

**RECENT MINORITIES IN SIBIU. SIMILAR PROBLEMS,
SIMILAR SOLUTIONS**

Abstract:	<i>The recent minorities in Sibiu are at an early stage in the development of organizational structures, trying to make their voice heard regarding certain issues that affect its members. This policy paper aims to facilitate the offer of public policies solutions for the recent minorities in Sibiu: Arab, Bessarabian, Ukrainian, and Chinese, to identify solutions that may have a common denominator, to establish a way of cooperation, and to inspire the development of joined projects. As a result of the workshop, the policy paper will be sent to the institutions and authorities with attributions in this field.</i>
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Introduction

One of the main challenges of the actual security environment is represented by the mix that exists in every state between the local population and the minorities, especially the new minorities. This requires involvement at the national, but also local levels, in long-term integration support and inclusion, through policies that resonate with the new minorities. The goal is to reduce de-humanizations, labeling, also misconception, all approached in a holistic way, including certain aspects such as well-being and access to future livelihoods, equal access to quality education, sustainability to dignified work, etc. This objective could be achieved through communication with the minorities, to understand and transform the issues are facing, using different formal or informal instruments or institutions. The academic and university environment is a proper one to deal with these new challenges, an opportunity to establish a framework, and to offer feedback to be sent to the ability institutions.

Our concern, during this project is to identify the main characteristics and elements of recent minorities in the county of Sibiu: Arab, Bessarabians, Chinese and Ukrainian, to create a space for communication, to facilitate interaction, and to propose solutions. According to the official information received from the Immigration Office of Sibiu County¹, on the 8th of December 2022, the situation of the recent minorities in Sibiu is represented by the Republic of Moldova: 397 persons, Ukraine: 2374 persons, China: 94 persons, Tunisia: 63 persons, Morocco: 22 persons, Syria: 21 persons, Lebanon: 20 persons, Algeria: 13 persons, Iran: 20 persons, Iraq: 18 persons².

On this basis, was organized the workshop entitled “Recent Minorities in Sibiu: Similar Problems, Similar Solutions”³ was part of the International Conference “Human Security. Theoretical Approaches and Practical Applications”, October 22-23, 2022⁴, organized by the Research Centre in Political Sciences, International Relations, and European Studies – Laboratory for the Human Security Analysis⁵, within the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. The workshop was developed in collaboration with the Arab Cultural Centre in Sibiu⁶, three representatives⁷, Bessarabian Youth Organization in Sibiu⁸, three representatives⁹, Sibiu Ukrainian Centre¹⁰, three representatives¹¹, and the Chinese Community in Sibiu¹², with the participation of the Immigration Office in Sibiu County representative¹³. The workshop session

¹ Immigration Office of Sibiu County, <https://igi.mai.gov.ro/sibiu/>, (4.11.2022)

² Immigration Office of Sibiu County, information received based on an official request, (8.12.2022)

³ Laboratorul pentru analiza securității umane Workshop “Recent Minorities in Sibiu: Similar Problems, Similar Solutions”, <https://humansecurity.webnode.ro/workshop/>, (31.10.2022)

⁴ Laboratorul pentru analiza securității umane, *International Conference HSTAPA, October 22-23, 2022*, <https://humansecurity.webnode.ro/humansecurityconferencesibiu/>, (31.10.2022)

⁵ Laboratorul pentru analiza securității umane, <https://humansecurity.webnode.ro> (31.10.2022)

⁶ Centrul Cultural Arab, <https://centrulculturalarab.com/>, (31.10.2022)

⁷ Fawzia Rehejeh, Ali Hamdi, Sandy Attia, <https://humansecurity.webnode.ro/conference-agenda/>, (04.11.2022)

⁸ Organizația tinerilor Basarabeni din Sibiu, <https://www.facebook.com/OTBSibiu/>, (31.10.2022)

⁹ Alina Tulbure, Ana Felicia Talmaci, Bogdan Bunduchi, <https://humansecurity.webnode.ro/conference-agenda/>, (04.11.2022)

¹⁰ Centrul Ucrainean din Sibiu, <https://www.facebook.com/uasibiu/>, (31.10.2022)

¹¹ Eugene Vovk, Larysa Metanchuck, Katerina Rudenko, <https://humansecurity.webnode.ro/conference-agenda/>, (04.11.2022)

¹² Hua Guo, *A Chinese Woman in Sibiu*, <https://humansecurity.webnode.ro/conference-agenda/>, (04.11.2022)

¹³ Liliana-Adina Douchez, police chief commissioner, Immigration Office of Sibiu County, <https://humansecurity.webnode.ro/conference-agenda/>, (04.11.2022)

was preceded by consultations with representatives of each community, regarding the conceptual and organizational framework, the main themes were outlined and the finality of writing a policy paper was agreed upon.

