

It is an increasingly common experience for people in different peripheral rural areas in Poland and also around the world to leave their home localities and move, usually into the cities, to look for a better quality of life. This outflow trend is particularly visible in mountain areas where living conditions and farming-based economic activity pose many challenges to people. The Kłodzko region is an area in the Sudety Mountains where decline in number of people is the most dramatic. Going through this region at the end of the 1980s it was a common picture to see many abandoned households and desolated ruins of buildings, trees were growing on neglected, uncultivated farm lands and debris remained in places of former manufactures and craftsmen workshops. Some villages were completely deserted and depopulated. However, going for a similar trip today it would be possible to see – at least in some places – a radically different picture. In some formerly depopulated villages new homes are being built and the old ones are being renovated and modernized. Many tourists come to recently built boarding houses and houses which offer services in farm tourism. Grass on hay meadows is being mown again and on the slopes there is cattle again and skiing people who take full advantage of state-of-the-art ski-lifts and ski-slopes. In some villages there are more inhabitants but there is also much more willingness to become more economically active (and start one's own business) or to get involved into social activities promoted by local NGOs which promote common actions for the community. These brand-new processes mark a significant change which can be described as a revival of formerly deserted villages and rural areas. **So, can it be said that we are witnessing rural revival?** This is the main question that guides us through our research process. Rural revival can take various forms – demographic (influx of new inhabitants); economic (new businesses not related to farming and food-production, including tourism); social (creating new social bonds between people); spatial (modifications in landscape resulting from changes in land use and new developments). To find satisfying answers to our question we have created a team of academic experts who represent various disciplines (human geography, rural sociology, landscape ecology) and together we will look from various angles at the processes taking places in formerly depopulated rural areas. In our work we will focus on more detailed questions:

1. With what criteria can a reviving village be identified?
2. What are the directions and types of revival of villages?
3. How is the process of the revival of villages related to changes that can be quantified or is it rather of a qualitative type?
4. What is the role of rural communities in the process of the revival of villages and how does their functioning contribute to the consolidation or weakening of the effect of revival?
5. What are the factors supporting or inhibiting the revival of villages?
6. In what way and under what conditions can the process of revival of villages contribute to the activation of neighboring rural areas (or the entire region)?

We want to gain better understanding of the nature of the process of rural revival and what mechanism bring it in – this will allow us to create a model of the observed phenomena. Having a model in place it will be possible to forecast future processes in a region undergoing such significant changes. The answers will be looked for not only in official secondary statistical data but first and foremost in verbal data collected during interviews with members of local community, which is an important qualitative aspect of our project. Everyone who is curious whether there are any reviving villages in Kłodzko region will be able to do it by following a website (prepared as a part of the project) with an interactive map which will be successively completed with data obtained in the research. It will be also possible to join the discussion on the results and become an active project follower to trace the contemporary changes of this most deserted area in the Sudety Mountains together with us.