

## Report

## Social mapping exercise – Dognecea

## Participatory research through Photo Voice



**Jozef Goebels and Patrick Van den Nieuwenhof**

**In collaboration with Sara Schmid, Maarten Wuyts, Yoran Van Oosterwijck, Vanessa Pink, Kai Kuhnle, Kelly Sameys, Emilie Garnier-Selig, Annika Buhl**

**March – April 2022**

## Contents

General Information about Dognecea.....	3
Free time/Leisure time .....	6
Employment.....	8
Living conditions.....	10
Social help system .....	12
Education .....	13
Families.....	15
Source list.....	16

The purpose of social map is to bring together information about Dognecea in order to find out the needs of the local community.

## General Information about Dognecea



Dognecea is a commune in Caraș-Severin County in the Banat region of Romania. The commune of Dognecea also includes the village of Calina. Dognecea has a total area of 7573 hectares. According to the website of the town hall, the village is inhabited by 875 households and 2054 people. There are two kindergartens and two schools in the village. ([https://www.ghidulprimariilor.ro/ro/businesses/view/city\\_hall/PRIM%C4%82RIA-DOGNECEA/44054](https://www.ghidulprimariilor.ro/ro/businesses/view/city_hall/PRIM%C4%82RIA-DOGNECEA/44054)) According to the 2002 census, 131 Germans lived in the village. From our interview with the children, it appeared that there are tendentially rather larger families in Dognecea. The children's teacher confirmed this statement in a separate interview.

The village is located in the west of Romania and southeast of the city of Timisoara. A main road leads through it, the 586A.



Location of the commune of Dognecea in the district of Caraș-Severin.

On the north-western edge of the Banat Mountains is the Dognecea Mountains.

The Dognecea Mountains are a mountain range in the Banat Mountains, the southern part of the Western Romanian Carpathians. The Dognecea Mountains are located in Caraș-Severin County, in southwestern Romania. The highest peak, Culmea Poețiilor, is 617 metres high. The Dognecea Mountains are easily accessible, the main access points being the localities of Bocșa and Reșița, which can be reached by road from all parts of the country. Both localities can also be reached by train via the Timișoara-Bocșa-Reșița, Caransebeș-Reșița and Anina-Oravița-Berzovia-Bocșa-Reșița lines. The Dognecea Mountains are bordered by the Pogăniș Corridor to the north, the Reșița Corridor to the east, the Caraș Valley to the south and the Dognecea Hills to the west. The two main settlements at the foot of the Dognecea Mountains are Reșița to the east and Bocșa to the north. The Dognecea Mountains are crossed east-west by the Bârzava River, which divides the mountain range into a northern and a southern area, the northern area with the highest peak Cula Arenișului at 549 metres and the southern one with the peak Culmea Poețiilor, also called Culmea Mare, at 617 metres. The southern area is in turn divided by the Dognecea in a north-south direction into a western and an eastern area. In addition to the Bârzava, the Dognecea Mountains are crossed by the rivers Dognecea, Moravița, Bocșița, Ferendia and Tău.[1] Some of these rivers were dammed for industrial use. Thus, the reservoirs "Vârtoape" and "Vârtop" were created on the Ferendia river, "Lacul Mare" and "Lacul Mic" on the Dognecea and "Dănilă" on the Moravița.

We heard from a teacher and her students about the desire for more extracurricular activities. There are few to no playgrounds in the village. Many of the children we interviewed said that their favourite place was the park. There are few opportunities for

young people to do something. For example, according to the children playgrounds are missing in the area of Dognecea. It seems like especially girls are disadvantaged regarding sports activities. They are more or less pressured into participating in soccer, since there are only soccer fields. In the interview many girls mentioned that they wish to have a location where they can perform sport activities as dancing for instance. One of the teachers we interviewed said she would like to see more opportunities for the children and dreams of an after school centre.

Furthermore, we talked to two men who had already emigrated from Dognecea to Germany about 30 years ago. In general, we can say that their attitude towards the current situation and future of the village is rather pessimistic. When asked why they think there are so few play opportunities for children here, they replied that there is almost no money in the village and what little there is, is spent on infrastructural projects, for example.