Each representative of these communities has previously drafted working papers on matters relating to specific aspects and issues, which were presented during the workshop session and made available to everyone present. The documents are also available online on the international conference website in the workshop section¹.

Methodology

This policy paper represents a research document focused on analysis, findings, and recommendations, which will target decision-makers: officials, and organizations representatives and address the generally informed public, regarding a critical social issue such as the recent minorities in Sibiu. An important element was to define the audience, answering certain questions: who is the receiver of the policy paper? Which is the knowledge regarding the issues presented? Which are the questions that need answers? What are the concerns, interests, and needs of the recent minorities in Sibiu?

Special attention has been paid to the topic specificity to send a clear and concise message, including defining the purpose of the policy paper; also, to indicate vital points, facts, and situations that characterized the context of the recent minorities in Sibiu.

The content is based on planning the research investigation, through three steps: identify the central point and if is common for all fourth communities; generate ideas and possible solutions; identify main points from subordinate others. All these elements were put together on the path on the central point – similar problems, similar solutions. We used it as a helpful tool for ideas mapping and organizing the ideas, sharpening the final output, and shaping the purpose and central idea.

Establishing the topic, the audience, and the content components were the first steps to elaborating the policy paper, which is built into a few main parts: abstract, introduction, main text, conclusions, and recommendations. The recommendations addressed to the decision leaders are based on the written documents sent by the representatives of the minorities and after the workshop discussions, with the evidence and findings highlighted in the paper policy.

Initial aspects released

The initial discussion with the representatives of the recent minorities from Sibiu, also the working papers' previous achievements, revealed the main important issues that needed to be approached within the workshop: learning the Romanian language, health, education, labor market, institutional communication,

¹ International Conference HSTAPA, Sibiu, October 22-23, 2022, Workshop, <https://humansecurity.webnode.ro/workshop/>, (21.11.2022)

civil status, and financial services. These were the main issues approached during the workshop; there was a real dialogue, on the one hand between the minority representatives, and on the other hand, between them and the Immigration Office in Sibiu County representative.

Health and medical insurance

According to the material previously submitted, one of the issues mentioned refers to the health care services: "one of the main challenges when arriving in a foreign society is gaining access to healthcare services. This is of paramount importance due to several important reasons: first, health constitutes a value, and people, regardless of their social position, economic situation, and juridical status, should have the fundamental right to health care. (...) the family physician will not release an immigrant and/or a TCNs (Third Country Nationals) medical certificate if the latter does not hold a residence permit. What we have here is, therefore, a vicious identified circle within which most immigrants are trapped. This vicious circle can be broken only through informal acts of generosity or social intervention. Therefore, one of the main challenges of immigrants and TCNs regarding their access to the health care system is to enroll in a family physician, which opens the gate for other public benefits"¹.

The Ukrainian minority also identified aspects regarding this issue: "for urgent cases, any refugee could contact an ambulance or emergency hospital. But for more complex cases, which require further medical investigations, there were no clear procedures. And even now, seven months later, a significant part of family doctors doesn't have any proper information about procedures for Ukrainians"².

Medical insurance was another subject presented by the representative of the recent minorities in Sibiu: "for immigrants and TNCs, this legal provision is highly problematic for several reasons: first, there are cases of immigrants arriving in Romania aged over 26 years. This means that these individuals will not benefit from medical insurance until they manage to get a job (which poses other, just as difficult, problems). And even after finding a job, an immigrant will have to pay retroactively her/his medical contributions to secure access to public health care services. Secondly, immigrants aged under 26, will face the same problem after achieving this age. However, in their situation, because they have spent more time in this country, their chances of finding a job and thus gaining access to health care services, are slightly improved"³. According to Romanian law, from 18 until the

