



# BOZOVICI SOCIAL MAP

2023

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'VICTOR BABES' DIN TIMIȘOARA



The  
open  
network





Bigăr waterfall



Sky view on Bozovici

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2023

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County Caraş-Severin, Romania

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# 1. Introduction social mapping



Bozovici is a village in Caraș-Severin County, Romania

The purpose of a social map is to bring together information about Bozovici in order to find out the needs of the local community. This social map of Bozovici is based on:

**Quantitative data (statistics):** for this reference can be made to the data available at the website of the Romanian National Institute for Statistics ([www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro)), the latest census of the population and statistics at websites of public institutes.

**Qualitative data:** collected by Photo Voice and interviews with policy makers in the commune and the inhabitants of Bozovici, conducted by different groups of students that participated to the BIP Immersion Trip 2023.

The result of this social map is to show what different age groups in Bozovici think about certain issues (medical care, economy, community, development of the village, education, family, etc.). This social map shows the thoughts and feelings of individual residents of Bozovici on the topics using exemplary examples or conversations. ADR-Vlaanderen/ The Open Network for community development (TON) are further using this social map as a mean to analyse localities to see how cooperation can be improved or set up in a way local development is possible.

In chapter 2 a general introduction is given for Bozovici. Purpose is to give already a first indication of the social situation in the commune of Bozovici. Besides local data, a reference will be made to the SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals). This will be further explored in chapter 3 by using the qualitative method of photo voicing. The results can be read in the narrative report of the students illustrated with some pictures. By way of conclusion chapter 4 summarizes the narratives and links them to statistics. This is the base for further development of challenges for the commune of Bozovici.

## 2. General information - Bozovici



### 2.1. Bozovici – general presentation

Bozovici is a commune situated in South-West of Romania, in Caraş-Severin County, Banat, Romania. The commune of Bozovici includes 4 villages: Bozovici (main village), Poneasca, Prilipet and Valea Minisului. It is located between the Almăj Mountains and the Semenic Mountains, in the Banat Mountains. Two rivers flow through the village: Nera and Miniş.

Bozovici was first mentioned in history in 1484. However, traces of human life have been found as early as the Neolithic and Roman periods. The Habsburg monarchy conquered the place in the 18th century and it was not until 1920 that the place became part of the Romanian kingdom again.

Bozovici is part of two National Parks: Cheile Nerei-Beuşniţa and Semenic-Cheile Caraşului. Meaning that Bozovici is known for its natural beauty and outdoor recreational potential. The Nera Gorges and Beusnita National Park are located nearby, offering the chance to explore stunning waterfalls, canyons and forests. Most known is the BIGAR waterfall.

- ◆ Surface: 18.777 ha i.e. village (build area) 225 ha and outside the build-up area: 18.552 ha.
- ◆ Households: 1.100
- ◆ Houses: 1.250

The village itself has a few shops, restaurants, and accommodation for tourists. Bozovici is also home of a small museum that shows local artefacts and exhibits on the area's history and culture.

In addition to tourism, agriculture is an important industry in Bozovici. The village is known for its production of fruits, vegetables, and livestock.

Overall, Bozovici is a charming and peaceful destination for those seeking to escape the hustle and bustle of city life and enjoy the nature beauty of Romania.

The local authority consists of a mayor and a local council of 11 members.

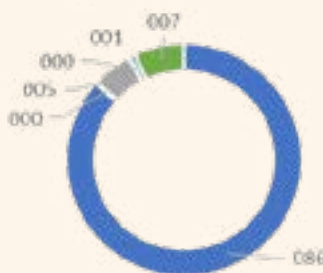
- ◆ Mayor: Stoicu Adrian Sergiu (PSD) (since 2012)
- ◆ Vice-mayor: Sirbu Ioan
- ◆ Secretary: Jurchescu Ion
- ◆ Accountant: Bolvanescu Elena Lavinia

During the last local elections of 2020, almost 55% of the citizens went to vote, which is above the county and national level.<sup>1</sup>

Political Party:	Number counsellors:
Partidul Social Democrat (PSD)	5
Partidul Național Liberal (PNL)	3
Partidul Alianța Liberalilor și Democraților (ALDE)	2
Partidul Mișcarea Populară (PMP)	1

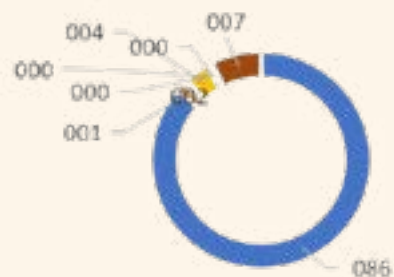
The population is almost homogenous Romania and Orthodox.<sup>2</sup>

% Ethnicity Bozovici 2021, n=2.506



■ Romanian ■ Hungarian ■ Roma ■ German ■ Czech ■ Not known

% Religion Bozovici 2021, n=2.506



■ Orthodox ■ Catholic ■ Pentecostal ■ Baptist  
 ■ Islam ■ Jehova ■ No religion ■ Not known

<sup>1</sup> <https://prezenta.roaep.ro/locale27092020/romania-pv-final>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.recensamantromania.ro>

## 2.2. Population and demography

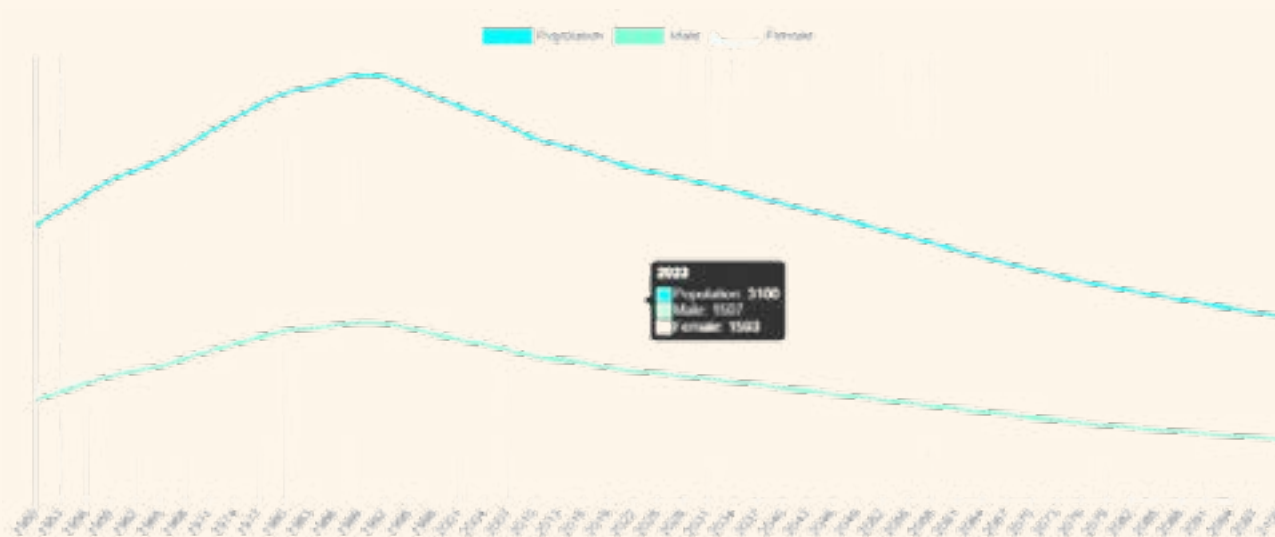
As a starting point to analyse the social conditions in Bozovici, a general overview of some demographic tendencies are given. The evolution in population can be interpreted as an indicator for the socio-economic situation in a commune. In the last census in 2021, 2.506 inhabitants were counted in Bozovici.<sup>1</sup> The population density is 16 inhabitants per square kilometre, which is relatively low. In Stuttgart, for example, there are 763 inhabitants per square kilometre (as of 2019).

### A. Decline of population Bozovici

In general, the population in rural areas in Romania has decreased in recent decades, which is reflected in the following data:

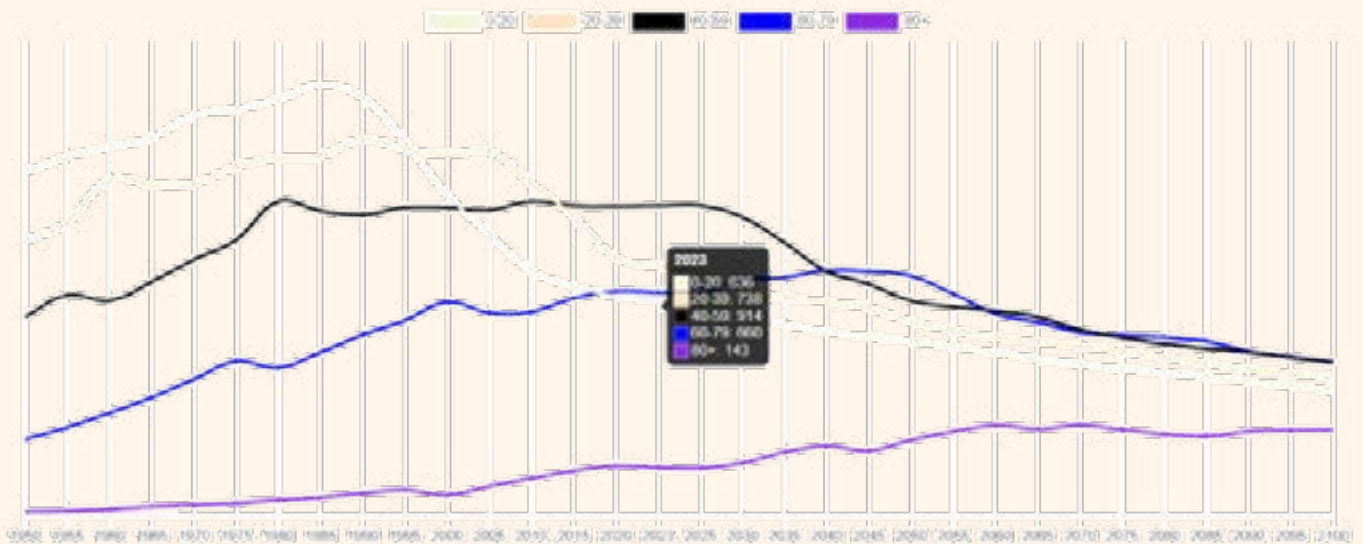
- ⇒ Romania rural population for 2021 was 8.732.240, a 1.05% decline from 2020.
- ⇒ Romania rural population for 2020 was 8.824.640, a 0.79% decline from 2019.
- ⇒ Romania rural population for 2019 was 8.894.686, a 0.71% decline from 2018.
- ⇒ Romania rural population for 2018 was 8.958.416, a 0.72% decline from 2017.

The same tendency can be seen in Bozovici. Internet sources show us the downward spiral.



source: <https://zhujiworld.com/ro/377308-bozovici/>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.recensamantromania.ro>



Source: <https://zhujeworld.com/ro/377308-bozovici/>

Data that are more detailed show us a drastic decline in population numbers. A distinction must be made between residence (have and address and present) and domicile (having an address but not necessarily present in the commune).

