

The dispersion of poverty in some Romanian rural areas – good examples of rural localities with the lowest poverty rates

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Abstract. *Poverty was and is still present in all societies and in all times. The distribution of poverty between rural and urban has always highlighted large differences in the incidence of poverty, which have affected a large part of the population, especially in rural area. It is well known that rural poverty is high, and the reduction of poverty in rural areas still represents a major challenge for national and local strategies and action plans in the field. Although many studies have been carried out regarding poverty and rural poverty in the specialized literature, showing the high incidence especially in the Romanian rural area, the challenge exposed in the present paper focuses on the identification of those Romanian rural localities that have succeeded to reach low rates of poverty and to become good examples for both other rural and urban localities that are currently facing high incidences of poverty.*

Keywords: lowest rural poverty rates, poverty distribution, territorial discrepancies and distribution.

JEL Classification: I32, R10.

1. Introduction

Poverty was and is still present in all societies and in all times. Regardless of whether we are talking about countries or regions, counties or cities, poverty has made its presence felt in these areas as well, in different degrees of precariousness, magnitude and persistence. The distribution of poverty between rural and urban areas has always highlighted large differences in the incidence of poverty, as well as important socio-economic inequalities, which have affected a large part of the population in these areas. It is well known that rural poverty is high, the gaps between rural and urban areas are significant in terms of poverty rates and thus, the reduction of rural poverty is still a major challenge for national strategies and action plans.

Many studies on poverty, as well as on the differences by residential areas, are present in the specialized literature, to highlight at a certain moment the poverty maps or an atlas of marginalized areas in Romania, and these publications show all together the high incidence of poverty especially in the Romanian rural space.

The purpose of this paper focuses on identifying those rural localities in Romania that have managed to achieve the lowest poverty rates, despite high incidences of this risk, recorded even at the peri-urban / small-urban level, but also in urban localities. Unfortunately, these studies were carried out only at a certain moment, not being continued in dynamics, to highlight the magnitude, but also the persistence over time. But, even the picture of poverty at a certain moment are particularly conclusive, even if they could induce a conjunctural aspects, for the validation of these analyses, other available indicators were considered in addition to the risk of poverty, respectively those regarding social marginalization rate or the local human development index. In addition, other renowned studies were considered, and together they highlight the picture of these rural localities where poverty is at the lowest thresholds, even if the national values, or at region / county level these values are particularly high. It is a well-known fact that poverty, even if it has experienced decreases in recent years, remains at high thresholds both in the urban, but especially in the rural areas, highlighting large discrepancies according to the degree of urbanization.

2. Connection with the specialty literature

The studies carried out on the rural poverty (Paraschiv, 2008) show that in Romania poverty is territorially concentrated; in the rural areas, the consumption poverty predominates; small and isolated villages (far from cities, from an European road) are considerably poorer than large villages, which are the administrative centre of the village. So, from the perspective of consumption, rural poverty is the key problem of poverty in Romania.

On the other hand, in the rural area, other experts are of the opinion that consumption poverty is concentrated at the level of certain villages/communes with specific characteristics, most likely "poor people in poor communities and not poor people in rich communities" (Sandu, 2003). This fact is analysed and proven by a series of studies - community poverty maps made both based on socio-economic indicators at the commune and village level (Sandu 1998, 1999, 2000; UNDP 1999; World Bank 2016, 2018), as well

as based on consumption poverty rates determined at the level of households and individuals. These studies highlight that small villages are at the same time characterized by community poverty and consumption poverty of an important part of the population, that poverty concentration areas are also found in large and rich villages, especially if they are in the immediate vicinity of some cities (Stănculescu and Berevoescu, coordinator, 2004). The authors estimate that "more than 900,000 Romanian persons live in slums, houses in historic areas and ghettos rented by the authorities as social housing and, for these reasons, economic growth has not translated into a better life for Romanian people".

Poverty maps, carried out in 2018 by the World Bank in an extensive national report, show also that more than 900,000 people (4.5% of the total population) live in extreme poverty in the marginalized Romanian areas (3.2% of the urban and 6.2% of the rural population). The experts of the World bank appreciate that marginalized urban areas are poor, socially isolated urban areas that are not reflected in the statistics on poverty rates calculated at local or county level. In addition, they mention that marginalized areas are real pockets of social exclusion and concentrate people with a low level of education (the population aged over 15 who have not completed more than 8 classes), poor health, high number of children, usually without any kind of job and living in poor conditions. Considering these aspects, it is concluded that the strong stigma associated with these places, in addition to the lack or poor quality of services (education, health, infrastructure) drastically reduce the chances of the population to escape poverty (World Bank, 2018).