¹ Fawzia G. Rehejeh, *Challenges of Social Integration of Immigrants in Romanian Society: Access to Health Care, Labor Market, and Financial Services*, <https://2e64187412.cbault-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000211-0cbfa0cbfc/Arab%20Cultural%20Center%20in%20Sibiu.pdf?ph=2e64187412>, (4.11.2022)

² Eugene Vovk, *Ukrainian Minority in Sibiu*, Microsoft Word - Ukrainian minority in Sibiu (cbault-cdnwnd.com), (04.11.2022)

³ Fawzia G. Rehejeh, *Challenges of Social Integration of Immigrants in Romanian Society: Access to Health Care, Labor Market, and Financial Services*, <https://2e64187412.cbault-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000211-0cbfa0cbfc/Arab%20Cultural%20Center%20in%20Sibiu.pdf?ph=2e64187412>

age of 26, every person is entitled to a basic package of health services, even though they are not working, but are officially included in the university system¹, including immigrants. For immigrants from outside of the European Union, the eligibility for state health insurance will be after 12 months in Romania; for a shorter period, can be applied for national health insurance via the County Health Insurance Office with a certified copy of the passport and residence permit stamp and the certified copy of the admission letter from the educational institution².

These aspects were correlated with the aspects regarding the residence permit: "in this brief document, I have highlighted two serious challenges and major difficulties encountered by immigrants and TCNs in relation to health care services: (1) gaining access to a medical physician, which is required by law for obtaining a residence permit; (2) obtaining medical insurance after achieving the age of 26, which requires having a job in order to have access to the public health care system"³. Alina Tulbure, the representative of the Bassarabean minority admitted that in students' case these aspects are simple because they are automatically considered by the university family doctor.

Residence permit; work permit; residence permit for family reunification

In Romania, the conditions for obtaining a residence permit are specified within the Emergency Ordinance no.194/2022 on the regime of foreigners in Romania, republished and updated in 2020 through Law 247/2028 for amending and supplementing some normative acts on the regime of foreigners in Romania⁴. "Regarding obtaining a work permit for foreign workers, when an immigrant changes his/her job, they need this work permit, which takes a long time to obtain. And during that time, they have no salary or any income. Therefore, this is a serious problem encountered by many immigrants⁵.

Similar situations were identified in the material sent by the representatives of the Chinese minority invited to the workshop: "first of all, no one, almost never, answers the institution's phone. I have tried dozens of times, I think once or twice someone answered, the date from which the permit is valid

cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000211-0cbfa0cbfc/Arab%20Cultural%20Center%20in%20Sibiu.pdf?ph=2e64187412, (4.11.2022)

¹ *Asigurarea de sănătate de stat*, https://ghid-asigurari.ro/medicale_de_stat.html, (12.11.2022)

² ExpatFocus, *Romania Health Insurance*, <https://www.expatsfocus.com/romania/health/health-insurance-romania>, (12.11.2022)

³ *Idem*

⁴ Romanian Government, *Emergency Ordinance no.194/December 12, 2002 (republished in May 2022) on the regime of foreigners in Romania*, published in Official Gazette No. 421/June 5, 2008, <https://igi.mai.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ORDONANTA-DE-URGENTA-nr.-194-din-12-decembrie-2002.pdf>, (04.11.2022)

⁵ Fawzia G. Rehejeh, *Challenges of Social Integration of Immigrants in Romanian Society: Access to Health Care, Labor Market, and Financial Services*, Microsoft Word - Workshop-Centrul Cultural Arab (cbaul-cdnwnd.com), (4.11.2022)

starts from the date on which the documents were submitted (the settlement is made between thirty to ninety days, depending on the situation); after we received the list of necessary documents, we made an appointment and presented ourselves at the headquarters. There we were asked where the translator was. No one specified anything about it, did not write anywhere and in addition to that, it was not specified in the site either; when we came back with a translator, he was not even present in front of the officer, he stood in the hallway, no documents were checked, they simply gave us the questionnaire and told us to bring it back filled in; because no answer the phone, it is impossible to check whether the request has been solved; only by going to the headquarters (where there is always a row, the Immigration Office being quite busy in the context of the Ukraine conflict); when I extended the right of residence, within ninety days, I was at the Immigration Office at least ten times, without exaggeration. Each time they told us the case is in the process of being solved. We asked if it is a problem and what could we do, and they always respond that we will be contacted by the institution. On Friday, after ninety days, at 11 o'clock they called us to tell us that there is a problem with the CAEN code (Classification of Activities in National Activities) in the employment contract and it needed to be modified, and we have time to do this for a few hours"¹.