Romania's population has been declining for years; in 2019, the population shrank by around 0.6 percent. On the one hand, this is due to the low fertility rate: in 2019, it was only 1.77 children per woman - despite positive developments in recent years. On the other hand, emigration also plays a role. The migration balance for Romania has been negative for years. In 2019, the negative migration balance for Romania was around 31,000 people - in the long term, more people left the country than immigrated to Romania in the same period. The standard of living in Romania is relatively low, which is reflected in life expectancy, among other things. ( <https://de.statista.com/themen/1665/rumaenien/#dossierKeyfigures> )

In 2019, the average life expectancy at birth in Romania was around 75.5 years, with a life expectancy of around 79.3 years for women and around 71.8 years for men. ( <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/270801/umfrage/lebenserwartung-in-rumaenien/#:~:text=lm%20Jahr%202019%20betrug%20die,8%20Jahre%20bei%20den%20M%C3%A4nnern.> )

The unemployment rate across Romania was 5% in 2020. In comparison, one can take the figures from previous years. For example, in 2011 the rate was still 7.2%. However, it can also be seen that there was a drastic increase in the number of unemployed between 2019 (3.9%) and 2020. ([Rumänien - Arbeitslosenquote | Statista](#) )

The statistics of the number of inhabitants by ethnicity in Dognecea in 2002 were as follows: A total of 2044 people lived in the village. Of these, 1867 were Romanians, 8 were Hungarians, 131 were Germans and 38 others ([csetn02.pdf \(kia.hu\)](#)).

## Free time/Leisure time



*1 Children playing football at the lake*

### Subjective part:

As we talked with one of the teachers in Dognecea, she and the children of her class told us that there aren't that many options for them to practice hobbies or do something in their free time. The teacher told us that there is only one park (which we didn't even see) and a football place by the lake (see photo). When we asked the kids which sports they practice and what they do in their free time, they all answered the same: "football". Even the girls all told us that they played football. Afterwards when we asked the teacher what reason was because of the fact that everyone plays football over there, she simply told us that there are not much more other possibilities. When we asked the children if they would like to have some more options to do in their free time (like dancing for girls or a swimming pool), they all loudly screamed "daaaaa" which means "yesssss!" in Romanian. So it was quite clearly that they would like to have more things to do in their spare time.

The children told us that they miss opportunities like going to swim or something. When we asked the teacher if she could ask the children how many of them could swim, only 5 out of 12 students raised their hands. When the teacher asked for fun: "and who out of you 5 is lying?", 1 kid raised his hands. It was quite shocking for us to notice that not even 50% of the children who were with us that day couldn't swim as it is a normal thing to learn in primary school in Belgium and Germany.

When we did a small game to get to know the children, one of the questions we asked them was what their favourite place on earth would be to visit. Sadly enough, none of them was able to give us an answer outside their own village. Since they don't have much opportunities and live in larger families with a low income, they don't have the chance to travel and see the world. Their world is "limited" to only the village where they live in and maybe the city 30 km's further.

After the fun morning session where we had the possibility to get to know the children, we all went inside at the lake house for lunch. We all enjoyed the restaurant meal and saw that the children were very happy as well. Afterwards we were shocked because we were told that this was the first time ever for these kids to be in a restaurant and get lunch. This also has to do with the fact that the families are bigger and don't have that high of an income to be able to enjoy a meal at the restaurant. Something that looks so normal and accessible for us was actually a first time experience for these children which is actually crazy if you think about it!

Objective part:

POP107D - LEGALLY RESIDENT POPULATION, by age group and ages, sex, counties and localities at January 1st.

<b>Youth population in Dognecea Year 2021 (jan 1<sup>st</sup>)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Total (every age)</b>	2191	1118	1073
<b>0-4 years</b>	138	76	62
<b>5-9 years</b>	143	74	69
<b>10-14 years</b>	126	71	55
<b>15-19 years</b>	147	72	75
<b>Total amount of youth</b>	554	293	261

When you make the calculations: About 25,29% of the population in Dognecea is youth. Around 52,89 % of the youth are male and about 47,11 % of them is female.

Definition: Legally resident population represents the number of persons with Romanian citizenship and legal residence on the territory of Romania, delimited by territorial-administrative criteria. The person's legal residence is the address where he/she declares to have the main dwelling, printed as such on its identity card and registered by the administrative bodies of the State. To set up the value of this indicator, the usual residence is not taken into account as well as the period and/or reason of absence from domicile.

