



NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY:  
COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

# ReNewTown

## Newsletter



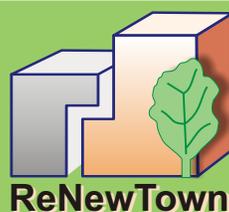
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**NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY:  
COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE**

**ReNewTown**

Dear reader, we are very pleased to release the tenth issue of the ReNewTown project newsletter.

ReNewTown constitutes a platform for discussion on urban regeneration problems reaching beyond the project's own case study research. It focuses on the most interesting urban regeneration examples in the countries involved in the project: Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Germany.

## This issue contains the following articles:

### ReNewTown seminars in Nowa Huta and Velenje

Seminars in Nowa Huta (a district of Krakow, Poland, on June 18, 2013) and Velenje (Slovenia on May 29, 2013) concerns detailed discussions of two urban heritage revitalization cases and the presentation to wider public the ReNewTown Handbook.

### Model Socialist Town, Two Decades Later: Generations of Memory and Change in Nowa Huta

Anthropologist Kinga Pozniak carried out a project that looked at the role that memory plays at times of major political, economic and social change, and at the relationship between memory, place and generation.

### Pioneers of gentrification in the Nowa Huta district in Cracow

Sociologist Jacek Gądecki conducted research on the gentrification of Nowa Huta district in Cracow, currently highly stigmatized but very interesting milieu of the former "ideal city of socialism".

### Twelve models of urban revitalisation

The core ReNewTown project publication entitled Post-Socialist City: A Role Model for Urban Revitalisation in the 21st contains numerous practical examples of the identified models' implementation from the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia along with valuable lessons learned.

### Final ReNewTown Project Conference in Ljubljana

Call for Papers: ReNewTown Project Conference in Ljubljana, February 11th and 12th, 2014.

**Submission of abstracts until 30.09.2013**

### The ReNewTown databases and project in brief

We present the main goal of the ReNewTown project and three databases: on good practices, initiatives and experts in the field of regeneration of urban areas built during the socialist period.





## NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY: COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

### Seminars in Nowa Huta and Velenje pointed out close interrelation between physical and social actions in urban heritage revitalization projects

The models of socialist urban heritage revitalization from the ReNewTown Handbook of Models were presented to wider public in Velenje (Slovenia) on May 29, 2013, and in Nowa Huta (a district of Krakow, Poland) on June 18, 2013. The issues discussed during the seminars focused on the challenges of participation in Velenje due to the direct relation of the renovation of public space and strong involvement of local communities in the conducted works in this town. It also represents the model described in the handbook as an example of voluntary work aimed at the improvement of post-socialist urban environment.

In the case of Nowa Huta and the pilot investment – ArtZona – a place that became a popular venue for cultural and social events, the seminar entitled “Understanding the city” made the audience acquainted with the cultural offer of ArtZona, small-scale projects developing neighborhood gardens in the district, and a blog featuring the residents of Nowa Huta.



Both investments and models showed a close interrelation between physical and social actions. ArtZona in Nowa Huta and renovated space in Velenje proved that the most important dimension in urban revitalization programmes are local communities and neighbourhoods. Our local experts – Małgorzata Hajto in Nowa Huta and Marko Govek in Velenje – gave practical hints on what needs to be done and what should be avoided when implementing revitalization investments.

