

THE RURAL AREAS OF BANAT AND THE ECONOMIC OCCUPATIONS PRESENT TODAY. CASE STUDY: CENAD COMMUNE (TIMIȘ COUNTY)

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ABSTRACT: *Rural areas remain a major part of Europe's land area. For several reasons, the EU wants to see sustainable development. Several European funds are therefore intended to support activities, particularly economic activities, in rural areas. Thus, motivated by such a European policy, we considered it appropriate to carry out research at the level of a commune with an important level of living and economic development. We focused our attention on the commune of Cenad in Timis county, a commune on the western border with Hungary. In the methodological approach we used different types of documents and a range of research methods (participatory observation, case study, document analysis, interviews) to highlight the level of economic and social development achieved by the community of Cenad. Even if the inhabitants are mostly satisfied with what has been achieved in their community, even if unemployment is very low and does not put pressure on the social welfare system, we have nevertheless identified certain directions of sustainable development of the locality and implicitly of the community that can be beneficial for all, inhabitants, or tourists.*

Keywords: *rural; commune; community; sustainable development; economic activities;*

The study of the Romanian countryside has gained momentum in recent years, or we can say that it has entered a new phase of analysis. In most rural areas of the country, there is a demographic decline and an ageing population, or, worse still, the abandonment of some localities. There are empty villages, as if haunted, where, if you find one person, two, of the elderly who do not want to leave and leave their homes.

The European Union's agricultural policies are based precisely on the realities on the ground, and the aim is to restore these rural communities to an acceptable economic life and repopulate them. Why are they doing this? Because they are aware that it is agriculture that needs to develop and keep pace with global population growth. We cannot only support urban development, industries, banking systems and services, we need to invest in agriculture, in activities that are mainly carried out in rural areas, and therefore in the village world.

The world of the village is changing, and that of Cenad, too, and stopping and taking "a snapshot of today's village, with its people and their concerns" may become a point of reflection in a few years' time. From the photo we have taken now you can think about what the most appropriate development strategies are.

The rural environment and all its components, from economic life, population, customs, and other aspects of the rural world

have been the focus of attention of specialists in various fields. Geographers, historians, ethnographers, sociologists, and economists have all recorded in their research the defining elements of the countryside.

The term rural appears with more intensity in geographical writings from around the 1930s, but more often in comparison with the urban world (Plet 2003).

One of the best-known French specialists who has focused on rural space in his research is Pierre George who, in trying to define rural geography, said that its main concern was the village, and for the word rural he said that its meaning was much broader and more comprehensive than that of agricultural (George 1970, p.376). In other words, one cannot equate rural with agricultural, just as rural space cannot be seen as merely a place for agricultural activities or rural crafts, along with elements of rural tourism (George 1970, p. 376). Weber is of the opinion that a more accurate term for rural would be 'country' because the people in a rural space share the same language, the same language, but also the same experience of life through the common life they share (Weber 1983, pp. 70-71; Plet 2003).

Sociologists became interested in analysing and researching the countryside only in the 1960s. In their research on the countryside, they were interested in two aspects: on the one hand rural communities, on the other hand the population involved in agriculture (Plet 2003).

From the 1980s onwards, an interdisciplinary approach to the world of the countryside can be observed when geographers, sociologists and ethnographers are joined by agronomists and natural scientists (Plet 2003). The countryside becomes a living environment, as Henri Medras pointed out, and hence the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the countryside.

Bernard Kayser's 1990 paper uses the term rural renaissance instead of urbanisation, a term preferred by other geographers and sociologists concerned with the rural world. He defines rural space on the basis of the following characteristics that he identified in his research on the evolution of contemporary rural space: a low density of inhabitants and their households, a predilection for agricultural and forestry activities, a specific way of life that emerges from people's relationship with their space, and last but not least a specific identity that is reflected in peasant culture (Kayser 1990, p. 29; Negru 2006, p. 85).

