

LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LGD) „PARTNERSTWO DLA WARMII” AS A CREATOR OF LOCAL TOURISM

Janusz HOCHLEITNER

Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie Instytut Historii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych
e-mail: janusz.hochleitner@uwm.edu.pl

Marek ARSZUŁOWICZ

Szkoła Wyższa im. Bogdana Jańskiego Wydział Zamiejscowy w Elblągu

Abstract: *Local Action Group (LGD) „Partnerstwo dla Warmii” as a Creator of Local Tourism.* The need to develop rural areas in Poland, especially after joining European Union, became a big challenge. LEADER programme has been active in European Union since 1991 and it consists of several stages. It is a program of nonreturnable financial help to support rural areas by the means of creating partnerships. Creating partnerships is also a goal of Lokalne Grypy Działania (Local Action Groups) that have been active for several years, and one of them is "Partnerstwo dla Warmii" (Partnership for Warmia). This partnership covers a vast area and seems to have abilities for these kinds of activities because it is located in a very poor economic area. The Partnership for Warmia sees a big chance for developing local communities through creating tourist infrastructure in order to use better the potential of the Nature and very interesting, multicultural history of Warmia and part of old Mazury (Natangia)

Key words: development strategy, rural areas, natural and landscape features, tourism infrastructure.

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The territory of the described Local Action Group (Lokalna Grupa Działania - LGD) „Partnerstwo dla Warmii” is predisposed towards tourist development¹. The area is rich with attractions which might potentially become important elements for creating new tourist products. The area of LGD covers 9 districts (gmina) in four counties (powiat) braniewskim (Frombork, Pieniężno, Braniewo, Płoskinia, Lelkowo, Wilczęta), bartoszyckim (Górowo Iławieckie), ostródzkim (Miłakowo) i elbląskim (Godkowo). All districts are located in warmińsko – mazurskie voivodship. The total surface of the studied area is 1931 km², that is 8 % of the area of the whole voivodship with population of 42063, which stands for 2,95 % of the whole voivodship.

The biggest potential beneficiary is powiat braniewski (Braniewo county) whose all districts (gmina), except from town district Braniewo, are included in the area of interest.

¹ J. Hochleitner, *Budowa strategii rozwoju ruchu turystycznego – postulatory*, [w:] *Kulturowe wartości Wzniesień Elbląskich*, pod red J. Hochleitnera i W. Moski, Elbląg 2008, s. 95-102.

Braniewo county borders with Russia (Kaliningrad District) in the north, and Zalew Wiślany marks a natural border in the north west. Additionally it borders with three counties (powiat), that is: in the west and south west with powiat ziemski ebląski, in the south with Lidzbark county, in the east with Bartoszyce county. The county has an access to the Baltic Sea through Zalew Wiślany and Cieśnina Pilawska, and canal connection with Pojezierze Iławskie through Zalew Wiślany, Elbląg river and Elbląg Canal. Port in Frombork, in Zalew Wiślany is communicated with port in Elbląg, Krynica Morska in Mierzeja Wiślana and with Kaliningrad in Russia. In this area there are 97 council villages and 189 villages.

The representative of Elbląg county (powiat elbląski), situated in Równina Warmińska and Pojezierze Iławskie town-rural country Godkowo, consists of 22 council villages and 9 other villages. Town – rural county Miłakowo belongs to Ostróda county and embraces 17 council villages and 11 other villages. In the east of the region there is a rural county Górowo Iławeckie that belongs to Baroszyce county with its 36 council villages and 32 other villages.

Socio economic potential

The area of nine LGD counties was inhabited, in December 2006, by 42063 people, that is 3 % of warmińsko mazurskie voivodship. In 2001-2006 there was a drop in population number by 2,22 %. The biggest drop was noted in counties: Frombork (4,70 %), Wilczeta (3,81 %), Pieniężno (3,51 %), Godkowo (3,22 %) i Górowo Iławeckie (3,02 %). Only in the rural county Braniewo there was a rise by 1.14 %. In comparison with the drop in population in the whole voivodship (0.11 %), LGD area shows a quicker pace. Changes in population are entitled to the birth rate and migration.

