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## DETERMINANTS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO THE CITTASLOW CONCEPT BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF GÓROWO IŁAWECKIE

### UWARUNKOWANIA ROZWOJU MIASTA WEDŁUG IDEI CITTASLOW NA PRZYKŁADZIE GÓROWA IŁAWECKIEGO

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**ABSTRACT:** This article analyses the awareness of the inhabitants of Górowo Iławeckie regarding the participation of the city in the Cittaslow development network and identifies the conditions of its development. For this purpose, a survey was conducted among the residents of Górowo Iławeckie and questionnaires were distributed to employees of the Town Hall and the Mayor of Górowo Iławeckie. The article also deals with the subject of the city's activity aimed at achieving the goals promoted by the Cittaslow network related to revitalization.

**KEY WORDS:** Cittaslow, local identity, local awareness, city development, Górowo Iławeckie

**ABSTRAKT:** Celem artykułu jest zbadanie świadomości mieszkańców Górowa Iławeckiego w związku z uczestnictwem miasta w sieci Cittaslow oraz identyfikacja uwarunkowań jego rozwoju. W tym celu przeprowadzono ankietę wśród mieszkańców Górowa oraz rozdano kwestionariusz pracownikom Urzędu Miasta i Burmistrzowi Górowa Iławeckiego. W artykule ponadto poruszono temat aktywności miasta ukierunkowanej na realizację celów promowanych przez sieć Cittaslow oraz odniesiono się do aspektu rewitalizacji obszaru miasta.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** Cittaslow, tożsamość lokalna, świadomość lokalna, rozwój miasta, Górowo Iławeckie

## Introduction

The modern world is experiencing an era of intensive development of civilization, with changes taking place at all levels of life: global, national, regional and local. At present, an important role is attributed to local endeavours, as from this stage we start the implementation of activities aimed at the broader development of an area or the improvement of the living conditions of its inhabitants.

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Concepts or models of urban development have adopted diversified forms. Increasingly, however, there is a concern that many negative phenomena that have occurred in the cities during the past few years, have resulted from the implementation of projects originally supposed to contribute to their improvement (Solarek, 2011). Taking this into consideration, one must consider the universal phenomenon of globalization and the pursuit of a desired level of competitiveness in the constant “devastating” battle of entrepreneurs, cities and regions.

Industrialization, urbanization and globalization create a high level of changes in the public and private spheres. Of course, this is a period of huge opportunities, but also deepening uncertainty, the lack of a sense of stability and deconstruction of constant values (Gruszecka-Tieśluk, 2013). The megatrends in the literature (including globalization, digitization and metropolisation) have led to fatal economic consequences that result in economic, cultural, social, spatial and environmental degeneration of cities. Although economic indicators may show a different picture, the process of degeneration is ongoing, which results in economic polarization, the disappearance of social bonds and degradation of space (*Miasto-Idea – jak zapewnić...*, 2017). The idea of the Cittaslow network is a very interesting response and an alternative to the development of small cities.

The first Polish cities joined the Cittaslow network in 2006 and more cities gradually joined over the next 12 years, including Górowo Iławeckie – the subject of this article. It is a small town with a population of 4,068<sup>1</sup> (as of 31 December 2016), in which the Cittaslow concept can play a very important role. The development of the city can be difficult because of the small number of companies, lower socio-economic potential in relation to the larger cities and the long distance from the main transport routes. As noted by E. Strzelecka, the development of small cities can be diversified both in the region and in the country, and the small peripheral cities can face difficult developmental conditions due to their location in relation to the leading city (Strzelecka, 2017). Therefore, it seems that the most essential development factor in small cities is precisely their inner potential, commitment and the mentality of the local community. Therefore, the opinion of the inhabitants of Górowo Iławeckie is crucial, since they feel the impact of the Slow movement to the largest extent. The general awareness of people living in a given area is one of the criteria for joining the Cittaslow network. The most important goal of a Cittaslow city “under the sign of the snail” is to improve the quality of life. Therefore, it is essential to learn the opinions of Górowo Iławeckie residents and the positions of people directly involved in the development of the town (municipal office employees).

The aim of this article is to study the awareness of Górowo Iławeckie residents in connection with the participation of the town in the Cittaslow network development, as well as to identify the conditions for the town’s development. For this purpose,

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<sup>1</sup> [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl) [access: 28.12.2017].

a survey was conducted among residents of Górowo Iławeckie and the employees of the Municipal Office were also asked to complete a questionnaire. The survey was also taken by the Mayor of Górowo Iławeckie, Jacek Kostka, who is the President of the Association of Polish Cittaslow Cities. The poll was carried out from 3 to 24 January 2018. The surveys were delivered to 200 inhabitants of the town. The completed forms were returned by 169 people. For the research sample, the respondents were selected using the random selection method. The survey for residents consisted of 30 questions, including 28 closed and 2 open questions. The survey of the residents consisted of 30 questions, including 24 closed questions, 4 semi-open and 2 open questions. There were also three conditional questions. The questionnaire for employees of the Municipal Office consisted of 15 questions, including 8 open, 5 semi-open, 1 conditional and 1 closed question.