Year	Residence	% difference	Domicile	% difference
2002	3.321		3.225	
2011	2.924	-11,95	3.245	0,62
2021	2.506	-14,30	2.822	-13,04

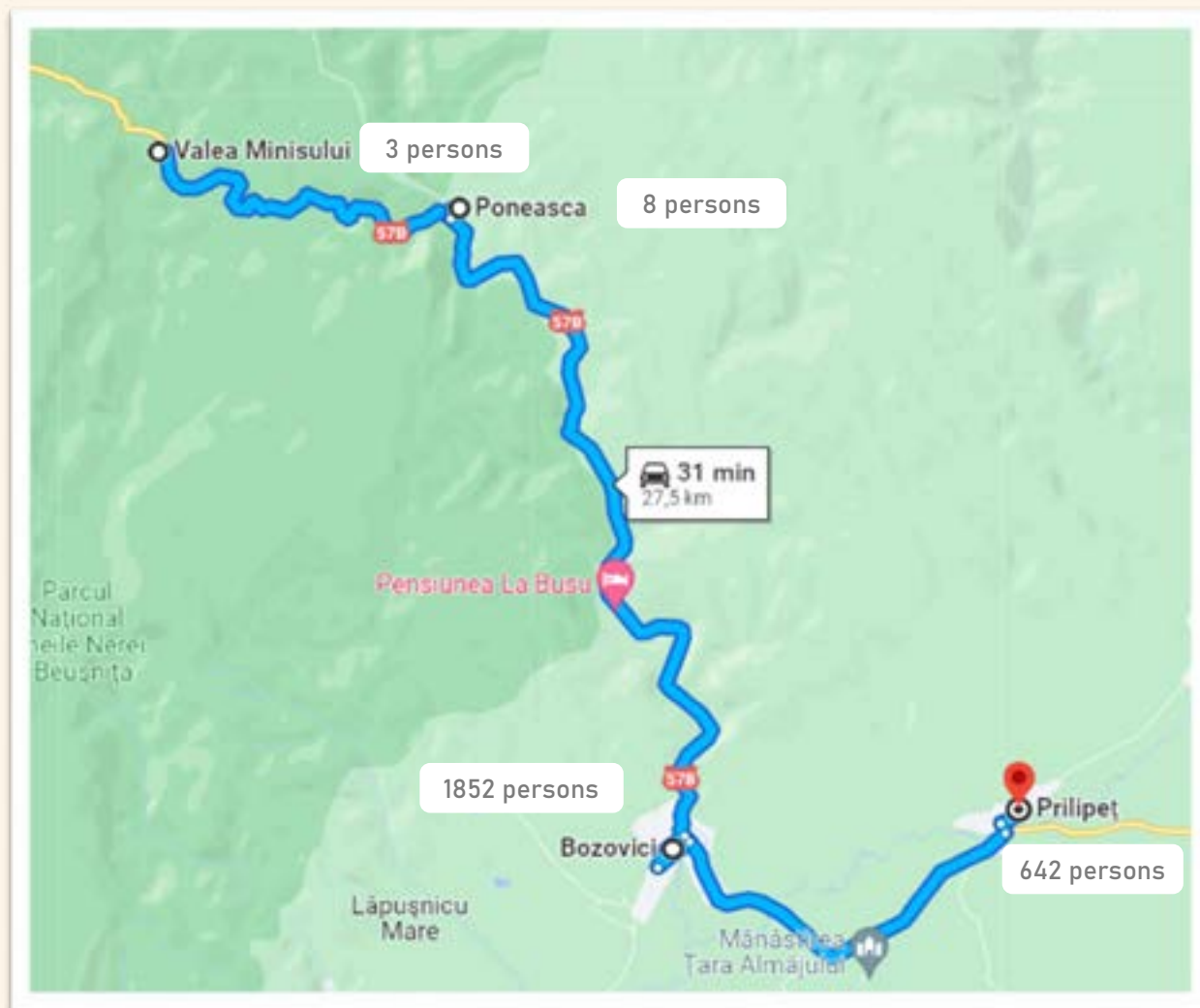
In 2 decades, the stable population of Bozovici was declining with almost 25%. The same can be seen at the level of the villages (Romanian: sat).

### B. The villages (sate)

The villages Bozovici and Prilipet follow the general trend, a strong decline can be seen in Poneasca.

Bozovici residence level sat, census 2002 & 2021				
Residence	2002	2021	Difference	% Difference
BOZOVICI	2.408	1.853	-555	-23,05
PONEASCA	78	8	-70	-89,74
PRILIPET	829	642	-187	-22,56
VALEA MINISULUI	6	3	-3	-50,00
BOZOVICI Total	3.321	2.506	-815	-24,54





### C. Difference between residence and domicile

Collection of taxes and financing are the basis to keep people registered in the commune. Although some of them are not present or stay only for a short period in the commune. In 2021, 316 persons are having an address but are not present in Bozovici. Because of migration (young active people) are outside of the village. This has an impact on the care for older people (see later).

Bozovici residence-domicile census 2002, 2011, 2021				
Year	Residence	Domicile	Difference	% Difference
2002	3.321	3.225	96	2,98
2011	2.924	3.245	-321	-9,89
2021	2.506	2.822	-316	-11,20

Later on, more details will be given by age group and the consequences on the community structure and the demands of certain groups.

## 2.3. Bozovici and the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 as a new set of international development goals. Governments have pledged to meet these new goals by 2030.

The SDGs offer a new vision, and new challenges, for development actors around the world. The SDGs are wider in scale and in ambition than the MDGs. They consist of 17 goals, 169 targets and 231 unique indicators (established to monitor progress). The SDGs are also different from the MDGs in the fact they are universal - covering every country in the world - and no longer applicable only to developing countries.

The United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

The 17 SDGs are integrated - they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. Countries have committed to prioritize progress for those who are furthest behind. The creativity, knowhow, technology and financial resources from all of society is necessary to achieve the SDGs in every context.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



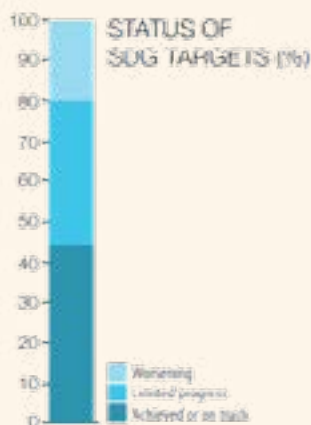
The SDGs are more focused on the progress into societal domains. It is a comparison on differences about how countries, regions and local authorities are performing. To reach everything is almost not possible, but can be a compass in the development of policies towards realizing the SDGs.

Romania is in 2023 with an index of 77,5 at the 35th place of the world ranking.<sup>1</sup> At the EU26 level, Romania is at the 25th place, just before Bulgaria.

# ROMANIA

## Eastern Europe and Central Asia

### OVERALL PERFORMANCE



### AVERAGE PERFORMANCE BY SDG



### SDG DASHBOARDS AND TRENDS

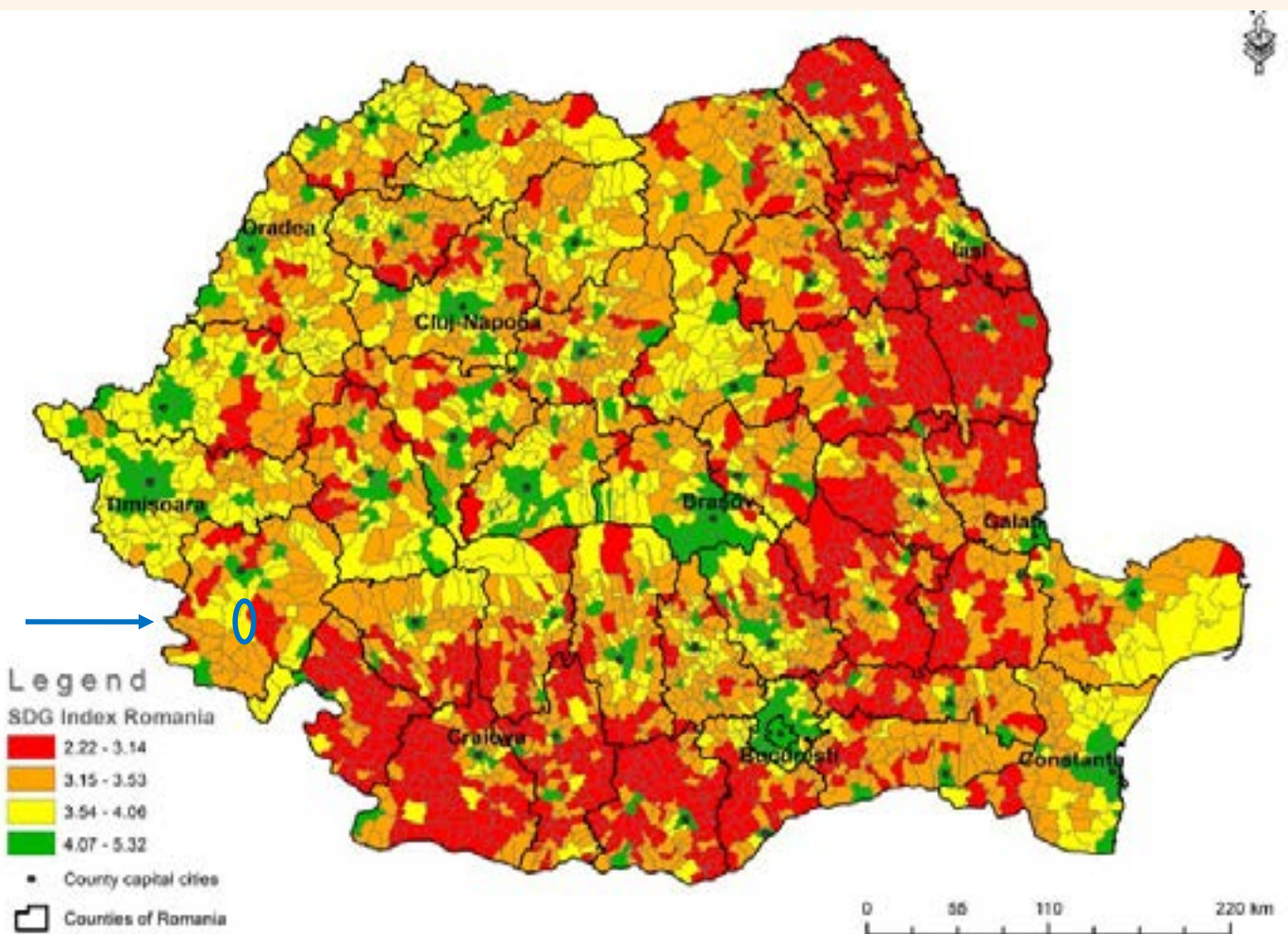


■ Major challenges   
 ■ Significant challenges   
 ■ Challenges remain   
 ■ SDG achieved   
    Information unavailable  
↓ Decreasing   
 → Stagnating   
 ↗ Moderately improving   
 ↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement   
 ● Information unavailable

<sup>1</sup> <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/romania>



At the beginning of 2021, an interesting study was published in which Romanian communes were compared in their progress to realize the SDGs. This study aims to measure the progress toward achieving the SDG at local and regional level in Romania by calculating the SDG Index. For the calculation of the SDG Index at subnational level, the study proposed an integrated approach based on 90 indicators. The results show the concentration of the highest performances of sustainable development in some specific geographical areas. The rural areas and the extended peripheral regions in the eastern and southern part of the country are the poorest performers.<sup>1</sup>



According to this map, Bozovici (blue circle) is in the third segment of the ranking. Although we can suppose that it is going more in the direction of the second segment taken into account the regional performance.

<sup>1</sup> BENEDEK J., ..., Indicator-based assessment of local and regional progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): An integrated approach from Romania, 2021, Open Access Article, 16 p.



## 3. Narrative report

### 3.1. Methodology - Photo Voice

Community-based participatory research has become a popular approach for mapping complex public needs. Photo Voice is one of the several qualitative methods utilized. It is a participatory method in which participants use photography, and stories about their photos to identify and represent issues of importance to them, which enables researchers to have a greater understanding of the issue under study. Sometimes the term photo novel is used to describe the process of using pictures to tell a story. Important in this is that community members are not considered as passive subjects, but as active contributors. As base there's a strong belief that 'locals' are best able to define to articulate their own needs and that they ought to be the most important actors in designing efforts to address those needs.

Photo Voice has three main goals:

1. To enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns,
2. To promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs,
3. To reach policymakers.

Specific tasks during visit in Bozovici:

Students were divided in mixed groups per country origin and asked to make 2 kind of pictures:

1. The outsider's view: students chose places or situations that represent for them (best) the social-health and economic state of the community.
2. The insider's view: students are meeting locals. Students are asking people to choose a place or situation that represent for locals (best) the social-health and economic state of the community. Important is to have a short story about what is photographed: why they chose this place/ situation, why important, what's the personal link....

## 3.2. Education



School Bozovici

- ◆ Kindergarten: 2
- ◆ Primary Schools: 2
- ◆ Secondary Schools: 1

A lot of people told us that it is difficult for the children to go to school in Bozovici. There's no college or university in this village. The environment is good for the kids. But when they grow up, they must go to college in Timișoara and move out.

The children who are going to school told us that the teachers are alright, but they are not as patient as they used to be, and they also don't teach as good as they used to. There are about 20-25 students in one class. It's difficult for the teachers to take care of each student and they are not as involved as before. They don't know what they want to do with school in the future. They are happy with how it is now. The school is building a playground and a gym. There's no place where the children can play at this moment. There's only one principal for the three schools.

A young couple told us that if they had kids, they wanted them to grow up in the city. Because it's a nice community. They said that the teachers just do what they're told to do, to get the money and that they are not interested in the kids. Some children can't go to school (8 km from there) because the bus driver won't go there for just one kid.

## Interview 1: (group 2)



A young couple that we met, the boy told us that after his final year at high school, he has no clue for the future. He is not planning to stay in Bozovici, because of the poor workplaces. The young woman had a child. And when we talked with

her she was very happy about the school life of her children. There are some good teachers she said that take their job seriously. And that was very important for the woman. She is also convinced that the basics of life should be taught by the parents and not at school.

