



3. Newsletter MChance October 2020

The second transnational meeting of the partnership of the Erasmus+ project “MChance – Multi-locality as an opportunity for adult education offers” took place on 27th of October 2020.

Because of the restrictions due to Covid-19 it took place in a virtual form by using Zoom.

The organizer of the meeting was Social Ecological Institute. All partners were present.

SIE invited to the discussion Adam Czarnecki and Ruta Spiewak – they conduct sociological research in the frame of Rural Development Institute on the topic of Second- and Multihome Owners. Both cooperate with SIE and participate in SIE activities as volunteers.

They presented their latest research and analysis on the situation of people living in different places in Poland, and the impact this situation can have on their life as well as on local and regional development.



The new "old" house of a family from the city who decided to live in the countryside (Gorło - Mazurien region)



One of the main reasons why people move to rural areas is looking for peace and quiet

According to Austrian sociologists Weichhart & Rumpolt (2015): Multi-locality is characterised by the fact that individuals, social groups, or economic subjects pursue their basic and/or their economic interests concurrently or alternately at several places.

The Multi-local citizenship can be: newcomers/permanent residents, second- and holiday-home owners and renters, temporary and seasonal workers, transnational migrants, students and pupils or traditional tourists.

They can play different roles in the local participation: as CONSUMERS they are spending time and money at the second home and its surrounding area, as PARTICIPANTS they participate in local events and happenings, as DEVELOPERS – they are active contributors – they bring human and economic capitals.

Sociological research tries to determine the impact of Multi-local citizens on the local community. Their strengths and opportunities could be used by local authorities to improve the development of the commune:

- they are people in retirement or pre-retirement, relatively wealthy, well-educated, with connections and diverse intellectual capital,
- they are influential and powerful people, impacting on the local decision-making process,
- they can have rural origins, in this case they are more responsible, aware and conscious of the rural specificity of the rural area, more committed, supportive and ready to undertake deliberate actions in favour of the local community,
- previous experiences of living and spending time in the countryside could be important for maintaining relationships, integration and involvement in the community life,
- they have higher environmental awareness,
- second-home owners with no experience in rural life learn from the locals how to cultivate land, maintain the garden etc.,
- permanent resident could gains economic benefits from selling land, property or providing second-home owners with goods and services.

Analyzing weaknesses and threats could help to find solutions of many problems which appear between local communities and second-home citizens. The most spectacular areas of conflicts concern:

- differences in the socio-demographic profiles of second-home owners and the local people (urban vs. rural status),
- different, divergent views, ideas and representations towards the local area and its development between second-home owners, local residents, local authorities, local businesses, local farms,
- conflicts over the land use - lack of acceptance for large-scale, intensive farming (or just farming) in the neighborhood due to noise, pollution, smell and provision of the non-attractive landscape,
- in attractive tourism localities second-home owners' demand for infrastructure and services is a burden for local/municipal budgets given the seasonality,
- socio-economic conflicts – intensive traffic, noise, seasonal increase in prices for locally provided goods and services, limited access to natural amenities (river, lake), pollution, littering.





In Poland in general (but also in most European countries) the local authorities do not recognise second homes as an asset and are even not aware of the scale of this phenomenon in their territory. Second homes rarely appear in strategic documents (local development strategies) in favour of more traditional forms of tourism, e.g. farm-based tourism or massive tourism in attractive leisure destinations.

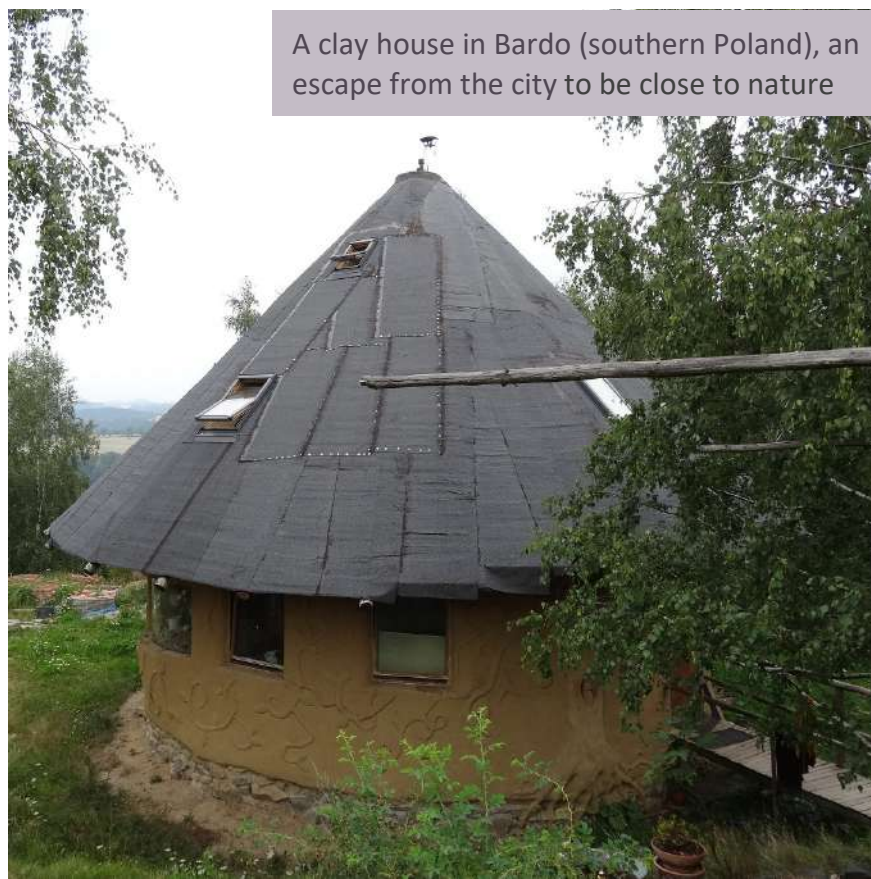
Recognition of both strengths and weaknesses will enable the development of educational tools that will help both parties to seize the opportunities and potential of the new situation.

Especially the situation of Covid-19 pandemic has made second homes more attractive and has induced demand for individual, more isolated forms of housing, leisure and recreation, it has changed the home-usage pattern to longer, uninterrupted stays even over the whole pandemic. The second home has often informally become first/primary residence and vice versa.

Another interesting change is observed by sociologists since few years in Poland – people moving from the city to the country side.

The number of this new comers/gentrifiers is increasing year to year. Main reasons why people move to rural areas are: desire to have own home (38%), need for peace and quiet (28%), change in the family structure (26%), willingness to live close to nature (22%).

The process is observed mostly in areas around large and medium-sized cities, attractive for in-migration. The presence of new migrants does not affect local social and cultural capital.



A clay house in Bardo (southern Poland), an escape from the city to be close to nature



Domed house in central Poland – a second home of a family from Warsaw

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Newly arrived residents participate in a local life in a small extent, they choose only certain elements from the rural concept, such as rural harmony, landscape, but they don't want to participate in the social and neighbourhood life.

Also this group could have an important impact on local development, but still the process of gentrification is not well recognized and tackled by the local authorities.

A very interesting best practice is taking place in Finland. The Laiturilla Project (<https://laiturilla.fi/>) is a very complex and holistic approach. By using ICT tools all partners of Multi-home process can take advantage from the new demographic, economic and social trends in rural area.

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