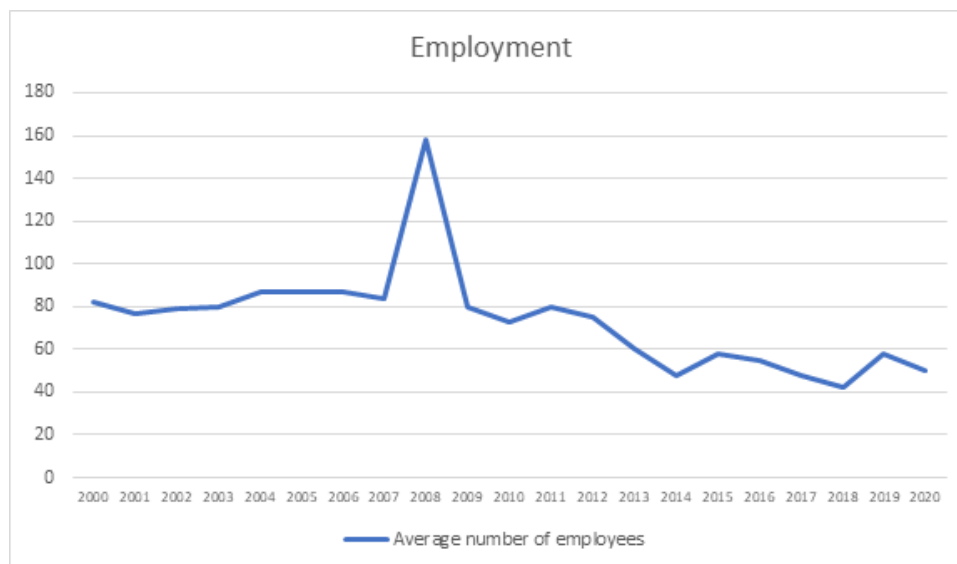
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

(Consulted on 11/04/2022)

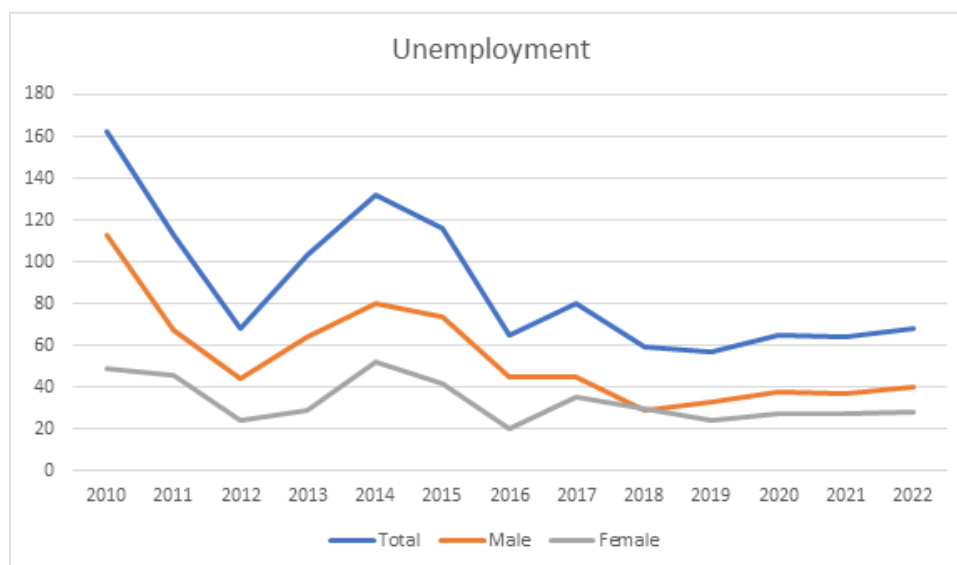
## Employment

Dognecea is an old mining village since the Roman era. Metal and ore were mined there for hundreds of years. The mines were closed and since then, many inhabitants are unemployed.

The National Institute for Statistics provides quantitative Data about the number of employees and unemployed persons.



As you can see, the number of employees is decreasing in the last 20 years from 82 employees in 2000 to 50 employed persons in 2020. Included are persons employed under a labour contract/agreement on a definite or indefinite duration (including seasonal workers, the manager or the administrator). At the same time, the number of unemployed persons is also decreasing in the last 10 years.



In January 2022, 68 persons in Dognecea are registered unemployed, which means 5.4% of the work force (<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#!/pages/tables/insse-table>)



When we visited Dognecea, we were told by locals, that there are only a few possibilities to work in the village. There is a construction company that builds the roads in the area and the hotel where we stayed. But the hotel regularly opens only in the summer months when tourists come to Dognecea. Another possibility to work is at the primary school and in the kindergarten. Furthermore, the village has a few tiny shops for groceries and basic commodities. The children also told us that their fathers are mostly working in the forest or have day jobs.