The concept that defines the rural does not appear identically described in all the countries of the European Union, which is why it is quite difficult to make a comparison between what rural means in Romania and what rural means in the western countries of the EU. However, a common idea stands out, namely that rural is the opposite of urban. In other words, in people's minds and in the work of specialists, the rural is in opposition to the urban, the standard of living in rural areas is lower than in urban areas (Dinc 2008).

Another coherent description of the elements that make up the countryside mentions the following:

- the countryside comprises areas outside urban areas;
- there is a smaller population than in cities;
- there is a lower density than in urban areas;
- the main occupation of the inhabitants is agriculture;
- the relationships established between members of a rural community are more personal (Rusali 2013, p. 18).

Another definition of rural space is given by Brânzan who sees rural as a vast ensemble comprising villages and communes in an interdependent relationship, and the population of this space is one that embraces the same aspects or socio-cultural, demographic, or economic particularities (Brânzan 2006, p. The author also reviews the concerns for the Romanian rural space, the village, starting with Henri Sthal, Ion Ionescu de la Brad, Constantin Dobrogeanu Gherea, Dimitrie Gusti and Traian

Herseni (Brânzan 2006, p. 1-2). Therefore, we will not dwell too much on the village as seen by some of those who have researched the Romanian countryside.

The Sociological School in Bucharest, led by Dimitrie Gusti, aimed to carry out research in rural areas. Dimitrie Gusti defined the village as a monographic research unit. Thus, between 1925 and 1940, several monographic research campaigns were carried out in the Romanian countryside (626 villages were analysed). Thus, Gusti laid the foundations of the monographic research method, a method based on a multidisciplinary approach. The sociological movement's area of concern is vast, ranging from agrarian social structures to mentalities specific to the village environment.

Another term that needs to be considered when referring to or analysing rural areas is that of rural community. It is the rural community that helps to define certain aspects of rural areas. It is the rural community that contributes to the development of the rural environment.

The term community has been used in sociological literature to designate certain types of settlements of populations, the supposedly ideal ways of life typical in such places, social networks whose members share the same characteristics independently of or in addition to a common characteristic. Frequently, the term is used with meanings that contain all these elements, as for example in "traditional working-class communities in urban environments". At the same time, the problems of defining the concept of community provide the basis for a thriving sociological industry.

The term community can be said to be highly controversial because of its ambiguity. It was T nnies who first introduced it into sociology. For some sociologists' community is one of the fundamental components of sociology, while for others this concept is not considered because it is too dense and fragmented. A classification is accepted in which 16 different characteristic elements are distinguished, including geographical area, self-sufficiency, kinship, awareness of similarity, shared lifestyles, and different types of intensive social integration (Dictionary 2003, p.119-120).

Certainly, in the Romanian countryside the events of 1989 brought about significant changes, some of them well known, others leading to other important changes in many social levels. Some communities fractured for various reasons (property, religious, ethnic or political beliefs), others managed to build

strong, dynamic communities that could keep up with the new challenges coming from European politics in the rural area.

An approach to rural research can be pursued by analysing criteria ranging from the physical-geographical to the demographic, economic, social, housing and utilities and the quality of the natural risk factors that have been identified (oirposdru-vest.ro).

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation No 1296/1996 specifying the characteristics of rural areas to have a common definition of rural areas accepted in the European Union.

Typology of the countryside

In 1990 Kayser established several types of rural areas based on certain indicators. These indicators that he considered when trying to establish the specific types of rural areas are economic activity, socio-professional structure and demographic dynamics (Kayser 1990; Brânzan 2006, p. 9-10). Thus, he will establish 5 types of rural environment starting from the deep rural, the semi-agricultural, the mutating, the stagnating and the intermediate. A few years later, André Brun, Bernard Kayser and Philippe Lacombe, specialists concerned with rural research, categorized the countryside into three types (Brun, Kayser, Lacombe 1994 p. 3-38). They will also establish the main elements that define each type as follows:

