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Committee

Social Inclusion
Participatory Democracy
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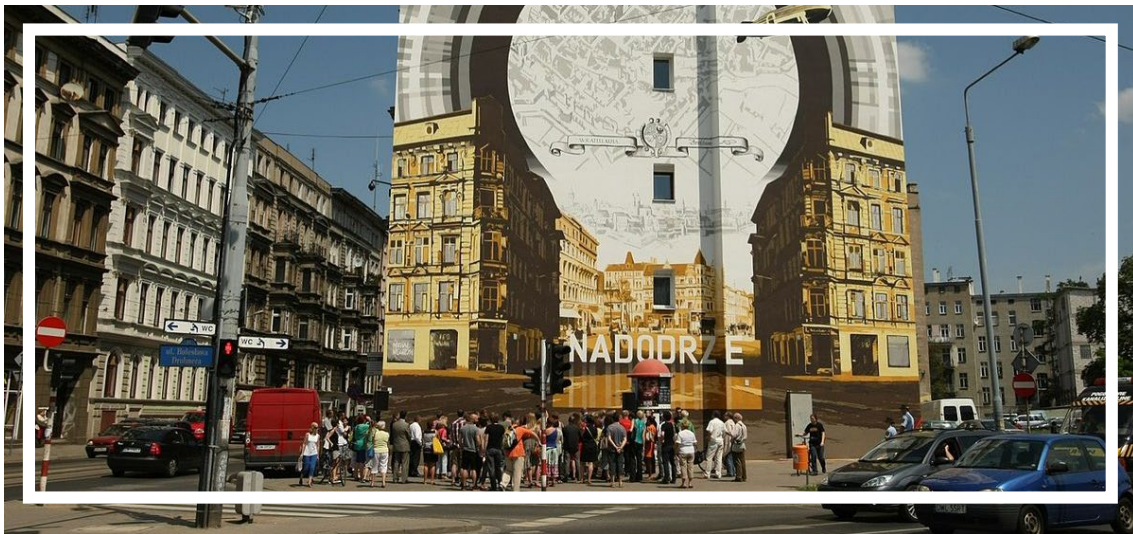
**Inclusive Cities
Observatory**

« NADROZDE NEIGHBORHOOD REHABILITATION PROGRAMME »

Wroclaw, Polonia

Period of implementation: 2006 (launch) | Study case written in 2010

This case study shows the introduction of participatory practices into the rehabilitation programs of a deprived neighbourhood in the context of the governance reorganization of post-communist Poland. Since the 1990s, the democratic local government reform grants more power to local administrations, although a limited management of funds often jeopardizes their capacity for intervention. In recent years, European Structural Funds and policy guidelines have become a substantial endorsement of urban regeneration and development. In 2009, the Municipality drafted an Integrated Urban Development Programme, and selected Nadorzde area as its pilot project. The pilot project has been developed within the network URBAMECO, which deals with the economic redevelopment of deprived urban areas within the European programme URBACT II (EU Cohesion Policy 2007-2013). This International Programme promotes the exchange of practices and supports the development of sustainable, integrated urban policies through the definition of a Local Action Plan, which requires participatory planning approaches.



The **Inclusive Cities Observatory** was launched in 2008 by the UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights with the aim of creating a space for analysis and reflection on local social inclusion policies. The initiative was developed with the scientific support of Professor Yves Cabannes (University College of London) and the Centre for Social Studies (CES) from the University of Coimbra. At present, the Observatory contains more than sixty study cases mostly developed between 2008 and 2010. Even though many of these cases refer to policies that have already come to an end, they still have much to offer: from capitalizing on the learning acquired by other local authorities to discovering suggestive and alternative means to address social inclusion challenges from a local perspective.

Context

City context

Wrocław is located in the south-western part of Poland and is the former capital of [Silesia](#). It is a city with a rich European heritage, having been part of [Poland](#), [Bohemia](#), [Austria](#), [Prussia](#), and [Germany](#) as its national allegiance changed several times under the Piast, Bohemian, and Habsburgs dynasties and also as a part of East Germany in the last century. In the mid-1940s, it became one of the major Polish urban centres, and is now the fourth most populated city in the country. Today, Wrocław is the seat of the Lower Silesian Province authorities and capital of the greater region of Lower Silesia, a province (*voivodeship*) created in 1999, with a population of more 630,000 inhabitants (22% of the regional population).