The biggest county in the search area, by area and population, is a rural county Górowo Iławeckie. From population point of view attention should be drawn to county Miłakowo, at the fourth position with relatively small area. However the middle size Płoskinia has a relatively low population density.

Table 1. Area and number of inhabitants

Source: Author's research based on data from Urząd Statystyczny in Olsztyn, Województwo warmińsko-mazurskie, podregiony, powiaty, gminy 2007, Olsztyn 2007

No.	District name	Area	Number of inhabitants
1	Frombork	124 km ²	3 754
2	Pieniężno	243 km ²	6 745
3	Braniewo	307 km ²	6 368
4	Płoskinia	170 km ²	2 709
5	Lelkowo	198 km ²	3 061
6	Wilczeta	148 km ²	3 102
7	Górowo Iławeckie	416 km ²	7 264
8	Miłakowo	158 km ²	5 751
9	Godkowo	167 km ²	3 309

In 2006 the highest population density was in Miłakowo county (gmina) – 36 people/km² and Frombork county – 30 people/km². The lowest population density is in rural counties of Lelkowo and Płoskinia – 15 and 16 people/km² respectively. The average population density of the studied region is 22 people per 1 square kilometer and far from the average of the voivodship (59). Compared to the national average (122) it can be classified as the most „deserted”¹. Age structure proves that the population at the pre production age embraces 23.3 % (9804 people) of the entire population of the studied area, at the production age 62.6 % (26336 people) and past production age 14.1 % (5923 people)².

The age structure for warmińsko – mazurskie voivodship is respectively 21,9 %, 64,5 %, 13,6 %. The comparison proves that there is a relatively high percentage of young people (pre production age) but on the other hand there is higher than average percentage of older

people (past production age). Also, lower than the average of the voivodship, is the percentage of people at the production age, which proves the weakness of this labor market. Apparently some of the production age people is employed beyond the studied area. The most difficult situation is in the following counties: Lelkowo. Płoskinia, and Godkowo. The number of people at the non productive age for all 100 people at the production age exceeds well over 60. The ration for the whole area is 59.7 and voivodship average is 55.

In majority of the counties there has been a negative birth rate. Only Miłakowo and Górowo Iławeckie effectively counteract this trend. The data prove a relatively low potential of working staff in the county and should provoke dynamic actions, to change it. The migration of population on the studied area exceeds the average in the voivodship. The highest migration rate, with the ratio to the county population are: Miłakowo (2,31 %) i Wilczęta (2,29 %). It is disturbing, that nearly half of the migration consists of people aged 20-39. Undoubtedly one of the migration reasons from LGD area is very unattractive job market, which is proved with high unemployment rate.

Table 2. Population migration

Source: author's research based on GUS; <http://www.stat.gov.pl/demografia/index.html>

District (Gmin)	Population 31.12.2006r.	Migration in 2006			
		Total		aged 20 - 39	
		numbers	%	numbers	%
Braniewo	6 368	95	1,49	48	0,75
Frombork	3 754	60	1,60	32	0,85
Godkowo	3 309	52	1,57	31	0,94
Górowo Iławeckie	7 264	130	1,79	76	1,05
Lelkowo	3 061	46	1,50	33	1,08
Miłakowo	5 751	133	2,31	67	1,17
Pieniężno	6 745	117	1,73	68	1,01
Płoskinia	2 709	35	1,29	20	0,74
Wilczęta	3 102	71	2,29	35	1,13
Obszar LGD	42 063	739	1,76	410	0,97
Województwo	1 426 883	21 906	1,54	11 515	0,81

LGD area is characterized with unemployment rate, due to:

- Collapse of government owned farms (PGR)
- Collapse of companies' branches in little towns
- Collapse of the service managing huge areas farming, in the aftermath of which on considerably huge areas arouse a serious social problem with consequences shadowing attitudes and behavior of generations to come.