## Interview 2: (group 2)

The 2 children (a boy and a girl) that were present, we asked them questions about school. They went to school here in Bozovici, but the girl doesn't like to go. She told us that there is no equal attention, only attention for the smart ones. She is not planning to quit school or skip school. But the mentality bothers her. Her siblings, sisters, are in different schools and live in children's homes. The parents are working, but the government took the children away from their grandparents to give them a better life and support. It is not a bad thing the girl told us, because the government is really busy with the children. The children are not left to fend for themselves. The boy however likes to go to school. He is younger, 3rd grade.



### Interview 3: (group 2)

#### 3 Adolescents in front of the city hall of Bozovici:

Person 1: 15 years old – 8th grade: Parents are working abroad. Mom is a nurse for elderly people wants to study in Austria when he's 16 and wants to stay there. Lives at his aunt's.

Person 2: 15 years old – 8th grade: Parents are working abroad Mom is a nurse for elderly people Dad is a truck driver in Europe. Lives at his grandparents that are retired. He says they live a good life since they live at home instead of an elderly home.

Person 3: 18 years old – will graduate next year: Parents worked abroad but came back; mother is currently looking for a job, father is a handyman. Lives at his parent's

#### School:

- ⇒ They all skip classes when they have to go to work (they work at the restaurant „Club La Lu“) and they want to help with everything they can.
- ⇒ They all say the teachers don't really help them to develop themselves and they want to be better prepared for life.
- ⇒ The teachers also aren't motivated to do their jobs (reasons: salary, education system).
- ⇒ 20-30 students per class.
- ⇒ The adolescents all don't see the point of studying at a university while their dream jobs are to become a chef, a hair stylist and to go abroad for work (higher salary).

### Interview 4: (group 2)

#### Mother of the grandchild:

- ⇒ Children enjoy school, the teachers put in a lot of effort and believe in education while the family teaches basic values.

Parenting is very important so the children can study properly.



## Interview 5: (group 2)

Children at the hairdresser: boy 3rd grade, girl 6th grade:

They have siblings (7 + 18 y/o).

- ⇒ Girl 6th grade doesn't enjoy school because the teachers only care for the children who are intelligent and write good grades. Still, she doesn't want to quit or skip school.
- ⇒ Their sisters live in children's homes and go to school in other villages and/or cities.

## Interview 6: (group 2)

During our task to create a social map, we had to talk to the people on the street. We came across 3 youngsters and asked them questions that were related to school, health care and also their future. All 3 said the same about school in Romania: lack of motivated teachers. That's why most students skip school. They know there is no future for them in Romania so why go to school. The 3 youngsters we've interviewed were convinced that going abroad is better for their future and that they can make more money over there instead of staying.

## Interview 7: (group 3)

Bozovici Schools:

At the town hall we were told more about the general situation in Bozovici. The community is largely made up of older people, as the younger generations often move away because they do not see a future for themselves in the village. This problem is evident in almost every conversation we had with the inhabitants of Bozovici. The mayor tells us about his plans to build more schools. Unfortunately, very few teachers would want to move to the rural areas to teach there. Often there are so few teachers and children of different ages have to be taught together in large classes. The mayor made it clear how important it was for him to organize recreational activities for the children, such as dance classes or karate courses. The education of the children is very important to him that is clearly noticeable. He is building new sanitary facilities in the schools and is trying to ensure that all children from the area actually attend school, because truancy is a big problem. To counteract this, the schools provide a hot meal for the children every day.

## Interview 8: (group 3)

They also told us that some of their friends did not go to school, even though school is compulsory in Romania. All in all, they both seemed very frustrated and also both told us that they liked absolutely nothing about Bozovici.

## Interview 9: (group 4)

Bozovici dropout rate:

According to data from the National Institute of Statistics in Romania, the school dropout rate in 2020 was 10.5%, which is a decrease from previous years. The dropout rate is higher in rural areas compared to urban areas, and it is also higher for boys than for girls.

The school dropout rate in Bozovici in 2020 was 6.32%. Factors that contribute to school dropout in Romania include poverty, early marriage, and migration. Children from disadvantaged families are more likely to drop out of school due to financial constraints or the need to work to support their families. Early marriage is also a common reason for girls to leave school, particularly in rural areas. The Romanian government has taken steps to address the issue of school dropout, including implementing policies to reduce poverty, increasing access to education, and providing support to disadvantaged families. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that all children have access to quality education and the opportunity to succeed.

## Interview 10: (group 5)

Right opposite to the street were a lot of children coming out of the school, so we went there to talk with someone, and one teacher was offering to give an interview. She told us that she already has 39 years of experience in her field. She was born in Bozovici, moved away to study pedagogy and psychology, and returned shortly after to teach the kids in her hometown. Right now, she is busy teaching the 2nd grade, but she told us that one teacher is always responsible for kids throughout the whole study cycle (grade 0-4). She is also responsible for teaching them every subject, except for special things like sports and foreign languages.



In Bozovici alone, there live 600 children and a lot of kids also from surrounding villages attend this school as well, but they still manage to separate classes and give every grade the lessons they need.

There are scholarships for the children who live

further away so it is free to attend the school and transportation costs are covered as well for them, which we thought is really impressive. The school also has a lot of qualified professors and is well equipped in general. They have a sports court and very lovely, designed classrooms as you can see in our picture. She was very proud about all the possibilities they have to teach the students. When we asked her about her wishes for the future, she said that it's important for her to adapt to the times and include more of the upcoming computer work to the curricula. The school needs more technological gadgets because it could also be a way to attract more children and keep them coming. But it is still important for her to keep a good balance between physical books and technological gadgets in her teaching methods. Her biggest concern at the moment was about children that are not visiting school regularly or not at all. In her opinion, families play a big role in that problem as well. The warm meals that are served in school have helped to attract more children. She observed herself that children came back and re-joined classes because of that. When we asked about recent events, she told us about the project "School after School". It is about giving the children some refreshment in their routines. They can experience different styles of classes with different teachers than in their regular school day. It was a big success and the children liked it a lot. She also told us that it's an important part of her work to get to know the children better personally to teach them, especially because she is at their side for so long. That's why she spends more time with them after school without getting paid.



## Interview 11: (group 5)

The 8-year-old boy we interviewed was sitting on the swing of a playground when we asked him if he wanted to talk to us. He told us about his school. He really likes to go to school, because of the good conditions and the kindness of the teachers that are very good at dealing with children. In the future, he wants to stay in Bozovici and become a firefighter, due to help the people that are living in the village.



## Interview 12: (group 6)

E. is a middle-aged woman living in Bozovici. She is a mother of one child, but even that kid left to study in Reșița, saying that there “is a better school”. She is sad that her child is not always close to her but she sees no future for kids in Bozovici. The schools are small, not funded enough and that in rural area schools the kids tend to have a higher chance to do something “stupid”, due not having much to do.

## Interview 13: (group 6) R., 14 years old

While taking a stroll through what seemed like the central park of Bozovici, we encountered R., a 14 years old boy, sitting alone on a bench and scrolling on his phone. He agreed to talk to us and appeared rather enthusiastic to have a conversation with new faces, a conversation that went surprisingly well as he understood the English language and was even able to deliver some of his ideas in English right away.



But what we thought was a positive beginning quickly took a turn as R. started telling us his plans – he wants to leave Bozovici as soon as he can. In fact, he was skipping classes as he was in the 8th grade, so he could do something he considered more useful: searching for a better place.

He told us his dream city would be Tokyo, a metropolis with a high-density population that would be perfect for his business-oriented persona, a place where he could open up his own restaurant and earn a living for himself in an area that would also fulfil his spiritual needs.

When asked about his friends and friends group, his face said it all – “there are not many people my age I get along with” he said, adding that their perspectives do not match. R. said he doesn’t want to work with his back or muscles only, to be a mere builder without having to use his brain at all, so he isolated himself from his peers that judge him for his bold mentality, a mind-set that he says he inherited from his family, as most of them have already left to work in another country (brother, cousins and parents).

The only group activity he could think of in Bozovici was a football club that he specified was not official nor funded, so it was just a mere gathering of young people who wanted to have some fun and practice some sports just for the sake of it.

There was a glimpse of joy in his eyes when he recalled a game of football and told us a story of bad arbitration.

The discussion ended as another child approached us and he called for R. – they were supposed to go play football, moment in which he excused him and us exchanged best of the wishes. We left R. to enjoy what the moment had to give and with lots of hope and determination in his heart – a dream to leave Bozovici for a better life.



### 3.3. Health & Healthcare

The medical and healthcare is not as optimal as it is in Belgium and Germany. There are no hospitals in the small villages. So, if there is an emergency there is no help on time. The nearest hospital is a 1,5-hour drive, in Belgium it's a 7-minute drive. Also, to go to a doctor you have to drive a long time. In Bozovici, people have to go to Reșița or Timișoara to see a good doctor. People prefer Timișoara because it's better over there. Sometimes there's a moment when doctors come over, but they are really expensive. So, people don't use it.

Most of the medicines have to be prescribed by the doctor, so it's hard to get your medicines. The prices for them are basically the same as in Belgium and Germany. But anticonception is not really a thing in Romania, they use a condom or other things. It's not really a bad thing because women do not have a lot of babies.

Medicines do get a payback from the government, if the people are old or have a disability. The amount of the payback is 90%. For people with diabetes, it's the full payback. That means Romania does care about the health system. Nothing of a serious disease can be sold in the dispensary. It has to happen in a hospital.

Big problem is the medical care is the technology in the hospitals. Therefore, the doctors can't perform well and it's not a good place to work in. If the first thing got fixed it would be more attractive.



Family doctors cabinet Bozovici

Healthcare in Romania is provided by the state, but there is also a private sector that serves a minority of the population and mostly against high payments. The public health system is funded by the government and through compulsory health insurance contributions paid by employees, employers, and the self-employed.

The healthcare system is divided into primary, secondary, and tertiary care levels. Primary care is provided by family doctors, who are the first point of contact for patients. Secondary care is provided by specialists, hospitals, and specialized clinics, while tertiary care is mostly focused on research and cutting-edge medical treatments.

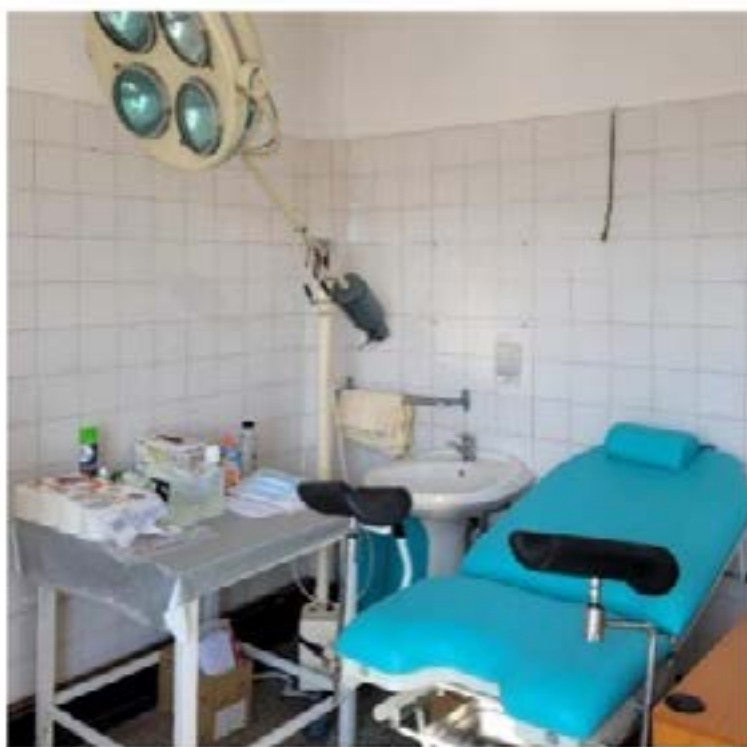
The quality of healthcare in Romania has improved significantly over the last decades, but there are still issues with availability, access, and quality of services, especially in rural areas. Waiting times for appointments and surgeries can be long, and some medical procedures are not available or affordable for all patients.

The country also faces a shortage of medical personnel, with many doctors and nurses leaving to work abroad for better salaries and work conditions. This has led to understaffed hospitals and a strain on the existing health care providers. For the moment, in some regions, about 30% of the villages don't have a family doctor anymore. A proposal from ADR/TON is to give more possibilities and act permission to well trained nurses, introduce, and reimburse telemedicine acts.

Overall, Romania has a healthcare system that provides basic services to most of the population, but there is still room for improvement, especially in terms of investment in technology and infrastructure, as well as retaining and attracting medical personnel.