Government and decentralization context

Wrocław is an urban *gmina* (municipality, which is the basic of administrative territorial division in Poland) and *powiat* (city county, which is the second level of administrative unit equal to county or district). It is also the seat of [Wrocław County](#), which adjoins but does not include the city. In the past, Wrocław was subdivided into five boroughs (*dzielnice*): [Fabryczna](#) ('Factory Quarter'), [Krzyki](#), [Psie Pole](#), [Stare Miasto](#) (old town), and [Śródmieście](#) (city centre). Today, it is divided into 48 [osiedles](#) (subdivisions of a municipality).

Since the fall of communism, Poland has made changes in its government structure. The democratic local government reform of 1990 grants more power to local administrations, which became equipped with self-governing power through democratically elected authorities. According to the 1990 law, local administrations are responsible for managing local water, sewage, and solid waste systems; maintaining, administering, and constructing local roads, municipal cemeteries, preschools, and elementary schools; and administering social welfare programs for the needy and municipal housing, but the list of tasks has been expanding over the years. Local government fiscal autonomy is less than most Western countries and lower than some neighbouring post-Communist countries. Polish *gminas* rely heavily on funds from the central government (UNDP 1999).

If the 1990 law delivered more strategic capacities to the local municipalities set up the first step of a new architecture of decentralization, its dynamic was not accompanied by a proper transfer of funds. Thanks to a consequent large debate in the nation, in 1998 a new administrative model was adopted that borrowed from the French one. The representative of the State, the *voivod* or prefect in charge of the ex-post control of the public funds, is the most important political figure; the Marshal, the president of the region, is elected by the regional assembly; the deputies of the regional assembly are elected by the citizens of the region. At the subregional level (more or less the district level), one finds the *powiat* led by the *Starosta* (an old word for 'chief'), elected by the local assembly. Under this level, but independent from the two upper levels, one finds the commune (*Gmina*), which is free to develop its own plan of development. What is remarkable in this new architecture is the capacity left to all levels to be independent from each other (Bafoil 2010).

Institutional level of policy development: Municipal, with the support of institutions at regional and European levels

Social context

Nadodrze is a district of Wrocław, north of the city centre, located between the inner city's historic marketplace and the second largest railway station in Wrocław. For the municipality, the presence of remarkable nineteenth century buildings in the once-called 'Polish suburb' represents a strong potential for economic boosting the area and this is one of the main reasons for the area becoming a target of urban renewal.

The area was constructed when the German unification in 1871 made Breslau the sixth largest city in the German Empire and substantial regeneration works took place in Wrocław, including the Nadodrze district. By the end of the nineteenth century, Wrocław's population more than tripled, hosting Germans, Jews, Poles, and other ethnic communities. Before the war, Nadodrze was a rich district but after the war and the bombardment that heavily damaged Wrocław, poor people and low-income families settled here, mostly as a result of urban policy implemented by the Municipality. This area still hosts different of ethnicities, populations, and credos. Today, the area is mostly inhabited by the third generation of Polish people since the Potsdam Agreement in 1945 made Wrocław Polish.

The Nadodrze neighbourhood covers an area of 16 km² and has a population of over 130,000 inhabitants. The ethnic structure consists of 126,478 Polish people; 758 from foreign origin; and 4,340 people with unclear origin. The area has a large Roma population, and is the largest Roma community in Wrocław. The members of this community are fairly integrated in the urban society and do not tend to create real ghettos, but still tend to concentrate in certain areas. The Roma children attend primary schools and speak Polish.

The age structure shows a population of 22,476 people in the pre-productive age; 86,675 people in the productive age; and 22,325 people in the post-productive age. The unemployment rate is very high and the average income level of the local population is very low, which puts the inhabitants of the area in a situation of socio-economic exclusion. The unemployment is accompanied by a poor education level and a high rate of school dropouts.