The structure of reported job demand reflects undergoing changes. Employment rate in agriculture drops, but rises in production, trading, service. Employees consist mainly of small and medium businesses. The dynamic tourist development seems to be at the moment one of the most important factors causing entrepreneurship development and turning away unfavorable trend of migration from these beautiful areas².

Natural environment potential

Each and every area holds certain natural and cultural potential. The former concerns elements of nature's activities, which have been shaping geographical dimension. The latter is secondary potential, which has been created as a result of human activities. Creating a diagnostic test and presenting LGD area from the perspective of natural and cultural potential will enable us to discover possible chances of using them for tourism and presenting further development possibilities.

² K. Z. Orzech, *Szanse rozwoju obszarów wiejskich poprzez Lokalne Grupy Działania, [w:] Kulturowe wartości Wzniesień Elbląskich...*, s. 103-112.

Natural environment is a set of natural elements tightly connected with each other, that surrounds living creatures. Natural environment is a place for living and acting for humans. It constitutes a complex effect of influencing different natural forces, and is a subject to constant evolutionary changes. As a result of mistakes in management and wasteful exploitation of resources, natural environment is currently in many places degraded or strongly jeopardized. Sometimes the understanding of natural environment is narrowed only to its natural part, examined solely without human participation. Geographical environment is ruled by natural laws (physical, chemical, and biological) which drive at preserving its natural state, meaning to uninterrupted processes both endogenous and exogenous, shaping the face of our planet, in accordance with the very basic natural law – energy and mass remain stable, only the form of matter changes in time and space.

To the very basic elements of the landscape in the studied area belong 6 regions. The review is started with Zalew Wiślany, which is a remnant of old Zatoka Gdańska, departed today with Mierzeja Wiślana. The only existing natural connection with the Baltic Sea is on the Russian side in Bałtyjsk. The area of this vast basin is 838 km², within Polish border 328 km², and the rest is within borders of Obwód Kaliningradzki (Russia). With its length of 90 km and width of 7-15 km the basin is not deep, the average 4.4 km.

The connection of Zalew Wiślany with the Baltic Seas through Piaławska Cieśnina causes that the waters in both basins – depending on the direction of winds – mix as a result of which salinity of the region reaches 7 ‰. The waters of the rivers falling into Zalew Wiślany (Narus, Bauda, Pasłęka) makes the salinity homogeneous and depending on the distance from Piaławska Cieśnina, it changes. Those same rivers are the cause of slow shallowing of Zalew Wiślany as a result of leaving the deposit of silt. Shallow and cloudy waters change their colour depending on the weather, giving the surrounding environment a very peculiar feature. Areas surrounding Zalew Wiślany are uniquely attractive for tourists. For sailors two ports are possible: in Frombork and harbors in Ujście and Nowa Pasłęka. The banks of Zalew Wiślany are low and marshy. Near banks areas are covered with reeds and bulrush. Water level is changeable and depends mainly on winds. In winter Zalew Wiślany is completely frozen¹. The direct access to Zalew Wiślany have only two warmia districts: Frombork and Braniewo.

Very interesting for tourists is Wybrzeże Staropruskie – delta shaped area of two rivers Baudy and Pasłęka that create a narrow, low level along south east bank of Zalew Wiślany in Frombork and Braniewo districts. The coast is slightly above sea level and was formed with small fracture mule and sands brought by Pasłęka and Bauda rivers and shaped with the help of weak currents and waves of Zalew Wiślany. Wet areas, crossed with complex net of irrigation ditches, partially covered with reeds, willows and alders along with earth embankments running along from Bauda mouth till Pasłęka mouth and further do the Russian border and a drawbridge in Nowa Pasłęka, resemble a landscape of Żuławy Wiślane and the Holland. Sporadic, seen from the far rare sand hills enliven the monotony of marshy plain providing a shelter for human settlements. So low lying areas are used presently for farming, but also give a perfect shelter for water and mud birds especially numerous storks from Klejnowo (25 pairs). Near lagoon wet area reeds protecting the access to Zalew Wiślany waters is also a shelter for migrating animals and in winter a perfect source of roof covering materials.

