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The powerful pressure toward anthropological regression and the urgent need to strengthen glocal education[1]

Silna presja na regres antropologiczny i pilna potrzeba wzmocnienia edukacji glokalnej

Abstract

Assessments and diagnoses of the contemporary world are extremely ambivalent. We see a vast scale of opportunities and development, yet at the same time, the darkness of the world seems to be intensifying. Professor Jan Szmyd of Jagiellonian University writes about anthropological regression, understood as a retreat in human development. Is this really the case? Certainly, people must ask themselves such questions and, at the same time, seek answers. Informal, spontaneous essays by academic youth confirm that the difficulties are significant, yet they see, above all, enormous hope in localism and glocal education, expressed in the formula "think globally, act locally," which appears to open a significant space for optimism.

Keywords: glocality, glocal education, locality, anthropological regression

Streszczenie

Oceny i diagnozy współczesnego świata są niezwykle ambiwalentne. Dostrzegamy ogromne możliwości i perspektywy rozwoju, a jednocześnie wydaje się, że mrok otaczający świat gęstnieje. Profesor Jan Szmyd z Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego pisze o regresie antropologicznym rozumianym jako cofanie się w rozwoju człowieka. Czy tak jest w istocie? Z pewnością ludzie muszą stawiać sobie takie pytania i jednocześnie szukać na nie odpowiedzi. Nieformalne, spontaniczne wypowiedzi studentów potwierdzają, że trudności są znaczne, jednak dostrzegają oni przede wszystkim ogromną nadzieję w lokalności i edukacji glokalnej – wyrażonej w haśle „myśl globalnie, działaj lokalnie", które zdaje się otwierać znaczną przestrzeń dla optymizmu.

Słowa kluczowe: glokalność, edukacja glokalna, lokalność, regres antropologiczny

[1] This article continues the line of thought from the previous year's article and builds upon larger-scale qualitative research; I would like to thank the editorial team for the opportunity to continue promoting glocal education.

Introduction

In the encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis makes the significant observation that one of the most serious challenges today is the ethical and cultural degradation accompanying systemic ecological degradation. Postmodern men and women are constantly at risk of extreme individualism; many current social problems stem from the selfish pursuit of instant gratification, the breakdown of family and social bonds, and a difficulty in acknowledging others. We frequently encounter excessive and shortsighted consumerism; furthermore, an inability to engage in serious, pro-existential thinking about others and future generations is linked to our failure to broaden the scope of our concerns and to reflect more deeply on ourselves, on others, and especially on those in need of help.[2]

The realities of daily life today give rise to profound concern among many people:[3] depression, even among the youngest; suicidal tendencies, affecting both young and old; a vast scale of diverse addictions and human struggles;[4] recurring relationship issues, both immediate and long-term;[5] difficulties with learning and memory;[6] and a multitude of other health-related problems[7] that could be listed endlessly.[8] All of this raises a major question about the future of humanity[9] and each of us, a question that resonates strongly in the aforementioned text by Pope Francis, who addresses critical issues regarding root causes. Professor Jan Szmyd of Jagiellonian University terms this collection of troubling phenomena "anthropological regression,"[10] while Professor Francis Fukuyama refers to a "great disruption."[11] Could it be, then, that humanity is regressing in its development?[12] Yet, from the perspective of theistic conceptions, in which the Absolute, or God, assists humanity in building a better world, there is room for hope. In my view, such hope lies in "glocal" education, understood as thinking globally while acting locally.[13]

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[2] Francis, *Laudato Si'*, Rome 2015, p. 153.

[3] See: M. Suleyman, *Nadchodząca fala*, Kraków 2024.

[4] N. Carr, *Płytki umysł*, Gliwice 2013.

[5] S. Pinker, *Efekt wioski*, Kielce 2015.

[6] M. Spitzer, *Cyberchoroby*, Słupsk 2016.

[7] D. Goleman, *Focus*, Poznań 2014.