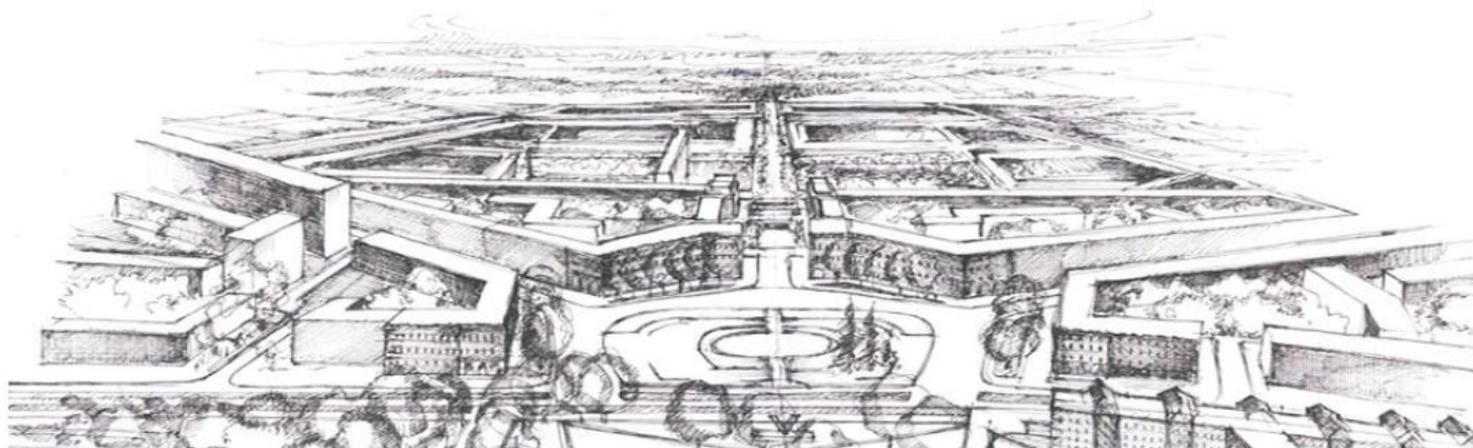


## Model Socialist Town, Two Decades Later: Generations of Memory and Change in Nowa Huta

Anthropologist Kinga Pozniak conducts research in Nowa Huta, a place initially built after World War II as Poland's "model socialist town". In the years 2009-2010 she carried out a project that looked at the role that memory plays at times of major political, economic and social change, and at the relationship between memory, place and generation. She posed several research questions:

1. How is Nowa Huta's history represented through channels such as commemorations (in this case, Nowa Huta's 60th anniversary commemorations), public space (for example, monuments or street names) and museum representations?
2. How do Nowa Huta's residents talk about their district's history and their own lives in the context of this history?
3. Do different generations of Nowa Huta residents tell different stories about the past? What about the youngest generation: what do they learn about the past from school or family, and is this past important to them?

- **Memory:** There are many narratives about the past that circulate in Nowa Huta. Some of them focus on the district's history of construction in the late 1940s and 1950s. At the same time, public representations also highlight local history of resistance, including the history of Solidarity activities in the 1980s. Lastly, there is also a trend to sidestep socialist-era history and to focus instead on the district's pre-socialist heritage. These various representations of Nowa Huta's past exist at different scales (including national historical discourses, local representations, memories of residents), and can both reinforce and challenge each other.





## NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY: COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

- **Place:** Place has an important role in shaping memories and identities. For example, local events shaped many people's experiences of larger historical processes such as postwar rebuilding or resistance to the socialist government in the 1980s. Many young people have a strong sense of local identity, developed as a result of their families' contributions to building the town. However, the same place might mean different things to different people: for example, Nowa Huta's steelworks means something different to older and younger generation of residents. The meaning of place can also change over time: for example, Nowa Huta itself was once seen as a model socialist town, but now many local representations try to reinvent it as a site of resistance to the socialist government.

- **Generation:** People of different ages are differently positioned with relation to important historical events, which in turn variously shapes their subjectivities and memories. For example, Nowa Huta's founding residents, who built the town with their own hands, often talk about different things than their children, who, three decades later, massively got involved in the political opposition. Memory also constitutes a framework through which generations are imagined and constructed: in Poland, a generational divide is popularly perceived between people who have substantial life experiences in socialist Poland (and memories of these experiences) and those who do not. The metaphor of generation can also be used to speak more broadly about change over time. For example, in the 1950s Nowa Huta was popularly seen as "the town of youth," both because the majority of its population consisted of young workers, and because the town was to symbolize a better future. Now, sixty years later, people often say that "Nowa Huta is old". This comments pertains both to the district's ageing population and also to its relative decline.

However, we must remember that every generation comes a new one, and that currently there are many initiatives at work in Nowa Huta intended to "regenerate" it.

### Author bio:

Kinga Pozniak is an anthropologist at the University of Western Ontario in Canada. She conducts research on postindustrial towns, memory and generation. She is currently writing a book about Nowa Huta which will be published by Pittsburgh University Press.

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## Pioneers of gentrification in the Nowa Huta district in Cracow

The gentrification of the ideal socialist city was a kind of provocative inquiry proposed in 2009 and started in 2010 in the highly stigmatized but very interesting milieu of the former "ideal city of socialism", the "old part" of Nowa Huta (founded in 1949-1953), now administratively within the district of Kraków. In the latter case the purpose was to capture the image of the district constructed by a group of newcomers, or "the pioneers" of gentrification, by using the ethnographic methods of participatory observation and in-depth interviews.

The members of the group, defined by Damaris Rose as "pioneers of gentrification" are the actors who can pave the way for degraded areas of the city and prepare such milieus for advanced stages of the process. My hypothesis was that in the case of the old part of Nowa Huta marginal gentrification could be perceived in categories of emancipatory practice. The emancipatory attitude applied in this study allows observing the marginal gentrification as an open-ended process, a process of connecting people from different backgrounds in the city centre, creating opportunities for social interaction, tolerance and the development of cultural diversity. In this vision, the process of gentrification creates tolerance, and the meeting itself and the contact is more important than the negative effects of gentrification described by "revanchists".