1. Peri-urban rural areas are located at 10-50 km from large cities or urban centres. In these areas, there is a development of housing and a mixture of urban and rural phenomena. A part of the population living in this type of rural area commutes daily to the city, but the place of residence remains rural. The specific economy of the Peri urban countryside is a mixed one, agriculture is practiced alongside small-scale industry and a population involved in services.
2. The intermediate rural area is the most common type. It is characterized by intensive agricultural activity using modern machinery and advanced technologies.
3. Peripheral rural areas, its name did not consider the physical distance from the cities, but it is so called because these rural areas are on the periphery of the economic and social axis. Agriculture is the main occupation of these communities, but production usually covers personal needs, with very little going to trade.

Law 351/2001 on the approval of the National Spatial Planning Plan classifies localities by rank and clarifies several terms used, such as.

Functions of the Countryside

From the outset, we will present the views of European bodies on these functions, as they are mentioned in the European Charter for Rural Areas. This document stresses three important functions of the countryside (not just the village when referring to the countryside, as they are not synonymous): economic, environmental, and social-cultural.

Listing the three main functions of the countryside does not imply listing them according to the importance of one or other of these functions. They complement each other, but all these functions need to be reflected in the rural environment, in the analyses that are carried out or in the definition of rural development strategies.

The economic function remains the basic function of the countryside and involves the involvement of resources and the rural population in economic activities. By far the dominant occupation is agriculture, as a source of products for own consumption, but also for trade in certain desirable situations. Alongside agriculture, forestry (including the forestry industry) and handicraft production are the occupations that are part of rural economic development. The latter not only helps to preserve traditional crafts, but can also be a source of income, albeit quite small, for rural families. In recent years, several projects have been implemented to preserve these traditional crafts and to pass on the skills to future generations.

They are recognized and considered part of a nation's intangible cultural heritage and therefore funds can be accessed at European Union level to preserve and pass on these traditional crafts. Traditional crafts specific to the rural environment include:

- Domestic crafts such as spinning, weaving, and sewing, generally practiced by women, which can be a source of income by exploiting these crafts at local fairs or at traditional craft fairs, which have become increasingly common and are held in urban areas. These include products made in a village household.
- Saw-milling, which is still practiced in rural areas where agriculture still relies, even to a lesser extent, on the use of animals. Thus,

these blacksmith workshops are still useful and can still be found in Romanian villages. Their production also took demand into account, and so, in order to take part in the fairs mentioned above, blacksmiths also made various craft products that urban buyers could use (scythes, sickles, axes and horseshoes used as decorative items);

- Traditional waistcoat markers, a craft that can be considered semi-industrialized by already involving electric machines for making traditional waistcoat, but also by involving several people in the production of finished products.
- Pottery, still successfully practiced today in various parts of the country, we mention here the potters of Horezu, Harghita, Baia Mare, but also for the western part of the country, we mention the potters of Târnăveni (Hunedoara County). Their products enjoy perhaps the greatest popularity among buyers.
- Carpenters or craftsmen who use wood to make their products. Of these, far fewer are nowadays Barrel makers, those who make barrels and other liquid storage vessels from wood.

The ecological function completes the picture of the functions of the countryside. It is more necessary to talk about this function as agriculture becomes increasingly industrialized and uses industrial products to increase productivity (Brânzan 2006, p. 13). Their introduction into the countryside throws into disequilibrium the link established since the beginning of human activities between resources and needs, and the existing link between man and nature. This imbalance needs to be removed or improved to achieve a balance that is necessary, as I said, in rural areas. The use of chemicals in agriculture must therefore be well controlled, in compliance with European provisions on the safety of agricultural production and the need to ensure the quality of a country's air and water.

The socio-cultural function "of the countryside is defined by the nature of human activities, relationships within communities and between communities, because the countryside is a social space." (Brânzan 2006, p. 13).