An important issue is as well the prevention medicine and the Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach. The model of ADAM Slatina-Timiş that has been developed now more than 20 years ago, shows possibilities for the first line healthcare system in a mutualistic approach of solidarity between people.

HOSPITAL OF BOZOVICI





There is 1 hospital in Bozovici that actually closed in 2011. It was a political decision. There was no real reason because everything went well for the hospital. In the whole country of Romania, 300-400 hospitals were closed. So all the patients have to go to the nearest hospital, brought by ambulance or helicopter to Reşiţa. Currently they have a running day center to admit patients, but there is only one doctor and at the moment 4 nurses. There are open positions for doctors, but nobody applied yet. The patients who come in can only stay for one day and can get a basic treatment.

For a specific one, they have to go to Reşiţa. Once we entered the hospital, it looked very old, inside and outside. We saw very old hospital rooms, once you can't imagine having them in Belgium or Germany. There were 2 pediatric nurses, but no doctor. And a pediatric doctor is necessary because there are a lot of kids in the neighbourhood. During the Corona pandemic, 20-30 children were admitted each day. On that moment, 2 retired doctors came to help. They kept open the vaccination center and did diagnosis and made treatment plans for treatment in the nearest hospital. The urgent cases were sent to Reşiţa (2,5 hours driving), the mild ones stayed in Bozovici. The most common problems they faced were respiratory problems. The medicines they need, they have to ask Reşiţa or a doctor who is present, otherwise they have to ask the family doctor at the building across the hospital.

So to stay open they need funds and also doctors of course. Have funding and could open a new hospital but they don't find any doctors (specialists). It's hard to attract them because they are in a very rural area, even though the salaries would be very good + housing and transport is offered + modern equipment.

It would be good to work on an intercommunal approach and on a obliged and subsidized way of hospital networks as it is the case in Belgium. Meaning that specialized care can be divided between hospitals (need of a certain number of acts/year for specialized interventions) and different villages can participate in a contribution system to set up hospital care and homecare in a region. The county hospitals should take the lead in this.

## Interview 1: (group 2)

The faith in the healthcare system. We had a talk with 3 youngsters, one of the guys had a wound on his hand and we asked if he went to see a doctor. But no, he took care of the wound himself because the healthcare system is failing. The doctors only want money instead of taking care of the people. One guy told us that there was a man that needed urgent care, but the hospital of Bozovici is closed, so he had to go to the hospital in Reșița, 73 km from Bozovici. The man needed a doctor and so by ambulance, they took him to Reșița, but there were no caretakers with the man in the ambulance, the man died. And that's why the faith in the healthcare system is very low.

## Interview 2: (group 2)



When we walked further to the center, we passed a nice park with the church of Bozovici. There was a family that we interviewed. Remarkable was the gap between the ages and the faith they have/have not in the healthcare system. Because of the closed hospital, the nearest by is Reșița, but when you are very ill it is not very easy to go there. The grandma told us that she had a liver crisis and that she had been treated in Reșița. She also has more illnesses and because of the closed hospital, they stay untreated. She has more faith in God, than in healthcare.

Where the grandma has faith in God, the 18-year-old nephew has no faith in the healthcare system at all. He had health issues and went to the county hospital in Reșița where he was treated poorly. He had liver problems, so he got an ultrasound and some painkillers, but they told him that if he wanted to know what the problem was, he needed to go to the bigger city. So, for more help, he went to Timișoara, so he had to see a lot of doctors to be treated. And that's why he has no faith in the system anymore.

## Interview 3: (group 2)

During our walk through the village, there was a car that passed us a few times. It was an older man that was interested in what we were doing and so we told him, and he was prepared to work with us. He was very friendly, but not Romanian by birth, but he was German from origin, and he followed his wife to Romania. Love brought



him to Bozovici. He told us about life before communism and after. He was very pleased to talk about his life here and about the pros and cons of the topics we asked him about. He lived for more than 45 years here in Bozovici and was a lawyer for more than 25 years. Now he is retired. He receives a pension every month. He told us about his illness, stomach cancer. And because of the illness, he receives some money because he survived cancer. His treatment did not take place in Timișoara because he told us there were better places. 20 people from Bozovici went to Timișoara and were diagnosed with cancer; they died over there because they were not being taken seriously. His opinion of the healthcare system: terrible, especially because the hospital here is closed.

Healthcare is worse than during communism. Closed down hospital is a problem; he doesn't believe in a re-opening. He also says that it's difficult to change something if the government is always changing. As a solution, he suggests longer terms and less political parties (too many different interests).

## Interview 4: (group 2)

The barber in the village we asked about social support and the healthcare system, he had 1 answer ready: very bad! For example, he is self-employed and so if he needs to go to the hospital he always has to pay. The full amount. So, that's why he is also an employee, so he has insurance if he gets ill or hospitalized. He is an employee, but he does not work. He stays self-employed. And that's something that you can do in Romania to get insurance when you are self-employed.

In fact, the system in Romania is that as well as employee or self-employee, you have to contribute for your health insurance since the privatization in 1997. For the employees, this is simple since part of their salary goes immediately to their health insurance. The problems since years is related to the self-employed people that have to send their contributions themselves to the health insurance. Part of them don't feel sick and don't see the need to contribute, but will have problems once they become sick and don't see the need to contribute, but will have problems once they become sick and for sure if they need to be hospitalized. The system is based on solidarity as it is in other countries and for sure in Belgium. The basis is solidarity between people, sick or not sick, everybody contribute.

## Interview 5: (group 2)



Talk with a grandma of 57 years old: feels good as long as God is with them. She is unemployed and receives money from the social system. She was once sent to the county hospital in Reșița due to liver difficulties and needed surgery. She has several other health problems that couldn't be treated due to the closing of the hospital in Bozovici. When asked if she

has faith in the healthcare system, she replied that she believes in God/has faith in God.

Her nephew, a 18 years old student who goes to school in Reșița (high school, 11th grade) wants to find a job in Reșița after graduating. He went to the county hospital in Reșița but was treated poorly, so he had to go to Timișoara to get proper help. The youth doesn't have faith in the healthcare system in Romania.

## Interview 6: (group 4) with the shopkeeper woman

Our most moving encounter was with an old woman who worked as a shopkeeper in a small store. She is now 62 years old and has lived in Bozovici for 40 years, but was born in Reșița. Family matters made her move and stay here. What she admires the most about Bozovici though is the fresh air. She has to travel to Austria every 2 months to work there and to get a proper medical treatment, because she was severely ill. She was paralyzed for 3 months and still has problems with walking now. This is one reason for her to take on this long journey, but also because of other family and of course financial reasons.



The pension she gets is just around 200 euros, which isn't nearly enough to care for her and her husband who is also sick. Her connection to Bozovici is still strong, because she built the house with the shop together with her husband from scratch. So, she always has to return to the town to take care of it and of their garden as well.

When we asked her about how she managed to recover after 3 months of being paralyzed, she told us that it was mainly because of her strong will and her determination to recover. She managed not to fall into a depression, even though there was no possibility for her to get psychological help. Because of the lack of doctors in her region, she relied on plant medicine as well, which did a great deal in her recovery. Apart from the missing medical services, she sees the main problems of Bozovici in nepotism in their organizing structure. Apart from the struggles she has gone through in life, this was a very emotional encounter for our group and it was clear to us all how happy it made her to have someone to listen to her story. It was very moving and made clear to all of us that it is very important to bring the elderly back to the middle of society because there is so much to learn from their life experiences.

## Interview 7: (group 4) with the pharmacists



The last encounter we had was with two women that worked in the local pharmacy. They have already worked there for 10 years and also grew up in Bozovici. They studied in Reșița but returned to Bozovici again after that because of family matters. Because of the lack of a hospital, they report that a lot of people ask and rely on their advice (which is normal since a pharmacy should be a social pharmacy and part of the first line healthcare system and as such inform and serve people). Their biggest wish therefore is for the hospital to reopen, real doctors that can give professional advice to the people and a well working medicine supply for their pharmacy as well. When we asked about a place to turn to if someone has problems with their psyche tough, they just replied it would be even “too much to ask for”.

## Interview 8: (group 5) 63 year old woman

The first person we interviewed was a 63 years old woman, M.. She lives in Bozovici with her family and is a housewife, so she takes care of their home and garden. She also has animals and grows their own vegetables and fruits, so they don't have to buy it. As we asked how she feels about their life in Bozovici she says that they feel very free, but that things should be better.

M. really wants the hospital in Bozovici to be reopened, so people from other villages could come there as well. She also says that the mayor fights for the village and does his best to improve the situation.

### Interview 9: (group 5) trucker

The next person we interviewed is a man that works as a driver. His children moved away from Bozovici because of the lack of jobs in the village. His son is in Timișoara and his daughter lives in Germany. His wife worked in Austria. About the life in Bozovici he says that the community level in the village is very low. He also complains about the infrastructure that is not very good and the roads. Just the same as the woman, he wants the hospital to be reopened because its hard without a hospital when it comes to emergency cases.

### Interview 10: (group 6) middle age woman with a child

E. is a middle aged woman living in Bozovici. She is a mother of one child. She spoke about how bad the regular living situation is in Bozovici, that she is afraid because the healthcare is almost non-existent and that the local hospital is not reliable. She wouldn't want to live her retirement days in Bozovici due to the situation with the healthcare. Also, that most of the apartments or houses are in very bad shape, with moulding issues, unreliable heating etc.

### Interview 11: (group 6) R., 14 years old

When we asked him about the medical assistance in Bozovici. He told us that he does not remember ever needing some serious healthcare, but he felt sad for the people in Bozovici that do, as they have to travel all the way to Reșița and come back by their own means, or in an emergency situation how stressful it might be to do not have anyone close that you can ask for help.

### 3.4. Social care

#### Interview 1: (group 2) barber

About the social support system, he was very clear about the topic child protection: very good. There are homes/day-cares for children and they are very well equipped and also receive medical services over there. So no complaints about that.

#### Interview 2: (group 6) middle-age couple

The woman specifically said she doesn't feel like anything is done for her nor the people in the village, also she described Bozovici as a depopulated area, where there is no social assistance. She was aware of the fact that there is only one social worker in the whole Village and also complained about how hard it is to apply for social assistance and that she doesn't feel seen and recognized by the government. She also complained that she and her husband have to take care of the parents of her husband, because the prices for elderly care centres are too expensive (around 400 euros per month). She told us "the communist regime still lingers in this village".

Also, they criticized the health system in Romania, especially that the small hospital in Bozovici got closed.

#### Interview 3: (group 6) A., 79 year old lady

As we explored Bozovici, we decided to walk a bit further away from the centre. As we walked around a neighbourhood, we saw two older women sitting outside in front of their houses. One of the women was A., she was 79 years old, and we started talking about her situation in Bozovici. She stated that life in Bozovici is not really nice and that she almost has no joy in her life while living here. The only things that brought her joy were her dog and when her children visited her.



The problem is that her children who lives far away in Italy only visit her once or twice a year. She has nothing to do here due to the lack of a social environment and the lack of her pension. Also, because she isn't that fit anymore, she isn't able to access her house in the winter if she would go in the town for groceries because she is living on the hill. She also complained to the administration about it but she isn't getting any support to help with her issue. She also stated that in Bozovici there is a lack of medical assistance and that she had to leave to Reşiţa, which is 70 km away from Bozovici only to be treated for pneumonia. An additional problem is that she has to get back home by her own means, since there isn't a car or bus available. And, due to her low pension, it's even harder to find a way back home.

As we talked to A., another female came out of her house. She was the neighbour of A. and was really hospitable as she brought chairs outside for us. As we asked her about her feelings about Bozovici, she started crying about how hard life in Bozovici is. She told us that she had lost her sister due to Covid during the pandemic because she didn't get the medical care she needed. She also recalled a time where she had to wait outside in the cold for a member of her family to be treated. In conclusion, both women we talked to stated that life in Bozovici is not good and that there is almost nothing what brings them joy in life.

### 3.5. Work

As we discussed with different people, we observed that Bozovici is not very attractive for the young people, because it lacks the jobs they need or they want which determine them to leave for bigger cities like Timișoara, Reșița or even Cluj which can offer them much better opportunities for their development. These cities attract lots of investors, a fact that leads to creating more jobs. Unfortunately, Bozovici does not find itself in that position, because it is very limited by its size and it does not dispose of a great local influence like big cities do, hence it is not optimum for creating new jobs.

On the other hand, people in their 40s or 50s seem to be quite happy with the jobs they already have, even though they are not satisfied with the salaries they get. This is due to the fact they got used to their jobs and over time, they gathered experience which kind of makes them irreplaceable.

But again, their main concern is for their children, because they don't want their kids to work in the same conditions as they do, wishing for them to get better jobs elsewhere than Bozovici.

