorities in Hrubieszów commune and employees of the Regional Museum were interested in the RELOCAL project and ready to meet and share their knowledge, experiences and opinions.

Throughout the research, the relationship to the action's stakeholders was friendly and close. This can of course raise the doubt that the analysis is skewed in favour of the action. Yet, the researchers are aware of this issue and regularly reflected on it over the course of field work and analysis. In fact, the closeness to the actors is perceived as an advantage, as it allowed observing and gathering information in informal meetings and talks. Thereby, it can be considered that most stakeholders openly stated their views instead of holding back information.

3. The Locality of Masłomęcz

3.1 Territorial Context and Characteristics of Masłomęcz Village

Masłomęcz is a small but very dispersed village of 380 inhabitants (100 households), located in Eastern Poland in the Lubelskie Voivodeship, not far from Hrubieszów and only 8 km from the boundary with Ukraine (See Map 1). The area around Hrubieszów features splendid natural qualities and rich history of villages, with numerous palaces and manor houses, churches, chapels and shrines, mounds and tumuli – perfectly preserved in the typically farming landscape, where rivers Bug and Huczawa cross the soils, classified among the most fertile in Poland. The region is classified as predominantly rural by Eurostat (2013).



Map 1: The location of Masłomęcz Village (Source: ULODZ).

However, the very first moments in Masłomęcz appear – against the regional background – to disappoint. Contemporary character of Masłomęcz is marked by a complex set of political, historical and demographic factors. The former multicultural society, composed of Ruthenians, Poles and Jews have undergone during the war and the post-war period numerous processes, changing its structure. Among the most important of these processes was the resettlement of the Ukrainians from Poland to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in the years 1945-46 and the “Vistula” action in 1947, consisting in the resettlement of the Ruthenian population to the western and northern regions of Poland, as well as the settling of the Polish population, repatriated from the USSR in the period 1944-48 and later on in the 1950s. It is exactly the houses of the Polish settlers of the post-war years – small, identical houses of red brick, with an orchard, surrounded by fields, without fences – that constitute the distinguishing feature of the village nowadays. (Figure 4).

The former splendour of the village can only be seen in the partly preserved pattern of roads and field plots. There are no more traces of the manor farmyard, which served the property, composed of Masłomęcz and the neighbouring Czerniczynek, the Uniate (Eastern Catholic) church, the windmill, all of which existed yet at the beginning of the 20th century (See Maps 2, 3 & 4), confirming the significant position of the village in the local settlement system. There are no traces in space, nor in the memory of the inhabitants, who in large part came to this area after World War II from other regions. Only the oldest members of the local community mention these non-existing places which they only heard about coming here with their families to settle down in the 1950s.

As in the case of many similar rural communities in Poland, due to a declining number of children, the primary school in Maślomęcz established for newcomers after the World War II has been closed in the 1980s and turned to the private household.

Post-war recession of functions and loss of these activities which created the supralocal rank of Maślomęcz, as well as a decrease in the population, resulted in peripherisation of the village and underinvestment in services to meet the socio-economic needs of the population.



Maps 2, 3, 4: Historical maps of Maślomęcz Village



Figure 4. An example of the home of the settlers in Maślomęcz

Current local economic activities in Masłomęcz village are very poorly diversified, and the productive structure is still based mainly on farming and particularly the cultivation of wheat and sugar beets. The unemployment rate of 14,6% in 2017 in the area, according to the National Statistical Bureau is much above the national average of 6,6%. The strength of civil society measured by the density and activity of NGOs (1,18 per 1000 inhabitants in 2015) is weaker than in the national context (3,13 per 1000 inhabitants) as well as for rural areas in Poland (2,69 per 1000 inhabitants).

Name of Case Study Area	Masłomęcz (village) within Hrubieszów commune (gmina).
Size	Approx. 7,92 km ²
Total population (2018)	380
Population density (2018)	48 inhabitants per km ² (own calculation)
Level of development in relation to wider socioeconomic context	Disadvantaged within a wider underdeveloped region of Eastern Poland, Lubelskie Voivodeship
Type of the region (NUTS3-Eurostat)	Predominantly rural (Eurostat 2013)
Name and Identification Code of the NUTS-3 area, in which the locality is situated (NUTS 3 Code as of 2013)	PL312 – podregion chełmsko-zamojski / chełmsko-zamojski subregion
Name and Identification Code of the NUTS-2 area, in which the locality is situated (NUTS 2 Code(s) as of 2013)	PL31 – lubelskie voivodeship (region)

Table 2: Basic socioeconomic characteristics of the Masłomęcz Village

3.2 Spatial (in-)justice and territorial governance within Masłomęcz village

Analytical Dimension 1: Perception of spatial (in-)justice within the locality

Current residents of Masłomęcz village are in a high share the first or the second generation of post-war settlers' descendants, however **their territorial attachment is very strong** and their positive feelings about the village are often underlined. This is largely the effect of 25 years of archaeological excavations which made an important footprint on the village's society. First and foremost, it was something that the whole community shared together, no matter from which parts of pre-war Poland they came. Secondly, archaeological excavations distinguished the village on the scale of Poland. Summer time with archaeologists and their students, the common fest at the end of each season of excavations developed the feeling of uniqueness and pride among residents of Masłomęcz village. **This "local effect" disrupted answers on spatial (in-)justice as people feel happy about their place of living, underline the beauty of the natural landscape, an interesting history and tend not to notice too many disadvantages.** However, few common ideas shared by all respondents came up during the Focus Group activity and interviews, where the idea of spatial justice has been introduced.

Spatial (in-)justice as perceived by interviewees occurred to be shaped by personal experiences and feelings. Respondents usually compared their village to (1) neighbouring

spaces, (2) the further surrounding (subjectively perceived regional, national conditions) and (3) its higher position in the local settlement system in the past. Much attention was also paid to internal disproportions within the village of Masłomęcz. Thereby, **boundary-making** process as a result of such comparisons between perceived places occurred here on different spatial and temporal dimensions. Reference frameworks for the perception of spatial boundaries addressed by the respondents in Masłomęcz can be grouped into four layers.

Firstly, and secondly, as compared with the past (temporal reference) and the local settlement network around Masłomęcz (spatial reference), people expressed their sorrow about the contemporary functions of the village. Currently, there is only one shop fulfilling basic needs and the day room – the most important meeting place for social activities of residents. **The distance to services of general interests is one of the main sources of spatial injustice as perceived by people in Masłomęcz.** It has to be stressed, that interviewees remember the period before the transition of 1990s when investments typical for rural industrialisation under exogenous development model of rural areas in post-war Europe took place in Masłomęcz. There was a primary school in the village and agri-food services (cattle purchase, milk collection, dairy, coal composition, fertilizers production and sale) (GV1PrivLI, GV2PrivLE, GV3PubLI). Only few respondents: the oldest residents, local leaders, members of NGOs, e.g.: Goth Village Association, Farmers' Wives Association or local leaders spoke about material cultural heritage of Masłomęcz, namely: the manor farmyard, the windmill, the church that have disappeared during the World War II or during the post-war period (GV1PrivLI, GV2PrivLE, GV3PubLI, GV8PubRE, GV9PubRE).

Thirdly, there is a **distinction between urban and rural areas** regardless the spatial and administrative scale (national, regional, local). The countryside is nothing special in the view of respondents. If not the Goth Village, they would describe Masłomęcz as ordinary – the village just like a thousand others in Poland *"If not the Goth Village, nothing would distinguish Masłomęcz. We would live a monotonous life in the rhythm of the seasons and agriculture"* (GV3PubLI). The inequalities are displayed in migration flows of people from rural to urban areas.

Lastly, on a local level, throughout all interviews **spatial boundary-making** is portrayed in different contexts. As the village has a very dispersed character, respondents were asked to draw (on an aerial photograph of the area around Masłomęcz) and describe the centre and borders of the village. Interviewees didn't have problems either with pointing the borders led along fields, forests and local roads, nor with central parts of the settlement identified with the location of former agri-food services (GV3PubLI) or the contemporary objects, namely: day room with a new playground, the chapel, the shop, the bus stop and the Goth Village (See map 5). Interviewees underlined the importance of these places perceived as symbols of the development and most characteristic for the village (the Goth Village), meeting places (the day room with a playground, the Goth Village, the chapel, the shop, the bus stop), "the window to the world" (the bus stop). Within the central part of Masłomęcz, expressed by highly positive feelings of pride, joy, happiness and satisfaction, there is a place identified with crisis, ugliness, and shame. Indeed, the purchase of scrap on the farm neighbouring to the day room and the Goth Village makes a very visible contrast and negatively affects the aesthetics of the area (GV2 PrivLI, GV3 PubLI, GV4 CivLI, GV5 CivLI, GV6 PubLI, GV8 PubRE) (See Figures 5, 6, 7). Interviewees expressed their frustration, anger and helplessness against this situation, yet the problem concerns the private property.