The 2011 Romanian Census showed that almost half of Romania's population (more precisely, 46% of the total stable population) lives in rural areas, much more than in the countries of the European Union, where the rural population is around 20%. From an administrative point of view, the rural area consists of 2859 communes (in 2011) which include over 12,000 villages and represent about 90% of the country's surface, as statistical data show.

Numerous economic and sociological studies as well as national strategies highlight the significant discrepancy between urban and rural areas and show that a region is poorer if it has a greater share of the rural population. In recent years, the differences between urban and rural have deepened, with rural areas being disadvantaged in terms of infrastructure, public utilities, and home comfort, as well as access to education and health services. Considering the characterization of rural poverty, some elements that consider rural underdevelopment in comparison with urban development will be analysed by specific indicators.

3. Methodology: research questions, indicators, and data sources

The research question of the paper focuses on the following aspects: (1) are there rural localities with lowest poverty rates, considering that rural poverty in Romania is particularly very high? (2) are there many such rural examples? Another question that appears, but which is not solved in this paper and represents the subject of further research, focuses on the identification of those causes and factors that make these rural localities

register such low poverty rates, below 10%, in the context in which others rural localities exceed even 6 times this poverty threshold.

To answer at these questions, we analyse in the paper the indicator regarding the risk of poverty. In addition, we referred to other similar indicators (marginalization rate, local human development index, to highlight the positive aspects registered by these rural localities with the lowest poverty rate, below the threshold of 10%. The risk of poverty refers to the proportion of people with an equivalent disposable income, after social transfers, located below the poverty risk threshold which is usually set at 60% of the national median disposable income per adult equivalent after social transfers. The poverty risk rate refers only to the strictly material dimension.

In this paper, for the analysis of the incidence of poverty, the existing statistical data was used (Eurostat data or of the National Institute of Statistics INS / from the Tempo online database), which presents poverty at the level of NUTS 2 / region. But, for a finer level of disaggregation (NUTS 3 / county or NUTS 5 UAT / locality / local administrative units), since these structures are not available in the Eurostat or INS databases, interactive maps on the territorial distribution of poverty were used. These interactive maps represent one of the results of the Project titled "Implementarea unui sistem de elaborare de politici publice în domeniul incluziunii sociale la nivelul MMJS" (code SIPOCA 4) – This project was carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and the National Institute of Economic Research and was co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Administrative Capacity Operational Program (POCA). These interactive maps regarding the territorial distribution of poverty were published on 02.05.2018, at <https://portalgis.servicii-sociale.gov.ro/arcgis/home/>. Unfortunately, these interactive maps were carried out only in one single year. From these maps, the author selected and analysed the poverty incidence by county / NUTS 3 (41 counties and Bucharest municipality) and in each one of the 3181 localities at UAT / NUTS 5 level (3181 local administrative units). Thus, one of the paper's challenges consisted in identifying those rural localities with the lowest poverty rates, as it is known that the incidence of rural poverty had high values over time. Drawing on the research method used in the paper to identify, select and analyse data, including a comparative analysis at a particular point in time, it highlighted a certain picture of the least poor rural areas in the country.

4. Analysis of poverty indicator at NUTS level

Starting with the poverty distribution analyses at NUTS 2 / regional level, the paper will analyse some important indicators of poverty at NUTS 3 / county level and at UAT / NUTS 5 / locality level (local administrative unit), in rural and urban areas. Discrepancies between residence regarding the distribution of the population facing the risk of poverty will be highlighted, and the analyses will be performed in dynamics and/or at the level of year 2018 (the processing was done by the author based on the latest available data from these interactive maps).

In the paper, the analyses refer to the 2018 year, regarding the following remarks: even regional data are available in the present time, there are only at the level of NUTS 2 region,

and we want to highlight the incidence of poverty in more detailed structures, at the level of NUTS 3 county or NUTS 5 locality / local level; in addition, the existing data for poverty analyses in these detailed structures at NUTS 3 and 5 levels was used in the application interactive maps regarding the territorial distribution of poverty selected from geospatial analysis maps, with publication date 02.05.2018, available only at this moment on <https://portalgis.servicii-sociale.gov.ro/arcgis/home/>.