With regard to the housing stock in the area, the majority of inhabitants are renters with 11,109 flats owned by housing cooperatives; 20,621 flats owned by communes; 476 flats owned by the Treasury; 437 flats in corporate ownership; and 110 in other forms of ownership. The housing blocks with poor energy efficiency tend to be very wide, offering large semi-public space that in most cases is run down and often used as informal parking space. The provision of infrastructural facilities is very poor compared to the rest of the city. There is limited public transportation (except for the tram line) and many cars in the area occupy open space that could be easily dedicated to absent playground and public green spaces.

Policy development

The main challenge of the Nadodrze district regeneration policy is to integrate (a) the municipality's plan of urban and economic renewal of a deprived urban area located in a strategic position close to the city centre with (b) measures of social inclusion, poverty reduction, and protection of minorities living in the area. With the support of the EU programme URBACT, the municipality was encouraged to establish a Local Support Group, which requires the multi-stakeholder participation of local actors in defining a Local Action Plan for the integrated urban renewal plan of a selected area. The launching of the local support group worked as leverage for a variety of initiatives and programmes dedicated to involving the local population in the development plan.

The municipality manages and coordinates a range of socio-cultural programmes dedicated to the integration of the inhabitants, including specific initiatives dedicated to Roma populations,

taking advantage of the schools in Nadordze neighbourhood attended by Roma children. With the local schools, there is a programme devoted to economic activities training, led by the service of economic development in the Municipality. Students live in this area because it is still affordable. Artists also inhabit the area and there is a squat in which cultural activities occur in the neighbourhood. The squat is supposed to remain, even after the implementation of the regeneration process, but one part of the building will be destroyed to become a part of another project (a sport centre). It is unclear how the municipality will manage potential disagreements between the squat and the urban renewal plan.

Background

Over the course of time, the Nadordze neighbourhood has become less and less attractive due to the decay of buildings and lack of investment in maintaining the patrimony spared by the bombardments that devastated the city. The state of decay of the area and the social economic problems faced by its inhabitants are among the reasons for regenerating what the municipality considers a deprived urban area. The regeneration project also deals with the renewal of the second largest railway station of Wrocklaw, located in the Nadordze neighbourhood, whose renewal is connected to the coming EURO 2012 Football Championship when many tourists and football fans must be connected from the station to the touristic highlights in the city centre.

Policy objectives

The main goal of this policy is a sustainable regeneration of the area, with the functional integration of different ethnic groups into a successful city socially and economically. In 2009, the Municipality of Wrocklaw drafted an Integrated Urban Development Programme for the area including steps to be implemented in different phases. Implementation of the urban revitalization is supported by municipal, regional and, in the case of Nadordze, European funding. Through the URBACT programme (EU programme of exchange and development of policies and practices among EU cities), the municipality is committed to draft a Local Action Plan resulting from the participatory process. The Local Action Plan is an integrated policy that will focus on a trade development strategy for the arts and crafts, services, and a tourist route accompanied by the renovation of tenement houses together with socially inclusive policies.

Chronological development and implementation

The practice described had its kick-off with the participation of the City of Wrocklaw in the URBACT Programme within a network of European cities called URBAMECO, which dealt with the economic regeneration of deprived urban areas in Europe. Each participating municipality was asked to select a target area to develop an integrated sustainable urban regeneration process by sharing experiences and mutual support among the participants in the URBACT II Programme. URBAMECO was a Fast Track network, which benefitted from the support of the EU commission due to the relevance of the theme it tackled. Together with the municipality of Wrocklaw, the Managing Authority (the authority dealing with the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which for Wrocklaw is the Lower Silesian Voivodship) is involved in the definition of the urban regeneration policy.

If the policy is, on one side, defined and influenced by the European programme, on the city level, there are other programmes that also convey efforts towards the same goal of Nadordze renewal. Wrocklaw implemented the '100-Tenement-Houses' programme to support the restoration of listed buildings in the city. As mentioned above, another focus of current local activities is the EURO 2012 championship where Wrocław is one of the hosting cities, which is being used as a strategy to renovate certain parts of the city. There is no additional funding for

its preparation, but a special team for this task has been created in the local authority's administration.

Other relevant local strategies are the 'Wrocław in 2020 Plus Perspective Strategy', which was adopted by the Resolution of Wrocław Municipal Council on 6 July 2006, and the 'Wrocław Local Revitalisation Programme for 2004-2006 and 2007-2013', which was adopted on 8 December 2005. This strategy covers 12 thematic areas of urban regeneration in the city. This Local Revitalisation Programme is open and will be updated on a regular basis with further projects submitted by the beneficiaries.