This study is based on a critical discourse analysis, in-depth interviews (IDI), and participant observation. Aside from the (1) material and spatial aspects of gentrification and (2) symbolic creation of the image and representations of Nowa Huta as a whole in media discourses. I wanted to depict (3) behavioural and socio-spatial practices of new residents the old part of Nowa Huta in order to determine the level of integration between new and existing residents of the neighbourhood. The study was designed to obtain answers on the housing preferences of new residents, their daily activities and relationships in and with the district. On the basis of that, I wanted to see whether, and if so how, the behaviour and attitudes of residents can be regarded as characteristic of the pioneers of gentrification.

**Jacek Gądecki, Ph.D.** is a researcher and academic teacher in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow. Contact: [jgadecki@agh.edu.pl](mailto:jgadecki@agh.edu.pl).





## NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY: COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

ReNewTown

### Twelve models of urban revitalisation

All over Europe large numbers of inhabitants live in urban settlements which were planned and established during the socialist era, either in their entirety or in part. The estates were carefully planned. But now, while some have well integrated into the housing markets, many of them experience both physical and social decline. They house large numbers of low-income households, unemployed people.

Often despite many years of attempts at rehabilitation, they remain increasingly problematic areas. The focus of the ReNewTown project is on policies and its circumstances which lead to solve particular problems as well as to counteract negative trends and on activities that stimulate positive developments.

In ReNewTown project we believe that solutions to many problems that concern the post-socialist urban areas in Central Europe have already found a solution. One of the main activity for ReNewTown project is therefore to collect good practices across the Europe towns and cities and identify what were the circumstances and the conditions for success. To this end, several model approaches have been identified and four pilot actions implemented in post-socialist cities of four different Central and Eastern European countries (the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia). The core six models are those that directly refer to the ReNewTown project key areas:

- Improved provision of local cultural and social events.
- Improved public space between blocks of flats.
- Support for the development of small business operators in the area of blocks of flats.
- Improved attractiveness of the architecture of buildings dating back to the socialist period.
- Promotion of the local community involvement in the events organized in a given quarter.
- New functions for constructions from the period of socialism.





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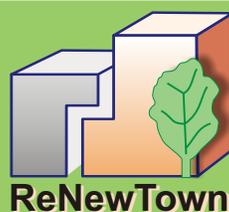
Moreover, other models of socialist urban heritage revitalisation that we have managed to identify within the framework of the ReNewTown project focus on:

- The use of voluntary work to improve post-socialist urban environment.
- Improved awareness of the socialist urban heritage through communication channels.
- Improved energy efficiency of buildings from the socialist era.
- Direct involvement of the local community in decision-making processes concerning urban development projects.
- Shared responsibility of both owners and users for maintaining building structures (not necessarily constructed during the socialist period, but neglected during this period).
- Improved attractiveness of constructions intentionally neglected during the era of socialism (1945-1989).

Each of these models is presented and described in the core ReNewTown project publication entitled *Post-Socialist City: A Role Model for Urban Revitalisation in the 21st Century*. This Handbook of Models contains numerous practical examples of the identified models' implementation from the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia along with valuable lessons learned. These were provided by individuals directly involved in the models' implementation processes in their communities. They were not only given the opportunity to describe the positive aspects of their achievements, but also to state what they would do differently were they to launch the same project from scratch.

On the project website there is also the brochure on Handbook of Models Here where you will find descriptions of four out of twelve identified models within the framework of the ReNewTown project. These models are at the same time ReNewTown project investments implemented in post-socialist cities: ArtZONA in Krakow (Poland), renovation of public space in Velenje (Slovenia), museum of socialist curiosities in Hnúšťa (Slovakia) and the centre for small and medium enterprises in Prague (the Czech Republic).





## NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY: COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

### RENEWED POST-SOCIALIST CITY: COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

Final ReNewTown Project Conference

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics, February 11th and 12th, 2014

Call for Papers

The project entitled New Post-Socialist City: Competitive and Attractive (in short the ReNewTown project: <http://www.renewtown.eu>) has been implemented through the Central Europe Programme co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund. Its primary focus is on reduction of disparities and improved quality of post-socialist urban environment (not only by positive transformation of residential landscapes but also by improved quality and accessibility of public spaces, increased provision of cultural and social events, increased support of entrepreneurial initiatives, strengthened identity, creation of common values, etc.). To this end several model approaches have been identified and four pilot actions implemented in post-socialist cities from four different Central and Eastern European countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia).

This call for papers is aimed to provide a broader perspective on the competitiveness and attractiveness of post-socialist cities in Central and Eastern Europe by providing a forum for exchange between academic researchers, urban planners and decision-makers dealing with these issues. We are looking for contributions that would address one of the following themes:

- (1) New economic and social functions of post-socialist buildings, public spaces, estates and/or districts
- (2) Identity of, and differentiation among, post-socialist urban settlements
- (3) Values, well-being and sustainability challenge in post-socialist urban settlements

Participants are invited to submit an abstract (maximum 250 words) before 30.09.2013. To submit your abstract e-mail Lejla Perviz ([lejla.perviz@ef.uni-lj.si](mailto:lejla.perviz@ef.uni-lj.si)).