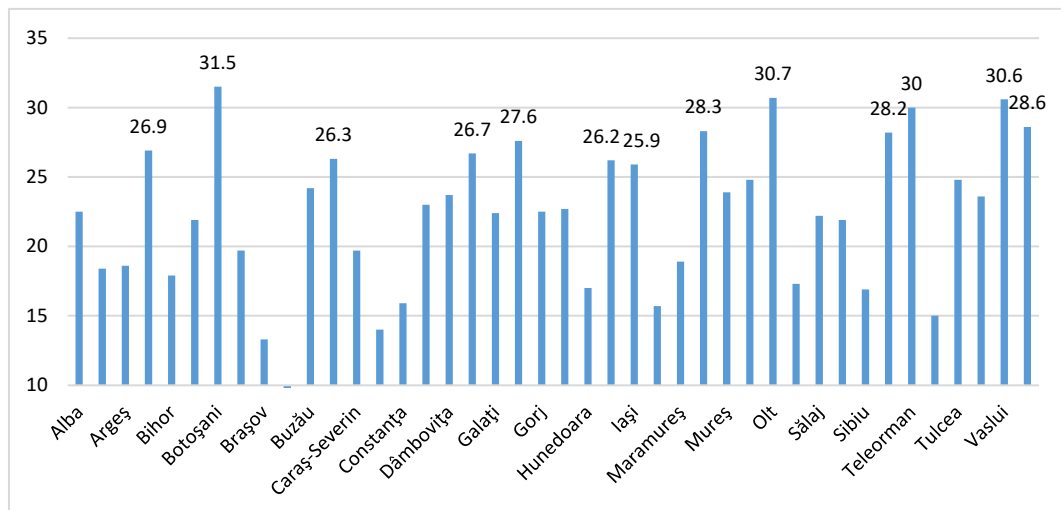
4.1. Distribution of poverty in Romania by NUTS 3 / county level in 2018

Since the existing statistical data (Eurostat or the National Institute of Statistics - tempo online) present poverty rates only at the level of NUTS 2 region, to analyse the incidence of poverty in more detailed structures (at NUTS 3 county or NUTS 5 locality / local level), we use data from the interactive maps regarding the territorial distribution of poverty published in 2018.

According to the available data extracted by the author from the interactive maps regarding the territorial distribution of poverty, the poverty rates at the NUTS 3 county level were selected. In the existing data interactive maps, with the higher poverty rates, over 30%, the following counties are ranked: Botoşani (31.5%), Olt (30.7%), Vaslui (30.6%), Teleorman (30%). Then follows a set of counties where incidents of poverty are also high, so that 64% of the country's counties are above the national average (20.9%).

In the same time, only 36% of the country's counties are positioned below the national average, which means that the population of these counties faces poverty, but in lower proportions than the population of the other 64% of the counties, where the rates are much higher.

Figure 1. Distribution of population by the risk of poverty rate at NUTS 3 / county level



Source: Data selected by the author from the Interactive maps regarding the territorial distribution of poverty, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity MLSS, Project*, publication date 02.05.2018, <https://portalgis.servicii-sociale.gov.ro/arcgis/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=2b5d7bc721b047998b07048fc19956f8>

