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## **STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES' COMPETENCE FOR ENGAGING IN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING**

**Keywords:** urban mentoring, participatory planning in Poland, public space, democratic city.

## **WZMACNIANIE KOMPETENCJI LOKALNYCH SPOŁECZNOŚCI DO UDZIAŁU W PLANOWANIU PARTYCYPACYJNYM**

**Słowa kluczowe:** mentoring urbanistyczny, planowanie partycypacyjne w Polsce, przestrzeń publiczna, miasto demokratyczne.

### **Introduction**

A European city nowadays is, by definition, considered a city of a democratic tradition (the Leipzig Charter 2007), guaranteeing equal development opportunities for its inhabitants, making it a common good and a collective responsibility<sup>1</sup>. In this context, awareness of the constant need to strengthen the actions aimed at development of a civil society has been too low in Poland. Only few circles combine the issues related to socialization of urban planning with the development of democracy in a country still marked by the heritage of the socialist past. The low level of public trust (Stompka, 2007), characterizing today's Poland, stigmatizes the social dialogue, which as a tool for working out a compromise and for balancing the interests could not be practiced and developed in the socialistic past. Nowadays, the issue constitutes a diagnosed barrier to the development of a country wishing to match the quality of city life to the standards of its western neighbours. The issue of a poor public dialogue regarding the urban issue is part of a broader background of the problem, which Carmona et al. (2010) describes using the concept of communication gaps. These gaps result from the asymmetry in knowledge and in experience, they generate conflicts, cause loss of understanding, and are the cause of manipulation (Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath, Oc 2010).

This issue of supporting the process of levelling the communication barriers in implementation of the participatory model of city planning was addressed by a year-long research-implementation project completed in the fall of 2015 (QV), titled "Quo Vadis Gdansk? The residents plan their city". An inter-

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<sup>1</sup> Miasto - wspólne dobro i zbiorowy obowiązek (City – a common good and a mutual responsibility), I Kongres Urbanistyki Polskiej (The First Congress of Polish Urban Planning), Gdansk 2002

disciplinary project-team, composed of urban planning theoreticians and practitioners, worked with the representatives of the local communities within four different districts of Gdnask. Participatory elaborated micro strategy for improvement of the quality of public space became the reason for broadening the competencies of the district councillors and of the local activists, which would prepare them for taking a better partnership attitude in future cooperation with municipal planning authorities.

The article describes the genesis of undertaking the subject that was realized as part of the QV project. It systematizes the knowledge on similar foreign practices which combine development of planning competencies, in the context of strengthening the participatory planning. Against this background, the paper documents the local activities of the research team, on one side, by illustrating the process of forming a new model of planning, and on the other, by showing development of the method involving incorporation of didactics into the process of implementing scientific studies.

### **1. The model of urban mentoring as a method of levelling the communication gaps in planning**

The competence to participate in public dialogue authorizes people to take positive and constructive attitudes in planning. Effective communication is a feedback process of speaking and listening, based on a common baseline for an agreement between the speaker and the recipient. The dialogue connection between both parties is expanded through existence of common basic knowledge unquestioned by all discourse participants. Not without a reason the RTPI (the Royal Town Planning Institute) promotes its activity with a maxim: mediation of space, making of place. In the manual titled „Public Places Urban Spaces the dimensions of urban design”, top British urbanists - Carmona M., Tiesdell S., Heath T., Oc T. (2010) - distinguish 5 main axes of misunderstanding planes emergent in the process of urban space planning: 1. a professional – a layman, 2. a designer – a non-designer, 3. a designer – a user, 4. strong – weak, 5. reality – the vision of the future. A very significant gap in the dialogue between the professionals of various specializations, different generations, and even different approaches within the same industry, however, are not mentioned. This gap is responsible for the low level of integration and socialization of urban planning in Poland, as advocated by the National Urban Policy 2023. This document is evaluated as a significant achievement on the way towards a departure from the current, far imperfect model of planning in Poland – a unique conglomerate of the solutions implemented by the old, socialist and the new neoliberal system, which proves the unfinished transformation of the political system (Billert, 2012).