Figure 5. The place of crisis – scrap purchase



Figure 6. The place of development – the day room

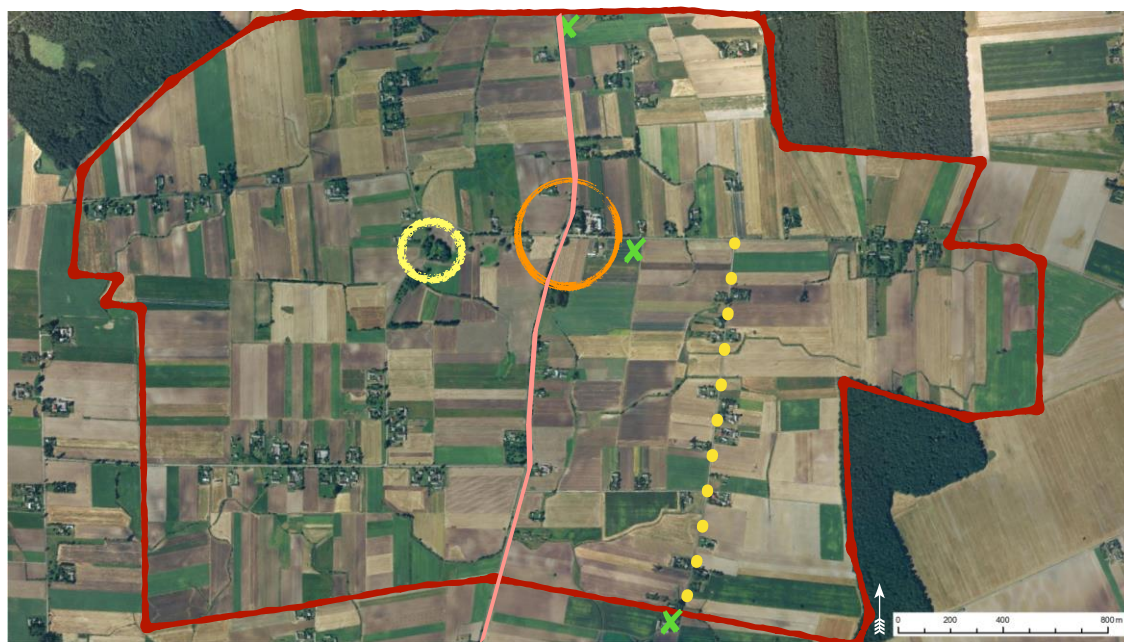








Figure 7. Spatial contrast in the centre of Masłomęcz village

The village is crossed by the regional road No 844 from Hrubieszów to Mircze and due to the dispersed character of Masłomęcz, the speed limit for cars is 70 km/h. Lack of a pavement, or a bicycle track makes it dangerous in opinion of respondents.

Interviewees easily marked old and new places on the map of their village. The old was linked with the line of houses along Zielona Street built up for post-war settlers in the 1950s (Figure 3, Map 5). Respondents pointed on the remains of the Uniate (Eastern Catholic) cemetery – the only existing place drawing back to the pre-war history of this area. The building of the former primary school was also mentioned as the old part of the village, at the same time being an example of the response to the demographic crisis in peripheral rural areas of Poland, where schools are closed and turned to other functions (in case of Masłomęcz – residential function). New places in Masłomęcz were identified with new economic activities of village's residents: the agri-tourist farm and a bike rental – both being results of the Gotania project (see: Part 4, The Action) as developments of tourist infrastructure accompanying the Goth Village.

Interestingly, despite the close proximity to Ukraine and the post-war border changes resulting in massive migration flows and settlement actions, the border is currently an important “mental barrier” for many inhabitants of Masłomęcz, especially since 2004 when it became the external border of the EU.



-  Borders of Masłomęcz as perceived by residents
-  Center of the Masłomęcz as perceived by residents:
 - the meeting place (the day room, the chapel, the shop, the bus stop)
 - the place of development (the Goth Village)
 - the place of spatial contrast
 - characteristic place (the Goth Village)
-  The dangerous place - the main road
-  The former Manor
-  Zielona Street with houses for post-war settlers
-  New services: agritourist farms, bike rental

Map 5: Masłomęcz as perceived by its residents

Analytical Dimension 2: Tools and policies for development and cohesion

Analysis of the notion of spatial (in-)justice within local development plans and tools for cohesion has been presented in Table 3 and described below with attention to characteristic features of the space of social injustice, their geographical location and reasons for its appearance in particular parts of the Hrubieszów Commune, especially Masłomęcz Village.

In the Local Development Strategy of the Hrubieszów Commune for the years 2008-2020, it was pointed out that **unjust municipalities are characterized by 1) high, structural unemployment caused by inactivity and inadequate education, and 2) a very large asymmetry in the age and sex structure that results from a significant outflow of women aged up to 30 years from the commune, as well as from over mortality of men over 60 years of age. The document indicates that eliminating social injustice should be implemented, among others, through activities carried by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sector.** Masłomęcz, as one of the typical agricultural villages, according to the Strategy, should be transformed into a tourist place, where cultivated areas characterized by the lowest class of soil quality should be afforested, used for growing trees, ornamental shrubs and herbs, or used to build cottages. Building entrepreneurial attitudes should take place through the development of folk handicrafts as well as by supporting agritourism.

In the Local Strategy for Solving Social Problems of the Hrubieszów Commune for the years 2014-2020, reference is made only to the demographic and economic problems of the population. Issues regarding education, culture, health, public safety, physical educa-

tion have been marginalized. Importantly, the document ignored the spatial context. The problems and ways of solving them were indicated only at the level of the entire commune, while no specific areas requiring intervention were pointed out. The document postulates: 1) providing the inhabitants of the Hrubieszów commune with assistance and support in the scope of health and safety protection, 2) providing residents of the commune with wide access to cultural, educational, sport and recreation facilities, 3) creating conditions for the development of entrepreneurship and creating new jobs. It is worth noting that the **proposed activities are not directly related to the most serious problems of people in need of solutions diagnosed in the same document: poverty, unemployment and chronic diseases.**

In the Local Scheme for the Nutrition of Children and Youth in the Hrubieszów Commune for the years 2018-2020, **peripheral locations in relation to educational facilities were defined as spaces of injustice.** It has been diagnosed that the problem of child malnutrition concerns people from poorer families who travel longer distances on their way from home to school. Therefore, for logistic and financial reasons, they are not able to provide children with meals of appropriate quality and frequency.

According to the information provided by the Local Housing Management Program in the Hrubieszów Commune for the years 2013-2020, there are no communal nor social premises in Maślomęcz, whereas they are available in other municipalities.

One of the reasons for social injustice in the Hrubieszów commune is the relatively low level of education of inhabitants, as well as the low level of entrepreneurial attitudes, as indicated in the Local Development Strategy of the Hrubieszów commune in the years 2008-2020. In the Communal Strategy of Solving Social Problems of the Hrubieszów Commune for the years 2014-2020, three main reasons for the emergence of social injustice, which are the basis for subsequent intervention, namely: poverty, unemployment and chronic and severe diseases were indicated. What's more, in the Communal Program of Prevention and Solving Problems of Addictions for the year 2018, it was pointed out that social injustice could be related to the phenomenon of alcoholism.

Document	Does the document present the maps of locations in need of intervention?	Does the document present the maps showing the spatial directions of intervention?	Do the notions of "social justice" or "spatial justice" appear in the document?
Local Development Strategy of the Hrubieszów community 2008–2020	–	–	–
Local Strategy for Solving Social Problems of the Hrubieszów Commune 2014–2020	–	–	–
Communal Program of Assistance to Families for the years 2018–2020	–	–	–
Communal Program of Prevention Against Aggression at Home and Protection of Victims of Aggression at Home for the years 2017–2020	–	–	–
Communal Program of Prevention and Solving Problems of Addictions for the year 2018	–	–	–
Local Scheme for the Nutrition of Children and Youth in the Hrubieszów Commune 2018–2020	–	+	–
Local Housing Management Program in the Hrubieszów Commune for the years 2013–2020	–	–	–
Local Spatial Development Plan for Hrubieszów Commune	+	+	–

Table 3: Assessments of the spatial injustice in the strategic documents of the Hrubieszow Municipality

A document strictly related to spatial issues is the Local Spatial Development Plan for Hrubieszów Commune. Importantly, this document refers only to those issues of spatial policy and local government intervention that are related either to the protection of the natural environment or to the protection of cultural goods. The principles of locating housing, communication, service, production and agricultural investments have been discussed in the document, but they have not been justified, and they have not been referred to the idea of spatial justice. The document indicates, however, that Masłomęcz, as part of the spatial policy of the Hrubieszów commune, will be treated as a settlement unit with functions of agriculture and basic services for the local community. At the same time the need for developing local services in Masłomęcz village has been reflected here.