Next region is Nizina Warmińska pushed between Wysoczyzna Elbląska and Wzniesienia Górowskie. The southern part of this lowland is bordered with Road no.512 Pasłek – Orneta, behind which there is uplift of Pojezierze Iławskie. The natural borders of the lowland are rivers Bauda and lower Pasłęka³. In its highest point, in the southern part,

³ L. Roszkówna, *Doliny rzek – kronika rozwoju zastoisk Pobrzeża Warmińskiego*, „Studia Societatis Scientiarum Toruniensis”, vol. 8 sectio C, nr 4-6, Toruń 1976.

it reaches 60 m above sea level, and then goes down gradually towards north near Braniewo to 20 m above sea level and further towards Zalew Wiślany in the delta region of Pasłęka river to 0.5 m above sea level. The lowland is partially covered with loam from the period of extinguishing of the last glacier. Soil is fertile and used for farming. It worth mentioning, that the biggest attractive of the region is not only the oldest town in Warmia – Braniewo, but also the middle of Pasłęka river with beaver lodges, Pierzchalkie Lake, reserve of dwarf birches in Cielętnik, old prusian settlements in Bogdanka and Baranówka. However valuable layers of peat and cowberries in Biedkowo and Rucianka region, foresting and old motorway “Berlinka” joining Berlin and Kaliningrad, push this region in a good direction of economic development and good management. Nizina Warmińska embraces the whole Wilczęta district and majority of Frombork district and Braniowe, less of Godkowo I Płoskinie.

Since 1945 popularization of tourism has been a failure in Wysoczyzna Elbląska with its highest peak of 197 m above sea level. Towards surrounding Żuławy Wiślane, Równina Warmińska and Zalew Wiślany it goes with sloppy edges⁴. The height of this hill with the neighboring lowlands caused the creation of many erosion gorges, ravines and channels of swift flowing streams and rivers, ending their short run in Drużno Lake and Zalew Wiślany. The whole area is covered with mixed forests with old oaks, beeches and hornbeams. The western part exposes on the bottom loams from the last glacier, exploited by some brickyards. However the most beautiful landscape dominates in north west part, clinging to waters of Zalew Wiślany. One has an obvious impression of a hilly landscape with contrasting hills, winding roads, with the cascade architecture of villages. Natural, cultural, and landscape advantages in this part of Wysoczyzna Elbląska make a unique and unrepeatably value of this region. Thus Park Krajobrazowy Wysoczyzny Elbląskiej preserves and protects those values for scientific, educational, and tourist reasons. Similarly accompanying nature reserves of “Buki Wysoczyzny Elbląskiej”, “Kadyński Las”, “Piuropusznikowy Jar” along with fauna and flora represented by wild pigs, raccoon dogs, badgers, deers, mooses and eagles confirm the legitimacy and rank of this activity. Wysoczyzna Elbląska occupies the western part of Frombork district⁵.

Two further regions occupy a small percentage of the discussed LGD area. Pojezierze Iławskie was shaped by the withdrawing glacier. The landscape in this region consist of picturesque hills of terminal moraine, lowlands and valleys crossed with rivers, numerous streams, creating a dense net of flows thanks to canal connections. The area is rich with post glacier lakes. The biggest lake in this area is Narie lake with numerous branches nestled in Pasłęka basin, and the deepest in Wukniki lake 68 meters deep. There are many forests, mainly mixed with the majority of coniferous forests. Apart from forests there are also water plants and peat. North east part of Pojezierze Iławskie covers the area of Miłakowo district entirely and half of the area of Godkowo district. Wzniesienia Górowskie present isolated base of moraine exceeding 150 m above sea level with the highest point of 216 meters. On the southern slope of Góra Zamkowa there is the beginning of Walsza river which makes below Pieniężno deep and picturesque ravine covered with interesting set of plants. In the west Wzniesienia Górowskie borders with Równina Warmińska, in the south with Równina Ornecka, in the east with Nizina Sępoleńska, and in the north it crosses Russian border. Wzniesienia Górowskie are located in the area of Górowo Iławskie, Pieniężno, Lelkowo districts.