Regarding these aspects, Liliana-Adina Douchez, police chief commissioner from the Immigration Office of Sibiu County mentioned that the legislative frame – Emergency Ordinance no.194/2022 on the regime of foreigners in Romania, republished and updated in 2020 through Law 247/2028 for amending and supplementing some normative acts on the regime of foreigners in Romania, is a very good law, adding that every foreigner must have knowledge on the host legislation country. Related to the communication difficulties Liliana-Adina Douchez specified that the institution server is overburdened; also, that there is a pressing need for more employees. The representative of the Arab Cultural Center noticed the differences between the status of the Ukrainian refugees and other refugees, in Romania. Liliana-Adina Douchez pointed out that this situation is not due to the national legislation, but to the decision-making framework of the European Union, caused by the war in Ukraine.

European Commission through the Temporary Protection Directive² for refugees from Ukraine, applicable in Romania, provides temporary protection for one year and can be extended by periods of 6 months, for a maximum of one year.

¹ Guo Hua, *A Chinese Woman in Sibiu*, <https://2e64187412.cbau1-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000228-b2ea9b2eaa/Comunitatea%20Chineză%20din%20Sibiu.pdf?ph=2e64187412>, (4.11.2022)

² Council of the European Union, *Council Implementing Decision establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:32001L0055>, (30.10.2022)

the implementation of EU Directive in Romania the legal framework consists of Government Decision No. 367/18.03.2022 on the establishment of certain conditions of temporary protection and for amending and supplementing certain acts regulation in the field of foreigners¹, Government Emergency Ordinance No. 59/04.05.2022 for the amendment of some normative acts in the field of foreigners² and Government Decision No. 743/02.06.2022 for the amendment and completion of some normative acts issued to European Union citizens and their family members, as well as in the field of foreigners³ of The temporary protection will last until 4 March 2023 and up three years, depending on how the situation in Ukraine evolves⁴. Even though, the representative of the Ukrainian minority in Sibiu considers that: „local migration offices did not have any procedures on how to issue those residence permits. And therefore, Ukrainians who were ready e.g. to begin working were not able to obtain the CNP for some significant time⁵. Eugen Vovk admits that temporary protection gives wide rights to Ukrainians, which cover all main aspects of staying in Romania during the war, consisting of promising activities, but there are no clear signs that the conflict will be finished soon. This is the reason for some families to start deeper integration. In this context of the residence permit, and because the temporary protection for beneficiaries from Ukraine is not considered Romanian residents, Vovk signals some issues: ”there is no way to buy a car in Romania and obtain license plates for it. People with disabilities cannot rely on any support from a state. Those who start a business here will still be asked to leave the country immediately once the war will finish, etc. Legal advice and clear procedures are still needed in this aspect⁶.

¹ Romanian Government, *Government Decision No. 367/18.03.2022 on the establishment of certain conditions of temporary protection and for amending and supplementing certain acts regulation in the field of foreigners*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, No. 268, March 3, 2022, [https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/252745#:~:text=HOTĂRĂRE%20nr.%20367%20din%2018%20martie%202022%20privind,și%20completarea%20unor%20acte%20normative%20in%20domeniul%20străinilor,\(12.11.2022\)](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/252745#:~:text=HOTĂRĂRE%20nr.%20367%20din%2018%20martie%202022%20privind,și%20completarea%20unor%20acte%20normative%20in%20domeniul%20străinilor,(12.11.2022))

² Romanian Government, *Government Emergency Ordinance No. 59/04.05.2022 for the amendment of some normative acts in the field of foreigners*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, No. 450, May 5, 2022, [https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/254908,\(15.11.2022\)](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/254908,(15.11.2022))

³ Romanian Government, *Government Decision No. 743/02.06.2022 for the amendment and completion of some normative acts issued to European Union citizens and their family members, as well as in the field of foreigners*, published in the Official Gazette of Romania, No. 555, June 7, 2022, [https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/256004,\(17.11.2022\)](https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/256004,(17.11.2022))

⁴ European Commission, *EU solidarity with Ukraine*, [https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/index_en,\(10.11.2022\)](https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/index_en,(10.11.2022))