In the Communal Program of Prevention and Solving Problems of Addictions for the year 2018 it was indicated that it is necessary to set detailed rules and monitor the issuance of licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages. In connection with the above, the analysis of the co-occurrence of social problems resulting from excessive alcohol consumption and the distribution of alcoholic beverages appears to be the key. Unfortunately, such analysis was not prepared in the said document, nor was there any formal need to prepare it.

One of the most serious social problems diagnosed in the Hrubieszów commune is domestic violence. The phenomenon is estimated primarily based on the registration of the so-called "Blue Cards". In 2017, questionnaire surveys were carried out among students of the 5th and 6th grades of primary and junior high school students in the Hrubieszów

commune regarding domestic violence. Analogous studies were conducted among 48 adult residents of the commune. Unfortunately, in the Communal Program of Prevention Against Aggression at Home and Protection of Victims of Aggression at Home for the years 2017-2020, no spatial analysis of the results of the conducted research (the inventory of the "Blue Cards" and questionnaires) was presented.

The Communal Family Support Program for 2018-2020 was dedicated to solving the abovementioned problems of poverty, unemployment, helplessness in matters of care for ill persons as well as alcoholism and domestic violence. It was pointed out that solving the above-mentioned problems is possible primarily through the support of entire families in which these problems occur, and not only from individual people affected by these problems. As in the case of other strategic documents, unfortunately the spatial dimension of the planned intervention has not been included in the discussed Program.

4. The Action – Goth Village becoming An Anchor of Local Development and Place Attachment

4.1 Basic Characteristics of the Action

The turn in the life of the Maślomęcz village took place in 1977 when archaeologists from the Lublin University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska started excavations in Hrubieszów Valley. Between 1977 and 2002, they discovered a complex of Goth settlements and cemeteries from the 2nd-4th centuries. Initially distrustful of “strangers”, the residents of Maślomęcz slowly got used to the presence of archaeologists every summer (Figures 8 & 9). Their work became, with time passing, an element of the annual cycle of life of the community, until then dictated only by the natural cycles, the farming and family activities. Professor A. Kokowski brings back in his books the unusual relations, which developed between the residents and the archaeologists in the village of Maślomęcz. After a couple of years, every excavation season ended with a collective feast of the archaeologists and the local community. This tradition is being continued, and the Archaeological Feast is nowadays the most important regular event, organised in Maślomęcz by the Goth Village Association (KOKOWSKI 2014).



Figures 8 & 9. Students of archaeology in Maślomęcz in 1995 and 1996 (Source: GV3CivLI)

Undertakings that consist in thematisation of a Goth Village resulted in excellent effects, both social and economic, together with the creation of new landscape forms. **The Goth Village in Maślomęcz consolidated the local community anew. Its formal organiser is the municipality of Hrubieszów, but the substantive supervision and the scientific coordination is carried out by the Regional Museum in Hrubieszów together with the Institute of Archaeology of the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin.**

The Goth Village Association is preparing the workshops and the expositions of the ancient craftsmanship. The open-air exhibition contains the reconstructions of several structures (a Goth hut, a semi-dugout, a weaver's hut, a hut of a warrior-merchant, and a farm-yard of a pot maker), made conform to various technologies of the Roman period (See Figures 10-11). These structures serve not only as the background for the cyclic open-air events but are also used in conducting living history lessons, during which ancient crafts are shown and exercised, martial art shows are organised, along with the presentations of the ancient art of cooking (See Figures 12-13).

The Goth Village is now a fundamental element, generating the organised tourist traffic towards Maślomęcz and is an important element in the realisation of the multifunctional development of the village. Every year it is visited by approximately 5-6 thousand people however, only the Archeological Fest organised on the last Sunday in July, draws attention

of about 2-3 thousand tourists. The open-air museum around which a new centre of the scattered settlement keeps developing is filled with new facilities and events and thus becomes the heart of the village – not only the natural meeting place of the community but also their commonplace to identify with, work on and realise new ideas. It is an extraordinary example of grassroots actions and social stimulation of village residents who identify with the Goth tribe that lived there 1,700 years ago, strengthen their social and territorial ties.

4.2 Evaluation of the Implementation of the Action in Masłomęcz

Analytical Dimension 3: Coordination and implementation of the action in the locality under consideration

The following section gives an overview of the way Goth Village Association implements and manages its activities in Masłomęcz. Attention is also given to the impact that other stakeholders have on the action. A brief timeline on the development of the thematic Goth Village has been presented in Figure 10.



Figure 10. The timeline of actions undertaken to create a thematic Goth Village in Masłomęcz

The Goth Village Association was formally established in 2010, although the local community started to be involved in the reconstruction and promotion of the cultural and historical heritage of the region already in 2004, in response to winding up of 25-year-long archaeological excavations and an emptiness, sense of loss they had after the last season in 2002. In effect, after the idea of Professor Kokowski to bring archaeology and Goths back to Masłomęcz, a partnership of the residents, NGOs (namely: the Farmers' Wives Association and the Fire Brigade) and authorities were set up in the form of a Local Action Group "Better Tomorrow". Their initial plan was to use the historical and cultural heritage of Goths to develop tourist attractions and services. In 2006 on the plot of land purchased by the Hrubieszów commune, a wooden hut with a straw roof was constructed, a careful reconstruction, on the scale of 1:2, of a Goth hut from the 3rd-4th centuries. This structure constituted the beginning of the "Goth Village", an open-air museum, which is being continuously developed and aims to present examples of everyday activities of ancient Goths along living history lessons, workshops and fests (Figures 11-14).

Between 2007 and 2009 projects focused on historical education of the village's inhabitants and shaping their skills in arts and crafts typical for Ancient Goths were realised. In 2009, with support from the young archaeologists, students of Professor Kokowski, having obtained jobs in the Regional Museum in Hrubieszów, "The Goth Squad" was established. Nowadays, the Squad gathers about 30 persons of various age, who, after a series of train-

ings with the professionals – experienced craftsmen, specialists in reconstruction, and under the supervision of the employees of the Regional Museum in Hrubieszów, reconstruct with archaeological accuracy the crafts, everyday life rituals and martial arts of the ancient Goths. This initiative to conduct inter-generational activities was noticed by the media, the neighbouring municipalities, and became a new symbol of the region.



Figures 11 & 12: Traditional constructions in Goth Village



Figures 13 & 14: Archaeological Fest in the Goth Village

In 2009 after the visit of the Swiss Contribution representatives in Maślomęcz, Hrubieszów Commune received considerable financial support for the project “From a vision to modern management of Gothania region” whose purpose was to create a tourist brand of the entire region and stimulate the residents in economic terms. All the tasks in the program, have already been successfully implemented and reflected in the local development of the village and the community.

The Goth Village development is accompanied by the establishment of two agri-tourism farms where, in addition to accommodation and a variety of services (bike and ATV rental, horse riding), one can buy and taste local products. Vegetables, mushrooms, fruit, juices, honey and liqueurs delight with their colour and taste. The Maślomęcz shop located next to the Goth Village sells several kinds of Gothic beer with labels featuring a drawing of a Gothic cottage and the symbol of Gothania.

Interviewees agreed that since the establishment of the Goth Village Association, projects still rely on the **know-how and decision-making capacity of external leaders** (Regional Museum in Hrubieszów, the University) but there is a better possibility to apply for funds on these actions (GV1 PrivLE, GV2 PrivLI, GV3 PubLI, GV5 CivLI). The current Head of the Association Board as well as the Director of the Regional Museum in Hrubieszów – former students of prof. Kokowski, play an important role, being perceived as representatives of the Goth Village also because they implement new ideas and take over most of the dialogue with other civil and public actors. However, this situation is not perceived negatively

by the residents involved in the action. All in all, the mode of **leadership of the association can be considered simultaneously well-regulated and non-hierarchical.**

According to interviewees view the **relationship of the Goth Village Association with local authorities of Hrubieszów commune is very positive** (GV1 PrivLI, GV2 PrivLI, GV3 PubLI, GV5 CivLI). It has to be underlined that **there is a very stable local government administration and the Hrubieszów commune leader occupies his position since 1992.** This leads to the long-term stability of the project, as political changes do not constrain the favourable attitude and resources obtained by the Goth Village Association from the community.

