

The project's goal is an in-depth assessment of the scope and ways of conducting archaeological heritage education in local communities. It will also concern the extent to which the potential of this heritage is reflected in the development documents of Polish municipalities. Research has shown that archaeological heritage is one of the least understandable, and therefore the least interesting for Poles. This translates into a low role of archaeological heritage in local development and a lack of public understanding of the need for its protection and wise management. Meanwhile, it is a rich and diversified asset that may be an important factor in effective policies of local socio-economic development. Unfortunately, education about archaeological heritage is not conducted in Poland in a systematic manner. So far, no in-depth research has been carried out to assess the state of such education. It is unknown, whether and how it is undertaken and by what entities. It is also not known what impact such educational activities have, or whether they are included by local governments in the documents setting out the directions for the development of municipalities. The proposed project intends to fill these gaps by examining and defining the conditions for conducting effective education about archaeological heritage, based on knowledge and implemented in a systemic way.

The tasks planned during the implementation of the project intend to depict - step by step - the above described issues. It will tackle the subject by starting with a general assessment of topics related to education about archaeological heritage in all Polish municipalities and culminating with case studies of three selected municipalities, which will enable a detailed look at the studied issues. The research will be an attempt to answer such research questions as: (1) whether and how local archaeological heritage education in Poland is understood, and by whom and how it is conducted; (2) whether and how archaeological education is included in local strategies and strategic documents and implemented in the development activities of municipalities; (3) what are the deficiencies in this area and (4) whether and what actions are taken to minimize these deficiencies.

An attempt to illustrate more general issues related to education about archaeological heritage will be conducted on the basis of surveys of all municipalities in Poland (using the CAWI online survey method), in-depth interviews with employees of conservation services about the characteristics of archaeological heritage assets in Polish voivodeships, in-depth analysis of relevant strategic documents in selected municipalities to see if and how they include archaeological heritage in development goals and activities. Then, the results of these studies will be used for a selection of three municipalities foreseen for detailed analyzes: in-depth interviews with officials responsible for the creation and implementation of specific strategic documents, with managers of cultural centers, teachers or museum employees. The case studies will allow for the creation of a detailed picture of the archaeological heritage education conducted in selected municipalities, the degree of advancement of such an activity and its inclusion in development policies. An important element will be to identify the existing gaps in these activities and their possible causes, and to indicate ways to minimize their negative effects.

Due to the specificity of the research problem addressed in the project, research methods and tools specific for the social sciences will be used to solve it. Both quantitative (CAWI online surveys) and qualitative research: in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, and an analysis of the literature on the subject, strategic documents and statistical data are planned. Nevertheless, their use will serve to achieve the current goals of contemporary archeology, and as a result will contribute not only to increasing public awareness of the archaeological heritage, but also to its effective management, protection and use.