⁵ Eugene Vovk, *Ukrainian minority in Sibiu*, [https://2e64187412.cbau-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000216-883a6883a7/Sibiu%20Ukrainian%20Center.pdf?ph=2e64187412,\(11.11.2022\)](https://2e64187412.cbau-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000216-883a6883a7/Sibiu%20Ukrainian%20Center.pdf?ph=2e64187412,(11.11.2022))

⁶ *Idem*

The situation looks different within the interaction between the Bessarabian community and public authorities: "from the beginning, in order to be legally on Romanian territory, Bessarabian students have to obtain some documents, i.e. they have to apply to the Immigration Office of Sibiu County; with the help of inspectors, Bessarabians without Romanian documents create their residence permit, which is valid for the duration of their studies. Fortunately, in Sibiu, none of the students from Bessarabia encountered any difficulties. This document is easy to obtain, even a lot of information is provided, and the employees there have always been receptive"¹. The same situation was presented by the representatives of the Bessarabian community in relation to the Sibiu County Police Inspectorate for the criminal record².

Education

Each of the representatives of the recent minorities in Sibiu considered education as a very important aspect, but also very challenging. The first issue signaled refers to learning the Romanian language, especially for the Chinese and Arab minorities. Within the university system, there is the possibility for a university preparatory year there are no other options: "with the exception of the university preparatory year (which costs a minimum of 3000 dollars for a year), I did not find an intensive center/course to help me learn the Romanian language"³. Attia Sandy⁴ mentioned that the only solution for an Arab to learn the Romanian language is the online paid courses, or at university, adding that Sibiu is the most expensive in Romania. She added that, besides learning the language, it is very important to insist on cultural aspects, through some culture-related courses, necessary because Arab backgrounds are very different. The importance of face-to-face interaction was the main point highlighted regarding the learning Romanian language process, but also get connected with the mentality and cultural aspects. Liliana-Adina Douchez considered that a solution could be the European funds (which are not existing at this moment), so that the Immigration Office be able to organize language courses, making a comparison with the German system.

The Bessarabian community in Sibiu represented by the Bessarabian Youth Organization in Sibiu considered themselves advantaged regarding the educational aspects, especially from the university education system in Sibiu point of view: "fortunately, we, the Bessarabians, have always been advantaged. Often,

¹Petru Arnăutu, *Comunitatea basarabească din Sibiu*, <https://2e64187412.cbau-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000213-3c5db3c5dc/Organizația%20Tinerilor%20Basarabeni%20din%20Sibiu.pdf?ph=2e64187412>, (15.11.2022)

² *Idem*

³ Guo Hua, *A Chinese Woman in Sibiu*, <https://2e64187412.cbau-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000228-b2ea9b2eaa/Comunitatea%20Chineză%20din%20Sibiu.pdf?ph=2e64187412>, (4.11.2022)

⁴ Attia Sandy, (Egypt) workshop participant, member of the Arab Cultural Center in Sibiu, student at Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Faculty of Medicine

in our perception, we have more favors from the Romanian state than the native students (...). Both the university management, professors, and colleagues have shown warmth and are always responsive to our needs. Whenever we have a problem or something personal happens, even the professors support us, no one has a problem if we must go home, because they understand that we are away. Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu offers several facilities to the Bessarabian students, and we would like to thank them for the free accommodation and scholarship that Bessarabians can benefit from”¹.

Eugen Vovk, the representative of the Ukrainian community in Sibiu considered that the impediment to knowing the Romanian language is the main issue in dealing with the children’s education and the way parents manage this: „the educational system wasn’t ready to accept these children. First, because of the language barrier, they can be recognized in schools only as visitors, but not the pupils. While for kindergarten there are almost no Ukrainian-speaking educators, which causes too high stress for kids and parents refuse to enroll them in a state kindergarten”². Compared with the other recent minorities in Sibiu, the Ukrainian minority was supported by the local authorities by offering support, including an evaluation process of the needs, within the meetings between this minority and the County Council of Sibiu, NGOs, and other local institutions. Starting with the 2022 spring few activities were organized for helping the Ukrainians, including from an educational perspective³.