The basic feature of the climate in LGD area is its changeability. It is a consequence of its location, right in the middle of migration of Atlantic cyclone centers meeting

⁴ L. J. Łuka, *Osadnictwo kultury pomorskiej na prawobrzeżnym Dolnym Powiślu i Wysoczyźnie Elbląskiej*, „Rocznik Elbląski”, t. 3, 1966.

⁵ J. Marcinkowska, *Park Krajobrazowy Wysoczyzny Elbląskiej*. [w:] *Kulturowe wartości Wzniesień Elbląskich...*, s. 137-199.

continental air. There is a domination of polar – marine and polar – continental air, less important are arctic, tropical – marine, and tropical – continental. The average annual temperature at the real level is 7.2 Celsius. Climate conditions of LGD area are fairly diverse which is connected with the shape of the land and also depends on the influence of Zalew Wiślany. Vegetation period is on average 205 days.

Surface waters are an important element of the landscape diversity of the area, they decide about functioning and richness of ecosystems, are socially and healthy significant. Apart from lakes and rivers the studied area is rich with wet grounds: marsh, bogs, peat, spring terrains. The level of surface waters does not threaten the tourist development of the area.

On LGD area there are central European, Euro Siberian and Boreal species. Among protected plants on LGD area there: aconite, anemone, foxglove, phantom orchis, Lady's slipper, daphne, horsetail, ivy, clubmoss, Platanthera, ostrich fern, gnieźnik, small birch. From among all groups of plants the least diverted are forests and very valuable water – peat groups. A very interesting set of plants can be found in "Dolina Rzeki Walszy" reserve near Pieniężno.

The average forest coverage in LGD area is 24.3 %. Forests should be used in accordance with their function and protected against setting aside for non forest usage. Within forests there should be no investments not connected with protection and growing of forest resources. Ecological rules should be observed while using forests. Forest economy should be directed at protection of natural and landscape values. There should be easy accessible tourist tracks, bicycle routes, horse riding routes, designed in a way that would allow to admire landscapes, visit available parts of reserve and to see natural monuments, bird watching, taking photographs, have a camp near lakes and in forests. There should also be educational routes both for pedestrians and bicycle riders. There should be organized rest places, camp sites and mark them in such a way that with the help of foresters it would be possible to learn about many interesting aspects of growing and using forests, their protection against parasites and fire. Very helpful are all kinds of maps, folders and information boards called stops. Tourism is possible only on marked routes. Entirely excluded from tourism are forests with protected species of animals.

The animal world of LGD consists of variety of species. It is a result of existence of variety of habitats, from mixed woods till big meadows, peat fields and surface waters. The biggest variety of fauna exists in water areas and in their neighborhoods. In the studied area there are many species of birds with 152 protected. In Kiejnowo village and in adjoining areas there is the biggest breeding spot of a white stork. The area is within NATURA 2000 project. Apart from that in Górowo Iławeckie district, in Żywkowo village there is the biggest population of a white stork.

Cultural potential

Nine districts within LGD area have diverse and valuable cultural potential. These are remaining of old communities that used to live in old Warmia, Natangia, and Oberland. Material cultural goods (buildings, communication facilities) and spiritual goods (social norms and etiquette, religious beliefs, customs and tradition) are passed from older generations and shape basis of psychological disposition of a person and constitute a base for intentional training of such. To present effectively all material sources of all LGD areas, they can be bound into certain groups and sets of building with respect to their chronology in the area.