[8] See: "Niedziela" no. 24 (14 June 2026): *Less Drinking – More Gambling: New Threats*, p. 9. The article cites CBOS research – "Youth 2025" – which clearly points to a growing number of risks associated with e-cigarettes, online gambling, problematic Internet use, peer violence, and mental health (e.g., two-fifths experience symptoms of depression).

[9] A. Toffler, *Szok przyszłości*, Poznań 1998.

[10] J. Szmyd, *Zagrożone człowieczeństwo, Regresja antropologiczna w świecie ponowoczesnym*, Katowice 2015.

[11] See: F. Fukuyama, *Wielki wstrząs*, Warszawa 2000.

[12] See: *Sapiens without Homo?*, "Niedziela", No. 25 (21 June 2026).

[13] See: J. Nikitorowicz, *Edukacja regionalna i międzykulturowa*, Warszawa 2009. The author and the book continue to inspire me in developing and promoting a model of glocal education.

The informal, spontaneous essays written on this subject by university students clearly demonstrate that such education represents a source of great hope.

In her extensive publication titled *Nowoczesny esej* (*The Modern Essay*), Roma Sendyka offers an inspiring argument for engaging with the essay form; in her view, the study of the essay encompasses a multitude of potential starting points, countless interpretive goals, and, ultimately, an extraordinary diversity of conclusions. The essay seems to be everything and nothing all at once, spanning poetry, drama, and prose, and ranging from literature to specialized academic scholarship.[14]

Julia's essay serves as an excellent introduction to the subject matter and offers powerful inspiration regarding glocality and glocal education:

In an increasingly globalized world, where people frequently move and change jobs or places of residence, a sense of local belonging might seem less significant. Yet it is precisely this connection to a place that gives us a sense of identity and stability. Even if I were to leave and start a new life elsewhere, that local connection would remain within me. It taught me respect for others, openness, and sensitivity toward my fellow human beings. Local belonging also entails responsibility for the place where we live, for the people around us, and for the common good. It means caring for the environment, local culture, and the future of generations to come. It is the awareness that every action we take has an impact on the community of which we are a part. That is why this sense of local belonging holds such immense value for me. It is the foundation upon which I build myself, my values, dreams, and relationships. Without it, I would feel untethered, stripped of my roots. Local belonging means home, not just in a physical sense, but, above all, in a spiritual one. And it is thanks to this that I know where to return, who I am, and where I belong in the world (Julia).

Systemic issues

In *Querida Amazonia*, Pope Francis aptly illustrates the complexity of global issues and the phenomenon of anthropological regression, insights that can readily be applied to various models of local challenges in our rapidly globalizing world. Francis makes the significant and emphatic point that the globalized economy shamelessly damages human, social, and cultural wealth. The breakdown of the family resulting from forced migration disrupts the transmission of values, given that the family is, and has always been, the social institution most instrumental in preserving our cultures. Furthermore, in the face of the colonizing encroachment of mass media, it is essential to promote alternative forms of communication among indigenous

[14] R. Sendyka, *Nowoczesny esej*, Kraków 2006, p. 5.

peoples that are rooted in their own languages and cultures, while ensuring that indigenous actors themselves have a presence in existing media outlets.

Francis stresses that any project for the Amazon, and indeed for many local communities worldwide, must incorporate the perspective of the rights of peoples and cultures; this is necessary in order to understand that the development of a social group requires the active, ongoing participation of local social actors, grounded in their own culture. Moreover, a concept of "quality of life" cannot simply be imposed; rather, it must be understood within the framework of the symbols and customs specific to each group of people. Since the ancient cultures of indigenous peoples emerged and evolved in close contact with their natural surroundings, they cannot remain unaffected when that environment is destroyed, a point Francis astutely identifies and highlights. This, in turn, necessitates systemic solutions viewed through a "glocal" lens.[15]

An excerpt from an informal essay by a student, Julia, powerfully illustrates the immense challenge of analyzing and diagnosing these issues, while simultaneously seeking systemic solutions rooted in the interconnectedness of the world and local life. She writes inspiringly:

For me, 'locality' is far more than just a place of residence. It is not merely a dot on a map or an address on official documents; it is a space rich in meaning, emotions, memories, and relationships. It is this sense of locality that provides a feeling of being rooted in a world that is often unpredictable and constantly changing. To me, locality holds unique value; it is the foundation of my identity, a place to which I can always return, whether physically or simply in my thoughts.