Analytical Dimension 4: Autonomy, participation and engagement

From the presented case study, being an example of the successful bottom-up initiative assisted by external incentives, three aspects emerge all of which are closely interrelated and significant for local development, community integration and place attachment.

The first was the creating social ties within the community as well as with external actors and leaders (increased trust and growth of social capital). The second was the 'cascade effect' of first projects in the community which led to the creation of many other initiatives. The third was bringing together areas and sectors that had previously been disconnected (breaking down barriers between the local community, professionals, local stakeholders, entrepreneurs).

Leaders – in Maślomęcz, archaeologists – were the first factor to form a group and to impart adequate dynamics of implementing new ideas which seems to confirm prior conclusions of W. IDZIAK ET AL (2015) and who claimed that **expert external assistance might be necessary at key stages, especially by providing professional knowledge** of markets and marketing. However, in this particular case, the theme for the village came as the natural consequence of the excavations carried out for 25 years. When ultimately finalised in 2002, they brought the sense of loss and longing for actions to bring it back in a new form: *"Nothing was happening when they (archaeologists) left. Our village was just like all the others. With nothing interesting, distinguishing. Life became boring (...)"* (GV2PrivLI). **Leaders were needed here as the trigger to start the process, and the local community was ready to work together.** *"When archaeological excavations finish, nothing is left behind. All exhibits go to museums and holes in the ground are filled up (...) In Maślomęcz, people were eager to keep the archaeology in the village, and we decided to help them (...) A very active and successful Farmers' Wives Association was the first partner to work with over the project"* (GV7CivLI). **Then institutions and organisations (the Regional Museum, the Lublin University, the Goth Village Association) became important to stimulate and integrate visions within the social activity.** Imparting them with a legal and organisational dimension, led in consequence to gradual creation of physical forms for carrying out ideas (infrastructure) and reproduction of activity, especially concerning cyclical cultural events. *"What is most important for us and we care for is to keep the village authentic and historically correct"* (GV5CivLI, GV7CivLI). Of special significance are, in particular, such undertakings as the development of a Goth Squad uniting residents over common history, interests and activities aimed at popularisation of the historical and cultural heritage of the village. Special teaching curriculum in schools concerning the most ancient history of the region or organisation of contests on the subject of the culture of Goths is also vital. This diversity of projects and a mixture of 'professional' and open activities facilitate easy **participation and engagement** of the village residents to the action and allow accommodating different interests and talents. As a result, people in the region become enthusiastic about archaeology and proud about their place of birth. Activities offered by the Goth Village Association sometimes result in particular life decisions of the community members as one of the young residents of Maślomęcz decided to study archaeology. There are also

possibilities to work for the Goth Village and thus staying in the area for longer underlined by interviewees: *“Today young people leave rural areas to study and never come back. The Goth Village attracts people with interesting projects keeping them here or encouraging to be back. They have always been successful in applying for funds showing to people that if You really want to do something, You can do it and have a happy life in the beautiful countryside”* (GV1PrivLI).

As a consequence, people in Masłomęcz associate the Goth Village with development and the meeting place, where they like to spend their time and evaluate it very high from various perspectives: as being essential for the local development of the village and the local community, effective in its actions and of quite long-term effects. When asked for adjectives best describing the Goth Village, they listed: interesting, useful, open for everybody, being the source of pride for people in Masłomęcz. It should be underlined, that in line with what has already been found by many scholars, the analysis of the interviews from the case study confirms the importance of aspects such as **leadership, availability of resources and the role of education** in developing thematic village. Also, interviewees highlight that the projects have brought about a greater sense of community and place identity.

Comparing the case of Masłomęcz with the person-process-place framework of place attachment, it might be stated that all dimensions of the bond between the village and its residents are strengthened in this particular location (Figure 15). As to the person dimension, at the individual level interviewees mentioned their memories of excavations, summer feasts with archaeology students, and the fame of the village at these times due to the discovered past. However, these experiences, as well as these about post-war re-settlements and constructing the village (the place and the social ties) anew, were common for all interviewed members of the community. The three psychological aspects of place attachment typically highlighted in its various theoretical and operational definitions are affect, cognition, and behaviour. Affect is thought to be of a central role in the person-place bond, and indeed positive emotions about the village of Masłomęcz appear in all interviews. People are proud of the village, happy to live there and to be a part of this place. They identify themselves with Ancient Goths, also by joining the Goths Squad, which is an example of place attachment as cognition. The third aspect of the psychological process dimension of place attachment is the behavioural level, in which attachment is expressed through actions engaging members of the community – in Masłomęcz these might be actions undertaken by the members of the Goth Squad, e.g., Archeological Fest, living history lessons, construction of new elements of the village’s space. Perhaps the most critical dimension of place attachment is the place itself. The term “community of place” is of very high relevance here because it describes social ties rooted in place, such as Goth Village that supports social interactions.

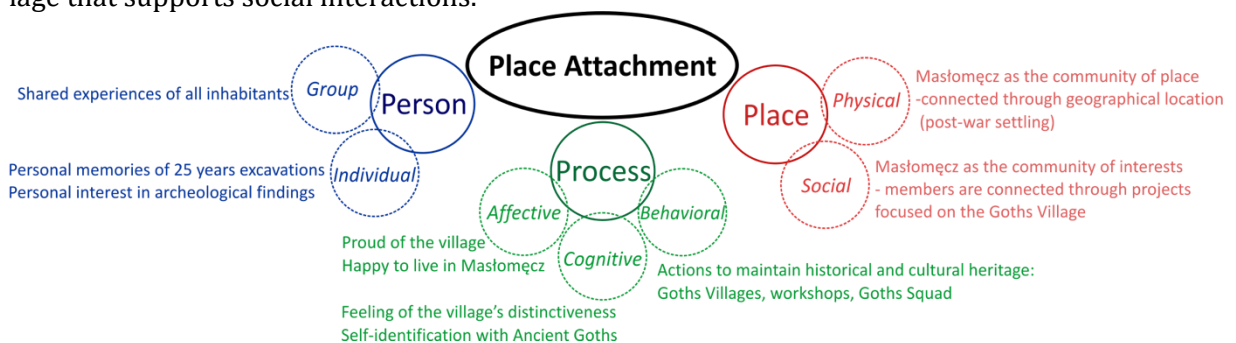
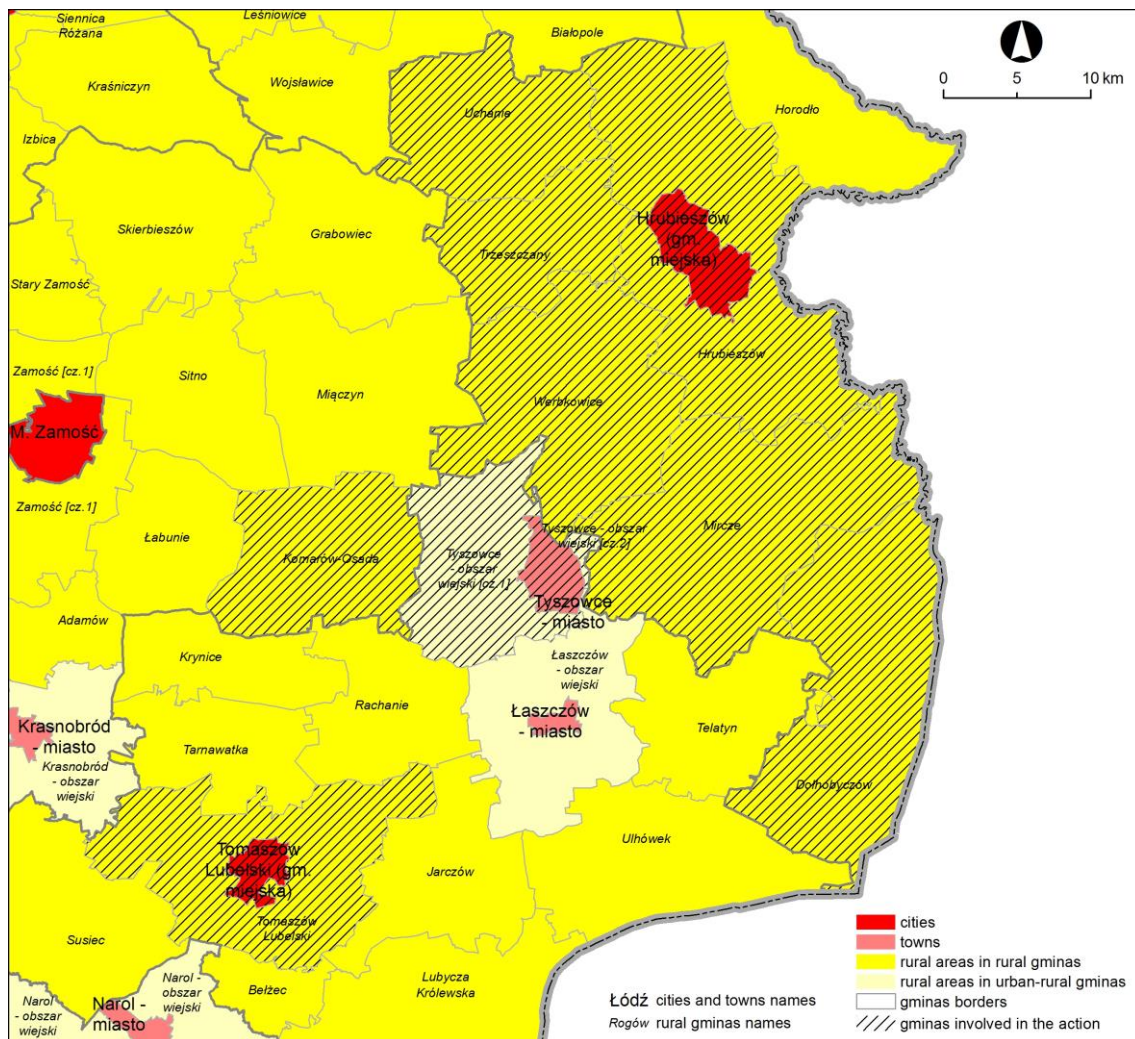