On the neighbourhood level, the local authorities apply a strategy called 'Entrepreneurship as an Alternative to Exclusion'. It deals with the integrated revitalisation of the former Oder Suburb and a route connecting Wrocław's historic centre with the multimodal traffic node. The main goal of this comprehensive revitalisation is lasting renovation and prevention of marginalisation of several degraded streets in the area of the former Oder Suburb, and transforming them into attractive tourist and economic centres. This route is important because the downtown buildings here are from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and belong to Wrocław's cultural heritage.

Stakeholders, beneficiaries and participatory methodologies

Agents involved

The main agent is the Municipal authority, in coordination with the Managing Authority for the ERDF funding the Lower Silesia, the European Investment Bank (EIB), and some NGOs such as the Foundation Dom Pokoju and the Klub Pod Kolumnami (a cultural center in Nadordze active since the 1960s). The City of Wrocław established Wrocławska Rewitalizacja Limited Company to implement the regeneration process; this agency takes the form of a company with a majority share owned by the City. A co-partner is the German company BIG-Städtebau GmbH from Kronshagen.

Beneficiaries

The main beneficiary is supposed to be the population of the Nadodrze District: this includes people who have a permanent and temporary residence in the area as well as workers and users of the services and facilities in the area. The elaboration of the integrated redevelopment plan requires institutional capacity building and coordination among the involved institutions. This practice represents a testing ground also for the concerned administrations, which are experimenting with a new way of managing a neighbourhood regeneration plan both with vertical coordination among institutions and public participation of the local residents. The Foundation House of Peace (NGO DomPokoju) is, in a sense, a beneficiary as well since along the process it gained the role of umbrella organization responsible for the future steps of the rehabilitation initiatives of the neighbourhood.

Participation processes implemented

Information regarding the participatory process established to develop the regeneration of the Nadorzde district is reported mainly by two stakeholders: the municipality and the NGO active in the management and organization of the process itself. On-site research analysis by a third party was not possible. The comprehension of this type of participatory process is then strongly related to these two main actors that are – from different perspectives – animators of the urban regeneration policy: on one side, there is the municipality, which is strongly encouraged by the EU programme to implement and sustain a participatory process; on the other hand, there is a

local NGO which is involved in several actions and projects involving target population economically supported by the municipality.

The NGO DOM POKOJU Foundation has been particularly active in the area through different actions and initiatives involving Roma children in the local school, organizing European Neighbourhood day with the Municipality, and so forth. Worthy of mention is the project called 'Old Professions'¹, developed with local teenagers, which entails the mapping of small and disappearing small arts and crafts shops in the area.² These projects became the first basis to sensitize public awareness around the topic of urban regeneration and economic development of the neighbourhood. Moreover, they represented a way to reach out to the local population potentially constituting the Local Support Group (LSG).

The Deputy Mayor is responsible for the LSG and, at the time of defining the Local Action Plan within the URBACT EU programme, the LSG had about 20-25 members (including representatives of the municipality, the NGOs, and inhabitants), which met regularly in the neighbourhood municipal centre in the Nadorze district. Prior to the creation of the LSG, the municipality launched three phases of citizen's consultation within a time frame of about half a year from May 2008 to January 2009. This consultation led to the creation of three thematic subgroups concerned with social issues, culture, and economy.

There is no updated information about the evolution of this practice, except for the coordination of other local initiatives by the Foundation Dom Pokoju, which functions as umbrella for targeted social activities under the Infopunkt Nadordze. The Infopunkt has an innovative nature, and constitutes a platform for cooperation between NGOs, the Town Council, representatives of business, independent artists, and residents of the estate. Through debate and concrete projects, the influence of local communities on decisions taken by the authorities will increase. In addition, the same NGO conducted a project for ameliorating the image of the neighbourhood through 'greening', which involved the participation of international volunteers.³

Institutionalizing and financing

Institutionalization processes

The municipality is planning to extend the experience of Local Support Group into other areas of the city in which regeneration plans are foreseen. During the development of the local action plan, the LSG was part of a network that allowed exchanges of practices and experiences with other LSGs in Poland and in Europe among the cities participating in the URBACT programme. After the ending of the URBACT programme, the Wrocław LSG is planning to continue exchanges with other jurisdictions in Europe in order to get acquainted with different methodologies of dealing with public participation in regards to urban regeneration.⁴

Financing

The development of the neighbourhood regeneration programme has been supported at different institutional levels and counts on a combination of programmes and funding. One of the most consistent source of financing has been the Regional Operational Programme (ROP) for the

¹ The 'Old Professions' Project was co-financed by EU funds through its 'Youth in Action' Programme and by Wrocław Municipality.