I come from a small town where life moves a bit more slowly and naturally, in tune with the rhythm of the seasons and the flow of human affairs. In such a setting, one learns to appreciate the beauty of everyday life, the scent of freshly mown grass, the sound of church bells, or conversations held by neighbours over the garden fence. These small, seemingly ordinary things create a sense of belonging, the awareness that I am part of this community, this landscape, and this history.

For me, the true value of local life lies above all in human closeness. People here have known each other for years; they remember family histories and share in one another's joys and sorrows. In a local community, you are never anonymous; everyone is 'someone's son,' 'someone's granddaughter,' or 'the girl from that family.' While this can sometimes be challenging, it is far more often a source of support. When something difficult happens, you are not left alone; neighbors will come to help and ask if you need anything. It is an invaluable sense of community, something hard to find in vast, anonymous cities.

Local life also embodies continuity and tradition. The places where we grew up bear the traces of the past, family stories, old customs, and sites of worship or

[15] Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, Rome 2020, pp. 30–31.

ritual. Participating in local events, harvest festivals, markets, religious feasts, or community gatherings, forges bonds not only between people but also with the place itself. It gives us the feeling that we are not here by chance, that we belong to something greater than ourselves. It also teaches us respect for history, for older generations, and for their life experiences.

A sense of place is also connected with the nature and surroundings I have known since childhood. Every field, every path, and every nook holds a story, recalling carefree moments, meaningful conversations, and early triumphs and setbacks. Even years later, when I return to these places, I feel truly at home. The nature around my house is more than just a landscape; it is part of my inner self, something that calms and inspires me, and reminds me of who I am.

The harmony of local life as an antidote to globalization

In a healing message addressed to the Amazon, though one that arguably offers healing to the entire globalizing world, Pope Francis invokes the invaluable richness of pre-Columbian cultures. These cultures embody values such as openness to God's action, gratitude for the fruits of the earth, the sacred nature of human life and respect for the family, a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility in collective work, the importance of the cultural dimension, belief in life beyond the earthly realm, and many others.

In this context, the indigenous peoples of the Amazon offer a profound lesson, a proposal for many cultures, communities, and individuals, by exemplifying the concept of "good living." This entails harmony on personal, familial, communal, and cosmic levels, and is expressed through a communal approach to existence, the ability to find joy and fulfilment in a simple, austere life, and responsible stewardship of nature that preserves resources for future generations. Indigenous peoples can help us understand the meaning of joyful moderation; in this sense, "they have much to teach us." They are capable of happiness with little, rejoicing in God's small gifts without hoarding possessions; they avoid needless destruction, care for ecosystems, and recognize that the earth, which gives of itself to sustain them, possesses a maternal quality, like a generous source that evokes a tenderness born of respect.[16]

Building upon Francis's deeply motivating reflections on the "good life" and multidimensional harmony, I would like to share excerpts from informal essays written by students on the value of locality; these passages powerfully articulate ideas that resonate strongly with Francis's model and offer significant inspiration for glocal education.

[16] *Ibidem*, pp. 54–55.

Katarzyna writes:

For me, a sense of locality is far more than just the place where I live. It is a space to which I am emotionally attached, one that has shaped me and where I feel truly like myself. My local world is a small village near Sandomierz: quiet, peaceful, and surrounded by fields and forests. Although I study in a different city during the week, I return there every weekend with great joy. It is a place that gives me a sense of security, stability, and belonging, I feel at ease there because I am surrounded by people I have known since childhood, family, neighbours, and friends. I grew up in this village; I spent my childhood and youth there, attending kindergarten, primary school, and high school. Every corner holds a specific memory. I could walk the path to school with my eyes closed, as it became part of my daily routine over the years. I hold a deep affection for this place. It was here that I first discovered the world, learned about relationships, and built my values and character. Even now, living in a different environment and meeting many new people, I feel that my roots are right there.