The tourist potential of the Bozovici area is immense through the extraordinary landscapes, forests, rivers and streams, lakes, hunting (the number 1 sport in Bozovici), fish fauna, and last but not least, the hospitality of the Almăjan people. From the Bigăr waterfall (near the 45-degree parallel) to the Cheile Nerei, the well-guided tourist can also see the trout from Valea Minișului, the centuries-old forests, the water mills from Rudăria (the most representative mulinological complex in Romania and the most sea from South-Eastern Europe, included in the European heritage), the dam and the lake on the Poneasca stream valley, the lake behind the dam on Valea Minișului, Poiana Gosnei.

#### Interview 1: (group 2) older man from Germany

During our walk through the town, there was a car that passed us a few times. It was an older man that was interested in what we were doing and so we told him and he was prepared to work with us. He was very friendly, but not Romanian by birth, but he was German and he followed his wife to Romania. Love brought him to Bozovici. He told us about life before communism and after.

He lived for more than 45 years here in Bozovici and was a lawyer for more than 25 years.



The man kept talking and he was telling us that a lot of young people leave Romania to go abroad. Better workplaces, salaries and so on. After they finish their school, they don't find work, even if they want to. But in the end, I keep laughing and enjoying life, he said.

### Interview 2: (group 2) barber

We saw a barbershop. And we all know, a visit to the barber is also a social event. We went inside, but it was empty, except for 2 children. So we asked the barber if he was willing to answer some questions and also we asked whether it was allowed to ask these children some questions. The man was born in Bozovici but left the town for many years to become a professional football player. But then he came back to his birth town and became a hairdresser.

He started his shop during the pandemic, in 2020, without any support. He is also the only barber in town. Also people from nearby villages come to him. It is not a big town and shop, but he has his clients. And that's what makes him happy.



### Interview 3: (group 3) old lady

In the interviews with older people from Bozovici it quickly became clear that most of them have lived in the village all their lives and cannot imagine moving away. One elderly lady described that she had never thought about leaving Bozovici because she has a house here. The same lady also had only positive things to say about the mayor and the municipality in general.

### Interview 4: (group 3) old man

In another interview we interviewed an old man (he must have been around 80 years old). He reported that he had been living in Bozovici for 20 years. He told us that there used to be many more jobs here than nowadays.



He described (like many others) that all the young people were leaving Bozovici to move to bigger cities. However, he would stay here because his pension would be enough for him to live here. He also told us how difficult medical care was here, as one had to travel 50 to 80 kilometres to the nearest hospital. He talked a lot about the old days and how things were much better economically for Bozovici back then.

As an example, he mentioned that before the revolution in 1989, there were twenty companies (construction, transportation) in Bozovici and therefore many jobs. Since then, these companies had all gradually disappeared.

All in all, you could tell he really missed the old days. He described how people had more discipline back then and that everyone got a job and a house from the state after graduating from school.

In general, he talked a lot about the communist times and how, in his opinion, everything was better organized back then. He talked about how the politicians had kept their promises back then. It quickly became clear that he was very disappointed in today's politicians and wished for communism and the old days to return. At the end of the conversation, he said some very racist things about Sinti and Roma, it seemed a bit like he had to project his anger onto something or someone.

### Interview 5: (group 3) old teacher

He was 85 years old. He said that the school system had deteriorated recently due to administrative changes. The Minister of Education had made a lot of changes which had led to everything becoming a bit chaotic. He had grown up in Bozovici and had lived here all his life. He spoke of how there had been both good and bad changes and again described that many young people were moving away because they had no chance of finding a job in Bozovici.

He also told how the number of inhabitants had drastically reduced. He spoke of the need for the mayor to create better conditions for the children who lived and grew up here. We also talked to him about the closure of the hospital, which he considered a big mistake.

At the end of the interview he told us that he had little hope for Bozovici but he had some hope in the younger generation.

## Interview 6: (group 3) youth

In the interviews with younger people from Bozovici it became clear that they saw no future for themselves in the village. They all described life in the community as boring, uneventful and hopeless. There were no prospects for work and nothing to keep them there.



In a conversation with two young men (they were 17 and 18 years old), one described life in Bozovici as "boring as fuck". They had nothing to do and there were few leisure activities for young people. Therefore, the 18 year old had decided to go to high school in a bigger city and then study in Reșița. He described that his whole family had already left Bozovici. The 17-year-old told us that he was still living in Bozovici, but that he was also thinking of leaving because he would have better prospects of finding a job somewhere else.

This was also something they made clear to us, namely that they would like the mayor to create more job opportunities. They also told us that some of their friends did not go to school, even though school is compulsory in Romania. All in all, they both seemed very frustrated and also both told us that they liked absolutely nothing about Bozovici.

## Interview 5: (group 3) old teacher

We interviewed a mother (she was about 30-40 years old) with her daughter (about 4-5 years old). She told us that she was going to work abroad in Austria because she had not been able to get a job here in Bozovici and the surrounding area. She told us that she would raise her daughter alone, but would get support from the child's grandparents.

She described to us that she would like to go abroad together with her child, as she would have better chances for education etc. there. But she told us that she would not want to tear her daughter away from her familiar environment. Her daughter had so many friends here and she didn't want to lose them. She described to us that there would be hardly any activities for the children in Bozovici, which did not fit at all with what the mayor had told us.

## Interview 8: (group 4) city workers



After we decided to turn to the village center to find people that would talk to us about what's happening in Bozovici and their opinions on it, we saw to ladies doing gardening work outside.

They told us that they have a quite routine life and most of the time nothing extraordinary happens. They say they like their life the way it is in

Bozovici and that they are treated nicely by everyone as long as they have a job.

In general, they have a good feeling about inclusion in their community. What they are missing the most is the hospital, a place that can take care of the needs of everyone. In the community, rumours are spreading that that the hospital is going to be reopened, but they don't feel like they have the power to influence any decisions that are being made.



They also worry about youngsters leaving the town in search of jobs. They think more simple jobs are needed to motivate them to stay and live in Bozovici. Apart from that they seemed happy and satisfied doing their gardening work together, and just wished for a simple life.

## Interview 9: (group 5) agriculture

Another person that we talked to was the owner of a restaurant, who complained about the fact that people prefer to buy products and seeds from stores rather than the farmer's market, and even there, the products are not sourced from local farms but from vendors who buy fruits and vegetables from big stores and sell them at the market, which doesn't help the local economy at all.

## Interview 10: (group 6) woman middle age

E. is a middle aged woman living in Bozovici. She was the first person we had a conversation with. Her initial thoughts about Bozovici were not very promising. She was not originally from Bozovici, but had moved there for work, working at a tool, paint and supply store now for 20 years. She mentioned that she was lucky to get a job there because there are no work opportunities, especially ones that pays you well or even enough to make a decent living out of. Though she wishes for more work places or job opportunities for the town to improve, she did not see a very promising future for that to happen.

Even with all the negative things, E. was happy in her own personal life, having a reliable and a good job that also keeps her busy so she does not have to worry about the situation of the town too much.

## Interview 11: (group 6) middle-aged couple



While walking in Bozovici, we walked by a woman sitting on a bank in a park. We wanted to talk with her about her life and situation in Bozovici, so we asked her if she could answer our questions, luckily she agreed. A few minutes later her husband joined us. The woman is unemployed for 4 years and cannot find a workplace. She explained that jobs here are acquired only if you know the

right people that can set up a job or a job interview for you, which means that it is hard to find a job without connections. The couple moved from Reșița to Bozovici, because the mother of the husband still lives in this small village. The husband is working as a security guard in a wood factory nearby. They didn't studied at university, but went to post-grad school.

In conclusion, they seemed unhappy about their life and the situation in Bozovici. The woman seemed really dissatisfied and disappointed because she can't find a working place.



### 3.6. Infrastructure



A big problem is also the infrastructure. One man in the city told us about the lack of the infrastructure in Bozovici and the surrounding villages. For school, there is only one Bus to the school, which is 8 km from Bozovici and if there's just one kid in a village, the bus driver won't go there to pick the kid up and take it to school. So, if this kid has no other possibility, like family or friends who can bring them to school, they're not able to go at all.

Another problem are the streets of the villages in the area around Bozovici. They're so bad, that the ambulance can't go there on the streets, so the medical staff has to walk long ways to reach the people and help them – something which is really dangerous if it's about the health of the people.

Regarding the free time activities for the people in Bozovici, there's just to say, there are no activities for the people. There was a football team once, but because there were not enough children in the village to build a team, they had to stop it.

There is a playground in Bozovici, which can be used by the parents and children, but actually, it can't really be used, because there's asphalt on the whole playground and holes on the floor, where children can get hurt easily. And as there is no playground in the kindergarten or school, there's not really an opportunity for children to play in Bozovici and be safe while playing.



A lot of people like living in Bozovici, but they also admit that things urgently need to change. For example: schools for the children; healthcare/hospital infrastructure.

In Bozovici, we saw many street dogs and cats. Many of these animals were limping or had a broken leg. The students from Romania told us that this is a problem especially in the smaller towns and villages. Some of them are castrated and have a chip. Many people keep a cat or a dog but they can't take care of them and leave them behind. Many of the people in the village are so used to it that they don't care about the animals and even chase them away.



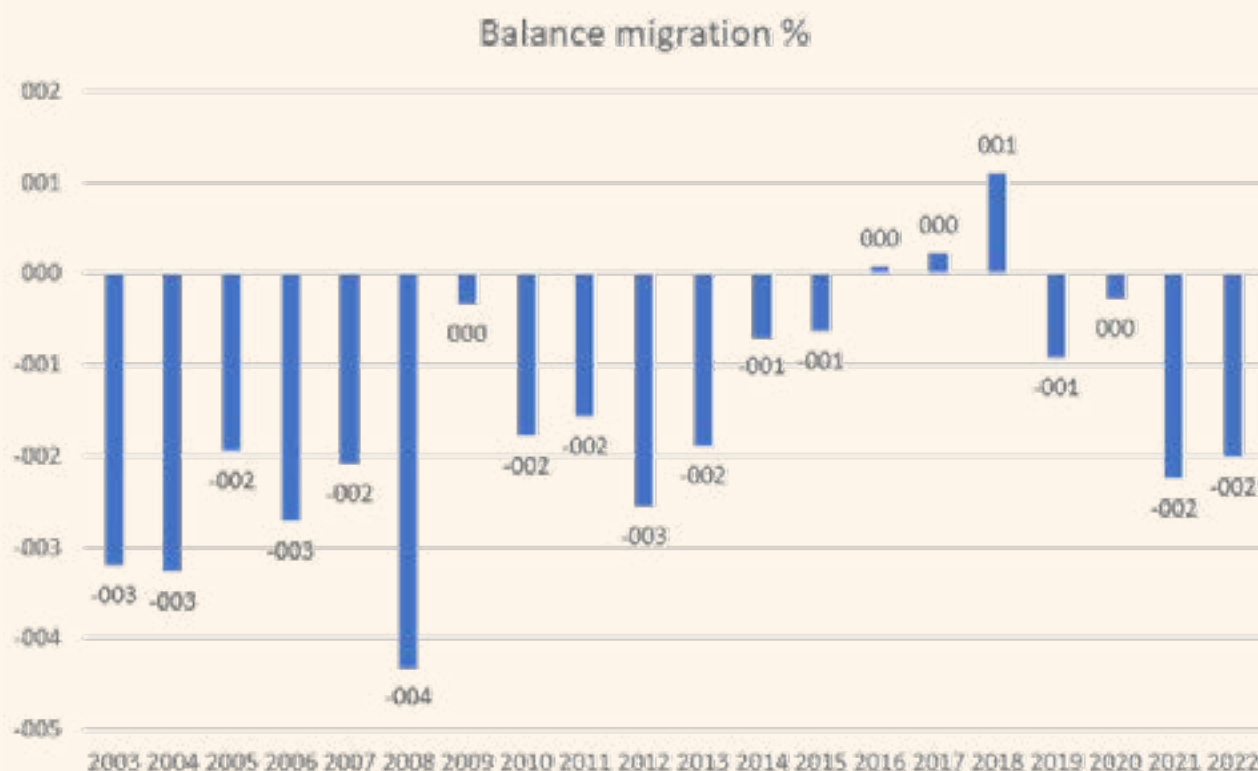
Museum Bozovici



## 4. Statistical reflections on narrative report

A constant issue in the conversations is emigration. Some people refer to their own migration past: “She told us that she was going to work abroad in Austria because she had not been able to get a job here in Bozovici and the surrounding area. She described to us that she would like to go abroad together with her child, as she would have better chances for education etc. there.” (woman with child). Other are wishing to migrate like the 17-year old boy told: “he was still living in Bozovici, but that he was also thinking of leaving because he would have better prospects of finding a job somewhere else.” Almost every inhabitant in Bozovici is confronted with migration. Like for example the personal situation of 15 year old boy: Parents are working abroad. Mom is a nurse for elderly people. Dad is a truck driver in Europe. Lives at his grandparents that are retired.”