Basically the greatest amount of religious buildings, since the beginning of Christianity in this area, have been preserved in historical Warmia. These are: churches in towns, churches in villages (eg. in Chruściel, Lechowo, Pierzchałka, Płoskinia, Radziejewo, Tolkowiec) branch chapels (eg. in Glebisko, Bornity, Wojnity) and above all numerous

chapels and road crosses, mainly from XIX c⁶. The latter did not exist before war in regions surrounding so called “Holy Warmia”. Before war there was a strict division in the region between richly equipped religious building in the area of catholic Warmia and modestly designed religious building in Protestants’ owned areas (Natangia and Oberland very often ascribed to Mazury). At present all churches are catholic. The only exceptions are churches in Górowo Iławeckie and Pieniężno, administered by Greek Catholics. However some valuable objects did not survive till our times in Szalmia, Lipowina, Karwiny, Pęciszewo.

Historic manor houses and palaces have preserved in various conditions. Majority of them belonged to great families living in the area. Historical necropolis, maybe with exception of those from war time, are not tourist attractive, but improve landscape value of the terrain. For this reason they should be taken care of, even if at present they are closed for the public. Some commentaries are very characteristic in the landscape of Warmia and Mazury. They were connected with sets of palaces – parks and manor houses – parks objects. Usually it was a commentary for the owners or related family. Within those commentaries there were usually farm ones as well.

Monuments in honour of the deceased during World War I began emerging in the area after the warfare has ended. Their artistic form and materials base is varied. The monuments may appear as casual spatial forms; they may also be a part of a larger arrangement – composed into a church wall or a wayside shrine (Garbina). The monuments in Biedkowo, Chruściel, Łoźnik, Piotrowiec, Płoskinia, Wilczęta are not complicated architectonic constructions. They include references to Christ, present a list of the killed residents or present militaristic attributes⁷.

There are documented objects of historic qualities in the register of restoration services (Provincial Division of the Monuments Preservation Service in Olsztyn – delegators in Elbląg). However, not all of them are of the status of monument. Generally, it is accepted that objects of such status are all constructions which were built before 1945, having historic value and which were formally or on the request of the premise proprietor registered. Only a portion of historic objects were decided to be included into the monuments register and are encompassed by restoration protection, which means that all the construction works related to them or carried out in their surroundings ought to be agreed with restoration services⁸.

Recognized richness of natural landscape of the studied area, including numerous artefacts of material culture, make various forms of tourism possible⁹. Nevertheless, contemporary tendencies in the field point to the necessity of particular popularisation of cycling tourism, which is becoming increasingly popular. In this study, we intend to indicate necessary actions that may lead to creating developing tourism product including, above all, a network of interconnected cycling routes. Construction of a tourist trail is a chance to expand the already existing tourist infrastructure and to create new tourist devices adjoining the trail in its most attractive spots.

Creation of a tourist trail, already creatively worked out by activists of LGD - de facto making up a network of cycling routes, walking paths and horse-riding trails in the area – would serve the purpose of:

- development and promotion of tourism in the region,
- leisure,
- education and learning about the region’s natural and historical quality,

⁶ S. Kuprjaniuk, Potencjał kulturowy Wzniesień Elbląskich na przykładzie małej architektury sakralnej, [w:] Kulturowe wartości Wzniesień Elbląskich..., s. 57-74.

⁷ Por. „Studia Angerburgica”, t. 11, 2006.

⁸ *Ustawa o ochronie zabytków i opiece nad zabytkami* (Dz. U z 17 IX 2003 r.).

⁹ E. Kerstan, *Die Geschichte des Landkreises Elbing*, Elbing 1925.

- limitation of the damaging impingements on the areas particularly protected.

The chance to develop cycling traffic in the area of the districts in question is possible due to:

- diverse geographical location of individual districts,
- their natural and scenic quality,
- history documented by retained, rich cultural heritage,
- universal, cultural substance of the community inhabiting the area, in the past and now.

Creation of a long-distance trail for cyclists will be conducive to the development of local economy. Those profitable undertakings serve development of hotel branch of industry, as well as catering and cultural ones. A tourist using those trails can cover varied sections of the way, approximately 50-100 km a day and, taking bicycles with luggage into consideration – visit the region using convenient cycling routes of low level of difficulty. In smaller centres, one can stay overnight, using the catering base and take one-day trips on more difficult routes in order to visit the neighbourhood.

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