For me, locality is also about people. In my village, everyone knows everyone else, which makes relationships warmer, more sincere, and more genuine. There is no anonymity, only mutual help and kindness. That is why I feel I always have a place to come back to. Conversations with neighbours, a walk along a familiar road, the scent of the air after the rain, these small things forge a strong bond with the place I call home. Locality means being rooted, closeness, community, and memory. Though life may take me to many different places, I know that I will always return, in my thoughts and not only in my thoughts, to my home village near Sandomierz. It is part of my identity and will always hold a special meaning for me.

Weronika strongly emphasizes that:

For me, a sense of locality is about more than just the place where I live. It represents my roots, my memories, and the people I know and with whom I feel safe. For me, that place is my hometown, Hermanowa, located near Rzeszów. It is where I grew up and where I feel most like myself. Hermanowa is a quiet, charming village where I know every corner well. I love returning there after a long absence, after classes or a week full of responsibilities. As soon as I enter Hermanowa, I catch that familiar scent of the air and see the fields, forests, and rolling hills; I know instantly that I am home. It is here that a warm dinner cooked by my mother, conversations with loved ones, and a kind of rest I cannot find anywhere else await me. The best scent is that of freshly cut grass. This place has taught me patience, gratitude, and respect for nature. For me, Hermanowa also embodies the simple, everyday things that hold great value, such as walks along a country lane or the familiar faces of neighbors. It gives me a sense of peace, security, and the joy of belonging to something close-knit. Here, everything seems less complicated, and the world moves a little more slowly. Locality is also about nature, which is exceptionally beautiful in Hermanowa. Sometimes, just stepping outside for a moment or

heading into the woods makes you feel as if you are breathing differently. For me, then, locality is not just about geography; it is primarily about people, relationships, and memories. It is something that grounds me and a place to which I can always return, no matter where life takes me.

Zuzanna highlights the immense value of a sense of place and local roots in the following way:

For me, a sense of place, of belonging to a specific locality, is deeply personal. It is not merely a spot on a map or a home address; rather, it is a space that shapes who I am and defines my identity. It is a place to which I am emotionally attached, where I feel safe and can truly be myself. For me, that place is Żmiąca, my home village. It was here that I spent my childhood and learned the meaning of hard work and respect for nature and tradition. Every road, every tree, and every house holds significance for me. I know the landscape and the people, and they know me. Although the world changes and life sometimes leads us in different directions, Żmiąca remains my anchor, a place I always want to return to. I feel a genuine sense of belonging here. The village gives me a sense of rootedness, a feeling that cannot be bought or artificially created. There is something unique about this place, perhaps the morning silence, the scent of the fields in summer, the sound of church bells, or simply the people: kind, hardworking, and authentic. It is in Żmiąca that the sunrises and sunsets are most beautiful. This sense of place is also about tradition and community. Most of my family lives in Żmiąca, so I associate the holidays exclusively with the village; at Christmas, the snow-covered landscape delights everyone. It is also where I received the sacraments, which makes the place especially significant to me.

This connection to my local roots holds immense value for me. While I do not know whether I will live there my entire life, I know one thing for certain: I will always be happy to return and visit my family often.

Ewa, for her part, highlights the immense value of her local community in a remarkable way:

My home village is Nowa Wieś, a small village located about 60 kilometers from Rzeszów. Although it might seem unassuming, it holds great significance for me. It is here that my home is located, a place to which I find myself returning with increasing eagerness. This is where my family and my cat are; it is the space that shaped me and gives me a sense of belonging and peace. My village is a place filled with quiet and nature. There is no urban bustle, noise, or rush there. Thanks to this, whenever I am there, I can truly calm down and recharge my inner batteries. I walk along familiar dirt roads and forest paths, listening to the sounds of nature, which allows me to rest and escape the daily grind of city life. As I get older, I increasingly appreciate my family home and life in the countryside.