Awareness of the complexity of the problem of communication gaps should shift the issues related to the subject of new tools for civic urban education onto the forefront of every city’s important development priorities. Inspir-

ing examples have been provided by the German urban practice, which for decades has been trying to break through to Poland via numerous joint initiatives proposed by the academic and the professional circles. The political assumption<sup>2</sup> adopted at the turn of the 1970's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, regarding the expansion of the social co-decision zone, after decades resulted in a highly-developed system of participatory planning. Long-term observation of the German revitalization experience, built on the participatory planning model, has allowed putting forward a thesis that the social change which has taken place in urban communities has become one of the main revitalization achievements. Openness to innovation, public trust, social integration or activation of the communities now is the basis for enabling the cities to pursue further development challenges, which require widespread social competencies (Rembarz, 2017). For many years, German practice has been a very strong inspiration for the Rembarz / Martyniuk-Pęczek research team, in development of their approach towards the issue of the studies on a city as well as in their educational practice.

Systematic development of the didactic workshop, treated as a kind of a practice-based scientific research on the method, allowed the QV project team to create a new urban planning curriculum (the Social Academy of Planning), in the form of participatory planning based on an authorial model of urban mentoring. Inviting a group of students to a monthly workshop as permanent project participants enabled the skills of both the young professionals and the local communities to be strengthened. A feedback relation in a workshop setting was used here: the student studies, the teacher teaches. This model should be considered as a valuable social innovation.

Urban mentoring (hereafter UM) is a type of counseling – a partnership relation between the professionals in the field of urban planning and the local communities, oriented at discovering and developing the community's potential. UM assumes that the community has significant competencies in terms of the knowledge on the local conditions and needs. Professional assistance is needed to broaden the scope of understanding, on the part of the community activists, of the mechanisms and the tools of city planning and management. It facilitates preparation of the community for a dialogue with the professionals who are mainly represented by the local administration and authority representatives. Simultaneously, UM applied in combination with other participatory planning tools allows a two-way exchange of the knowledge necessary to deepen the diagnosis of the condition in the district and to create auxiliary coordination plans and strategies systematizing the inner discussion on the actions undertaken in the urban space. This aspect constitutes a strong UM potential for

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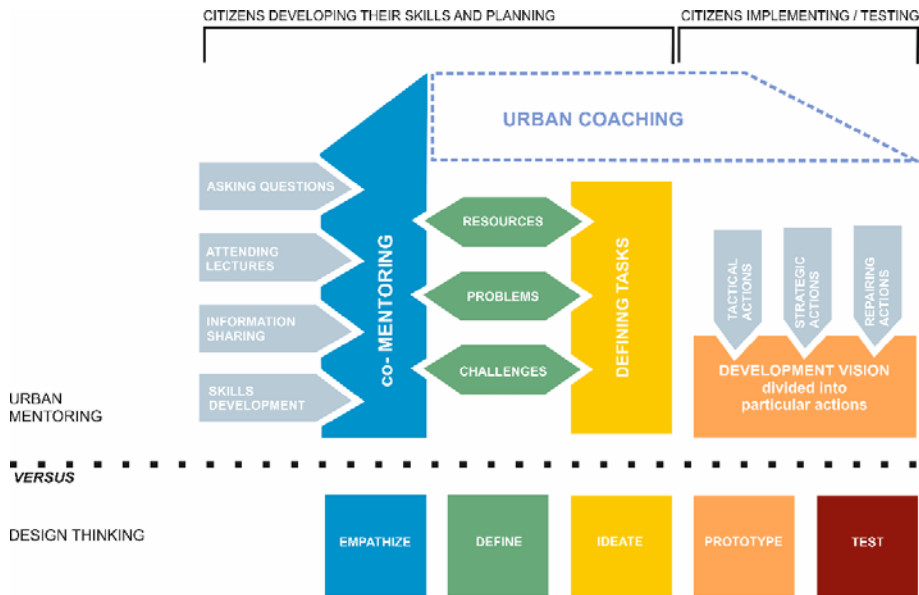
<sup>2</sup> The words spoken in 1969 by the Chancellor Willy Brandt: "We want to have the courage for more democracy. (...) Our society's co-decision-making and co-responsibility in various areas will be the driving force in the upcoming years", nowadays are used as the genesis of the currently functioning practice of wide participation (Senatsverwaltung fuer Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt Berlin, 2011).