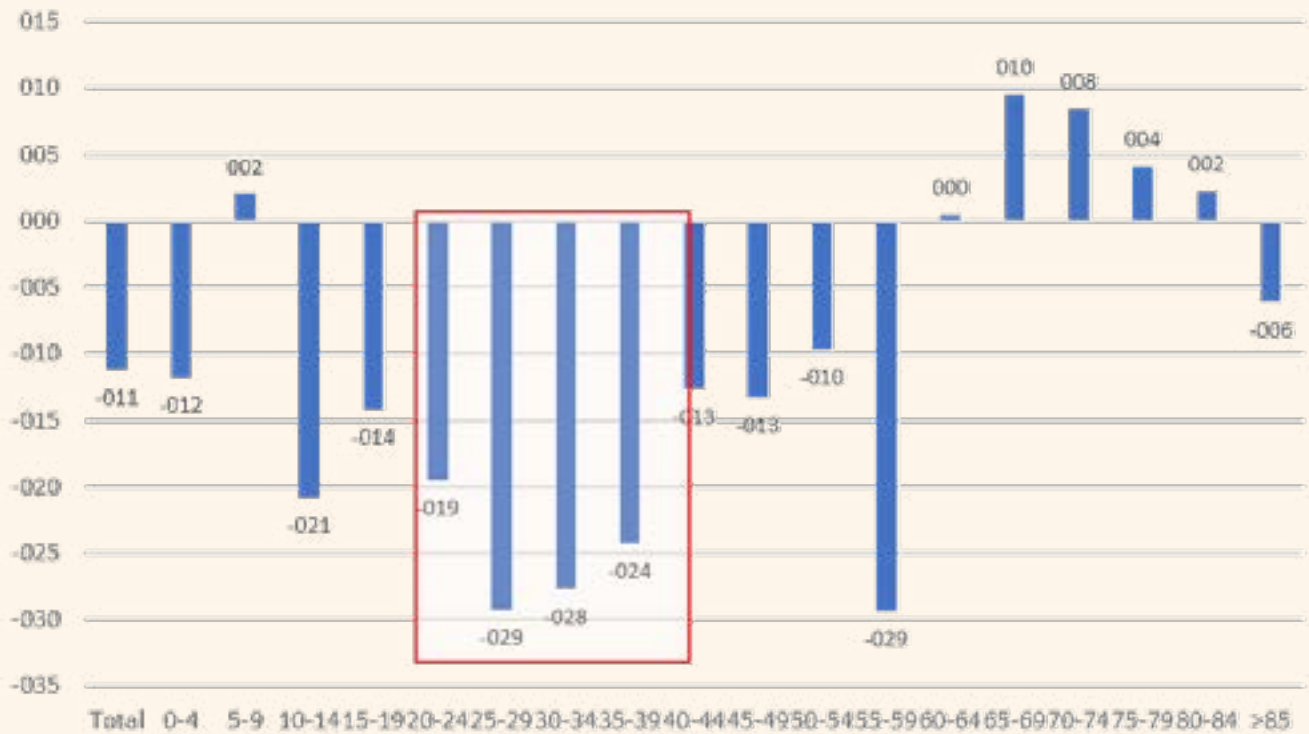
In chapter 1 already a short reference was made to the topic of migration. Some more detailed data will illustrate the magnitude of emigration in Bozovici. Since more than 20 years, Bozovici is confronted with a negative migration balance as shown in the graph below.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Romanian Institute for Statistics: [www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro) > TEMPO Online: POP107D, POP304B, POP305B, POP307A, POP308A.

Another indicator was already mentioned: the difference between residence and domicile. More than 300 persons do have an address in Bozovici but are not living permanently in the commune. Even worse are the number of youngsters (young active population, in red marked in graph) not residing in the commune.

Difference % residence - domicile census 2021



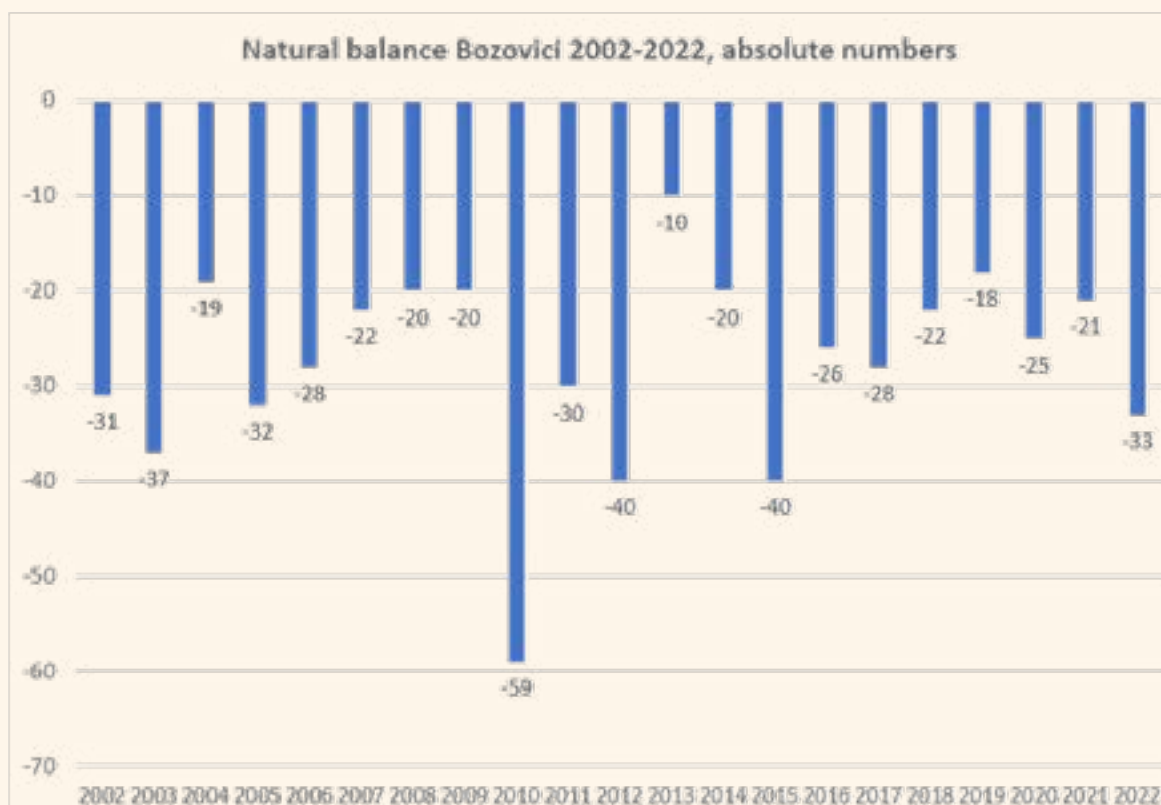
Between 20 and 30% of the young active population is living outside the village, in which they registered.<sup>1</sup>

Another very remarkable point is the comparison of the stable population in 2011 and 2021. The data make it possible to draw a table with a 10-year follow. Those aged 10-14 in 2011 are now in 2021 20-24 year old. In almost every age group, a decline can be constated. Again, the highest numbers can be found in the group of 20 until 30 years old persons. For older people migration is not the cause but the number of deaths is growing in this age group.<sup>2</sup>

2021 residence - domicile Bozovici age category - comparison age & 10 years flow		Total	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	>85
2011 residence		2724	332	154	166	348	358	348	369	399	275	140	232	245	233	180	169	124	99	59
2021 residence		2506	305	99	99	364	328	304	328	338	338	170	196	118	228	230	181	301	93	62
10y flow difference					-1	8	-38	-44	-39	-10	8	-79	-39	-27	-13	-15	-32	-79	-28	-62
10y flow difference %					-2.94	5.13	-22.89	-25.73	-18.99	-8.76	2.17	-24.57	-12.89	-15.71	-5.60	-8.12	-22.32	-36.88	-48.35	-50.00

One of the consequences of migration of namely young people is a negative natural balance (births > deaths) and the ageing of the population.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Population Census 2021: <https://www.recensamantromania.ro>  
<sup>2</sup> Population Census 2011 & 2021: <https://www.recensamantromania.ro>  
<sup>3</sup> Romanian Institute for Statistics : [www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro) > TEMPO Online: POP201D, POP206D



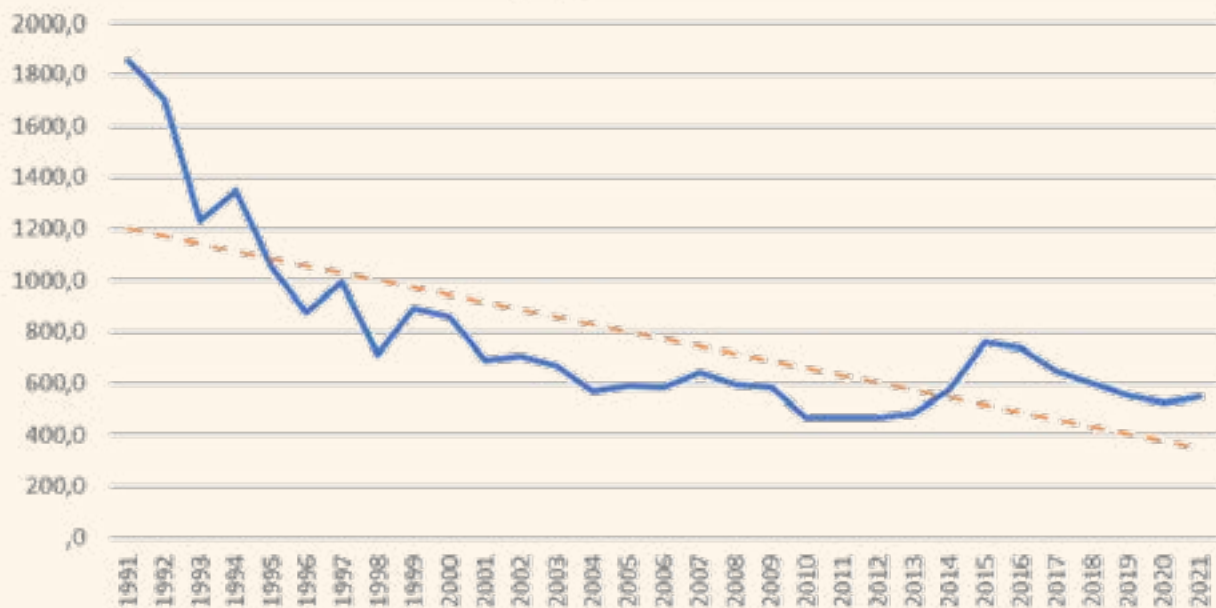
The dependency rate namely for the older group of the population can be clearly seen in the next table.<sup>1</sup> The growing pressure on the young population to take care for the elderly is increasing. In the same time because of migration, Bozovici is confronted by 'left alone' elderly. This phenomenon was clearly illustrated by one of the testimonies: "The only things that brought her joy were her dog and when her children visited her. The problem is that her children who lives far away in Italy only visit her once or twice a year. She has nothing to do here due to the lack of a social environment and the lack of her pension. Also because she isn't that fit anymore, she isn't able to access her house in the winter if she would go in the town for groceries because she is living on the hill."

	Y 2011	Y 2021	
Green pressure 1	22,4	19,7	Rate of 0-14 year old for 100 15-64 year old
Green pressure 2	37,7	40,4	Rate of 0-19 year old for 100 20-59 year old
Gray pressure 1	31,8	43,2	Rate of 65+ year old for 100 15-64 year old
Gray pressure 2	55,1	76,5	Rate of 60+ year old for 100 20-59 year old
Internal gray pressure	21,9	20,9	Rate of 80+ year old for 100 60-79 year old
Rate family care	31,4	48,7	Rate of 80+ year old for 100 50-59 year old
Rate dependency 1	54,1	62,9	Rate of 0-14 year old & 65+ year old for 100 15-64 year old
Rate dependency 2	92,9	117,0	Rate of 0-19 year old & 60+ year old for 100 20-59 year old
Rate changing	66,5	73,4	Rate of 10-24 year old for 100 50-64 year old
Ageing of actives	76,5	75,6	Rate of 15-39 year old for 100 40-64 year old

<sup>1</sup> Population Census 2011 & 2021: <https://www.recensamantromania.ro>

The young active population seems not to have enough resources to fulfill tasks of taking care. One of the push factors for migration is the lack of stable job opportunities. In 3 decades, the employment fell by no less than 2/3 as can be seen in the graph below (1991: 1.800, 2021: 550). This means that in 2021 only 40% of the active population (1.374 persons) are employed (monthly salary).