4.2. Distribution of poverty in Romania by NUTS 5 / locality / local level in 2018

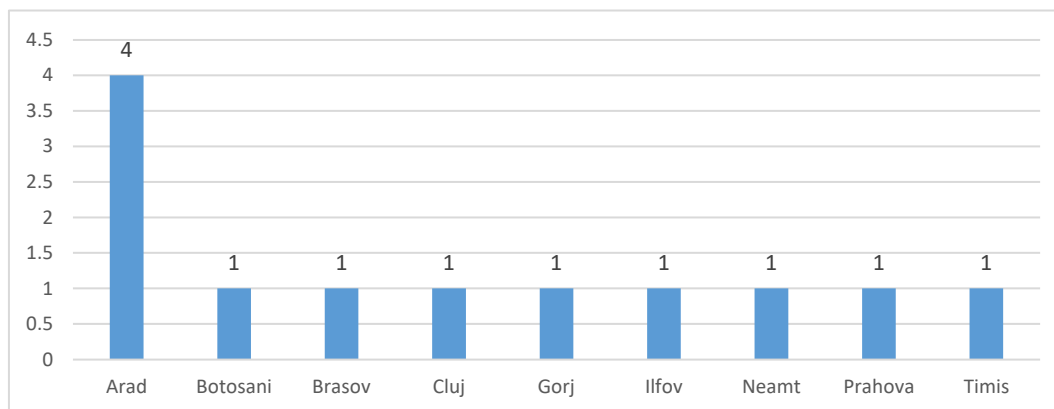
Since statistical data (Eurostat or the National Institute of Statistics / Tempo online database) do not present poverty rates at a finer level than NUTS 2 region, to analyse in more detail, at the level of NUTS 5 / local administrative units, it was referred to existing data within the interactive map application regarding the territorial distribution of poverty.

According to the data extracted by the author from these existing available data within the interactive maps, the poverty rates at the locality level (UATs / territorial administrative units) corresponding to the NUTS 5 level divisions in the EU were selected. There data highlighted 3181 localities (UAT / LAU), made up of municipalities (3.2%), cities (6.8%) and communes (90%).

At the country level, according to the data of the interactive maps, there are a total of 115 localities that are characterized by the lowest poverty rates, below 10%. If we consider the total number of localities at the level of the whole country (3181 localities / UATs), this means that only 3.6% of UATs / localities have low poverty rates below 10% threshold.

According to these data selected from the interactive maps, of the 115 localities that register the lowest poverty rates in the country (located below 10%), 12 are rural localities (located in 9 counties) and 103 are urban localities (located in 37 counties). The model of the 12 rural localities that have the lowest incidences of poverty must be analysed, to highlight those examples that can be disseminated among other rural, but also urban localities, and to identify elements of good practice and solutions in poverty alleviation among the vulnerable population. These 12 rural localities with low poverty rates below 10% are concentrated in 9 counties, where Arad county has 4 such rural localities with the lowest poverty rates among the population.

Figure 2. Number of rural localities, by NUTS 5/UAT level, with the lowest poverty rates, below 10% threshold, from each 9 counties, 2018



Source: Data selected by the author from the Interactive maps regarding the territorial distribution of poverty, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity MLSS, Project*, publication date 02.05.2018, <https://portalgis.servicii-sociale.gov.ro/arcgis/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=2b5d7bc721b047998b07048fc19956f8>

From the processing of the data selected from the interactive maps, it was highlighted that, in the context of high poverty thresholds, over 50% or even 60%, there are some localities with the lowest poverty rates, below 10%, only in 115 localities (115 localities from the total 3181); from these 115 local units, of which 12 are placed in rural areas. On the other hand, this aspect is more exciting as it is well known that rural poverty in Romania was and is particularly significant, despite the targeted programs to reduce this scourge (almost 40% in 2018).

Thus, the *12 rural localities with the lowest incidences of poverty* are:

- 4 rural localities in Arad county: Dorobanti (municipality consisting only of Dorobanți village, detached in 2004 from Curtici town); Peregu Mare (village of residence of the commune); Chisindia (village of residence of the commune); Iratoșu (village of residence of the commune);
- in Botoșani county: Șendriceni
- in Brașov county: Feldioara
- in Cluj county: Florești
- in Gorj county: Telești
- in Ilfov county: December 1
- in Neamț county: Dumbrava Roșie
- in Prahova county: Cornu
- in Timiș county: Dumbrăvița.

Therefore, a relatively important number of rural areas register low rates of poverty, and the 12 rural localities where poverty is lower and is positioned below 10%, while in many other localities the incidence of poverty exceeds 60%, are examples of good practice for other rural as well as urban areas facing high poverty rates.

This finding must be subjected to more detailed analyses from multiple perspectives, to highlight what are the motivations, causes and factors why certain rural areas have low incidences of poverty, or even the lowest ones, below 10%, in the context of high poverty rates at the level of the country, but especially in the rural areas, where poverty reached 39% in 2018.