People of different ages and educational backgrounds participated in the survey. The largest age group were people not older than 25 years of age, which constituted 35%, people aged 46-60 years – 30%, people aged 26-45 years – 25% of the surveyed, and those over 60 years – 10%. The highest number of people participating in the study had higher education – 39%, general secondary education – 21%, secondary technical – 11%, vocational – 13% and basic – 16%. Women accounted for 55%, while men for 45% of the respondents. The questionnaire intended for people directly involved in the development of the town was completed by 10 employees of the Town Hall.

The results of the studies were complemented by an analysis of the reference materials, which allowed for an accurate presentation of the issues. The article assumed the following structure: the first part presents the conditions of Górowo Iławeckie as a town belonging to the Cittaslow group and the results of studies referring to this issue. The next part shows the theoretical aspects of the awareness and identity of the town inhabitants (supplemented by the survey results). The next section addresses the topic of revitalization of the town – an important phenomenon in the idea of Cittaslow and the opinions of the respondents on the subject are quoted. The last part presents a summary and conclusions. The results of the studies are shown in all the parts of the article. It was assumed that this type of structure reflects the essence of the discussed issues in the best way and will be more useful for the reader.

## **Cittaslow as a model for the development of small cities**

The strategy of the International Network of Cities of the Good Life was born in Italy in 1998 and is derived from the concept of Slow Food. This is an alternative approach, based on local economic development, intended to ensure, among others, the stability of indigenous communities, viability, justice and equal developmental opportunities. The current rules may facilitate the improvement of the residents' lives and the city itself may become a friendlier place to live (Mierzejewska, 2009).

Cittaslow cities are committed to common goals, such as the continuous improvement of life quality and developing a culture of good living. An emphasis is placed on

pro-environmental and pro-social activities through nurturing the unique character of a city and its local producers and cuisine. The essence of this movement is a tradition of hospitality and development.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of a city “under the logo of the snail” is part of the theory of the endogenous development of a region. This means that the emphasis is on society, its local potential and, above all, on the activation of residents – increasing their involvement in activities and their desire to create development and make changes. This provides a chance to function independently as well as to develop permanently (Mazur-Belzyt, 2014). The movement also supports the intergenerational transfer of skills. The experience passed down from generation to generation is inextricably linked to the local sustainable development model that promotes Slow Food literature. In the long term, it helps to ensure closer relations between local producers and consumers, which reinforces the sustainability of local economies (Pink, 2008). As pointed out by H. Mayer and P.L. Knox, local products are used as factors to build the regional, social, economic and cultural distinctiveness of a given place (*Slow Cities: Sustainable Places...*, 2006).

The Cittaslow movement also includes urban planning and design activities. The cities are not only involved in promoting traditional local crafts, but also in promoting modern technologies. It is also important to care for the environment in the form of increasing green areas, creating bicycle paths and maintaining spaces free of advertising and billboards (Knox, 2005).

Cittaslow may directly affect tourism through the possibility of choosing a target development based on it. The brand itself can bring a quality guarantee for these cities (*Slow Tourists: A Comparative Research...*, 2011). In addition, Slow cities are obliged to undergo training in the provision of tourist information, the use of international tourist signs and hospitality standards. An important emphasis is put on policies regarding tourist facilities and service feedback in the area (*Cittaslow International Network...*, 2011).

Cities with up to 50,000 inhabitants may belong to the network. In the certification process, the candidate city must meet at least 50% of the requirements (the so-called self-assessment criteria) referring to seven development areas: energy and environmental policy (e.g. protection of air and water quality, energy saving), infrastructure policy (e.g. removing architectural barriers, access to medical services), urban quality policy (e.g. restoration or implementation of green areas, valorisation of the urban centre), agricultural, tourism and craft policy (e.g. valorisation of rural areas), hospitality policy, awareness and education (e.g. targeted training for proper reception of guests) and social integration and partnership (e.g. counteracting negative social phenomena and cooperation with other Cittaslow units). At least one criterion must be met in each area (*Międzynarodowy statut miast “Cittaslow”*, 2014).

One of the cities that fits the concept of the Slow ideology very well is Górowo Ҙaweckie, which is analysed in the next part of the article.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.cittaslowpolska.pl](http://www.cittaslowpolska.pl) [access: 30.12.2017].