For me, this sense of 'locality' is also about memories. Many places in Nowa Wieś evoke images from childhood: playing with my siblings and friends, first walks

in the woods, bonfires shared together, or sledding on the hill by the house. These memories are a part of me, and always will be. When I pass by old trees, a field, or the pond, I remember the moments I experienced there. It gives me a sense of rootedness and a pleasant nostalgia. It also prompts reflections on the passage of time and the changes that have occurred over the years among neighbours and old childhood friends who have ventured out into the world, started careers, or even begun families of their own.

Although the village is truly small and everyone knows one another, I do not think I would trade it for any other place; you could say it is part of my identity. Walking down the street and observing everything… I realize that, to an outsider, it might seem that little changes on the surface, yet the people around me are growing up, aging, and trying to live their lives in their own ways. The same applies to me; although my studies in Rzeszów mean I am not home as often, with every return I feel a sense of gratitude and the knowledge that I am finally where I belong.

In short, I believe that 'local roots' mean more than just the place you come from; they are, above all, about the people, the atmosphere, and a sense of familiarity. The family home is the one sanctuary in the world where someone is always waiting for me.

Another excellent essay highlighting the immense value of a sense of place, and its importance for a good life and harmony, is the one written by Gabriela:

In today's world, defined by constant change and migration, having a place to call one's own takes on special significance. For me, a sense of place is more than just an address or a dot on a map; it is a space where I feel safe, accepted, and connected to others. It is this sense of belonging that shapes my identity and allows me to find peace.

My place in the world is my family home in the countryside, surrounded by an orchard, a pond, a flower garden, and a vegetable patch. It is there that I can find quiet, spend quality time with my loved ones, and pursue my passion for herbalism. This place connects me to nature and gives me a sense of harmony and tranquillity. Yet people matter most, my family, especially my four siblings, alongside whom I grew up. Thanks to them, our family home is filled with warmth, support, and shared memories that shape who I am and teach me the meaning of belonging. I also feel a strong connection to the local orchestra, of which my siblings and I are members. Music and our shared activities strengthen the bonds among us and with other residents of my town. This demonstrates the importance I attach to relationships and community, which give a deeper meaning to my local roots. Above all, this sense of place provides me with security and stability; I know I can always return to this place, my "safe harbour." It is here that I can calm down, gather my thoughts, and find support during difficult times. Although I do not plan to dedicate my future entirely to working for my local community, I feel that this sense of place will always remain the foundation of my life. It is thanks to this that I have the strength and peace of mind to pursue my dreams and passions.

For me, a sense of belonging is defined above all by the people who create a community and give meaning to a place. The local setting is not merely a backdrop but a space where relationships, history, and emotions unfold. It is the foundation that allows me to feel truly at home and to look toward the future with hope.

I see the value of local identity in the strength of bonds, traditions, and the sense of security that shape who I am and give meaning to my everyday life.

Aleksandra's excellent essay also strongly emphasizes the role of local connection in fostering a good and harmonious life:

For me, 'locality,' a sense of place, is more than just where I live. It is the space that shaped me, giving me a sense of identity and unforgettable childhood memories. In an era of globalization, as the world becomes increasingly homogenized, this local connection serves as a sanctuary of authenticity. It is here that I find peace, deeper human connections, and true beauty, qualities often undervalued or overlooked. One place that reminds me of the unique value of this local connection is Pustynia, in the Podkarpackie region. It is where I grew up and spent nearly twenty years of my life. I still return there with nostalgia and fond emotions. I recall summer bike rides with my mother through the woods and the surrounding countryside. I also formed many friendships there that have lasted to this day, and I hope will continue long into the future.