² <http://ginacezawody.org/>

³ <http://nadodrzerevitalization.wordpress.com/>

⁴ See the section on 'Key results and achievements'.

Lower Silesian Voivodship that allows co-financing for revitalization projects. The ROP has been approved by the European Commission and Wrocław is the only town mentioned specifically in the Lower Silesian ROP under Priority 9: Towns (Renovation of degraded urban areas in Lower Silesia). Wrocław has been allocated 9.45% of ERDF funds for this priority.

The '100-Tenement-Houses' programme of the Municipality of Wrocław is a funding scheme that supports the renovation of listed buildings with up to 80% of the costs, but can only be provided to owners of listed buildings, not to the owners of all the buildings that were constructed under the Communist Regime after World War II. If the City entirely owns a house, the entire investment is financed by the City; if it is totally or partially private property, the city provides a proportion of the renovation costs. A few years ago, the local authorities created a special unit (currently transformed into an independent company called the Development Agency for Wrocław Agglomeration) that provides assistance to big investors. The agency has had excellent experiences in attracting investors to the city and the other local authorities in the Wrocław agglomeration. The creation of each Local Support Group and its first period of activities is partly financed through the URBACT II EU programme (EU Cohesion Policy 2007-2013), which grants the city an amount of 7000 € for managing the LSG. The municipality itself provides additional funding but there is no information about the actual amount.

Outcomes and reflections

Key results and achievements

In Autumn 2010, a survey about the results achieved through the participatory planning process and the creation of the Local Support Group provided the following considerations and results. The main achievement is the creation of a Local Support Group that envisions a steady presence of multi-stakeholders participating in the decision-making process of the Nadordze district regeneration. The LSG works at the *neighbourhood* level by assuring the steady presence of multi-stakeholders participating in the decision-making process of the Nadordze district regeneration; at the *city* level as a pilot for other regeneration plans in the city; and at the *international* level, since the LSG engaged in organizing exchanges with other jurisdictions in Europe in order to become acquainted with different methodologies of dealing with public participation in regards to urban regeneration.

The municipality declared that there was no previous experience of an institutionalized form of participatory planning. In this sense, the presence of the URBACT EU programme encouraged this type of approach, which was also sustained by the collaboration with the region representing the Managing Authority (MA) of EU funding. As matter of fact, the MA, which has been involved as a supra local level institution in the development of the Local Action Plan through the work of the Local Support Group, is now supporting the development of the regeneration project through additional funding proposals. The Local Support Group still functions after the ending of the EU programme and new partners have joined the group, such as the university, inhabitants, and other socio-cultural associations. The URBACT Local Support Group meets every two months with about 20-25 participants.

The work is supervised and supported by a group of civil servants of the municipality, which ensures the co-production of the Local Action Plan with all the participating actors. The group also reports on the LSG progress and outcomes to the EU network URBAMECO, and therefore its role is to link and exchange the work performed locally with the work performed by other cities in Europe tackling similar objectives.

At the time of the survey, approval for the financial aspects of the plan resulting from the work of the LSG was due in the coming months. The first steps of the Local Action Plan have been implemented through the following actions:

- Application for funds – the project of a Professional Development Centre;
- Start of a programme with the Art University students concerning the embellishment of shops windows in the commercial route;
- Competition for local NGOs to manage the Urban Regeneration Information Point (the Infopunkt has been recently activated);
- Continuation of the social consultation with citizens through socio-cultural initiatives; and
- Changing of one of the strategic documents to allow artists and craftspeople to access low-cost rental spaces in the neighbourhood.