## Identification of the conditions of Górowo Iławeckie as a Slow City

The history of Górowo Iławeckie dates back to very remote times. The city was founded on Prussian-Natangia land which was conquered in the thirteenth century by the Teutonic Knights. The Prussians living in the community were the last group of pagans in Christian Europe. Herkus Monte – one of the most famous chiefs and leaders of the Prussian Uprising (1260-1274) against the Teutonic Knights<sup>3</sup> is connected with this region.



Fig. 1. Górowo Iławeckie – location on the map of Poland

Source: own elaboration.

Górowo Iławeckie is located near the border with the Kaliningrad Region on the Młynówka River and Lake Garncarskie, away from the main transport routes. After 1945 it was populated almost entirely by new residents and more than 90% of them had been forcibly resettled. Historical events resulted in the fact that the town is currently home to several nationalities. The largest group are Poles, Ukrainians and Germans. The minorities are associated with ethnic organizations (The “Natangen” Association of the German Minority and the Association of Ukrainians in Poland) (*Ponadlokalny program rewitalizacji sieci miast Cittaslow*, 2015). Therefore, Górowo Iławeckie is referred to as a “City of many cultures”, which suits the idea of Cittaslow.

Górowo Iławeckie joined the Slow network in April 2014. In the survey, the respondents were first asked whether they had ever heard the term “Cittaslow”. It turned out

<sup>3</sup> [www.gorowoilaweckie.eu](http://www.gorowoilaweckie.eu) [access: 04.01.2018].

that a large proportion of the population participating in the survey were familiar with this idea (74%). In a further part of the survey, the author presented a brief introduction to familiarize the respondents with the principles of the Cittaslow movement concept.<sup>4</sup> In addition, a large number (3 out of 4 respondents) declared that they knew that Górowo Iławeckie belonged to this network of cities. The awareness of citizens regarding the participation of their town in this structure is undoubtedly an important starting point for further development. Moreover, it is also undoubtedly the starting point for the formation of development processes in Górowo Iławeckie, since it enables participation according to certain patterns consistent with the Slow motion concept. Almost all the respondents believe that the idea of Cittaslow is a good strategy for the general development of small cities (90% of the responses), while slightly fewer (88%) said that it was a good strategy for creating the specific image of the town of Górowo Iławeckie.

These opinions confirm the fact that the Cittaslow movement is perceived as optimistic by the inhabitants of the city. This suggests that the community is aware that the values of the Slow movement may be “a driving force” for the development of their locality. It may be considered a key aspect if the assessment is related to one of the most important objectives of the idea of “the cities under the logo of the snail”, namely – the improvement of the inhabitants’ living conditions as well as their life quality. As indicated by A. Janiszewska and E. Klima, economic development and progress of civilization are justified when they serve mankind and have an effect on the improvement of living conditions and, thus, improve the quality of life – which is the main objective (*Jakość życia – definicje i pomiary...*, 2017).<sup>5</sup> The surveyed people were asked to express a subjective, general assessment of the current living conditions of the residents of Górowo Iławeckie. The largest number (47%) evaluated them as “average”. Slightly fewer (40%) defined them as “good” and 8% as “bad”. Every one-in-twenty of the respondents stated that they were “very good”.

Górowo Iławeckie became “a city of good living” after having met the statutory requirements concerning energy, environment and infrastructure, technologies and equipment in urban quality, valorisation of local production, hospitality, awareness and social integration. The certification process, according to information obtained from the Mayor of the city, lasted three months. A city defined as “a city of good life” must fulfil at least 50% of all the requirements (self-evaluation criteria) described for the above areas, taking into consideration the fact that at least one of the conditions in each area must be met (*Międzynarodowy statut...*, 2014).

The information obtained from the officials directly involved in the development of Górowo Iławeckie shows that the town received top marks for hospitality policy, aware-

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<sup>4</sup> In the introduction, the author presents the idea of Cittaslow – available at [www.cittaslowpolska.pl](http://www.cittaslowpolska.pl).

<sup>5</sup> To define the term “quality of life” exceeds the scope of this article. More information on the definition of the issue in: Janiszewska A., Klima E., 2017, *Jakość życia – definicje i pomiary*, [in:] *Alternatywne modele rozwoju miast. Sieć Miast Cittaslow*, Strzelecka E. (ed.), Wydawnictwo Politechniki Łódzkiej, Łódź, p. 41-60.

ness, education and social integration during the certification process. High marks were also given for partnerships and urban quality policy according to municipal officials. Agricultural policy, tourism and craft received the lowest marks. The areas in which the municipal authorities intend to concentrate the most in the nearest future are energy policy, environmental policy and urban quality. According to the statutes of Cittaslow cities, the scope of energy and environmental policy includes a number of measures aimed at protecting the environment, e.g. protection of the quality of air, water and biodiversity. The conditions of the natural environment are also seen as the greatest asset of Górowo Iławeckie. The survey found that 107 people highlighted this aspect.