Number of employees Bozovici 1991-2021

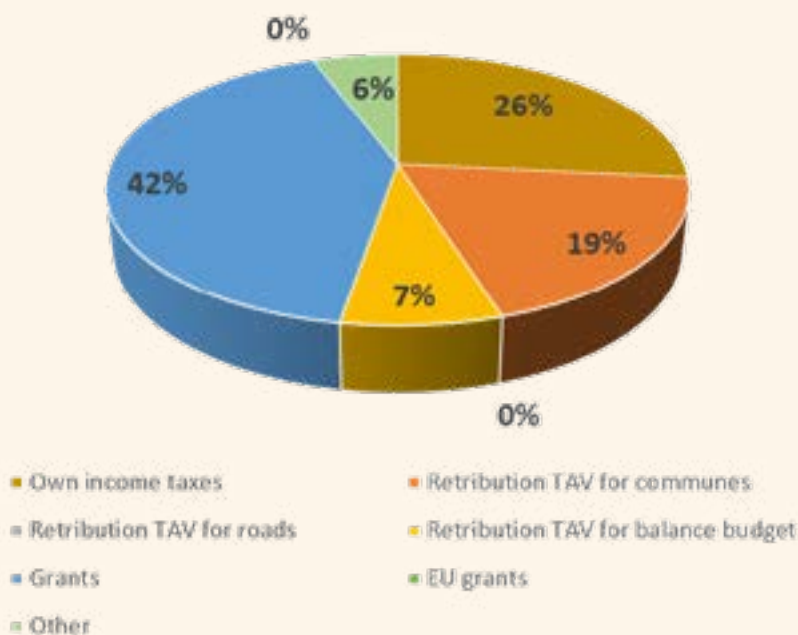


In one of the interviews, a lady *“mentioned that she was lucky to get a job there because there are no work opportunities, especially ones that pays you well or even enough to make a decent living out of. Though she wishes for more work places or job opportunities for the town to improve, she did not see a very promising future for that to happen.”* Some older persons were referring to the past: *“As an example, he mentioned that before the revolution in 1989, there were twenty companies (construction, transportation) in Bozovici and therefore many jobs. Since then, these companies had all gradually disappeared.”* In general, communities with a state controlled and financed economy in the past, are struggling with the reconversion towards new kind of attractive jobs. As a consequence: *“many young people were moving away because they had no chance of finding a job in Bozovici.”*

The lack of job opportunities and/or well paid jobs has an impact on the local budget of the commune of Bozovici. In 2022 a total income of €2.587.729 was registered. Around 26% (€687.106) of the total income came from taxes and can be considered as own income. The rest is coming from the state (retribution of TAV & grants).<sup>1</sup>

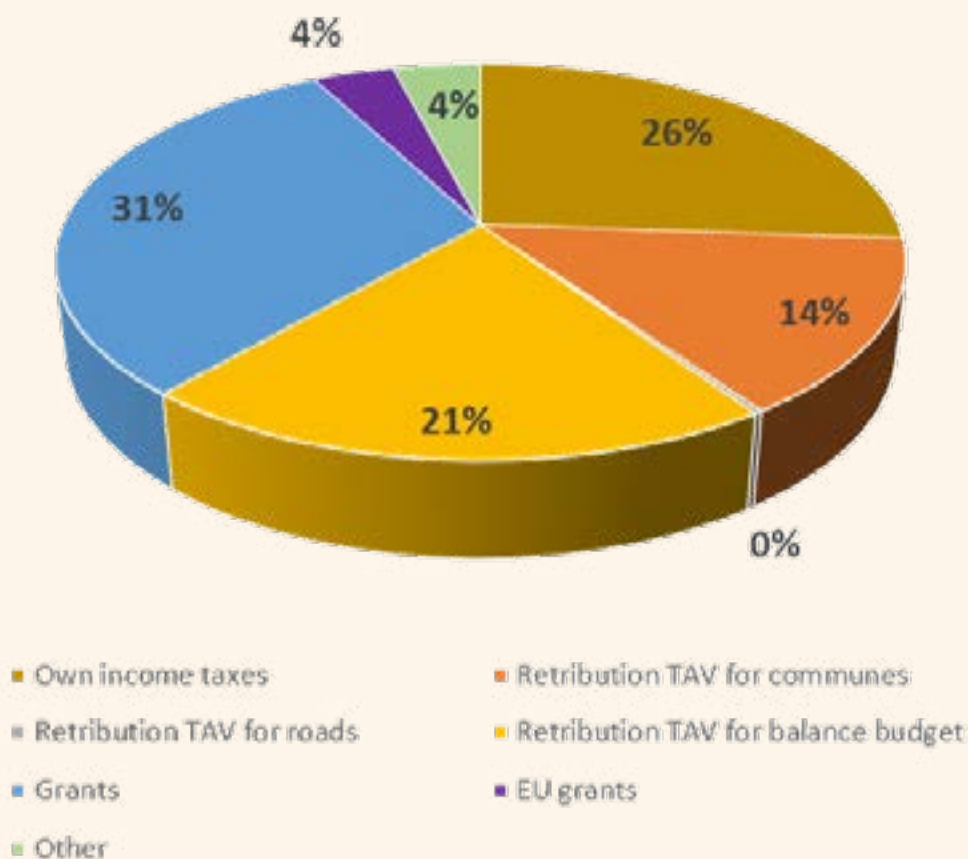
<sup>1</sup> [http://www.dpfbl.mdrap.ro/sit\\_ven\\_si\\_chelt\\_uat.html](http://www.dpfbl.mdrap.ro/sit_ven_si_chelt_uat.html) and change rate lei-euro based on [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-infoeuro_en)

**Income Bozovici 2022, 12.729.819 lei (€2.587.729)**



Compared to the budget of all communes in Caraş-Severin, Bozovici is following the general trend of income inputs. Bozovici is getting more out of grants and less from the retribution of TAV from the state to balance to local budget.

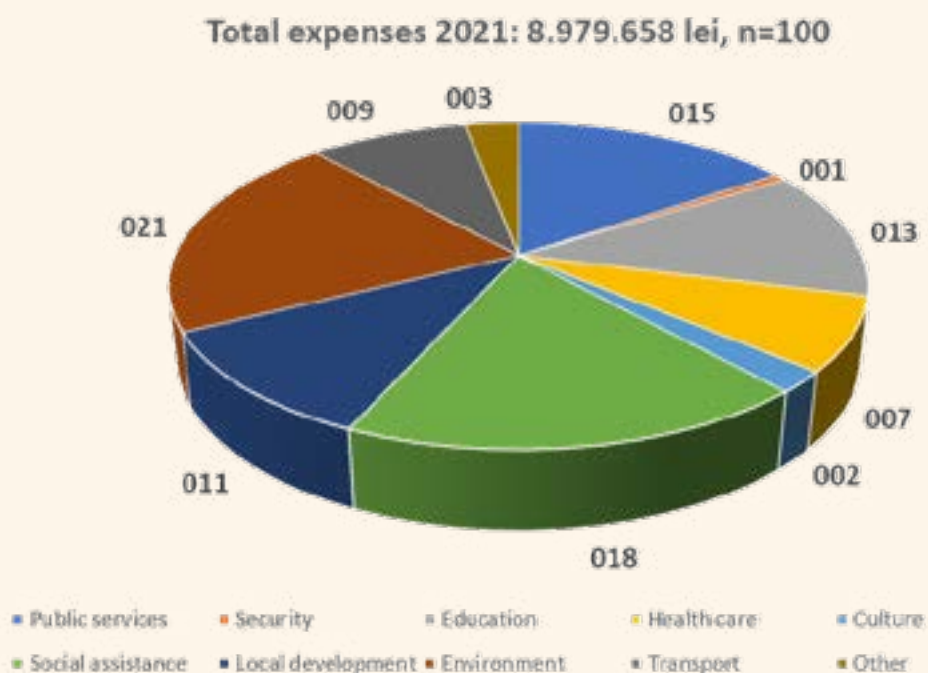
**Income communes CS 2022, 514.542.690 lei (€104.596.729)**



Although the low job intensity and taken into account the inflation, the own income of Bozovici is relatively stable. Between 25 and 30% of the total income is composed by own income. On the other hand, Bozovici is depending on budget coming from the central state budget and (EU) grants.

Income Bozovici 2013-2022			
Year	Total income	Own income	% own / total
2013	5.493.766	2.303.404	41,93
2014	7.047.521	2.052.529	29,12
2015	11.587.274	1.921.818	16,59
2016	7.966.063	1.999.034	25,09
2017	9.394.211	2.231.486	23,75
2018	9.072.590	2.438.195	26,87
2019	9.311.044	2.688.595	28,88
2020	9.670.519	2.888.104	29,87
2021	10.009.143	2.878.577	28,76
2022	12.729.819	3.380.084	26,55

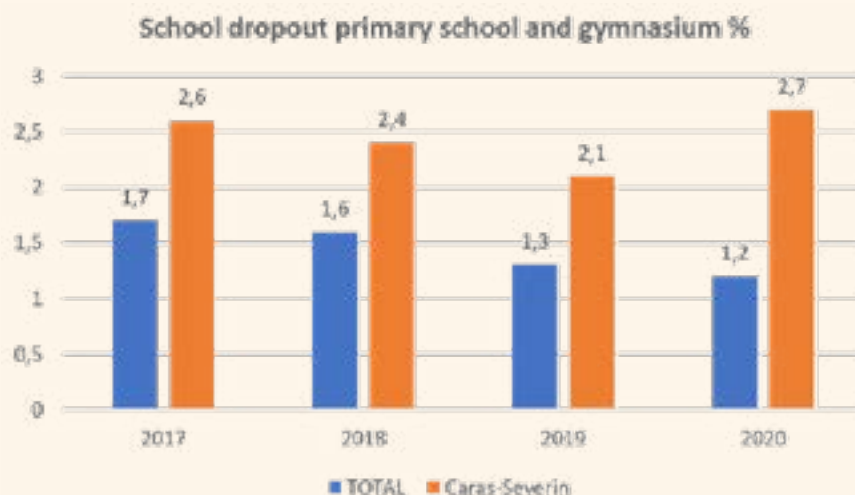
Taken into account a total income of 10.009.143 lei and a residence population of 2.506 persons in 2021, means that a budget of 3.994 lei (€807) can be spend per inhabitant. To have a better insight into to what money is spent, in the graph below the total expenses are put on €100. For each budget line the amount of money is calculated.



For each citizen in 2021: 12,80 euro was spent for education; 7,30 euro for health care.... A more in depth analysis of the budget for all communes in Caraş-Severin is needed to have comparable data.

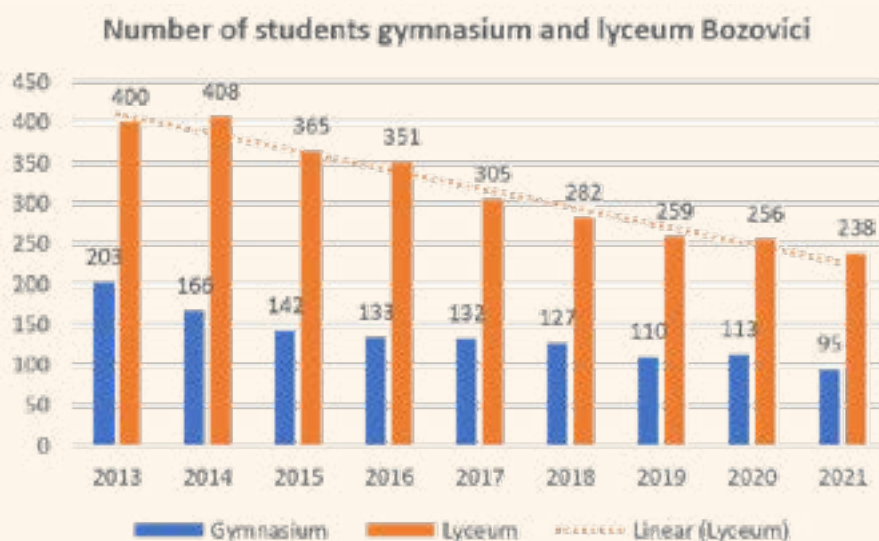


From the expenses side 2 issues came back often in the interviews: education and health care. Starting with education and as reminder: “They also told us that some of their friends did not go to school, even though school is compulsory in Romania. Her biggest concern at the moment was about children that are not visiting school regularly or not at all.” Numbers about the school dropout are not available at local level. In this context, the report is referring to the data on the county level.<sup>1</sup>



Compared to the national level of school dropout the county Caraş-Severin performs worse: for example in 2020 2,7% (CS) against 1,2% (RO). Without making any statements about the quality of education, the following graphs indicate that difficulties may be experienced.<sup>2</sup>

A strong decline can be constated in the amount of student enrolled in the school or gymnasium of lyceum.