The name of this socio-cultural function is also because of Acad. P. I. Otiman who submitted an amendment to the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the Council of Europe. He argued his proposal by the fact that in general the rural environment is the keeper of a cultural baggage that includes

beliefs, customs, traditions that need to be considered and preserved as a treasure of the village (Otiman 1995, p. 19; Brânzan 2006, p. 14).

Indeed, the village, as a component of the rural space, is the keeper of such cultural manifestations that define the cultural heritage, as well as religious beliefs, some even rooted in ancient paganism. Although the influence of the city is sometimes quite strong, the village can manage to preserve these aspects that define it and are part of the specific nature of each community. In this category of rural manifestations that fulfil a socio-cultural function, we even include attempts at village poetry, certain recipes for dishes specific to a community and other manifestations that are part of the intangible cultural heritage.

The local authorities are often involved in organizing and holding celebrations that define a community (religious festivals, parades, festivals). Such an attitude on the part of the local authorities is to be welcomed, as through such events they succeed in attracting not only tourists but also former members of the community who have left the village area for the urban environment.

These are the main functions of the countryside, as they are mentioned in the official document of the European Union Commission. In the following, in the research carried out for the elaboration of the thesis I will limit myself only to the first function of the countryside, namely the economic function, as it appears outlined in the case of Cenad. It is the economic function that keeps a community alive. If in the past most of the villages and communes in Romania produced most of the necessities for household living, today the situation is much different. Few households, for example, still bake bread at home. The overwhelming majority of people in rural areas buy their bread from villages, groceries, or mixed shops. This, in turn, is brought in from bakeries that are either in rural areas near towns or even from bread factories in towns.

Two terms can be used to analyse activities with an economic role in rural areas: economic growth and economic development. A clear definition that is succinct and that also considers the common elements between the two terms is given by Kerekes et alii (2010) who consider that when we refer to growth, we are referring to the expansion of all economic activity, while economic development aims at sustainable productivity growth (Kerekes et alii 2010, p. 29).

In general, in Romanian communes, the idea of local development is followed, which implies the desire of those who can achieve and support this development, to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the commune in question while respecting two aspects related to the preservation or conservation of the landscape and specific cultural elements. Territorial development objectives for rural areas are usually designated by county authorities and much less often by local authorities.

The main economic activities practiced in rural areas of Timis county are agriculture, animal husbandry, fruit growing, beekeeping, i.e. predominantly agricultural activities. Alongside these, there are a few smaller shoe factories.

The secondary and tertiary sectors are weakly present in the villages. At the level of Timi County the surface of the territory is divided as follows: arable land (more than 70%), pastures, meadows, and orchards (Hurmuzache et alii 2014, p. 359, fig. 4.). At the same time the population distribution for Timi county was in 2012: 61.6% in urban areas and 38.4% in rural areas (Statistical Yearbook 2012).

Research methodology

Our research aims to present and analyse the main economic activities in the commune of Cenad, a commune which has no villages of its own, is located near the town of Sânnicolaul Mare, a town which has become economically important in recent years, and on the other hand the opportunities offered by the fact that Cenad has become a border crossing point since October 2004.

We opted for qualitative research focused on interviews, case studies and participatory observation. The case study can be seen as involving an understanding, or the most detailed, thorough investigation of a particular case, in this case the economic situation in Cenad.

Qualitative research uses mainly unstructured techniques. Data collection was carried out by means of case studies, observation, interviews and the collection and analysis of official public and historical documents.

The main objectives of the research that we pursued through the interviews with the local authorities, but especially with the population of the commune were:

1. To present the state of rural development in Cenad.
2. To follow to what extent the local authorities have been or will be involved in cross-border projects, considering the small proximity to the Hungarian border.
3. To capture the economic diversity and the specificity of the fields of activity in the Cenad countryside.
4. To identify new solutions for sustaining a viable future economy of Cenad.