enhancing the competence in practicing urban activism on the part those who are not willing to participate in traditional trainings and courses. The method teaches by not teaching – it structures and broadens the knowledge on the spatial issues and on the methods of solving them in a systemic manner, thus it facilitates better, independent organization of the actions, by enhancing their efficiency. (Martyniuk-Pęczek, Rembarz, 2015).

The method is also applicable in broadening the competencies of modern planning among interdisciplinary groups and teams of professionals, which are necessary to strengthen the integration of urban planning and city management. UM is a tool for substantive, grassroots support of the ‘bottom-up’ process, requiring a significant shift beyond the ‘needs and preferences’ model (Vischer, in Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath, Oc 2010). “Rather than to confuse, seduce or manipulate an audience, communications might be used to challenge it, and to expose and reveal new insights”. (p. 332, Carmona, Tiesdell, Heath, Oc 2010).

**Figure 1. The urban mentoring scheme**



Source: Authors

## 2. The rationale for taking up the issue of participatory planning in the context of raising the planning competencies of communities

There are four main motives for undertaking the topic of the QV project, which have been diagnosed during the study-design work, the interviews with the representatives of the local communities, as well as resulting from the analysis of municipal planning documents and from the activity of the municipal services:

- a noticeable lack of harmony and spatial order in the housing districts – low quality of the shared (public) urban space;
- an increasing activity of the local communities for improvement of the place of residence, as part of the so-called urban movement, requiring support and coordination;
- lack of modern and effective methods for supporting the cooperation on the lines: the residents – the residents, the residents – the professionals, the residents – the professionals – urban administration, in terms of the planning and management of urban space;
- lack of the city's spatial policy at a district level, which would be based on a vision of the city's development that would be clear and comprehensible for the residents, which, in turn, results in information chaos, conflicting or passivity of both parties, but most of all in a permanent loss of the spatial potentials.

The idea of urban mentoring is based on the experience of British organizations associating city planning professionals. The economic crisis that brought back the far-reaching liberal ways of urban planning (*laissez-faire*) in the late 1970's resulted in emergence of the movements favouring a new form of impacting the private (commercial) sector, among both the professionals as well as the social activists. New, effective ways were sought for increasing the standards of spatial order (the quality of the housing environment and the aesthetics of the landscape) as well as for socializing the decision-making process in planning – nothing about us without us.

### 3.1 Anglo-Saxon inspirations

Planning without consideration of the local community – the primacy of private interest before the public one – has been facilitated in the UK, because it is realized by county institutions, distantly from the local business-personal conditioning. The response of the professional circles, which were further backed up institutionally by the government, entailed educational, training and advisory campaigns implemented by two most influential organizations: The Town and Country Planning Association TCPA<sup>3</sup> (an equivalent of the TUP – Society of Polish Urbanists<sup>4</sup>) and the RTPI Royal Town Planning Institute<sup>5</sup>, whose slogan 'mediation of space – making place' for over 40 years has symbolized the professional support offered by this institution to formalized local communities, private investors and municipalities, as part of the „Planning Aid England” pro-

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<sup>3</sup> [www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk)

<sup>4</sup> <http://tup.org.pl/>

<sup>5</sup> [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

gramme<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, the RTPI Future Planners<sup>7</sup> has been addressed to the young people thinking about city planning as their career direction.