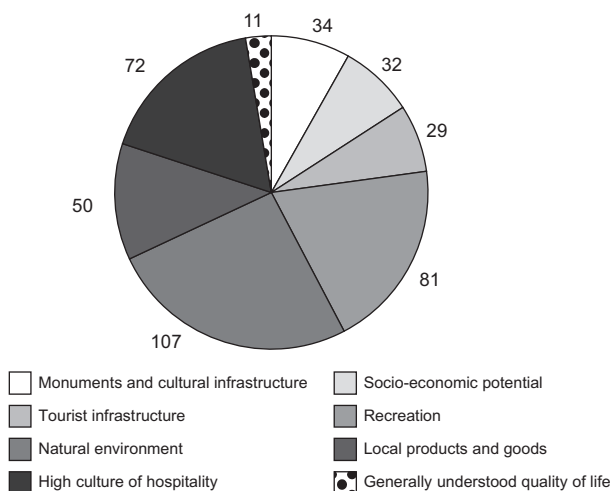


Fig. 2. Górowo Iławeckie advantages as the city of Cittaslow

Source: own elaboration based on research.

The significance of environmental policy is also emphasized by the Mayor of the City, as it is associated with building tourist attractions and spa infrastructure. This infrastructure was also indicated by the President of the Cittaslow Association as being the town's greatest aspect. The rest of the respondents indicated recreation (81), high culture of hospitality (72), local products and goods (50 votes).<sup>6</sup>

The aim of the conducted survey was to help identify the values of Górowo Iławeckie. It is crucial in the idea of Cittaslow because the idea can be implemented in various ways and the leaders of this concept enable its implementation in the context of general goals (*Sensory global cities...*, 2013). Since cities are characterized as unique systems operating in a specific and changing environment, the choice of the path of sustainable

<sup>6</sup> The surveyed residents had the opportunity to indicate the three most important assets of the town.



development is an individual issue for each of them. This unique character of the city and the dynamics of changes taking place in their environment require flexibility and creativity in planning long-term development. Therefore, the choice of the appropriate development concept is a very important issue (*Smart City, Slow City...*, 2016).

This individual approach to urban development of Cittaslow cities was confirmed by the studies of A. Gruszecka-Tieśluk. Every city aims to develop a distinctive and individual aspect. For example, the strategy of Reszel puts a particular emphasis on art and culture (due to the attractive castle from the fourteenth century), the strategy of Nowe Miasto Lubawskie – on contact with nature, Lidzbark Warmiński – on the city's history hidden in its historical areas (Gruszecka-Tieśluk, 2013). It is evident from the survey that both Górowo Iławeckie's residents and municipal employees see the values of the natural environment. According to the inhabitants, this is the most important factor that can attract tourists from big cities to this place (110 votes) It was followed by recreation (79 votes) and high culture of hospitality (61 votes).<sup>7</sup> However, the employees of the Town Hall pointed to recreation as the most significant field on which they put the most emphasis. Just over half of the respondents (51%) declared that Górowo Iławeckie is an alternative to big cities in terms of relaxation and regeneration. Out of the 49% who believe that their town was not such an alternative, 69% indicated that by using appropriate activities, the town could become such a place.

The results of the survey, in conjunction with the identification of natural and scenic values and the existing nature reserve "Dead Lake" in the commune, make Górowo Iławeckie a potential place with many attractions in terms of recreation and tourism. Both the town itself and its surroundings should be considered. For example, historical re-enactments of Napoleonic battles are held in Dwórzno and Toprzyny, making use of the landscape values. Castle Mountain is the highest point in the Górowskie Hills (216 m). In the first half of the nineteenth century, the astronomer and mathematician Friedrich von Bessel conducted cartographic measurements of contemporary East Prussia. There is a special didactic route around the mountain which combines natural and archaeological aspects. The surroundings of Górowo Iławeckie are also an attraction for explorers and seekers because of the von Schwerin family palace in Dzików and Tajemnicza Góra (Mysterious Mountain) (210 m), which are thought to be possible locations of the Amber Room. Presenting the tourist attractions in the neighbourhood of Górowo, it is impossible not to mention the European Centre of the White Stork in Żywkowo, where every year around 40 pairs of these birds build their nests (*Strategia Rozwoju Gminy Górowo Iławeckie na lata 2014–2021*, 2014).

The most spectacular cycling trail in Poland, i.e. The Green Velo Eastern Poland Cycling Trail, runs through Górowo Iławeckie. It is over 2,000 km long and the route is designed to provide visitors with joy and allow them to explore the area. The trail runs through the following provinces: Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Podlaskie, Lubelskie, Podkar-

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<sup>7</sup> The surveyed residents had the opportunity to indicate the three most important assets of the town.



packie and Świętokrzyskie (*Lokalny Program Rewitalizacji miasta Górowo Iławeckie w ramach Ponadlokalnego programu rewitalizacji sieci miast Cittaslow*, 2015). In the upcoming years, according to information obtained from the Mayor of the City, one of the main goals will be to create a comprehensive tourist offer related to this route.