Overall assessment and replicability or adaptation elsewhere

Main obstacles

The municipality is the main source of information, and during the first phase of the programme (which concerned the establishment of a Local Support Group) stated that there were no conflicts because the residents are welcoming the regeneration project. However, there is no information from qualitative interviews or surveys of residents confirming this statement. The main hindrance faced so far by the local authority regards the fragmentation of ownership in the area and the difficulties of reaching out and matching different owners and renters. In the case of municipal ownership, the decision for restoration or destruction is in its hands.

The area is inhabited by many people living in precarious conditions, including low-income families and retired and elderly people. The geographic position of the district, its vicinity to a bus and railway station and the city center, and the quality of the architecture are values underlining the regeneration of the area. Unofficially, it has been reported that more and more middle-class people come to live here due to the growing interest in this area, and students who used to live here because of the cheap rents are now moving to other parts of the city. There are no specific measures to prevent the phenomena of gentrification except the rent control set up by the municipality for spaces dedicated to arts and crafts.

Overall assessment

This policy is the first experience of a structured participatory planning process undertaken by the Municipality of Wrocklaw. Over the years, the neighbourhood of Nadordze has witnessed several socio-cultural initiatives involving the inhabitants and especially ethnic minorities living in the area. NGOs have been managing as volunteers and as third party executor for the municipality in most of those projects. But it is with the chance of drafting a social, environmental, and economically integrated Local Action Plan within the EU Programme that those initiatives are synergistically reconnected around a common objective to become part of an institutional planning document. The added value of this approach is the attempt to organize from scratch the horizontal participation of local actors, in a context novel to this sort of interaction, and in linking its outcomes to the municipal, regional, and European level.

This practice targets a neighbourhood that has been an unwillingly theatre of a slow process of disinvestment and decay, but could host some of the poorest communities in the city because it offered affordable living. The regeneration process is surely desirable because of the multiple

levels of deprivation in the area (see 'Social Context' section), but the regeneration plan is also on the top of the municipality planning agenda because of its geographical position which is strategic to the further economic and touristic development of the city centre (for example, the project of arts and crafts in the neighbourhood and the strengthening of the role of the railway station located in Nadordze). Likewise, the convergence of regeneration programmes and concomitance with Euro 2012 championship have made this area a prime site for redevelopment.

The actual challenge is how to orchestrate and maintain the work of multi-stakeholders' participation initiated through the EU Local Support Group and to capitalize on the opportunities offered by economic redevelopment, while ensuring still an affordable and high quality standard of living to the actual inhabitants who are willing to reside in Nadrodze.

Replicability or adaptation of policy elsewhere

While considering that the level of innovation of this policy should be strictly referenced to the conditions and the context in which it developed, some lessons for the policy can be drawn in the following major aspects:

- The capacity of the municipal authority to bring together different sources of funding targeting a common project, for an approach with the intention of involving the inhabitants from the beginning.
- The involvement of the foundation and local NGOs which already worked in the area, granting them the responsibility to lead and coordinate the participatory process, basically working as mediator between the municipality and the inhabitants.
- The capitalization of local resources such the skills and competences of arts and crafts practiced in the area in order to build upon them towards local economic development, while supporting craftsmen's presence in the neighbourhood through maintaining low rents for working spaces.
- The involvement of local schools in the area, with workshops and multimedia projects regarding the future development of the neighbourhood. The children's products have been used in public consultation to animate the debate about the regeneration plan.
- The attempt to institutionalize the creation and activity of the Local Support Group into the regeneration processes of other areas in the city, although this intention has not been verified in practice.

Further information

This case was researched in 2009 and written in 2010 by Dr. Laura Colini, researcher in Urban Studies affiliated to the Bauhaus University, Weimar, and Expert for URBACT II Programme. The case was developed under the supervision of Dr. Giovanni Allegretti at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal. Dr. Colini is grateful to the people from the Municipality of Wrocklaw for their commitment during URBACT II FTP and to Dr. Allegretti for his encouragement to write about this case study.

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Web resources:

Blog about the revitalization of Nadodrze: <http://nadodzerevitalization.wordpress.com/>

Dom Pokojou Foundation: <http://www.mladiinfo.com/2009/12/15/ngo-%E2%80%93-inspired-evolution/>

Mapping 'Old Professions' Programme: <http://qinacezawody.org/>

Video about Nadrodze: <http://vimeo.com/16781070>