One of the important pillars for supporting the knowledge on urban planning, which has been valued among the decision-makers and the broader society and has particularly affected the subject of a beautiful spatial form, is the CABA committee. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment was established in 1999, at the beginning of the period of implementing the so-called 'urban renaissance' policy carried out by a national unit and meant to advise on architecture, urbanism and public space during renewal of the cities as well as to implement a new edition of the new city program called 'ecotowns' (Punter, 2009). As of 2011, the CABA renamed as the Design Council has continued lobbying: inspiring and influencing the persons making decisions about the shape of the building structure and of the landscape, through distinguishing well-designed buildings, spaces and places, promoting the examples of good practice as well as by providing experts and practical advisory. The most well-known program of substantive support offered by the CABA (the Design Council) is the Design Challenge<sup>8</sup>.

The main impetus for development of the activity of the institutions and the associations involved in fostering widespread awareness of and knowledge about the significance of city planning is emergence of a strong lobby within the society, which has been demanding inclusion, in the national and the local policies, of the issues of creating a so-called good city, i.e. a healthy, comfortable and socially equipped (inclusive) one. In conservative systems that promote liberal economy (Anglo-Saxon), state-level changes involving the spatial issues mainly occur due to the activity of the organizations created independently of the public sector (committees, associations). Their activity involving implementation of the changes is mainly realized through an intensive training program fostering expansion of the group opting for a systemic change. This type of a common promotion of knowledge and education, along with individual, independent, highly professional advisory for the local leaders, is the core activity of all important professional and academic institutions of this type worldwide. One example is the MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), which for several years has been carrying out a special spatial planning program at the Roxbury Community College in Boston<sup>9</sup>. In this way, this institution directly joins the list of the numerous public-benefit organizations i.e. the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), the Walkable and Liveable Communities Institute, which operate through widespread education, in order to improve the urbanism of North-American cities,

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<sup>6</sup> [www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid)

<sup>7</sup> [www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers)

<sup>8</sup> [www.designcouncil.org.uk/design-challenges](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/design-challenges)

<sup>9</sup> <http://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/71320>



having increasing influence on the global debate on the subject of the urban form.

### 3.2 German inspirations

In German reality, where urban planning is understood as a part of the innovative national economy, the demand for the above-described forms of common urbanist education is significantly lower. The planning culture, which has been shaped on the principle of balancing the public and the private interest and by availability of considerable resources of highly-specialized planning staff, appoints the social organizations more to initiate new solutions and to maintain the efficiency of the constantly updating itself system rather than to play the role of the institutions oriented at fighting the anachronistic mechanism that has been protected by public institutions. The issue of social participation in planning, in Germany is treated very seriously - as the most valuable dimension of a democratic state. Effective methods of the residents' participation in the activities aimed at improvement of their surroundings, in a direct form or through selected representatives, have been developed in Germany with full consciousness ever since the 1960's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, parallel to the well-functioning municipal self-government system (the city council, the district council, etc.). A system of participation scenarios has been realized here (SfSuU, 2011):

1. lack of activity,
2. information – cooperation – co-decision-making – deciding,
3. self-management (local government).

The society's high public awareness of the influence of the quality of the urban form resulted not only in initiation of the European declaration for improvement of the European city, the so-called Leipzig Charter in 2007, but also in development of the German National Urban Development Policy – NUDP (Nationale Stadtentwicklungspolitik<sup>10</sup>). It defined six main thematic areas devoted to the issue of maintaining the model of a European city development in Germany:

1. Civil society – activation of the residents' activity for their city's benefit.
2. Social city - creating conditions for social integration.
3. Innovative city – the engine of economic development.
4. Creating a city of the future – climate protection and global responsibility.
5. Better-formed cities –the culture of construction building.
6. The future of cities is related to their immediate regions – regionalization.

Such tasks are not realized without the society's active participation, hence the leading slogan of the entire strategy contained within the NUDP was Lern Process Stadt (city as a continuing learning process). It adopts an assumption that a European city is the subject and a result of a study / learning / research

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.nationale-stadtentwicklungspolitik.de/NSP/DE/Home/home\\_node.html](http://www.nationale-stadtentwicklungspolitik.de/NSP/DE/Home/home_node.html)

process. Hence, it commits to broader application of modern mediation methods, to seeking dialogue, compromise and beyond-border planes of action (disciplines, departments), as well as to using the synergic effects of the professional knowledge, experience and commitment to the city. Innovativeness in searching for the ways of using the hidden potentials as opportunities for development as well as the effectiveness of the applied solutions both require a society of conscious, active and co-responsible citizens, organizations, foundations, entrepreneurs, NGOs, churches, research institutes and universities. Hence, the main focus was put on:

- availability of discussion platforms regarding the NUDP for the citizens,
- orienting the NUDP on ongoing social problems and always on solving those problems,
- support for new quality – projects with lasting and quality-improving positive outcomes,
- creation of comparative examples,
- integration of political initiatives and incorporating the into the NUDP.