Environmental values, tourist and recreational potential were also noted by the representatives of Skills Holidays, which is a large tourist agency from the United Kingdom. After evaluating the recreational potential, they were interested in the possibility of creating a hotel network in the region.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the fact that every city “under the logo of the snail” chooses its own individual “path of development”, there is one very important aspect that joins them: an emphasis on cultural heritage, historical monuments and rich history. The field studies conducted by K. Mazur-Belzyt showed that 10 out of the 12 analysed Cittaslow cities possess protected cultural heritage, which gives them an interesting character (Mazur-Belzyt 2014). Górowo Iławeckie exemplifies that fact.

Monuments and cultural values were shaped by the changing ethnic structure of the inhabitants and the historical events in this part of the region. At present, they are an important asset for the town. Among the monuments, special attention is paid to the Old City, which can be described as having an outstanding historical and cultural value. The medieval arrangement of the buildings, marketplace and streets, situated on a picturesque hill, make it an extremely charming and intimate part of the town. The central location of the Town Hall adds considerable value to the Górowo “Old City”. Originally, it was a Gothic-style building completely rebuilt after 1655 and in the years 1846-1847 (*Lokalny Program...*, 2015).

The traces of the medieval past of the town can be seen in the partially-preserved town walls, as Górowo Iławeckie was a very well-fortified urban centre. Among other interesting sights of Górowo Iławeckie is undoubtedly the water tower built in 1910, which was the burial place of victims of the plague of 1710. “Napoleon’s House” is another point worth noting in the list of the Górowo monuments. On the night of 17/18 February 1807, Napoleon slept in the rectory, while the French were burying their dead after the battle with the Russians close to Pruska (Prussian) Iławska. Today on the walls of the building there is a commemorative plaque informing about this fact. Among other important monuments that give great value to this town, there is a Greek Catholic church (formerly Roman Catholic church, later Evangelical church) with a beautiful iconostasis, the Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Lord Jesus (built in 1367) and the Jewish cemetery which was registered as a historical monument on 20 February 1986. In the borough of Górowo, one can find 12 historical properties registered with the Polish Institute of Cultural Heritage (*Lokalny Program...*, 2015).

Cultural activities in Górowo Iławeckie are run by the Cultural Centre on behalf of the municipal authorities. In Górowo, they regularly organize cultural events and proj-

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<sup>8</sup> [www.gorowoilaweckie.pl](http://www.gorowoilaweckie.pl) [access: 15.01.2018].

ects designed to educate and promote the identity of the local inhabitants, combined with the development of passions, interests and diversification of leisure activities. These include events for children and youth, sports events, concerts of musical bands and other occasional ventures. As part of the Cittaslow awareness, different informative campaigns are conducted during festivals and the so-called Cittaslow Sundays and weeks during which the values of the “urban good life” movement are promoted.<sup>9</sup> They also organize special entertainment events and sports tournaments.

The readership among the inhabitants of Górowo Iławeckie is higher than the commune and province average (out of 1,000 inhabitants, 340 borrow books from the library, in comparison to 114 residents in the commune and 145 in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Province). This means that the Local Public Library (with nearly 25,000 titles) adds a significant cultural value. Museums are another factor contributing to the cultural attractiveness. The Gas Museum is an interesting place for fans of technology and history. It contains a unique collection of coke gasworks from 1908. The second place worth visiting is the Municipal Museum which has been collecting antique objects from the Stone Age, objects from the Napoleonic Wars and two world wars, as well as contemporary exhibits.

The cultural values of Górowo Iławeckie are appreciated by the residents of the town. As many as 67% of the respondents said that Górowo Iławeckie is an outstanding town in terms of cultural values. However, out of the 33% of the people who responded negatively, 80% said that by taking the right actions this town could become outstanding. Nearly half of the respondents evaluated the quality of services provided by the cultural facilities in Górowo Iławeckie as “good” (47% of the respondents), average – 31%, very good – 14%, bad – 6%, and very bad – 2%, respectively. The quality and variety of cultural and entertainment events was assessed similarly (44% classified them as good, 36% as average, 11% as very good, 6% as poor and 3% as very bad). A large proportion of people (82%) declared that cultural events contribute to the development of education, promotion of the inhabitants’ local identity, the development of passions, interests and diversification of leisure activities. However, the majority of respondents said that their frequency was not sufficient (61% of the respondents).