Cenad became a border point more than 15 years ago and has been modernized to meet the expectations of those who pass through the town and of the locals. The proximity to Hungary has led to cross-border partnerships between Cenad and neighbouring border towns on the Hungarian side. The development of industry in the town of Sânnicolaul Mare has led to the attraction of labor from Cenad, which means that the number of unemployed is very low or even non-existent.

The population of the Cenad is according to the data provided by the census of 2021 3537 people (1754 men and 1783 women), registering a population decrease of about 16%. In the 2002 census the number of Cenad inhabitants was 4272 people, of which 2082 men and 2190 women. Neither can there be any talk of the marked ageing of the population as there are about 500 pupils and pre-school children (in kindergarten and nursery). Another gratifying fact is that unemployment is almost non-existent, and the town hall has not had to give out much welfare aid, perhaps only for heating.

Agriculture remains one of the main occupations of the people of the town. Due to Cenad's geographical location, in a lowland area with land suitable for growing cereals and vegetables, most of the land is tilled and not left uncultivated. There are 257 agricultural machines registered in the town hall records (thanks to the Cenad town hall for providing us with this data). Most of the agricultural land is cultivated with various crops of wheat, maize, barley, sunflower, rape, but a part, admittedly much smaller, is used for vegetable growing. Thus, the land is suitable for growing potatoes, vegetables, and garlic, which are also the vegetables that Cenad is famous for. Some of these vegetables are destined for home consumption, but some also end up in the markets of Timisoara.

Some of the producers prefer to sell their produce themselves in the markets, others prefer to sell their produce directly to

middlemen.

As far as the use of agricultural land is concerned, it is well known that good production is achieved by using modern land processing machinery, using modern seeding, weeding, and fertilizing technologies. But what is most important is farming on large tracts of land, with fragmentation and 0.5 ha plots not leading to sustainable farming. The farmers of Cenad understand this and that is why there are 6 companies operating in the village whose main activity is land use.

In addition to these companies, 8 family associations are registered in the town hall's registers with areas of more than 50 ha.

While cereals are grown with mechanized help, vegetables are also grown with manual labour. Ploughing is carried out with the necessary machinery, but then the hoeing, harvesting, and watering is done with manual labour. As for labour, as it appears from the interviews and the participatory observation, people from the village are paid to work in vegetable growing (although their number is decreasing from year to year), either by the participation of all family members or neighbours, or by mutual help.

Alongside the cultivation of the land there is the concern of the Cenaden to care for and raise animals. There are not many animals recorded, they are generally raised to ensure their own consumption needs, and not specifically to be used for these products (milk, cheese, meat). Most of them are sheep, almost 1500 head, the total number of animals raised by the inhabitants of Cenad being 2250 head, excluding poultry (information kindly provided by the Municipality of Cenad). There is a seasonal food market.

Industries

The industrial development part of the Cenad countryside is not very clear, as Cenad is a short distance from the town of Sânnicolaul Mare, which in the last decade has become an important point of economic development at county level. The two large companies in Sânnicolau, Aptiv, which produces wiring, and Zoppas, a manufacturer of domestic heating elements, attract skilled and unskilled labour not only from Cenad but also from the surrounding villages. Alongside these two companies, several smaller shoe factories are also in operation in Sânnicolau. What stands out in Cenad in connection with this area of industry are several activities in manufacturing

industries and services, namely a carpentry workshop, two locksmith and blacksmith workshops, a mechanical workshop. There is also a bakery and two mills in Cenad.

Trade and services

In terms of services, both we and our interviewees consider that Cenad is doing quite well. A fairly large number of food shops, mixed (11 in number), bars and terraces (in total more than 20) provide for the needs of the Cenadian population. These are located both on the main road through the commune and on side streets. Although part of the population is drawn to Sânnicolau as a labour force, even though the Hungarian border is so close, still most of those asked said that they buy the necessities of life from these shops. The "big" purchases are made in Sânnicolau, especially by those who receive meal vouchers, as the shops in the commune do not accept meal vouchers. With the increase of VAT in Hungary, the small traffic has decreased a lot, as the shops in the village prefer to buy less, only some products from Mako or Szeged and most products from Timisoara.