### 3.3 The Gdansk experience

The authorial concept of urban mentoring has been built on extensive own/team practical experience, in cooperation of the academic circles with the local government. Significant constraints, such as lack of continuity in cooperation, mainly caused by a total lack of financing for such activity, or the above-mentioned knowledge asymmetry are characteristic features of this type of cooperation. Local governments have not ordered a systemic scientific research regarding their own activity, they diagnose the problems only to a small extent and search for solutions through innovative activities in cooperation with universities (they do not engage any financial or organizational resources). Unlike in the case of American or Western-European universities, the system of specialized research-implementation institutes of urban profile has not been developing because of that; there are few experimental studies of interdisciplinary nature, while student design projects (term papers, master theses or doctorate dissertations) have not been very openly recognized as a source of innovation for urban planners and managers. The situation observed deepens the gap between theory and practice, does not allow the universities' potential to be better used for building efficient cities.

In the years 1995-2015, the Faculty of Urban and Regional Planning (until 2006 also the Faculty of Urban Development) directed its scientific and educational effort at improvement of the link between the educational activity and the research-design practice. This allows creation of favourable theoretical conditions for implementation of the study design works having important parameters enabling their application as urban mentoring tools. During the years 1995–2005, student internships, in the form of annual summer urban workshops, were realized, which introduced the issue of public space revitalization. The results were given to the authorities (city and municipal) and





served the promotion of the problem area, the common education, and often became an inspiration for a reflection on the development/revitalization potentials in the selected parts of the city. Some of them only now, after introduction of new legal acts, can be implemented. However, unlike in western countries, in our country, student work done under supervision of experienced planners is not considered as an important and valuable planning material. This manner of collaboration, a short form of workshops allowing an impulsive transfer of knowledge from the university to the local community and collection of the data for research and for theoretical design work encounters a constraint – the lack of continuity in development of the initial design concepts.

The next phase of the work on the formula of urban mentoring was cooperation with the local government during preparation of term projects. The students, inspired by the short field workshops combined with the acquisition of the information on the city, provided directly by the city officials, developed urban concepts which further were presented to the city authorities and the residents, most often only via electronic media or temporary exhibitions. In this case, refining of the theoretical concepts gave these works a better chance to be used as knowledge transfer and educational tools. This formula, however, did not provide any possibility for a more developed, structural discussion on the rationales and on the solutions, thus it could not fully play the role of an active urban mentoring tool. Interestingly, smaller centres (2011 Tczew, 2012 Elbląg) implementing the public discourse in a modern formula, were more often prone to use the results of this type of innovative advisory than the cities with developed planning faculties.

Transition onto the next stage of the work on the urban mentoring model became possible after 2010. New partners for the two-way knowledge transfer appeared in the city. The district councils as well as the associations of residents activated council-side and wanting to improve their place of residence naturally became such partners. The demand of the neighbourhoods for expert knowledge sharpened the debate on the issue of developing the projects to be submitted to the civil budget. Integration of urban-movement circles created new possibilities for disseminating the knowledge on urban planning, excluding city administration. Many years of experience in working with municipal administration allows it to be identified as a kind of a sluice controlling the flow of knowledge between independent academic professionals and the local community.

Under the changed conditions, we can observe great commitment of the professionals – the architects and the urbanists (particularly the young ones) – to improving their areas of residence. However, these actions solve ad-hoc problems. Those professionals are valued in their communities and their advisory is used, firstly, when a professional acts as a regular resident in a public debate, secondly, when personal ambitions enter the game. This aspect also shows another phenomenon developing in the districts – politicization of the



debate on the district issues (according to the rule: who can get things done by the authorities). It is an unfavourable dimension which can destroy the potential of using the debate on neighbourly urban space to strengthen the democratic mechanisms and the transparency of the system.