Without doing in-depth analyses, potential findings might include: proximity to larger cities, which further reduces poverty (and spatial analyses of poverty have shown over time that distance often of a locality compared to a city, or compared to the residence locality, positively influences the reduction of poverty), or the degree of development of the respective rural locality given by the zonal specificity (e.g. through significant economic activities in those areas, within the sectors of agriculture, services, industry, or through specific zonal activities), or by developing infrastructure, by accessing structural funds that have made a real contribution to local development, or to attracting investors who have, in turn, contributed to rural development, or by directing local funds to intervention priorities, and so on, being therefore a lot of factors that could contribute, as other national experts also identified (Mihalache, 2020; Stănescu and Mihalache, 2022).

Without carrying out a factorial or multi-criteria analysis, comparing the 12 rural localities that presented low poverty rates in 2018 and for which this aspect is not only a conjunctural

one, but shows sustainability, we stopped at certain descriptive aspects that characterize these localities and ranks them among the poorest rural areas.

These rural localities considered the least poor localities in the country are also mentioned in other sources that used spatial analysis. Thus, in the study regarding the Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas and Local Human Development in Romania, carried out in 2016 by the World Bank, in the analysis of the sustainability indicator, we observe the following similarities in the analyses at the level of NUTS 5 / local administrative units. In this sense, *from the 12 rural localities with the lowest poverty rates*, according to the data extracted from the interactive maps with the territorial distribution of poverty, in this Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas, there are *9 rural localities without marginalization* (Peregu, Chisindia and Iratoșu (Arad county); Feldioara (Brașov county), Florești (Cluj county), 1 Decembrie (Ilfov county), Dumbrava Roșie (Neamț county), Cornu (Prahova county) and Dumbrăvița (Timiș county). So, even if there is a gap of about 2 years, at the local level, 9 rural localities present a rate of zero marginalization (the other 3 rural localities has a low threshold of marginalization, either below the average or at the average level, according to the calculations carried out by the World Bank). On the other hand, 2 other rural localities (Șendriceni from Botoșani county and Telești from Gorj county) were not at that time (2016) in the list of localities with zero marginalization, each of these two localities/communes having a village (division of the commune) characterized by a certain rate of marginalization (marginalization at or below the average, which means according to the World Bank, that between 170-256 people in these villages face social marginalization at that time (World Bank, 2016).

In addition, the World Bank has developed a Local Human Development Index (LHDI) to allow comparisons to be made between all sub-localities (SIRUTA units) in all communes and cities with less than 30 thousand inhabitants. Also following the indicator regarding LHDI (Comprehensive Development) / Local Human Development Index from the spatial maps of this indicator, it is also observed that 7 rural localities in the list of 12 rural localities have a *high value of LHDI index*: Iratoșu (Arad county), Feldioara (Brașov county), Florești (Cluj county), 1 Decembrie (Ilfov county), Dumbrava Roșie (Neamț county), Cornu (Prahova county), Dumbrăvița (Timiș county). So, these rural localities not only have the lowest incidences of poverty (below 10%), they have no social marginalization or a low degree of marginalization, according to the Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas, but according to the type of local human development they also have a very high degree of development (comprehensive development), recording the highest values of the LHDI / local human development indicator, as mentioned by the World Bank. Thus, these rural localities that have the lowest poverty rates, in fact, also have a very high degree of local human development index, comparable to the models of some cities / large cities, according to the maps performed by the World Bank at the level of each county in 2016.

On the other hand, *spatial poverty* seen as the distance from a city is a particularly relevant indicator in supporting the increase in the development degree of rural areas located in the proximity of some cities / municipalities / county seats that contribute to mitigating the

inertia of the increase in the poverty incidence. It is known that the proximity to an important city or development pole is an essential component of the conditions that favour the development of the rural area located at a relatively small distance from it, among the main factors being a certain "contagion" given by the increased accessibility that the proximity to that city gives it. This aspect can be justified by the fact that this city/development pole provides more jobs, social services, public services, and so on, which favours the economic and social development of the respective rural areas. This would be the conclusion of numerous studies, such as those carried out by other national experts (Chirilă, 2013; Lincaru et al., 2016; Lincaru et al., 2018; Lupu, 2018, etc.).