One of the greatest advantages of my village is its closeness to nature. Every day, I wake up to the sound of birdsong and views of fields, forests, and meadows. Each season holds its own unique charm: in spring, everything comes to life; in summer, the air is filled with the scent of fresh hay; in autumn, the leaves turn gold; and in winter, the world is blanketed in white snow. This is a completely different experience from the sight of concrete housing estates or the noise of city streets. The village is a place where one can truly relax and feel free.

Another advantage is peace and safety. There is no overcrowding, no traffic jams, and no constant rush in the village. Life moves at a slower, more mindful pace. People know one another, which builds a sense of community and trust. In my village, neighbours help one another, whether with gardening or during more difficult times. Such relationships are incredibly valuable and rarely found in big cities.

The countryside is also an excellent place to raise children. They can run around in yards, play in the woods, and ride their bikes along quiet roads. They are not cooped up in apartment blocks or glued to computer screens; instead, they connect with nature and animals, learning independence and responsibility. Nature itself becomes their teacher.

My village also has local traditions and customs that create a unique atmosphere. Harvest festivals, markets, communal bonfires, and village fairs are not just forms of entertainment but also ways to nurture our culture and identity. Thanks to this, village life is defined not only by work but also by shared moments. Although

some people think nothing happens in the countryside, I believe a great deal goes on, just in a different way. It is a life lived in harmony with nature, with other people, and with oneself. My village gives me what many spend their whole lives searching for: peace, security, and a sense of belonging.

I am happy to live right here. And although I sometimes travel to the city, I always joyfully return to my village, the place that matters most to me in the world.

In her essay, Oliwia highlights what "local" means to her:

To me, 'local' is not merely a place of birth or heritage; it is something deeply connected to who I am, part of my identity, a spirit of community, and the space where my values are shaped. My local home is Widełka, a village near Kolbuszowa. While to many it might seem like just a dot on the map, to me it represents something far more meaningful: shared warmth and a repository of memories.

Widełka is a community where a genuine sense of closeness exists among people. Our residents are approachable and supportive, ready to share in both joys and sorrows. Life here moves at a calm pace, yet it is deeply rooted in tradition and a shared sense of responsibility. Although the village is small, it teems with life, not the frenetic, noisy kind, but an authentic vitality born of closeness and engagement. I truly value the fact that we regularly undertake various social initiatives in our village, such as family picnics, festivals, and charity drives. Whenever someone needs support, especially when a child falls ill or a family faces hardship, everyone quickly mobilizes. People offer help, donate items for raffles, and pitch in to organize events. No one is left to face difficulties alone. These moments reveal just how strong and authentic our local community is.

I also place immense value on the intergenerational bonds that remain strong in Widełka. The older generation passes on not only stories of the past but also the principles that guide a meaningful life. Being part of this community makes me feel like I am part of a living history, one that endures while simultaneously evolving. Here, we know how to take action without losing sight of the future. We can take responsibility for our community, influence how things change, and support its long-term independence. I believe that 'local identity' is not just about what already exists, but also about what we, the residents, build together.

I dream of it remaining a place where young people want to stay, start families, grow, and work for the good of others. Nor can we overlook the beauty of the surrounding nature. The forest, the fields, the clean air, the open space, all of this brings a sense of peace and a chance to catch one's breath away from the daily rush. These places hold emotional value for me; this is where I spent my childhood and learned to view the world with gratitude and wonder.

My local community represents my roots. It encompasses relationships, memories, traditions, and a sense of togetherness. Widełka is not just a spot on the map; it is my home, a source of belonging and inner balance. Here, I learn that

there is strength in unity and that it is worth cherishing what is close and familiar. That is why my local community means so much to me; it shapes my worldview, builds my identity, and motivates me to act for the benefit of others. I believe that it is precisely in such small, close-knit communities that one can discover the true meaning of being part of something greater.

Natalia affirms the immense value of "locality," viewed as something far greater, encompassing everything that truly matters, in her poignant essay:

To me, locality is far more than a mere geographical concept. It is an emotional bond with the place where I grew up and which shaped me as a person. I come from Łęg Tarnowski, a small village in the Lesser Poland region, not far from Tarnów. Although the place might seem quiet and peaceful, it holds immense value for me because it is home to everything that matters most.