## **Awareness and identity of local residents in Górowo Iławeckie**

The above-presented aspects play an important role in the development of the city according to the idea of Cittaslow. However, the strategy is focused on sustainable development, not only by profiting from the natural environment, but also by focusing on the endogenous capital of the city (indigenoussness, traditions, regional products, activation of inhabitants) (Zadęcka, 2015).

Therefore, the role of the inhabitants of the city is crucial in its development, understood as their awareness, activation and increased involvement in regional progress

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<sup>9</sup> From 2017 on the accepted Polish proposal, “Cittaslow Sunday” was replaced with “Cittaslow week”.

or the sense of regional identity. The awareness and sense of local identity is strongly emphasized in the idea of “urban good life”. This aspect can be found, among others, in the Manifesto of Cittaslow Cities: “Living in one of the Slow cities, as well as its management, in a sense means turning the modern notion of the “good life” and living with all values to the priority of common involvement for the benefit of residents (...) to pride on belonging and local specific features. This is connected with the presence of conscious and well-informed fellow citizens of the city” (*Manifest Miast Cittaslow*).

These endogenous resources provide Slow Cities with greater efficiency in achieving goals than very large cities. This is a result of “feedback’ – citizens identifying with the development strategy strengthens local identity which, in turn, positively affects the development of social capital. This means that the most important factor of Slow urban development is the activation of internal potential (Mazur-Belzyt, 2014).

Referring to local identity, one should pay attention to the following issue. The identity providing the foundation for creating the image of a Slow city, must be authentic, i.e. free from the impact of outer forms. It is important to diagnose all the characteristics of a given area which form the basis of the image of the place. It is relatively easy for the cities where historical, cultural and social continuity is preserved, but quite difficult in places where this continuity was interrupted in a natural or forced way. Many Polish Cittaslow cities (including Górowo Iławeckie, as mentioned in the earlier part of the study) are inhabited by people, whose ancestors are relatively new immigrants, resettled to the area after World War II (Jaszczak, 2015). These facts may constitute an obstacle to creating awareness and local identity. It is also difficult for the people currently living there to experience a sense of belonging to their community. Thus, it provides an argument to examine the opinion of residents on the subjective experience of this phenomenon, commitment to the development of the city and a sense of awareness and willingness to participate in various social activities.

According to the survey results, the vast majority of population of Górowo Iławeckie (69%) identify themselves with their place of residence, which is undoubtedly a very important aspect in the development of Cittaslow cities. However, the respondents when asked about co-responsibility for the development of Górowo Iławeckie, mostly responded negatively (53%). The scope of the inhabitants’ involvement in the local community matters was defined as average by nearly half of the respondents (46%). Almost every fourth respondent described it as low and 5% as very low. 8% and 19% of the respondents estimated this scope as very high and high, respectively. More than half of the respondents (52%) stated that they were personally not involved in the affairs of the local community. Opinions were also divided on the subject of initiatives aimed at building a territorial identity and strengthening the local distinctiveness, authenticity and the activities undertaken by the city authorities. More than half of the respondents (54%) answered that such tasks were not undertaken. The remaining 46% of the people answered positively and indicated initiatives such as the “Ekołomyja” City Days (an annual festival with numerous events, attractions and concerts), Christmas market, sports events, concerts, craft fair as well as events which consolidate the multi-cultural and

multi-ethnic nature of Górowo Iławeckie, the promotion of national minorities, the activities of the association of the German minority “Natangen” or recurring ecological and cultural events. The respondents also indicated the efforts of the town authorities to encourage inhabitants to actively participate in the development of their town. The respondents felt that the authorities should undertake more pro-social activities, pay more attention to the current problems of residents through frequent meetings, create a civic budget, encourage young people to express their opinions on the development of the town, organize more cultural events, improve tourist and hotel infrastructure, disseminate information about the aims of the Cittaslow movement and invite the local community to participate in their implementation and promote the city to a greater extent.

The opinion of the Town Hall employees is uniform in this aspect. Almost unanimously, they indicated that the residents of Górowo Iławeckie were involved in the development of the town as well as in the creation of its image by taking part in different projects, events and cooperation in their organization, thus contributing to the growth of this activity. The initiatives for building the local identity were conducted through the organization of various meetings and cultural events.

Summing up the above considerations, it should be stated that there are conditions for the development of Górowo Iławeckie according to the Cittaslow idea. The Mayor of the City, when asked about the extent to which the Cittaslow model works in the case of Górowo Iławeckie, stated that: “The Cittaslow model works well in the direction of social infrastructure generating activity of residents based on public space and public facilities (stadium, recreational areas, sensory park) and the implementation of projects involving residents – building an open society.”

According to the Mayor, the Cittaslow model in Górowo Iławeckie is developing thanks to the change in the perception of urban space and the selection of new investments. In addition, the town government is cooperating in the “Slow” movement with other cities through a shared tourist offer with Lidzbark Warmiński, the social policy of the entire network, and infrastructure development within the framework of the Supralocal Revitalization Program.