Some large cities are considered "national poles of growth or engines of development" - Tier I pole (e.g. Braşov, Timişoara, Ploieşti, Cluj Napoca), according to Law no. 351/2001 with subsequent amendments and additions, depending on the economic and social situation of the area, of certain indicators established at the level of urban and rural localities. On the other hand, these localities are part of metropolitan areas, which include an association of urban and rural localities located in close areas (up to 30 km away), in which collaboration and cooperation relations have developed on multiple levels, also concentrating a large mass of the population. In this sense of *spatial poverty* (short distance between rural and urban), it is noted that these *12 rural localities are in the vicinity of large cities, municipalities, county seats*. In this regard, the proximity of these rural localities to an important city is foreshadowed in the following distances: Dorobanti is at 25 km from the municipality of Arad; Peregu Mare is located at 37 km from the municipality of Arad and 15 km from the city of Nădlac; Chisindia is at 72 km from the municipality of Arad and 9 km from the city of Sebeş; Iratoşu is located at 22 km from the municipality of Arad; Şendriceni is located at 6 km from Dorohoi municipality; Feldioara is at 20 km from the municipality of Braşov; Floreşti is at 10 km from the municipality of Cluj Napoca; Telesti at 20 km from Târgu Jiu municipality; 1 December is located at 20 km from the city of Bucharest; Cornu at 37 km from the municipality of Ploieşti; Dumbrăviţa at 5 km from Timişoara; Dumbrava Roşie at 8 km from the municipality of Piatra Neamţ

In the spatial analyses carried out by Lincaru et al. (2016), within the analysis of the indicator regarding Land covered with buildings change at LAU2 level identification of locations with peri-urban development using b) Representation LISA clusters calculated in GeoDA, Lincaru concludes that Romania's dynamics of the land using it covered with buildings as a measure of peri-urban area development indicates that more than 75% of the locations with positive modifications of the total locations with positive modifications are LAU2 of commune type that gravitate around some powerful urban centres. On the other hand, it can be identified in the maps made by Lincaru et al (2016) in Figure 1 b), that these rural localities with the lowest poverty rates are also in the proximity of areas that have land covered with buildings, which indicates a degree of urban and peri-urban development of these more developed areas that attract from an economic and social point of view the neighbouring rural localities and that diffuse a much-reduced risk of poverty in these attracted rural areas. It is true that this proximity of a rural area to a city does not represent a condition sine qua non in reducing poverty, since many such localities face high poverty

rates. Even more, it is necessary to identify those economic and social causes and factors that led to the poverty risk alleviation in these rural communities, as they are among the least poor rural localities in the country, with an incidence below 10% - which means a particularly low threshold compared to the national level (about 2 times lower) or compared to localities with particularly high poverty rates (about 5-6 times lower). The development of rural localities is influenced to a great extent by their location (within the regional urban system, by historical and geographical regions, within the communication and digitalization systems, infrastructure, economic and social development, etc.), but also by other internal characteristics (demographic size, position/territorial settlement, sources and resources, cultural and traditional type of the locality, local actions, community culture, capitalizing on the geo-strategic position, attracting economic activities, investments, etc.).

Thus, as the World Bank study (2016) also appreciates, the positioning of the village or small urban settlement within the regional urban space seems to be a fundamental condition for local human development, and this respects the theory of distance, density and division, which states that local human development index is not only influenced by the proximity to large cities in Romania, with high economic density (with over 200 thousand inhabitants), but also by the connectivity of this rural locality (village / commune / small town) and the level of development of the large city (municipality / county seat) that is in its vicinity.

5. Some limitation, discussion and final remarks

Even if the paper has some limitations, it highlights that there are some localities with the lowest poverty rates, of which 10% are located in the rural area. One limitation of the paper consisted in the fact that the analyses were carried out only according to the poverty rate indicator, at different levels of NUTS disaggregation (NUTS 2, 3 and 5). However, other indicators developed and analysed in other sources were also mentioned (social marginalization rate, local human development index) to emphasize some aspects highlighted by other studies and which are consistent with those derived from the analyses carried out in this paper. Another limitation consisted in the fact that there are no dynamic data to study the persistence over time, these interactive maps with the territorial poverty distribution being made only at a certain moment located at approx. 5 years apart.