The diagnosis of the situation provides numerous arguments in favour of the widespread application of urban mentoring for everyday urban practice. The new challenge is to introduce a new system of working with the community – to complement the formula of direct participation using the model of participation, through social advisory boards comprising substantially prepared representatives of the local communities.

### **3.4 Transfer of knowledge, in collaboration with Orunia and Osowa**

During its activity in the Orunia – St. Wojciech, the Gdansk Foundation for Social Innovation (GFIS) implemented numerous varied projects addressed to improve the quality of life in the district. The main purpose of those projects was to strengthen the residents' constructive activity, aimed at improvement of their place of residence – initiation and support of the effort, as opposed to doing the job for them (facilitators of the change). In addition to the cycle of debates on the future of the district – a continuous cycle of lectures on the history and the heritage of the district, conducted in cooperation with the Revitalization Department at the Gdansk City Hall, titled "I see Orunia as great", the Foundation implemented a series of activities oriented at physical improvement of the quality of the residential space. Apart from important point-based initiatives, i.e. the playground at the Zwiaskowa street, the GFIS initiated and carried out extensive actions. Namely, using the formula of neighbourly community service supported by minimal resources, five courtyards were cleaned out, which initiated the process of activating the residential communities and the city for the sake of its neglected areas. This so-called Orunian courtyard revolution can be described as a venture in the form of place-making work – a model for the entire city (Konopka, 2013). The Foundation combines the experience in working with the local community on solving important spatial problems, i.e. the lack of and functional and safe railroad crossing, the threat of a high-voltage power line or the opposition to the policy of cumulating the social issues emergent in the district, with the activities aimed at dissemination of civil knowledge. The need for developing a document (a vision) – an alternative to the municipal plans, which would coordinate the local discussion and the activities addressing the future of the district, has become the positive aspect of the cooperation between the local community and the institution associated with it. The pragmatic approach has prompted the local community to open up to the advisory of independent experts, in order to empower the local activists and to invite new persons to the collaboration.

The urban mentoring formula that allows preparation of study research-design papers in direct, constant cooperation with the local community has



been refined, thanks to the cooperation of the GFIS with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the Faculty of Architecture (FA) of the Gdansk University of Technology (GUT). Since 2010, urban planning adepts have been trained in the Neighbourhood House, thanks to an informal partnership. During that time, two extensive master diploma theses were prepared for the Orunia district, which fuelled the debate on the future of Orunia. Semester design studio dedicated to the district and carried out during the years 2013–2014 resulted in a study and research project titled “SlowSmartOrunia: SlowLife in Smart City – an alternative scenario for the development of a district at the edge of midtown, within the borders of active metropolis”. A 25-person group of undergraduate students (3 level urban design&planning studio) at the FA GUT, under the guidance of specialists, prepared 10 compatible micro concepts of a strategy for the spatial-social development of the district. The innovativeness of this work involved application of the method involving a scenario planning for the problem area, i.e. Gdansk Orunia.

The recommendations of urban scientists, developed on the basis of the experience of British local governments and of the health ministry, constituted the substantive baseline for the studies (Barton, Grant, Guise, 2003). The studies were aimed at answering the question of how the agricultural tradition of the district can be used as an endogenic potential determining the identity of the place and of the community. The results of the experiment were subjected to the constructive criticism of an international team of external experts. After additions and editions, these results were presented to the local community (the district council) and to the management of the Revitalization Department at the Gdansk City Hall (Rembarz, 2014). Achievement of high-quality results was possible due to integration of the knowledge and the creativity of all project participants, inspired by the place’s potential. Favourable reviews of the 2013 project became an incentive for application of a refined formula of urban mentoring as a model of work in the QV project.