## **Revitalization and developmental barriers as important aspects of the development of Górowo Iławeckie**

A number of social and economic changes resulting from the political transformation in Poland caused the appearance of many positive, but also negative, phenomena in small cities, including Górowo Iławeckie. Economic problems, degradation of the urban fabric, aging and wear of infrastructure and deepening social inequalities led to the need to take action to restore the functional quality of the area.

As it was mentioned previously, Górowo Iławeckie is a city which was populated almost entirely by new inhabitants after the year 1945. It is shown that the attitude of many people, resettled from the Western Carpathians, the Vilnius region and the

Bieszczady mountains, played an important role in the changes taking place in Górowo Iławeckie. The process of building the community identity of the area was therefore damaged for many years, which led to many negative phenomena such as, among others, a failure to maintain the existing infrastructure after the expulsion of the Germans. This resulted in the disorganization of property ownership, a decrease in economic activities and negative social phenomena which intensified with the collapse of state-owned farms and industry in this city. The economic problems of unemployment and poverty have still not yet entirely disappeared. These two phenomena are the most frequent reasons for social assistance in Górowo Iławeckie (Supra-Local Revitalization Program for the Cittaslow network). The survey indicated that these phenomena were identified as two greatest weaknesses and greatest barriers to the development of Górowo Iławeckie (158 and 94 opinions, respectively). Following this, the surveyed residents pointed to crime (54 votes), the threat of social exclusion of older people due to improper infrastructure which does not meet the needs of seniors (48 votes), the threat of social exclusion of children and young people (42 votes) and the difficult financial situation of the disabled (33 votes).<sup>10</sup> Unemployment and poverty were ranked first by the municipal authorities as being the greatest threats to the town. They also indicated the risk of social exclusion of children and young people, whereas the difficult situation of the disabled was not as important to them. As the city Mayor pointed out, improvement in the infrastructure for the elderly will be one of the priority activities in the upcoming years. The infrastructure was evaluated as average, bad or very bad (45%, 15% and 4%, respectively) by most of the surveyed residents of this town. 29% of the respondents marked it as good and 7% as very good.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, these phenomena create the need for a reaction to prevent the degradation of the urban fabric. The Cittaslow movement is also identified as a tool to combat social exclusion and poverty by supporting local communities and developing social cohesion. Therefore, revitalization is an integral element of this initiative.

Revitalization should be defined as the process of efforts conducted by local entities based on their needs and a comprehensive assessment of available resources in the field of their development, taking into consideration the conditions of functioning in a given environment. These activities are aimed at activating the existing functions of the area or at providing new functions in terms of activation and local development (Farelnik, 2014). In other words, the goal is to revive the economy, restore spatial order and raise the standard of quality of life for residents (Litwińska, 2011). The policy of revitalization in many small cities focuses mainly on activities related to the living conditions of their residents, such as the quality of public places, improvement of the aesthetics of the neglected urban space, investments in infrastructure and protection of the urban landscape (*Rewitalizacja, gentryfikacja i problemy...*, 2011).

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<sup>10</sup> The respondents had the opportunity to indicate the three most important phenomena that threaten the town's development.

<sup>11</sup> The respondents evaluated the infrastructure in terms of the elderly and the disabled.

Increasing the standard of living of the poorest inhabitants takes place through the so-called “social prevention” aimed at improving living conditions and preventing marginalization and social exclusion. A particular emphasis is placed on the problems of the unemployed, the elderly and the disabled. Revitalization projects aim at the activation of these people in the labour market and providing them with adequate infrastructural and social conditions (*Regionalny Program Operacyjny Województwa Warmińsko – Mazurskiego na lata 2014-2020*, 2018).

“*Lokalny Program...*” is the programme created to direct these changes and phenomena in Górowo Iławeckie. It stresses conducting revitalization activities in a coordinated manner, consistent with the intentions of the interested parties of the process. It is an auxiliary sub-program in the city’s development strategy, which involves specific projects planned for the years 2016-2020 designed to solve problems and undesirable phenomena in the so-called crisis areas of the city.

Specific projects are implemented mainly through European funds (spent through national operational programs), European funds acquired under the Regional Operational Programs and funds of local government units and the state budget. The table below presents the main revitalization projects along with the expected results.