In March 2022, the Romanian government decided to offer Ukrainian children the possibility to enroll in Romanian schools, but the language was the main issue. The compromise was resulting in a class for Ukrainian children in Charlotte Dietrich Shule and a kindergarten group in Samariteanul kindergarten from Sibiu, having hired Ukrainian teachers and educators. The main activity for them was to coordinate the online courses within the Ukrainian schools, to make sure they are studying, and to provide them with lunch and after-school activities. This educational center continued to function over the summer. Vovk considers that online education is good only temporarily or as a compromise solution, and cannot replace face-to-face learning, therefore a Ukrainian school is needed; „more than 80% of Ukrainians in Sibiu are willing to come back home once they feel it is safe for them (even if the war will not be finished yet by that time). The other 10-15% haven’t yet decided. While only less than 5% have made a final decision to

¹Petru Arnăutu, *Comunitatea basarabeană din Sibiu*, <https://2e64187412.cbau-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000213-3c5db3c5dc/Organizația%20Tinerilor%20Basarabeni%20din%20Sibiu.pdf?ph=2e64187412>, (15.11.2022)

²Eugene Vovk, *Ukrainian minority in Sibiu*, <https://2e64187412.cbau-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000216-883a6883a7/Sibiu%20Ukrainian%20Center.pdf?ph=2e64187412>, (11.11.2022)

³Știri Sibiu, *Ucrainenii stabiliți în Sibiu sunt invitați la Consiliul Județean Sibiu, miercuri, 4 mai, 2022*, <https://evenimentsibiu.ro/stiri-sibiu-ucrainenii-stabiliti-la-sibiu-sunt-invitati-la-consiliul-judetean-sibiu-miercuri-4-mai-2022/>, (15.11.2022)

stay in Romania for a long period, no matter what the situation will be in Ukraine”¹. Still, the context is a difficult one, because, according to Vovk, without knowing the Romanian language children could be only the listeners. They will not be able to obtain the knowledge. And the school will not be able to issue a certificate of finishing the grade. Children will learn the language during this year, but that may become the only significant achievement. And they will have to repeat the same study once again next year, so the 22/23 schooling year will be lost. This refers to both the first and second groups of children. Ukrainian and Romanian curricula have some differences. Mathematics or chemistry may be considered similar, but literature, history, geography, etc. are significantly different. Even the basics (e.g., the alphabet learned in primary school) have differences. After spending a year in a Romanian school such children will not be able to come back to the corresponding grade in their school in Ukraine. And will have to repeat this year once again as well. This refers to the second group of children, which is the largest one. Therefore, there are 3 groups of children in terms of education: those who would like to integrate into the Romanian system but can’t speak the language yet; those who will come back to Ukraine but need an “offline” education during their stay in Romania; those who will come back to Ukraine and are going to do online classes with their Ukrainian school. According to the information from the Ukrainian Center² approximately 230 children whose parents hope they can start studying in September in Sibiu in Ukrainian school; There is a quite uniform distribution of children among the grades from 1st to 11th, thus parallels aren’t needed. 18 teachers who are already in Sibiu and ready to join Ukrainian school. Together with the nongovernmental organizations “Sus inima”, Swiss Solidarity, and Canpack Romania, in a building free provided by the Evangelical Parish of Sibiu, completed by the Ukrainian parent monthly fee, starting with October 2022 works in Sibiu the first school for Ukrainian kids, until June 2023, secondary school and high school; there are 153 children, 28 teachers, and auxiliary staff³.

The urgent need to learn the Romanian language, also the impossibility to do this in a formal framework, determined the Arab Cultural Center of Sibiu to organize online Romanian language courses, in November 2022. The project is financed from the funds obtained from the Arab Cultural Center’s own previous activities⁴.

¹Eugene Vovk, *Ukrainian minority in Sibiu*, <https://2e64187412.cbault-cdnwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000216-883a6883a7/Sibiu%20Ukrainian%20Center.pdf?ph=2e64187412>, (11.11.2022)

² Sibiu Ukrainian Center, <https://www.facebook.com/uasibiu>, (18.11.2022)

³Sus inima, *Educational infrastructure for Ukrainian children*, <https://susinima.eu/ukrainian-crisis-response/educational-infrastructure-for-ukrainian-children/?lang=en>, (21.11.2022)

⁴ Centrul Cultural Arab, *Romanian Language Courses for immigrants*, <https://www.facebook.com/centrulculturalarab/photos/a.199363442263755/457607889772641/>, (21.11.2022)

Financial Services

Another important problem is when immigrants want to open a bank account, which is required when applying for a residence permit and for a range of other practical purposes. Most banks refuse to open a bank account and there are no clear rules why they refuse to provide such a basic service to immigrants. All these issues and obstacles make the life of an immigrant very challenging and tamper with the process of their social, cultural, and economic integration¹.