Figure 15: Towards the place attachment in Masłomęcz village exemplified on a tripartite model (Source: ULODZ based on SCANNEL, GIFFORD 2010)

Analytical Dimension 5: Expression and mobilisation of place-based knowledge and adaptability

In the case of Maślomęcz, the process of learning and adapting to the new environment started just after the II World War with the post-war resettlements of people. Thus, it might serve as a laboratory for following the process of place attachment and the features of this person-place bonds in this particular location and specific conditions among which the establishment of the thematic village seems crucial. Based on local historical assets and developed thanks to a bottom-up initiative together with external actors' assistance, it well exemplifies the neo-endogenous concept of local development.

The Goth Village served as an inspiration to establish similar projects in neighbouring rural areas, thus becoming an action of **regional importance**. Maślomęcz was a central part of the project: "From vision to the modern management of the subregion of Gotania" (2011-2016) integrating 10 rural communes (LAU 1) from 3 districts (LAU 2): District of Hrubieszów (7 communes), District of Tomaszów Lubelski (2 communes), District of Zamość (1 commune) (Map 6). All these localities have a common cultural and historical heritage, associated with the stay of the Goths in Hrubieszów Valley. Fostering this relationship of the Goth Village in Maślomęcz with the neighbourhood areas might be estimated as an important regional development factor.



Map 6. The spatial scope of the project: "From vision to the modern management of the subregion of Gotania"

The **neighbourhood work** of communities mentioned above currently encompasses strengthening local activity, promoting entrepreneurship, NGOs and integrating their development policies. It is a response to the long-term development challenges of the peripheral, rural areas struggling with the migration outflow, non-effective farming, lack of local and regional identity.

The Goth Village shows that they have been and are collecting place-based knowledge to subsequently adapt their activities to the specific context of the neighbourhood. The analysis has shown that the action is perceived as an outstanding association in the village and the surrounding region due to its professional organisation and methodological strength. Over the past years, a shift took place from rather impulsive projects to a management form. The Goth Village Association has also proved to be strong in the acquisition of financial funding, as well as organisational and financial backing of the Hrubieszów Community.

The spectacular success of the action should also be seen as a result of fruitful cooperation with local and regional civil and public actors and secondly a result of identifying motivated people willing to develop their interests and social ties (NGOs namely: Farmers' Wives Association, the Fire Brigade, local schools). *"We pay much of our attention to continuously develop our professionalism by applying for funding soft-skills projects to improve our qualifications."* (GV5CivLI).

5. Final Assessment: Capacities for Change

Synthesising Dimension A: Assessment of promoters and inhibitors

From the analysis presented within previous chapter, we can conclude that **leadership, availability of resources and the role of education, human capital and social trust** are the most important assets of the Goth Village project in Masłomęcz. The way how the Goth Village became a main spatial element of Masłomęcz and the main driver for its socio-cultural and economic development is built upon these assets, directly speaking to issues of **procedural justice**, and promoting socio-cultural development in the locality. Local sociocultural development is perceived as a pre-condition for long-term positive development in relation to both, quality of life in Masłomęcz as well as the position and perception of the village in the wider regional and national context. In this way, the action's aims also respond to issues of **distributive justice**.

Among the numerous elements, which contribute together to the originality of the described action, we can point out the universal ones, without which the process of local development would not stand a chance of success. The “cultural roots” are strengthened or start to grow anew when, first of all, **people are capable of delivering the foundations for the appearance of “mutual trust”** – the cornerstone of any society. A true verifying test for the local community is constituted by the emergence of a group of people, whose most important characteristic is the **capability of collaborating**. Rural social relations, which become the engine of various undertakings, are based mainly on the neighbourhood and family environments. The factor, which is constitutive for the group and which endows it with appropriate dynamics, is represented by the **leader or leaders**. Their philanthropic work for the sake of the community, along with the developed relations between them and the environment, is a guarantee for the local society that adequate protection is extended over the concept. The space of activation of the community is formed by **organisations, which are the stabilisers of the vision and the character of the social activity**. Formalisation of organisations, definition of their legal dimensions, leads, consequently, to the determination of the actual development strategy, to gradual creation of the physical forms for the implementation of ideas (infrastructure), and to the reproduction of activity, especially in the sphere of definite cyclic returns of the events (e.g., in the framework of the annual calendar of events).

A set of favourable conditions and opportunities have allowed Goth Village to become a relevant sociocultural development actor in the locality. In this particular case, the **identification and use of specific resources were of key importance, combined with critical external incentives in the form of first process creators (experts) and the later possibilities of financing the entire initiative (e.g. EU funds)**. Adjustment to the “place” in the process of thematisation of space resulted from the cooperation of the local community with external stakeholders: local authorities of Hrubieszów Commune and experts. With their help, the specific assets of the environment were identified to develop further local stories, related to the original motif. Those original concepts constitute an extraordinary act of creation of the place and its adjustment to the needs of the local community and visitors.

Concluding, we see as **main promoters** influencing the scope and impact of the action

- The authentic theme for developing thematic village (the ancient history of the area);
- The mutual trust of the local community and external actors (archaeologists) enabling to use results of archaeological excavations in the village as the development asset;

- Strategic capacity of the Goth Village Association members in defining, reflecting and pursuing their aims to build up a platform for sociocultural activities in Masłomęcz;
- The learning capacity of the association, including its flexibility and adaptability to react effectively when opportunities arise (for instance, through funding programmes)

Apart from these internal factors, which are related to the set-up and management of the association, further supporting factors play a role

- The organisational and conceptual backing of the Hrubieszów community, Regional Museum in Hrubieszów and Lublin University of Marie Curie-Skłodowska. Without this support, the action would not have been possible to achieve the importance and role it has today.
- The positive influence of EU funding programmes on the strategic development of the association into a sociocultural development actor.

As the **main inhibitors** influencing the action's scope and impact we might conclude:

- Peripheral location of Masłomęcz and the Goth Village which allows for its interaction only within the region (Lubelskie voivodeship).
- Seasonal character of the Goth Village activities – the open-air museum is opened for organised groups (children from schools, kindergartens) and individual visitors between May and October.
- Demographic crisis in rural areas (especially in peripheries) hinders generational replacement among members of the Goth's Squad involved in the action of the Goth Village.