To the question: Where do you prefer to go shopping? Most answers received mentioned *"Here, because the products from our commune are also good. When I need something, I go to the shop"*. Also, in the services area we include the hairdressing establishment that operates in Cenad, but younger people prefer to use the services in Sânnicolaul Mare. There are also currency exchange offices and a medical insurance office. Most of the clients of these offices are people in transit through Cenad, on their way to customs, and not the inhabitants of the commune.

If we look at the economic activities in Cenad as a whole, we can say that there is a clear agricultural activity, with farms through commercial companies and family associations with areas of over 50 ha and a service area that meets the needs of the population. Although the land is largely worked, the entitled have got their land back, but the attachment to the land is a little different. There are people who have answered without hesitation that they will not sell the land, even if they can no longer work it, and there are, it is true, younger people who, saying that they no longer have the time to work the land as well, have either already sold it or are thinking of selling it. We cannot say that those who are more inclined to sell are young or old, but it is a question of attachment to the

land, to the locality, in the case of people who are in no way willing to sell either their land or their house, even though they commute to work every day. In the area, Italians and Germans have bought land as foreign investors and set up companies.

Tourism is almost non-existent as an economic activity in Cenad. There are a few guest-houses that hardly have any tourists, usually customers in transit to customs. They stay for a night, or even just a few hours, and then continue their journey to the rest of Europe. Another thing that could be exploited in the area is eco-tourism, especially as the Mures Plain Protected Area has been established. Recreational cottages could be set up here, possibly attracting people interested in a weekend in nature, in an area full of a variety of flora and fauna. Hunting and fishing seasons could also be exploited, not in the protected area but outside it, especially for hunting rabbits and pheasants. It is known that in Hungary hunting-based tourism attracts several tourists from Italy and Germany. Or Cenad, which is in the Hungarian puszta, has quite many such species. This specialization of tourism should be carried out in cooperation with the local forestry board.

Regarding employment, we had a question in the interview guide asking where people go to find work. And the people, those who are employable, where do they work? The answers were pretty much the same, indicating businesses in Cenad, in local commercial companies that exploit the land, and those working abroad were also mentioned as possible employment. In fact, a hypothesis of our research was that being close to the border and after Romania's entry into the EU and the raising of barriers for Romanian workers in Western countries, more and more Romanians turned their steps towards the West.

With the opening of the Aptiv factory in Sânnicolaul Mare, the number of those going abroad to work has decreased, preferring to work in Sânnicolau and stay with family members.

Proposals for sustainable economic development

Although Cenad is one of the economically well-developed municipalities both at county and national level, however, in the analysis we have identified untapped resources that have allowed us to come up with proposals for the economic development of Cenad.

The study of maps and geographical information shows that, in addition to the indication that the land in Cenad is a fertile land, the famous Cenad cernoziom (black soil) which made it possible to establish an agricultural research station in the locality, there are thermal waters in the western part of the country, and therefore also in Cenad. These thermal waters are not exploited in any way today, although their beneficial effect on health is well known to many of us. A spa tourism could offer Cenad inhabitants an alternative source of income and then detach themselves from Sânnicolaul Mare when talking about employment.

It is obvious that the private investment would be the one that would give the possibility of involving the local workforce and developing the health system in Cenad by introducing even a permanent first aid point, which the inhabitants of the settlement do not benefit from at present. In the absence of such an investment, most people from Timisoara, the surrounding area and even Cenad will go to the thermal baths at Mako. We don't expect to put in a recreational base of the time of a spa resort, but spending a weekend or just a day at the spa in Cenad would bring several benefits to the commune and its inhabitants.