Regarding these aspects, Liliana-Adina Douchez, police chief commissioner from the Immigration Office of Sibiu County mentioned a lot of helpful information for the workshop participants, folded on national legislation, but adding that this kind of situation is directly related to the bank's internal policy.

Delicate situations were presented by the workshop participants related to the Romanian banks' interactions, including legal actions, presented by Fawzia Rehejeh², a lawsuit filed against a bank in Romania³. The representative of the Ukrainian minority in Sibiu, Eugen Vovk also noticed these aspects and the difficulties to deal with the legal frame regarding the collaboration with the bank, admitting that, for solving these issues it is necessary to restructure the legal framework, folded on the current needs.

Other aspects presented by the participants revealed the difficulties to obtain a driving license because the necessary information is not in the English language.

Conclusions

The workshop revealed, once again, that knowing and speaking the language of the host country is the most important aspect of the integration process. This can be considered the first challenge faced by newcomers, especially when there is no strategy and a practical modality managed at the level of public institutions, which manage this process.

The other results of the workshop drew primary conclusions across the areas of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, coordination, and sustainability.

Regarding relevance, we achieve that in a more complex and more diverse environment there is a lack of adaptiveness to a specific context, and the informational frame available for adaptation is limited. For many persons of recent

¹ Fawzia G. Rehejeh, *Challenges of Social Integration of Immigrants in Romanian Society: Access to Health Care, Labor Market, and Financial Services*, <https://2e64187412.cbaulednwnd.com/eab7757aca990345d30dc7c83b8a2ec9/200000211-0cbfa0cbfc/Arab%20Cultural%20Center%20in%20Sibiu.pdf?ph=2e64187412>, (4.11.2022)

² <https://www.facebook.com/fawzia.rehejeh/posts/5520378544697414>, (23.11.2022)

³ Turnul Sfatului, *Plângere la Consiliul pentru Combaterea Discriminării împotriva BCR. „Aceasta este politica băncii”*, <https://www.turnulsfatului.ro/2021/04/05/plangere-la-consiliul-pentru-combaterea-discriminarii-impotriva-bcr-bdquo-aceasta-este-politica-bancii-rdquo-181240>, (23.11.2022)

minorities is difficult to access the main data for integration support. Those certain aspects are one of the general frames of the increased protractedness of crises, rapidly increasing migratory flows in the latter half of the previous decade, that strained the capacity of the host countries to deal with these challenges and have often resulted in growing pressure on the minorities. In contrast with the traditional minorities, which benefit from well-established policies, the recent minorities don't benefit, and the integration programming is at the outer periphery of the state's traditional area of competence.

With regard to coherence, our project found that there is an inherent difference between the Ukrainian minority and the other recent minorities, under the international and regional context, and with the influence of the legal European frame. This delicate situation hampers an operational understanding of the official background, most of the time existing as a comparison between the advantages of the Ukrainian community (during the actual security environment) and others. At their core, the challenges which are involved in these dynamics often relate to adverse conditions about the obstacle to local integrations that could be significant or overwhelming. Still, before the workshop, there was a connexion between the Ukrainian minority and the Arab minority, in informal communication. In light of these considerations, the binary view of the national rules and the European rules produces effects on minorities, as a perspective more about a scale of imperfection options, inside of a constrained choice environment.

The effectiveness is apparent from the implications of civil society, including NGOs and minority organizations, besides the official part, represented by the authorities. We mention that in Sibiu, the Chinese community is not represented in a formal setting, which creates a bigger difficulty in the integration process. This could be considered the most often deployed model, revealed by the participants of the workshop. In most cases, is proficiently implemented, yet is limited in its design and is not addressed most needs. In the field of integration, the results were constrained by adverse contextual factors and a lack of updated guidance. At the official level, the processes involved in integration are completed by the NGOs' activities, their focus being on the facilitation of proper conditions for access to different types of information and activities carried out mainly before and during the arrival in a foreign country. The success hinges on activities conducted in Sibiu on collaboration inside the legal basis and previous experience of the representative of the minorities already here. In the area of integration, the results on the impact level depend mainly on language knowledge or failing this, on help from others.