Synthesising Dimension B: Competences and capacities of stakeholders

Among the main mechanism producing spatial injustice in the locality under this study – Masłomęcz village and its wider region are: 1) difficult adaptation to new place during the post-war period and local/regional identity crisis; 2) underdevelopment of local economy due to the domination of the production function of rural areas; 3) underdevelopment of services of general interest; 4) outmigration of the young and qualified – as a result of the previous three mechanisms; 4) low social capital. In this context, the Goth Village is an interesting case which **empowers the local community** and involves its members in constructive forms of place making and economic entrepreneurship.

Interviewed external stakeholders involved in the action agreed that future development of the locality, including its economic development, is rooted in its sociocultural fabric and civic engagement. Without it, there is no economic development, neither endogenous (local entrepreneurship) nor in form of external investments. Linked to this question is the role and function given to the sociocultural initiatives in Masłomęcz and more specifically, the Goth Village, as local development agents.

The Goth Village Association has taken over quite a responsibility in initiating and helping to establish the Goth Village as the central place in Masłomęcz and the most characteristic tourist attraction of the area being an important trigger for multi-functional rural development. They employ staff, engage volunteers, secure funds, carry out spatial development plans and have become highly professional.

Local authorities of the Hrubieszów community appreciate specific **potential for localised actions** of the Goth Village Association and sees its members as partners in local and

regional development. Over the years the community has given the Goth Village Association freedom to develop the idea and contents of the Goth Village as an open air, living skansen.

The success in strengthening social relations and place attachment in local community of Masłomęcz village by actions initiated by the Goths Village Association are well reflected in responses of interviewed residents who claimed that this is them who depend on the further development of the village. Local authorities and external stakeholders were indicated in the second place.

Synthesising Dimension C: Connecting the action to procedural and distributive justice

Observation of the processes of broadly conceived rural renewal under the thematisation of Masłomęcz village presented in the paper allows for the definition of two contexts of creation and use of rural space. The first of these is associated with the fulfilment of the endogenous functions, that is – maintenance of memory and cultural identity of the village, oriented towards the past, the refreshment of the local or regional stories as the condition for the continued existence of the communities, with their roots in a particular territory. The second context relates to the development of the exogenous functions, especially tourism and recreation, which, in the conviction of numerous municipal authorities, are supposed to contribute to economic strengthening of the self-governmental bodies, promotion of the respective area, as well as multi-functional development (and, consequently, to the improvement in life quality of the inhabitants). It corresponds somewhat to the demands of the contemporary times, i.e. it is most often the expression of consumption of the rural environment. The first of the contexts plays the sensitising role, forming the atmosphere of calm and reflexion, while the second one refers, in particular, to the function of movement and social mobility.

The case studies of the local communities, developing good practices in the domain of self-development, social self-organisation, and reconstruction of the local identity, are an essential way to uncover the essence of the social world and to attempt comprehending the specific features of “rurality” in its new contexts and interpretations.

The researched example of the Goth Village is a local action in rural peripheries of Poland facing problems of long adaptation after post-war resettlements and mixing of local communities. In terms of **distributive justice**, it aims to strengthen social and territorial bonds within the local community and provide possibilities to develop individual economic activities along development of the Goth Village as tourist attraction and educational centre. In terms of **procedural justice**, it also aims to be an anchor institution for the interests of vulnerable (young, unemployed) people, seeking to involve them in local development as they feel that they belong to the place. With a strong regional range of influence on schools attending the living history lessons organised by the Goth Village Association, it promotes the history of the area and shapes regional identity among visitors of this place.

The Goth Village Association over the years has become an important stakeholder for socio-cultural development in the village of Masłomęcz. The most important **achievement** in both the social and spatial context has been the development of the Goth Village – a living skansen presenting reconstructed material cultural heritage as well as way of life and traditions of Ancient Goths as discovered by archaeologists during 25 years of their work in the area of Hrubieszów Valley. The Goth Village Association also promotes empowerment and civic engagement, specifically amongst the youth, through their involvement in the everyday functioning of the skansen as well as wider actions and seasonal events.

We have argued that the association has a specific potential for creating **impact in the locality** by raising localised resources (such as local community engagement, involving

vulnerable population groups). The impact of the Goth Village on the locality could not have been achieved otherwise (for instance, by formal or higher-level actors), as its resources and potential are deeply localised: trusted networks with external stakeholders and other sociocultural initiatives of the local community and its neighbourhood are its social capital. The specific open and dialogue-oriented way of setting up and developing the action is directly linked to its social capital in form of credibility and trust. In this sense, the action is contingent upon place, upon time and the people (one of interviewees said that the Goth Village wouldn't be established if not the feeling of loss after the end of archaeological excavations, the strong will of the local community to bring archaeology back to the village and already thriving NGOs, namely Farmers Wives Association (GV7 CivRE)).

The achievements of the action could not be explained without a range of **internal and external factors** (see Section A). Going beyond the internal factors, which relate to the specific way how the Goth Village Association is set up and managed, there are parts of the action which could be transferred or up-scaled, as there is a number of thematic villages in rural areas of Poland, also in the neighbouring localities of Masłomęcz. However, in this specific case, the story for the development of thematic village was authentic – coming from the history of this place and thus becoming an anchor for the long-term development. Furthermore, the authenticity of the village's operations is still guaranteed by a substantive supervision of Regional Museum in Hrubieszów and the Lublin University of Marie Curie-Skłodowska.

The example of the successful thematic Goth Village in Masłomęcz points to the very important role of leaders - especially in the initial steps of the action when the local community needs a well-established vision and division of work.

As we have seen that strategic capacity, flexibility and adaptability are specific strengths of the association, there is reason to believe that the Goth Village will be successful in further development, although frames shaped by expectations of both the local community and visitors as well as the organisational and financial options change over time.

6. Conclusions

In Poland, just like in other countries, rural areas are in the time of transition. Facing challenges among which the most important are declining and ageing populations, problems with youth retention, limited economic and social opportunities for residents, loss of local services and higher costs of living, rural communities reposition themselves through diversifying their economic base, enhancing the quality of life, and seeking for new functions and roles.

Since the beginning of the market economy in the 1990s, we observe in Poland the emergence of a multifunctional rural regime which influences new non-productive functions in local economies and new lifestyles reflected in the rural landscape. The parallel core process within these transformations is the empowerment of local communities and thus reinforcement of social and territorial identity. However, it has to be stressed that these are complicated processes, difficult in view of the economic crisis of that period, with bad living conditions, and a number of other phenomena, which turned out to be an often obstacle for the real social change, based on the recovering of the cultural identity, including pride in the place, feeling of own value, conviction of the qualities of countryside (BUKRABA-RYLSKA 1992).

The success of transformation was in many areas, especially the peripheral ones, delayed, and became truly possible only in connection with the acquisition of the structural funds from the EU directed to the strengthening of the social capital and to revitalisation and broadly understood renewal of the countryside (CZAPIEWSKI 2010; FEDYSZAK-RADZIEJOWSKA 2010; JEZIORSKA-BIEL AND PSYK-PIOTROWSKA 2012). The ideologically motivated discrimination against the countryside, where the strong ethos of peasantry and rural community persisted, was the source of appearance of the social feeling of inferiority, shame, and – consequently – adoption of models, imitating the urban ones, both in the sphere of space management (e.g. abandonment of regionalism in the architecture), and in the socio-cultural sphere – primarily as regards the weakening of the system of rural values. On the other hand, in the already quite long period of transformation and the European experiences of Poland, during which the consecutive generation of Poles matured, there were quite some examples of good practices and social initiatives, oriented at stimulation of the community and neighbourhood activity, at the renewal of rural space, and at promotion of rural values.

Among main results of thematisation of rural spaces observed in Masłomęcz village were: 1) development of social interest in the village's past, 2) development of new skills and social relations, 3) development of strong local and regional identity. From the perspective of local economies, creating this thematic village was: 1) the trigger for the multifunctional development, 2) a possibility to develop new economic activities (entrepreneurship), local products, events. Actions undertaken in this village also made visible footprints on its landscape bringing new forms and architectural dominants as well as new "central places" (centres) of Masłomęcz.

What is being achieved in terms of delivering greater spatial justice?

The RELOCAL project asks in how far spatial justice, as a fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them, can be achieved through place-based strategies. We argue that the thematic Goth Village is an example for a place-based project that successfully works towards greater spatial justice within its locality, the village of Masłomęcz.