Furthermore, Alina, the teacher at the primary school explained, that it is difficult to find jobs in the villages or cities nearby because of the poor public transport. For example, the last bus from Resita to Dognecea leaves at 6pm.



*2 Empty beer bottles from 2 men who wanted to stay unknown*

During our walk through Dognecea we talked to different people and due to their stories, there are mainly two possible explanations for this statistical data.

First, we met two men sitting on a terrace from the restaurant in Dognecea. They told us that they are originally from Dognecea. Now they are working abroad in Germany for over 20 years. The reason to go abroad is the lack of work places in the village and the region. Now they are visiting Dognecea and their families only once or twice a year.

It seems, that many persons are going to work abroad as the two men we met and are not part of the official statistics anymore. Another possibility is, that many persons are not officially registered as unemployed as the example below shows:

During our walk through Dognecea we met a man at a well where he was collecting water for him and his son. He told us that he is a single dad and has one son aged 16. He is unemployed for many years and got financial support from the mayor's office in Dognecea. Since he had a small job in Italy, all financial support was cut for him and his son, even though he didn't earn much money abroad. In the consequence, he could not afford the school bus for his son, so his son had to drop out of school early.

## Living conditions

In Caras-Severin, 14 villages were identified as marginalized rural areas by “The Atlas of Rural Marginalized Areas and of Local Human Development in Romania” and Dognecea is one of them (s. Below)

A marginalized rural area is defined by three key indicators. First by the human capital such as education, family situation and health, which is disproportionately low in those areas. The second indicator is the employment, concrete the lack of formal employment and work in subsistence agriculture above average. The housing conditions are the third indicator, especially regarding house security, the quality of dwellings and the connection to public utilities. Due to the study, in Dognecea 257-418 inhabitants live in these marginalized areas.

Commune	Village	Population (number)	Share of Roma living in marginalized areas	Number of inhabitants living in marginalized areas *			
				1-169	170-256	257-418	419 and over
BERZASCA	LIUBCOVA	1.214	More than 20%	X			
BUCOSNITA	PETROSNITA	984	Less than 20%				X
CARASOVA	CARASOVA	2.341	More than 20%			X	
CARASOVA	NERMED	535	Less than 20%			X	
CORNEREVA	SUB PLAI	94	Less than 20%	X			
CORNEREVA	ZANOZI	131	Less than 20%	X			
CORNEREVA	ZMOGOTIN	117	Less than 20%	X			
<b>DOGNECEA</b>	<b>DOGNECEA</b>	<b>1.905</b>	<b>Less than 20%</b>			<b>X</b>	
FOROTIC	BREZON	96	More than 20%	X			
OBREJA	OBREJA	1.727	Less than 20%	X			
SOPOTU NOU	RACHITA	151	Less than 20%	X			
SOPOTU NOU	VALEA RACHITEI	91	Less than 20%	X			
SOPOTU NOU	VALEA ROSIE	62	Less than 20%	X			
TURNU RUIENI	BORLOVA	1.410	Less than 20%		X		

Source: Atlas of Rural Marginalized Areas and of Local Human Development in Romania, 2016.

In detail, nearly all houses in marginalized areas are made of adobe or are improvised shelters, and most of them are in a deteriorated condition and need capital repairs. Often there are also problems related to the lack of ownership documents for their land or their house. Another problem in marginalized areas can be the limited access to potable water, and waste management services are very rare.

As we walked through the valley into Dognecea, we experienced most of the described living conditions of rural marginalized areas. It was not hard to see many houses have been neglected leaving them in poor conditions. We have been told people can be forced out of their homes due to the high private rents, the rise of energy costs and the low incomes leaving the houses empty. Although many poor families occupy their homes illegally.

In Romania property has been bought below the market price. The number of private homes has gone from 67% in 1990 to 98% today. This is not so great as it seems because with this tendency the government failed to maintain and construct social houses. Government finances went from 8.7% to just 1%. Many families are living in small rooms altogether creating overcrowded conditions. To give you an example 17% of the people in the rest of Europe lived in these conditions. In Romania this was 54%

As we walked into town we were able to talk to a man who told us he had no gas and he needed to get water from the well. There was no running water and the roof was broken. He even can't afford to bring his son to school and since working is almost the same earning as being on welfare he is not really motivated to seek a job where there are none.

As we walked furthermore we passed by a man who herd his two cows. Although we were not able to talk to him he gave us an intense expression how hard life can be in the villages.