Initiation of a systemic cooperation with the Osowa District Council and with the “Our Osowa” Association served as verification for the method developed in partnership with the Orunian circles. In the academic year 2013–2014, open design workshops titled “My future in Osowa. Take the space in your hands” were carried out for the local community. These workshops became the first attempt at implementation of the urban mentoring formula in this environment. The results of the workshop were followed up in three master diploma theses dedicated to the issue of the district. They also inspired the student circles to continue the work on the subject, as part of an innovative international didactic method called Mentor&Student Research Lab.

### **The findings**

The innovative results achieved through realization of the project should be considered in two basic blocks: the universal effects and the individualized



effects. Urban mentoring is a method of cooperation with the local community, focused on increasing the knowledge on city planning and management. It can be used in work with every community. Its effectiveness, however, depends on the level of trust a given group places in the team implementing urban mentoring. There is no exaggeration in the statement that this method can only be used by the persons with the highest professional qualifications. Individualized effects include training of four groups of local leaders and student teams (360 persons). In retrospect, we know that the experience gained as part of the Social Planning Academy has significantly impacted the leaders' further work for the benefit of the district and the students' future professional choices. Deepening the knowledge on the city planning process among such a significant group of persons, along with the overall knowledge introduced into the Gdansk's local community via promotion of the project in the media – strengthening of the local capital of urban planning knowledge – should be deemed as one of significant individualized effects.

## Conclusions

Poland, as a young democracy developing in a neoliberal economic paradigm since 1989, is taking its first steps on the path of real socialization of urban planning. The 25 years of the transformation of a post-socialist country into a civil one, after 2004 supported by an intensive process of infrastructure modernization, has resulted in the awakening of urban activism attitudes aimed at improvement of the quality of nearby housing environments. This phenomenon has grown out of the widespread critique of the nature of the authority-citizen relation shaped during this period, which does not protect the public interest from the hegemony of the private (individual) interest escalating privatization and commercialization of the public space. The search for the potentials for changing this unfavourable state into a newly discovered, secular and non-partisan communality, after 2005 has become the signature of a new social formation. The emergent numerous, informal urban movements representing the weaker side of the society in the social dialogue have become the Poland's answer to the slogan "the right to the city". Their fast development results from implementation of soft social projects, using external structural and auxiliary resources, in order to expand civil awareness and self-organization through strengthening the development of non-government prosocial organizations. The universality of this phenomenon can be deemed as the second wave of the democratization of the Polish society that has been striving to finish the process of the systemic changes. In this context, the Citizens for the Democracy program realized with the EEA funds, part of which was the "Ouo Vadis Gdansk?

The citizens plan their city" project, was included in the activities aimed at strengthening local democracy. The results achieved due to integration of social and professional efforts as well as thanks to significant disinterest of both parties exceeded all possible expectations. In 2015, the project was the biggest participatory project in Poland. It involved preparation and testing of a new



educational program and was short listed at the AESOP Excellence in Teaching Award 2016 Innovative Approaches to Interdisciplinarity in Planning Education - Building Capacity to Respond to Interconnected Contemporary Planning Challenges.

The new method developed in Gdansk on the basis of a correlation of various socialization practices is a sort of a hybrid, constructed on the ground of the experience accumulated during the many years of urban project-didactic practice in Poland. It is part of a broader tendency of participatory planning – the community planning methods evolve along with the changes of the local society's needs.

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### Streszczenie

Artykuł opisuje genezę podjęcia tematu podnoszenia kompetencji planistycznych w społecznościach lokalnych w celu eliminacji przepaści komunikacyjnych oraz wzmocnienia nastawienia obywatelskiego. Przedstawia również tezę, że innowacja w tej materii wymaga nowych technik planowania partycypacyjnego, jak na przykład opisanego tutaj modelu mentoringu urbanistycznego.

Opisując inklinacje podjęcia projektu o nazwie "Quo Vadis Gdansk? Mieszkańcy planują swoje miasto" artykuł systematyzuje także wiedzę o podobnych praktykach za granicą i dokumentuje rozwój autorskiej metody zawierającej implementację dydaktyki w procesie przeprowadzania badań naukowych.

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