It is in Łęg that I feel most at ease; this is where my home, my family, my friends, and my beloved dog Boguś are. It is a place that gives me a sense of security and balance. When I am here, I know I am truly home. I know every nook and cranny, every shortcut between the houses. I am surrounded by people who know, understand, and support me. I feel part of a community, which gives me a strong sense of belonging, a belonging not just to a place, but also to the people, traditions, and shared values that unite the village residents. Thanks to this, I know I am never alone; I can always count on support and understanding.

Locality also represents a space where I am intimately familiar with every corner, every road, and the history of the area. It is a sense of rootedness, the awareness that this is where I belong, regardless of where life might take me next. I believe that the place we come from shapes our values, our way of thinking, and how we perceive the world. It was in Łęg that I learned the importance of closeness to nature, respect for tradition, kindness, and cooperation with others.

For me, a sense of local identity means home, not just in the physical sense, but emotionally, too. It is a space where I can be myself, where I have my roots, and from which I draw strength. Belonging to this place and community gives me a sense of stability and the assurance that, no matter where I go, I always have a point of reference. Belonging to Łęg Tarnowski is also a source of inspiration and motivation for me. I feel that this is the place where I can pursue my dreams and grow, supported by my loved ones and surrounded by a peace that fosters reflection. This connection to my local area teaches me the importance of human relationships, respect for tradition, and openness to others. Thanks to this, I feel part of something greater and can speak of my home with pride.

Oliwia articulates the priceless value of local connection beautifully in her essay:

To me, 'locality' means something far deeper than just a home address or a dot on a map. It is a sense of belonging, security, and being part of a community that shapes me every day. It encompasses the relationships, memories, and values that have become an integral part of my identity over the years.

I live in Nowa Wieś, in the municipality of Trzebownisko, not far from Rzeszów. It is a place to which I am deeply emotionally attached. I grew up here, and this is where my loved ones, family, friends, and neighbours, live. It is here that I experienced many significant moments that shaped who I am. Every path, every field, and every corner of this village holds a memory: of taking my first steps, of childhood carefreeness, of growing up, of laughter, and of moments of reflection.

For me, Nowa Wieś is not merely a place of residence but a sanctuary, my own special place on earth. I value it for its tranquillity, its open spaces, and its closeness to nature. In today's hectic world, these are the very elements that help me maintain my balance. I cherish the moments when I can step out into the fresh air, walk along a country lane, listen to the birdsong, or gaze at the horizon where the fields meet the sky. Simple, everyday gestures, like a neighbor's smile or a casual 'good morning' during a walk, also mean a great deal to me. These small interactions build the community I feel a part of; they remind me that I am not just an anonymous individual, but someone who matters within the local social fabric.

Locality is also about identity (…) *Being from here, I know who I am. The values instilled in me by life in this community, such as honesty, mutual aid, and respect for work, people, and nature, serve not only as a guiding light but also as the foundation upon which I build my life. They shape my choices, my relationships with others, and my perspective on the world.*

I know that life may take me to many different places and that the future often writes its own script. Yet, wherever I may be, my heart and thoughts will always return to Nowa Wieś. This is where my roots, my history, and my home are.

For a sense of local belonging is so much more than just a place; it is the feeling of being rooted, surrounded by people and values that truly matter to me. And that is precisely what makes it so incredibly precious.

Conclusion

I would like to be, and generally am, an optimist, yet many argue that an anthropological regression is intensifying, as if human problems were mounting. While a definitive answer is hard to come by, it is certainly worth seeking the sources of an optimistic outlook. A significant number of young people, especially university students, are awakening to the challenges at hand and generating a powerful wave of optimism. Yet they anchor this primarily in "glocality" and "glocal education," in caring for their local community, or even their immediate, intimate surroundings. As the informal essays powerfully demonstrate, it is in this context that one can find oneself, gain strength, and build a better future on both an individual and a societal level.

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