Some discussions derive on the side of these findings and which also emphasize that these *12 rural localities* could be considered good examples to follow, as proof of the fact that they register the lowest poverty rates, are shaped towards the following convergent aspects derived from other studies and researches:

- a) *rural localities without marginalization*: even if it is a small gap, of about 2 years, 9 rural localities present a zero-marginalization rate, the other 3 rural localities being identified with a fairly low threshold of marginalization, in the immediate vicinity of the average, according to the World Bank study;
- b) regarding the *local human development index*: it was found that 7 rural localities from the list of 12 have a high LHDI index, according to the World Bank study;

- c) *spatial poverty* seen as the distance from a city is a particularly relevant indicator in supporting the increase in the degree of development of rural areas located in the proximity of some cities / municipalities / county seats that contribute to mitigating the inertia of the increase in the incidence of poverty. This contagion effect is also relevant for the 12 rural localities, as they are located in the vicinity of large cities, municipalities, county seats.
- d) *location and other characteristics*. The development of rural localities is influenced to a great extent by their location, but also by other internal characteristics, respecting the theory of distance, density and division, which takes into account the proximity, but also the connectivity of this rural locality, and the development level of the city, municipality that is in its vicinity.

The data provided by the interactive maps highlighted these 12 rural localities with the lowest levels of poverty (below 10%), rural localities that do not even register social marginalization (zero marginalization or very low degree of marginalization) and that present a high value of local human development index compared to other rural localities in the county.

These localities, even if they seem just a few (115 localities out of a total of 3181 UATs, i.e. almost 4%), offer an example to follow up. In addition, out of the 115 localities with the lowest poverty rates below 10%, 12 are rural localities, so 10% of the localities are located in the rural area, which represents good examples to follow, because poverty rates in these rural areas are at the lowest thresholds, given that at the national or county, or even at urban level, but especially rural one, the poverty risk has high incidences (rural poverty reaches almost 40%, being rural localities that exceed the 60% incidence of poverty).

These examples of rural localities must be identified and analysed from the perspective to multiple socio-economic indicators that interfere and are potentiated and which make these rural localities examples to follow both for rural and urban areas that are currently facing high poverty.

Subsequently, it is natural to conduct causal and factorial research on the somewhat empirical aspects provided by these examples to follow of the rural localities that register the lowest poverty rates, below 10%. In this sense, it is important to develop in the future local analyses, not only in dynamics, but especially in multiple other structures (socio-demographic, contextual, factorial, with economic potential, which concern the population, the workforce, the business environment, but also other determinants of regional poverty, such as the labour market, social services, housing, targeted also on education, health, jobs, etc. – in an integrated overview), to highlight specific intervention areas, funding and support needs, objectives and action priorities to mitigate the risk of poverty and to support and to increase the development at the local level.

Taking into account these aspects, in future research it will be identified, through in-depth analyses, or factorial or multicriteria analyses, potential causes and factors that led to these results at the local level, as well as the potential multiplication of these good examples to follow, in order to have as few poor rural areas as possible, especially in the context of large incidents with which face the Romanian countryside. The pulse of poverty must be

taken permanently, especially in rural areas, where vulnerable people / households require more significant resilience, and need an actively support to overcome the threshold of poverty and its disadvantaged multiple faces.

Since poverty is concentrated in certain rural or urban areas, or certain population groups and is at territorial / local level concentrated, the policies and programs within the national poverty reduction strategies of the various strategic cycles are promoted at the national level. No matter how these policies and programs are targeted and effective as they may be, they cannot completely solve the problem of reducing the risk of poverty at the local level, in the absence of consistent support from local programs and projects developed in these local areas. In this sense, a project with an integrated vision in support of poverty alleviation policies, through the creation and implementation of integrated community services to combat poverty and social exclusion, aims to target people who are at risk of marginalization from 139 rural communities and small urban areas that have a severe and above-average degree of marginalization. This project targeted to the local level has an integrated vision to reduce rural poverty and social exclusion was completed last year and that will produce its effects after more years of continued implementation.

The identification of poverty at the level of rural/local areas, as a priority challenge, by local authorities, is therefore essential. Then follows the need to identify at the local level the areas of concentration of poverty, but also the poor, vulnerable, disadvantaged groups that face poverty and its associated risks. The monitoring of all these rural areas and vulnerable groups, the development of municipal policies adapted to the local conditions and context, based on local poverty reduction strategies, as well as the development of mechanisms for mobilizing communities and existing resources at the local level, constitute important ways of action that must be present in national, but also in local strategies and implemented as soon as possible, to reduce poverty and its associated forms in a sustainable way, to support the increase in the quality of life.

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