Since its establishment in 2010, the Goth Village Association became an important local development actor and main driver for sociocultural development in Masłomęcz in terms of procedural justice. Implementing the longest project and the widest in terms of territorial scope “From vision to the modern management of the subregion of Gotania”, a bottom-up organisational structure has been employed, capacitating individuals to develop their own ideas and projects. Financial and conceptual support to small-scale activities supporting the main theme around the history of ancient Goths, use place-based knowledge to engage people in the multifunctional development of their rural neighbourhood, and lobby for the interests of youth and cultural actors on a regional and national level. Consequently, they promote the involvement of young people – and other residents – in local decision-making processes, rural renewal, and rural development in general.

Regarding the just distribution of resources and opportunities, the Goth Village achieved to enrich the village’s economic functions as well as educational and cultural scene by promoting spaces for new social activities beyond mainstream offers. This leads to promotion of the village as more attractive to a young, creative, and innovative place and improves its image on a supra-regional level. Moreover, as a consequence of its ability in acquiring and allocating funds, Goth Village can offer young people at least short-term job perspectives and motivate them to stay in the village.

What are the policy changes ahead for bigger impact?

Throughout the analysis, several external mechanisms have been identified that promote the development of associations such as The Goth Village Association in a locality and that could be transferred to other villages in the EU. Firstly, the backing of a stable since 1992 local authorities (Hrubieszów commune) and the conceptual support of experts (archaeologists from Regional Museum in Hrubieszów and the Lublin University of Marie Curie-Skłodowska) as well as financial resources provided by institutional structures are essential in developing a large-scale project like the living skansen of the Goth Village. Thereby, it is important that local politics give freedom to the respective internal and external civil actors in developing the contents of the project, as they often have the greater potential in mobilising place-based knowledge and local resources. At the same time, the local community has to be ready and willing to act. In the case of the thematic Goth Village in Masłomęcz, there was a strong local asset in the form of spectacular results of 25-years long archaeological excavations and the discovery of ancient Goths’ settlements which served as a ready theme for cultural development of the area.

Going beyond the stable in this case local level, the acquisition of regional, national, and EU funds has the potential to back local initiatives.

The grassroots initiatives of the inhabitants, strengthened in many instances with the possibility of acquiring funds for the local development, play a particular role as a definite reaction to the processes of destruction of the rural identity in conditions of the imposed concepts of rural urbanisation as the way of modernising the countryside nowadays. Construction of the new “rurality” constitutes one of the elements of contestation concerning the consumption patterns, which dominate the mass culture, and are promoted, in particular, by the domestic and foreign mass media. Social activity is being reduced, as a consequence, to an execution of certain investment projects, which serve to adapt physically (e.g., through the revitalisation of the individual items) and symbolically (by describing the meaning) the rural space to the new functions.

The essence of the return to the roots, taken in the particular space, is constituted by the uncovering of the universe of local meanings, which emerge in the course of complex relations between nature and people. Focusing on the culture of local environments allows for interpretation of a village as a “place”, an original construct – simultaneous process and

effect of the collaboration of people with the closest neighbourhood in definite civilizational conditioning. Paying attention to the singular facts, stories of the life of people, intertwined in the specific conditions of the environment – related to nature and culture, makes a highly fascinating and, at the same time, needed perspective for the description and explanation of reality.

Among the numerous elements, which contribute together to the originality of the described village, we can point out the universal ones, without which the process of local development would not stand a chance of success. The “cultural roots” are strengthened or start to grow anew when, first of all, people are capable of delivering the foundations for the appearance of “mutual trust” – the cornerstone of any society. A true verifying test for the local community is constituted by the emergence of a group of people, whose most important characteristic is the capability of collaborating. Rural social relations, which become the engine of various undertakings, are based mainly on the neighbourhood and family environments. The factor, which is constitutive for the group and which endows it with appropriate dynamics, is represented by the leader or leaders. Their philanthropic work for the sake of the community, along with the developed relations between them and the environment, is a guarantee for the local society that adequate protection is extended over the concept. The space of activation of the community is formed by the institutions, which are the stabilisers of the vision and the character of the social activity. Formalisation of the institutions, definition of their legal and organisational dimensions, leads, consequently, to the determination of the actual development strategy, to gradual creation of the physical forms for the implementation of ideas (infrastructure), and to the reproduction of activity, especially in the sphere of definite cyclic returns of the events (e.g., in the framework of the annual calendar of events).

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Uchwała Nr XXXVIII/214/2018 Rady Gminy Hrubieszów z dnia 20 marca 2018 roku w sprawie przyjęcia Gminnego Programu Wspierania Rodziny na lata 2018-2020.

8. Annexes

8.1 List of Interviewed Experts

List of interviewed experts	Date of interview	Type of expert
GV1 PrivLE	2018-06-20	Agritourist farm 1
GV2 PrivLI	2018-06-20	Agritourist farm 2; NGOs
GV3 PubLI	2018-06-21	Local leader
GV4 CivLI	2018-06-21	Project team
GV5 CivLI	2018-06-20	Project leader
GV6 PubLI	2018-06-20	Local leader
GV7 CivRE	2018-06-20	Regional cultural institution
GV8 PubRE	2018-06-20	Regional administration
GV9 PubRE	2018-06-20	Regional administration

List of focus groups and attended meetings	Abbr.	Date	Number of participants
RELOCAL Małomęcz Case Study Workshop	FG1	2018-06-20	16

8.2 Stakeholder Interaction Table

Type of Stakeholders	Most relevant 'territorial' level they operate at	Stakeholders' ways of involvement in the project (What do we gain, what do they gain)
Local politicians	Local (commune)	Insights into governance processes; importance of and critical opinions on the action; place-based knowledge about local contexts (identification of disadvantaged areas); future development and challenges of the village
Local administration	Local (commune, village)	Insights in governance processes; comprehension of practical realisation of political activities; history of the initiative; importance of civil organisations for the village and the commune
Agritourist farms (private business)	Local (village/neighbourhood)	Important role in development of tourist infrastructure in the village
Project team (non-profit-/cultural organisation)	Local (village) Beyond local (supra-local/powiat and regional/voivodeship)	Detailed insights in the action and coordination of its numerous sub-actions; history and future goals of the action; discussion of possible future challenges; communication and relationship to local and regional administration and politicians; network and partnerships to other initiatives
Non-profit/civil society organisations	Local (village)	Importance and comprehension of civic engagement processes of residents and associations on the local level
Local and regional state offices/representations	Local (village, commune) Beyond local (supra-local)	Local and beyond local perception of the village; supra-local influence of the action
Cultural institutions and associations	Beyond local (supra-local, regional)	Perspectives of other cultural institutions and associations on the action; connectedness and relationship of cultural and civil actors
Media	Local (commune) beyond local (regional and national)	Media-related perception of the action; communication of public perception and opinion of the action
Academics/Scientists	Beyond local	Scientific perception of the action; dis-

	(regional and national)	cussion of local resources; future development of the village
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8.3 Map(s) and Photos



Photo 1. Masłomęcz in 1960s. On the way for the wedding



Photo 2. Archaeological excavations in Masłomęcz



Photo 3. Common fest – local community and archaeologists



Photo 4. Agrotourist farm in Masłomęcz



Photo 5. The day room in Masłomęcz



Photo 6. The farm where the big cemetery of Ancient Goths has been discovered – empty information



Photo 7. Old and new housing in Masłomęcz on one residential plot of land



Photo 8 and 9. Graves on a Uniate cemetery



Photo 10. Souvenirs in the entrance to the Goth Village



Photo 11. The Goth Village



Photo 12. The Goth Village



Photo 13 and 14. The Goth Village – inside huts



Photo 15. The Goth Village



Photo 16. The Goth Village

8.4 Additional information

Documenting the research instruments

According to the schedule of the investigations (see Table 1 in page 4) the research involved (I) the focus group activity, (II) the in-depth, individual interviews, which were then deepened with (III) mental maps. We provide below the specifications, related to the implementation of the research methods applied.