Table 1

Revitalization projects of the town of Górowo Iławeckie and votes of the respondents

Project	Description	Expected results	Votes <sup>a</sup>
Project: Górowo Iławeckie acquires new qualifications – youth youth of 15-25 years of age and people aged 26-50	Organization of a training cycle, along with internships resulting from local needs, addressed to people at risk of social exclusion	Improvement of living conditions of residents, social inclusion, improvement in education, increase in social competences	70
Revitalization of the social area of the Old Town in Górowo Iławeckie	Among others, execution of the elevation of the centrally located historic Town Hall building, development of public area on the Town Hall Square	Increase in the number of friendly places for residents, increase in the number of places conducive to integration and social activation, improvement of the town aesthetics	92
Establishment of a recreation and sensory park at the Pottery Pond in Górowo Iławeckie	Construction of a comfortable path for pedestrian and bicycle traffic along which fitness equipment will be deployed, especially adapted to the needs of children aged 3-10, seniors and disabled people	Improving access to infrastructure for residents, improving access to urban infrastructure for people with disabilities, improving the aesthetics of the town	116
Redevelopment of a degraded Cultural Centre in Górowo Iławeckie	Adaptation of the Cultural Centre building for museum and library purposes with equipment	Increase in the number of cultural facilities, improvement in the aesthetics of the town, increased access to education and cultural life	101



Table 1 contd.

Project	Description	Expected results	Votes <sup>a</sup>
Restoration of the area of the Młynówka river valley in Górowo Iławeckie	Expansion of the recreation, sports and rehabilitation infrastructure, giving the function of a foot and bicycle path which will connect the currently existing infrastructure of this type with the Eastern Poland Bicycle Routes	Creating places conducive to social integration and social activation, improving the town aesthetics, increasing the physical activity of the society, increasing the number of tourist-friendly places	98

<sup>a</sup> The respondents had the opportunity to indicate three most important revitalization tasks.

Source: own elaboration based on "Lokalny Program...", 2015".

The vast majority of surveyed residents said that the indicated revitalization projects would contribute significantly to improving the quality of life in Górowo Iławeckie. This opinion was expressed by 91% of the respondents. Among them, 64% thought that revitalization would improve the quality of life to a large extent, 22% – at an average level, 10% – at a very high level and 2% – small or very small. The most important project aiming at revitalization and providing new functions to particular places was the establishment of a recreation and sensory park (116 votes). As to their own ideas, the respondents mentioned, among others, the construction of social welfare infrastructure, redevelopment of the Gas Museum, the water tower and other crumbling monuments. They also pointed to the restoration of the Górowski pond as a landmark of the town as well as building campsites and the marina.

The creation of a recreation and sensory park is also one of the most important projects according to the municipal authorities. The revitalization of the Młynówka River valley is almost equally important. According to people with a direct impact on the development of the town, the other projects are less important, though, as they point out, the revitalization of the Old City area and the construction of recreational trails are planned for the upcoming future.

## Conclusions

The results of the study, together with the analysis of source materials, helped to assess the awareness of inhabitants of Górowo Iławeckie in connection with the participation of the city in the Cittaslow development network and to identify the conditions of its development. Moreover, the study allowed several conclusions to be drawn.

The research shows that the mere fact of participation in Górowo Iławeckie Cittaslow network is positively evaluated by residents. Many of the respondents know about the Cittaslow network and they are aware of its philosophy. This may be indicated by the fact that 88% of the respondents believe that the strategy chosen by the city is suitable for Górowo Iławeckie. There is still a lot of work remaining to involve the community



and the inner potential of the city to be used effectively, as the majority of respondents do not feel responsible for the development of their town and they are not personally involved in community affairs. Analysing the research results and individual responses of the citizens, it can be concluded that the key to increasing community involvement is a greater effort from the town authorities.

Górowo Iławeckie is distinguished by high environmental quality and considerable natural and leisure potential. The survey results confirm that both the residents and the town authorities recognize these opportunities. Based on other values, such as, among others, the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic makeup of the residents, cultural aspects, local products and high culture of hospitality, the town has a chance to create its own individual path of development.

As indicated by the examined, the greatest barriers to the development of Górowo Iławeckie are unemployment and poverty. The town has several revitalization projects aimed at restoring and providing new functions to degraded areas which were assessed positively by the inhabitants.

These conclusions do not cover the broad topic of the development of the Cittaslow movement in Górowo Iławeckie. Many aspects still require further in-depth analyses connected with innovative projects to activate the residents. This study may encourage further analysis of the region, as well as studying the awareness of residents of other small "good life" cities. In those cities, the local identity and endogenous potential are the foundation of development. The overall rating of Górowo Iławeckie in terms of the membership and development according to the idea of Cittaslow is difficult to be clearly formulated, since it has been less than four years since the town joined the Cittaslow network and it may take longer to see a clear improvement in the quality of life or other measurable benefits. The development of the town is affected by many factors and all changes take time. Nevertheless, the research and opinions of the inhabitants may constitute a clear signal of whether the city is developing or has taken the right direction. For Górowo Iławeckie, one can see the Slow development of the town occurring by using the natural environment to build tourist, recreational and environmental attractions.

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