Full papers submission deadline is December 10th, 2013.

Papers of the highest quality will be published in two peer-reviewed journals: Geographia Polonica (<http://www.geographiapolonica.pl/>) and Economic and Business Review (<http://www.ebrjournal.net/sites/index.php>).

Kind regards,

Irena Ograjenšek ([irena.ograjensek@ef.uni-lj.si](mailto:irena.ograjensek@ef.uni-lj.si))

on behalf of the ReNewTown Final Conference Organizing Committee





## NEW POST-SOCIALIST CITY: COMPETITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE

### THE RENEWTOWN DATABASES

The basic idea of the ReNewTown project is to take advantage of the experience and knowledge of related current and past initiatives from the last 20 years and, based on this, to develop knowledge and tools to support the revitalization of post-socialist urban areas in the cities of Central Europe. One of the key results of the project (in line with the basic idea) is the development of three databases: good practices, initiatives, and experts in the field of regeneration of urban areas built during a socialist period. The databases of good practices and initiatives include 132 cases from 13 Central European countries and 69 cities.

### PROJECT SUMMARY

RenewTown project 'New post-socialist city: Competitive and Attractive' is funded under Central Europe Programme and runs from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2014.

ReNewTown partnership consists of eight public institutions from Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. It will result in four pilot actions implemented in Nowa Huta in Krakow, Jizni Mesto in Prague, Velenje and Hnusta. The lead partner is Polish Academy of Sciences, Stanisław Leszczycki Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization

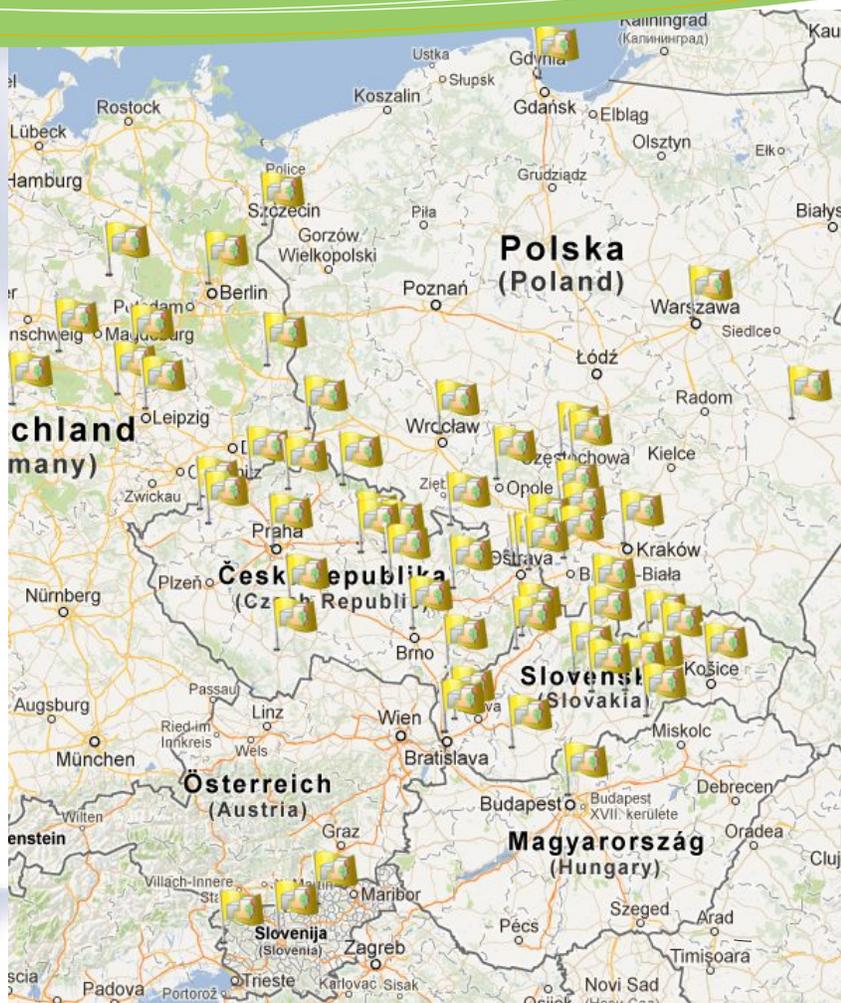
Total budget: EUR 1.514.061,60

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### CONTACT

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Project website: <http://www.renewtown.eu/>



Locations of good practices and initiatives included in RNT databases