I. Focus group activity framework

1. What were your first experiences with the Goth Village in Masłomęcz?
2. When and under what circumstances you made the first contact with the idea of establishing the Goth Village in Masłomęcz?
3. What was that attracted your interest in this idea and how was this linked to previous experiences?
4. What was important for you when You started to implement the idea of the Goth Village in Masłomęcz?
5. Is the social collaboration in the form of the Goth Village Association a good method for the development of the locality?
6. If so, why?
7. If not, why? What other form would be interesting for you?
8. What are the main benefits that a local community acquires owing to the development of the initiative of realization of the Goth Village?
9. Who (persons, groups of persons) is most intensively involved in the activities?
10. What is your assessment of the formal procedures in the course of deployment of such projects and their realization?
11. What is the role of the municipality / county in the support for such projects and their realization?
12. What is the role of the local Action Groups (LAGs) in the support for the projects?
13. Is the idea of development of the public spaces reflected in the documents, defining the directions of local development (the development strategy and others)?
14. What is your main general impression regarding the idea of development of the Goth Village in Masłomęcz?
15. What do you find essential in the deployment of such initiatives?
16. What is your very first association with the notion of “thematic village”?
17. What are your further developmental priorities?
18. What would you improve upon?
19. How can one yet intensify the social engagement?
20. Do you have a vision of the state you would like to achieve?
21. Are you looking for partners in other places (formation of a network)?

II. Guidelines for the in-depth, individual interviews with the stakeholders in Masłomęcz

- a) What is the role /share / contribution of the Respondent in the realization of activities, concerning the establishment of the Goth Village in Masłomęcz?
- b) What features of the character / competences / skills made it possible for the Respondent, in his/her opinion, to stand up to the challenge of this process?
- c) What are the characteristics / distinctive features of the local society of Masłomęcz?

- d) Do, in the opinion of the Respondent, the activities, related to the Goth Village in Maślomęcz, even out the spatial inequalities in the village and contribute to the spatial justice?
- e) What, in general terms, does it mean to the Respondent that a given initiative (project) is spatially just?
- f) What have been the changes over time due to the establishment of the Goth Village in Maślomęcz? What, in the opinion of the Respondent, had the village looked like earlier?
- g) Where one can find changes in the space of the village?
- h) Have the effects of the Goth Village establishment, in the opinion of the Respondent, the persistent character?
- i) Do the undertakings, associated with the Goth Village, exert an influence on the level of social activity of the local community?
- j) Is, in the eyes of the Respondent, the village of Maślomęcz characterized by a worse access to various resources (which ones?) than other comparable villages?
- k) What were the lessons, learned by the Respondent, on the basis of the experiences, associated with the work on development of the Goth Village?
- l) How does one live in Maślomęcz? What the Respondent likes the best in the respective place?
- m) What is important nowadays for the residents of the respective village? What do the potential development plans for the village look like?

III. Questions to the mental map

1. Please, mark on the map / describe the centre of the village. If there are concrete objects in the centre of the village – which ones are they? Since when they have been functioning? Are they important? What are the reaches of their influence? What are the functions of the village centre with respect to the village inhabitants, in the opinion of the Respondent?
2. Please, mark the boundaries of the village on the map. What constitutes the boundary of the village? Are the boundaries distinct or are they difficult to identify?
3. Please, mark on the map the places / items in the village, which are linked with Goths in Maślomęcz?
4. Please, mark on the map of Maślomęcz and characterize shortly:
 - the oldest fragments of the village;
 - the most recent fragments of the village;
 - the fragment(s) of the village, where crisis can be perceived;
 - the fragment(s) of the village, where development can be perceived;
 - the dangerous place(s);
 - the place(s), where you like to spend time;
 - the place(s), where the inhabitants meet;
 - the beautiful place(s);
 - the ugly place(s);
 - the places of biggest contrasts;
 - the place(s), characteristic for the village;
 - the places, which do not exist any more, and of whose existence in the past you are aware.

Questions, concerning the perception of the Goth Village project from the side of the inhabitants

5. What adjectives and descriptors depict in the best manner the Goth Village?
6. Is the Goth Village, in your opinion, a „good place” in Maślomęcz? Why?

7. Who, in your opinion, has the biggest influence on what is happening in your neighbourhood (the physical space in the village)? *[Please, refer to the response categories below using the following scale: 1 – I decidedly disagree; 2 – I disagree; 3 – hard to say; 4 – I do rather agree; 5 – I decidedly agree]*

Category	Scale				
Inhabitants themselves	1	2	3	4	5
Local authorities	1	2	3	4	5
The Social Cooperative	1	2	3	4	5
Local entrepreneurs	1	2	3	4	5
Associations and Foundations	1	2	3	4	5
Other actors (who?)	1	2	3	4	5

8. Please, use the scale below in order to assess the significance of the Goth Village in Masłomęcz. Please, mark the appropriate value. The closer to the left expressions – the better the assessment, the closer to the right expressions – the worse the assessment.

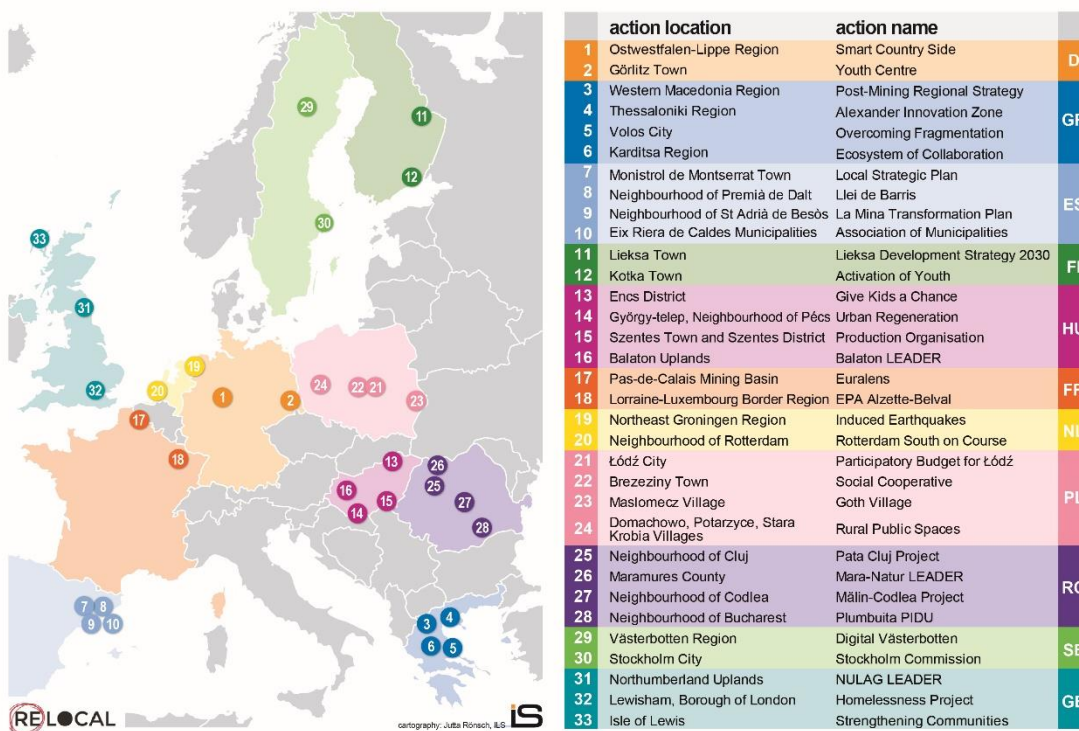
important for village development	5	4	3	2	1	unimportant for village development
important for the inhabitants	5	4	3	2	1	unimportant for the inhabitants
effective in its performance	5	4	3	2	1	ineffective in its performance
needed	5	4	3	2	1	not needed
having positive impact on space	5	4	3	2	1	having negative impact on space
producing persistent effects	5	4	3	2	1	producing transitory effects
equalising the access to resources	5	4	3	2	1	limiting the access to resources

The RELOCAL Project

EU Horizon 2020 research project '**Resituating the local in cohesion and territorial development**' –**RELOCAL** aims to identify factors that condition local accessibility of European policies, local abilities to articulate needs and equality claims and local capacities for exploiting European opportunity structures.

In the past, especially since the economic and financial crisis, the European Social Model has proven to be challenged by the emergence of spatially unjust results. The RELOCAL hypothesis is that **processes of localisation and place-based public policy** can make a positive contribution to spatial justice and democratic empowerment.

The research is based on **33 case studies** in **13 different European** countries that exemplify development challenges in terms of spatial justice. The cases were chosen to allow for a balanced representation of different institutional contexts. Based on case study findings, project partners will draw out the factors that influence the impact of place-based approaches or actions from a comparative perspective. The results are intended to facilitate a greater local orientation of cohesion, territorial development and other EU policies.



The RELOCAL project runs from October 2016 until September 2020.

Read more at <https://relocal.eu>

Project Coordinator:



UNIVERSITY OF
EASTERN FINLAND

University of Eastern Finland

Contact: Dr. Petri Kahila (petri.kahila@uef.fi)



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