The coordination, from our point of view, revealed that the effectiveness of the integration process should be measured not in the short term, but in the medium and long term, according to the more significant challenges. The coordination action inducted but the authorities with attribution in this field, which typically involves time-bound tasks, clear division of labour, and well-defined objectives, was affected by the crisis period caused by the conflict. Despite this, system-wide cooperation in the integration programming of the recent minorities

produces better results if is based on mixed approaches. We consider that a narrower status-based approach to integration may hamper broad-based cooperation and could constrain the added value of joint activities for each community.

An important aspect of our study refers to sustainability, proving that the opportunities to improve it, in terms of integration, lie primarily in better and more broad-based partnerships. Success in integration is widely understood to be the access to all information that occurs in the process of establishing or living in a new country, durable solutions to certain issues, programs practice, and resource allocation. In this context, a delicate element is represented by bias and stereotypes. The participants of the workshop noted that catalysing stakeholder support needs strategic involvement and strong communication. In terms of sustainability, should be paid attention to the interaction between several elements as financial, economic, social, and environmental specific to the recent minorities mentioned.

This last element, sustainability is directly related to the other criteria inside our conclusions; is linked to relevance being a key factor that affects the ownership and also buying to eventual benefits, turning in turn drive sustainability; coherence may incur useful insights on sustainability – interventions in a given context with certain support or undermine over time the intervention benefits; effectiveness influences through the synergies between it and impact, by evaluating conditions necessary for result to continue and also to explore over the longer term.

Recommendations

The recommendations follow the conclusions and are created in five broad thematic areas: normative framework, policy, and guidelines; operationalization and programming; information management; coordination and partnership; external relations, resource mobilization, and budgeting

1. Place greater emphasis on contextual realities, and minorities' needs, to attenuate the operational bias inside the formal statement conveyed in the institutional system;
2. Drawing a Handbook related to the recent minorities specific (English language, but including translation in native language), within a national making-decision process, with the main information about the local aspect, for every county in Romania. This handbook could provide concrete and useful information, first about the national legal framework, and secondly about the local public institutions and organizations, or NGOs involved, activities, contact data, etc., and should be available online, including on the website of those organizations and institutions mentioned before. We consider that the initiative could come from the national level, but it is possible to be achieved at a local level, in Sibiu (Sibiu County Council);

At the local level, within the official institutions is need a heavier emphasis on needs assessment and analysis, in the design of integration and support intervention. This could be achieved through constant (not from time to time,

or related to some events only) communication between the representatives of recent minorities in Sibiu;

Reducing ambiguity and contradictions between the information present on the websites of national and local institutions, including Sibiu City Hall, by training the specialized personnel in this field and respecting the legal deadlines for responding;

Create a call centre at the Sibiu County level to help foreign citizens.

3. Structurally enhance the involvement of recent minorities in decisions relating to their stay in Sibiu; constant periodical feedback provided in a formal frame to the local authorities that are directly related to the immigrants or refugees; this goal can be achieved in collaboration between the public institutions and NGOs;
4. A systematic assessment of the context of arrival in Sibiu, using the intention surveys, to explore modalities for integration support that better accommodate to need of these recent minorities;
5. Ensure that the information supplied by the local institutions to minority members is timelier and more localized;
6. For the dissemination and collection of information relating the minorities issues, mainstream the use of digital platforms and social media tools;
7. Achieve better clarity on how the institutions in Sibiu understand dealing with different partners and integrating at the operational level, especially shared leadership, and joint coordination in different directions. In these terms, and based on the workshop feedback related to the difficult communication (phone or e-mail), it is more than necessary to supplement the Immigration Office of Sibiu County's staff, as well as to facilitate the granting of a space in accordance with the workload;
8. On the local and national levels, support the development of broader and better integrated multi-partner platforms; accent on external relations, resource mobilization, and proper budgeting; in collaboration with the minorities representative, develop projects in partnership with local institutions and with European funds
9. Design funding instruments and structure budgets that support the specific activities of the recent minorities: the establishment of a Center for learning the Romanian language for expats, within the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, and/or through collaboration with the local public institutions.

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