A Government Decision of November 2004 established the Lunca Mure ului Nature Park, covering an area of 1,445 hectares. Here there is a humid ecosystem with willows and poplar galleries and alluvial forests. More than 200 species of birds, some of them internationally protected, can also be seen. The presence of this protected park could be exploited by developing ecotourism in the area. Increasingly, this type of tourism is gaining popularity in the European Union, not only among specialists but also among ordinary people who want to be able to observe different species of birds, animals, and flora in their natural habitat. The use of European funds by investors and the granting of benefits by the town hall would increase the involvement of the workforce in Cenad and increase revenue to the local budget.

The proximity to the Mures River and the fact that the water table is quite high, offers the possibility of developing ponds for recreational or sport fishing, as well as fish farms. It is well known that most of the funds for fish farming in Romania are far from being accessed, which means that such projects could be classified as having a high potential for success if they are justified and carried out in a professional manner.

The feast day of the local Orthodox Church is Whitsun, but also on Whitsun a celebration takes place in Cenad when fishermen's gear is consecrated. This feast is supported by the local council and is one of the traditional and specific celebrations in Cenad. Reactivating fishing (not only the only existing pond since 2012) and even using this celebration, which should be much better publicized, would offer the possibility to put Cenad on the tourist map of the county.

We consider these to be three possibilities for sustainable development of the local economy and diversification of economic activities in Cenad. These can be achieved in close connection with respect for the environment and respecting another function that the rural environment has in general, namely the ecological function. The investments would be in the field of tourism and leisure activities, which would make Cenad an attractive location even for Timisoara residents. We believe that granting additional benefits for the development of these activities, together with access to European funds for the development of the rural environment, would offer a new way of exploiting the natural resources that exist in Cenad and which are hardly highlighted. A great advantage that Cenad has is the existence of an infrastructure here, which was achieved by the local authorities in the years before and after Romania's accession to the European Union.

Conclusions

There are two sectors to which the working population of Cenad turns when it comes to external migration: seasonal workers for agricultural work, at most 3 months a year, otherwise they work their own land, and then especially women who go to childcare jobs and especially elderly people from Western countries. If several years ago they went to Spain, Italy, now in recent years, especially after the economic crisis they have gone to Germany, Austria and less to France, i.e. to countries where the economy has not been so shaken by the crisis.

The non-farm rural sector is also complemented by people working in the public sector, namely those in local government,

education, and health. In Cenad, alongside the civil servants in the town hall, there are two schools with grades I-VIII, as well as a kindergarten, and since 2013 a nursery, built with European funds. The number of pupils is close to 400 and the number of pre-school children is 150. The local authorities are concerned to ensure the transport of children who continue their studies in Sânnicolaul Mare and, to benefit from specialized teachers in the schools, they ensure the transport of some children from Sânnicolaul Mare who commute to Cenad. Medical staff work in the two general practitioners' surgeries (2 family doctors and 2 nurses) and in a dental surgery (2 doctors). Alongside these surgeries there is also a veterinary surgery and two pharmacies.

In other words, the number of those who do not have a job and sources of income other than help from the municipality or unemployment benefit is quite low, or as some of the interviewees said, "*Only those who do not want to work, do not work!*". In general, those who do not have a job are those without any education, poor people, with several children and are from Roma families.

The economic realities of the countryside have attracted the attention of specialists in various fields in recent years, whether we are talking about sociologists, economists, natural scientists, etc. The commune we have turned our attention to is an active commune, with inhabitants of all ages concerned with overcoming their condition and having the best living conditions. Most of the inhabitants of Cenad have found work in the neighbouring town or abroad where they work seasonally. However, some of the inhabitants (the local administration could not give me any exact figures) work in the local agricultural companies or in the field of vegetable growing. The latter sell their own produce in the markets of Timișoara. I found some of them in the markets of Timisoara where they have already made a brand out of Cenad garlic, together with potatoes or the vegetables needed for the "Sunday soup".

Services and trade are well established in Cenad. Cenad residents' shop in the village shops and less in the town shops, which means that the money they earn in town or working abroad goes back to the village. This is useful for small businesses in Cenad.

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