<sup>1</sup> Romanian Institute for Statistics : [www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro) > TEMPO Online: SCL113A

<sup>2</sup> For information and data concerning schools see <https://www.admitereliceu.ro>, CARAS-SEVERIN ([edu.ro](http://www.caras-severin.edu.ro)), <http://static.evaluare.edu.ro/2023>, <https://www.siiir.edu.ro/carto/#/unitatea/11404003>

Despite the regional of the lyceum because students from other communes are coming to Bozovici (Școala Gimnazială Dalboșet, Școala Gimnazială Bănia and Liceul Tehnologic „Iosif Coriolan Buracu“ Prigor), it looks like this decline is irreversible because of less youngsters and the choice to go to schools in urban areas.

In a way, this has an impact on school results. Based on available data for the last 2 years dealing with de national test after class VIII (14 year, gymnasium), a low number of students are succeeding for the national test.<sup>1</sup>

Bozovici	Number candidates	Succeeded	Not succeeded
2022	20	9	11
2023	25	11	14

The same is visible after succeeding in the lyceum (18 years) at the moment of the baccalaureate test. In 2022 50% of the graduates succeeded in the test. The percentage was higher in philology (81%), but lower in mathematics-IT (50%), natural sciences (46%) and technical profiles (17%). Over the years, this is a constant.<sup>2</sup> The school has entered a downward vicious circle.

Although the presence of family doctors and medical assistants, the same vicious circle can be constated in the domain of health care. Citizens are experiencing a decline in the quality of health care and the poor working conditions of the hospital.

The feeling of having no future in Bozovici is a (perhaps a subjective) strong feeling and leads to a downward vicious circle: less job opportunities -> economic migration -> pressure on social structures -> lower investment in education and health care -> social migration -> less investments .... In the challenges for Bozovici a suggestion is done to develop a vision on local development. This was clearly described by the students: "In summary, the situation in Bozovici looks rather hopeless. Especially as far as the economic situation is concerned, everything looks very bleak. The older people, who have lived there all their lives, are not completely satisfied with the situation either, but they seem to have more or less come to terms with it. For the younger people, it is really hard in Bozovici. There are too few things for them to do and they get bored. Some don't go to school, which of course further reduces their chances of finding a job later on. They all dream of leaving Bozovici and building a better life somewhere else. As a result, mainly older people stay in Bozovici and in the long run, there will be hardly any people living in this rural area in a few decades, if the economic situation does not change by then."

<sup>1</sup> <http://static.evaluate.edu.ro/2023/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://static.bacalaureat.edu.ro/2022/rapoarte/> & <https://www.admitereliceu.ro/institutie/liceul-teoretic-eftimie-murgu-bozovici>

## 5. Challenges Bozovici

A strong advocacy for more social investments could be found in one of the interviews: “Apart from the struggles she has gone through in life, this was a very emotional encounter for our group and it was clear to us all how happy it made her to have someone to listen to her story. It was very moving and made clear to all of us that it is very important to bring the elderly back to the middle of society because there is so much to learn from their life experiences.”. As moral compass a plan for local development could be developed in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights. The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) was set out in 2017 by the EU to act as a compass for a strong social Europe. The EPSR sets out 20 principles in three main areas: (1) equal opportunities and access to the labour market (2) fair working conditions and (3) social protection and inclusion.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1226&langId=en>

## 6. “The Mayonnaise” by way of conclusion by Jozef Goebels

An important thing during such a BIP Immersion trip with around 40 people from different countries, different universities, different departments and different personalities, students and docents, is that you have to feel a click in order to make the trip a success. It was clear that from the first day, students of different nationalities found each other and since the trip took place in Romania, the presence of the Romanian students from the beginning was an added value.

During the evaluation, students told this was one of the most impressive events during their live. Beside the students, their where as well the docents and guides that had to struggle (with pleasure of course) to make this BIP Immersion trip an unforgettable activity with clear results since the trip was also a study objective.

During all the discussions and consultations on different moments, and also during the lunches and dinners, in Timișoara, Ria told us that some ‘Mayonnaise’ time to time would be appreciated. That idea never left us and came up again on a regular basis. While the students did their interviews in Bozovici, Sandra consulted Dana to see if Mayonnaise could be found in the

local shop. To her surprise, in the village store was a whole rack full of different Mayonnaises.



During the Belgian week in Timișoara, May 2023, Dana tested the real Belgian mayonnaise fitting with the Belgian Fries.

A picture was sent by WhatsApp to consult us which one to take. Finally Sandra decided to buy, not quite realizing which product it was, a tube of “Hrean cu Maioneză” for each docent and guide.

During the dinner that evening in Caransebeş, we tested the product and came to the conclusion it was ‘Horseradish with mayonnaise’, so no pure Mayonnaise. Anyway, the product was liked as such and an issue in



all further discussions the rest of the week and even till now.

You can also see the positive reinforcing effect of this food supplement on Sandra as she helped bringing ADAM Slatina-Timiş' wood supply into shelter.

It led me to conclude that this simple “Mayonnaise” was the binder to further strengthen the bond between the docents and guides. Nice that small things on a familiarization trip in another country actually strengthen the bond between people even more and make us more

open to other cultures. To keep in mind for next trips and with many thanks to the splendid team of docents on this trip to Romania.



## [ 7. Participants / authors ]

This booklet has been created by the participants of the *Inclusion, Blended Intensive Program* project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and has been designed by the team of facilitators. The participants' names and countries are provided below.



● ● ● Belgium [Thomas More University College](#)



### Docents

- \* Karen Behaeghe (Occupational Therapy)
- \* Filip Bode (Social Work)
- \* Ria Bruijn (Nurse/Midwife)



### Social Work Students

- \* Sam Decoopman (B)
- \* Lorenz Huybrechts (B)
- \* Michiel Jacobs (B)
- \* Titiana Luyts (B)
- \* Elisa Peeters (B)
- \* Jarmo Karppinen (FIN)
- \* Vianne Dujardin (NL)
- \* Zlata Yana Busol (UA)
- \* Olena Laba (UA)

### Midwifery Students

- \* Luna Antonis (B)

### Nursing Students

- \* Lissa De Laet (B)

### Occupational Therapy Students

- \* Arne Cools (B)
- \* Caro Van Den Eynden (B)



● ● ● Germany [Evangelische Hochschule Ludwigsburg](#)



### Docents

- \* Sandra Fietkau (Social Work)



### Social Work Students

- \* Bennet Drescher (D)
- \* Mik Ernst (D)
- \* Marleen Habrom (D)
- \* Sascha Hansen (D)
- \* Serife Hayva (D)
- \* Layla König (D)
- \* Lisa Kupser (D)
- \* Karolina Kosakowski (D)
- \* Nina Victoria Leistner (D)
- \* Linda Saalfrank (D)
- \* Eva Schnürle (D)
- \* Jana Schwingen (D)
- \* Salome Strauß (D)





## Universitatea de Medicină și Farmacie „Victor Babeș” from Timișoara



UNIVERSITATEA  
DE MEDICINĂ ȘI FARMACIE  
„VICTOR BABEȘ” DIN TIMIȘOARA

● ● ● Romania



### Docents

- \* Daniela Șilindean (Medicine)



### General Medicine Students

- \* Mihai Paul Dascălu (RO)
- \* Elena-Andreea Despa (RO)
- \* Adonis-Petru Hoca (RO)
- \* Teodora Marin (RO)
- \* Maria Voina (RO)

### Physiotherapy Students

- \* Tudor-Andrei Ghiris (RO)
- \* Ariana Grec (RO)
- \* Georgiana Haba (RO)
- \* Raul Andrei Krutsch (RO)



● ● ● Belgium [ADR-Vlaanderen](#)



● ● ● Romania [The Open Network for Community Development](#)



### Guides

- \* Jozef Goebels (B)
- \* Ioan Suru (RO)



### Statistics

- \* Patrick Van den Nieuwenhof (B)



### Cover design and layout

- \* Alina-Tincuța Scânteie (RO)



## 8. About the project

*The Inclusion, Blended (interdisciplinary) Intensive Program (BIP)* immersion trip designed for Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery, Medicine, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Medical Rehabilitation students focused this year on the topic of inclusion and on the social and healthcare system in Romania.

This program offered for the participating students a unique opportunity to meet with fellow students, teaching staff, other professionals, local people in a multi-professional and multicultural context. At the same time, it created a great framework to discuss students different study topics and on top of that, it was an exploration of the rich Romanian culture.

This year we had 13 students from Thomas More, Belgium, including 2 students from Ukraine and 1 of Finland doing their international scholarship (nursing and midwifery, social work and occupational therapy), plus 3 docents; 13 students from the Evangelische Hochschule Ludwigsburg, Germany (social work), plus 1 docent; 9 students from „Victor Babeş” Medical University from Timișoara, Romania (Medicine, physiotherapy and medical rehabilitation), plus 2 docents. The program was set up together with ADR-Vlaanderen/The Open Network for Community Development (TON) and guided by Jozef Goebels (President of ADR-Vlaanderen/TON) and Ioan Suru (Vice-president TON).

The proposed challenges had to ‘challenge’ the students to search for a deeper meaning or an explanation for the differences they have found or the observations they have made:

*Challenge 1:* Comparing the curricula of the different disciplines.

*Challenge 2:* Comparing the mental health situation or approach in Belgium / Germany / Romania.

*Challenge 3:* Creating a social map of Bozovici.

*Challenge 4:* Comparing the social-medical center ADAM Slatina-Timiș with something likewise in your country (like a Belgian ‘wijkgezondheidscentrum’).

*Challenge 5:* Write an end-evaluation report on the process you have gone through and explaining your coaches how you have been working on the competences of this BIP.

The whole program had online introduction meetings, the physical trip with focused on study visits and followed by online meetings with Q&A and a final presentation on what has been learned as a method to put theory into practice.

The immersion trip in Romania, March 19-26, was build up with visits of, and contacts with organizations and institution from their field and faced with situations, problems in real practice (for example: socio-economic differences related to different health status and opportunities in access to





care). We chose to go from a big city, over smaller cities, to rural villages:

- ⇒ Timișoara (Timiș county) with 319.279 inhabitants as a big and international city:
  - ◆ We paid visits on place in smaller groups the first day.
  - ◆ There was a contact between the accompanying docents and the staff of the Victor Babes University: the vice rector for Academic Development and manager of the Timiș County Emergency Clinical Hospital, Prof. Dorel Săndesc; the vice rector for Didactic, Prof. Daniel Lighezan; the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Bogdan Timar; together with the vice-consul of Germany in Timișoara Siegfried Geilhausen and his wife.
  - ◆ The second day presentations of different organizations and institutions at AMBASADA with Q&A were organized, also in the presence of the vice-consul of Germany and his wife.
- ⇒ Reșița (Caraş-Severin County) with 83.985 inhabitants as a smaller county capital with visits on place and a meeting at the county council with the vice-president Marius Isac, responsible for social affairs accompanied by the responsible people of the social department and the president of the DSP (Direcția de Sănătate Publică).
- ⇒ Caransebeș (Caraş-Severin County) with 24.689 inhabitants as a smaller regional city with visits on place and meeting with the social department Caraş-Severin.
- Bozovici (Caraş-Severin County) with 2.924 inhabitants with visits on place, meeting with the mayor, vice-mayor and social department and talks with inhabitants to gather information for the social-map.
- ⇒ Slatina-Timiș (Caraş-Severin County) with 3.105 inhabitants where the group stayed at and got information on the social-medical center ADAM Slatina-Timiș; paid a visit to the kindergarten and daycare center for elderly; organized a play afternoon with a group of children of Slatina-Timiș and joined/assisted Ioan Suru for the homecare visits at home and the needed treatment for patients.

The trip ended again in Timișoara where final conclusions were made and the awarding of the participation certificates was organized. During their stay in Timișoara, the participants had the opportunity and were stimulated to catch an activity of "Timișoara European Capital of Cultural 2023".

Already an agreement is made with the different partners for a next BIP Immersion trip next year 2024 to Belgium. Later on, will be decided on and applied for a new Erasmus project from 2025 on.

All participants, as well students as docents were very delight regarding this trip, the new insights they got and the opportunity to see other cultures and meet and discuss with people from different nationalities. That's exactly also where an European Erasmus program is made for.





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