Some of the houses were been taken care of. At first sight some people of living on the country side are trying to be self-sustainable growing crops and raising some cattle along with chickens. I have seen this quite often as we traveled through Romania. It might seem that a village can be self-providing which is great when the village is not easily accessible during winter times. However this comes at a cost. Young people are often more attracted by city life and take their chances in university to start a career. Many of them will not come back to live in Dognecea which leads to a population which is rather old or poor. It is those who can afford to travel and study who go away.



*3 Picture of how people are living in Dognecea*

For children there is not much to do. The boys play football and the girls copy the behavior of the boys because there are not many other options. It seemed to me the girls are quit on their own. Asking the kids about their heroes or role models they tended to give the same answers like footballplayer or spiderman, were we concluded that their perspective on the world is rather poor comparing to same aged kids from school in Belgium. With the young people leaving their town there is not alot of enterntainment provided for them. The school teacher and the parents are the most important people. If the parents are not quite educated it is understandable that is not easy to widen the horizon of the kids leaving them with their own imagination.

## Social help system

Since 2001, the mayor's office offers social help and services to more than 300 families in Dognecea. Families without income or goods in their name receive 150 lei/person or 745 lei/10 person family. As a compensation, they have to work in service hours for the community varying from 10 – 72 hours.

They can also get family support help wivh goes from 85 lei up to a maimum of 347 lei. Preschool help is also an option wich if you get this, you get provided with 100 lei/month.

Inhabitants can also get a subvention for heating theit homes wich can go up to 1600 lei/month + 20 lei bonus. If there are children who need help, until 18 years old, there is a **local budget** for providing them fit their needs.

There is also a **local budget** for handicaped persons in need (children and adults). The amount of money you receive depends on the degree of disabledness. For a high degree of disabledness, the person can receive 1500 lei/month. For a social employee, this budget is 1800 lei/month and they can also receive extra help from the **state budget** wich has a range from 400 up to a 1000 lei for a maximum of 7 years.

There is also a child support pension with a maximum of 2 years. Here, they can receive up to 85% o the mothers salary. If the mother decides to work, they can receive 1500 lei/Month + salary.

They also have something wich is called "social displacement". If a child is orphaned, she/he will receive help if they stay in an extended family. If they do, they get 600 lei. If the child has an handicap, she/he receives 900 lei.

When we were given a presentation about Dognecea they told us that the minimum wage should increase because there is only a small difference between a wage and receiving social support. So social support is supposedly more interesting because you don't have to work.

## Education

### Subjective part

According to the city hall website, there are two kindergartens and two primary schools in Dognecea. There are no schools for secondary education in the village, therefore the children of the village must go to schools at least 20 or 30 kilometers away from Dognecea, for example to Resita or Bocsa. Transportation to those schools is by bus and many parents don't have money to pay for the school bus causing many children from the village to drop out of school early.

During our fun activity with the children from the local school, we learned that most people from the village are not highly educated. When we asked the kids during our game about their father's job we often got the answer that they worked in the forest or having day jobs. Later, Alina explained to us that there are not a lot of job possibilities in the Dognecea and that many fathers go abroad to look for a job and earn money for their families. Because of this, fathers are often not very present in the lives of the children. Alina also told us that the mothers of the children are often stay-at-home moms to take care of their families or they do some small jobs for their neighbors for which they are paid. Due to the fact that there are not many job opportunities in the neighborhood and that most jobs are poorly paid and day jobs, many families in Dognecea do not have a permanent income. Because of this, they usually cut back on education which makes that a lot of children drop out of school early and gives them fewer educational opportunities. This maintains the vicious cycle of poverty and low education.

## Objective part

Share of the population by educational attainment level and selected age groups, 2020 (%)

	25–54 years			55–74 years		
	Low (ISCED 0–2)	Medium (ISCED 3–4)	High (ISCED 5–8)	Low (ISCED 0–2)	Medium (ISCED 3–4)	High (ISCED 5–8)
EU	18.6	45.5	35.9	32.8	45.4	21.8
Belgium	16.6	37.6	45.9	35.6	35.5	29.0
Bulgaria	16.6	52.4	31.0	21.9	56.1	22.0
Czechia	5.6	67.5	26.9	10.2	74.6	15.2
Denmark	16.5	39.3	44.2	27.0	44.3	28.7
Germany	14.1	53.2	32.7	16.1	56.7	27.2
Estonia	9.9	46.9	43.2	12.3	50.4	37.3
Ireland	10.4	35.2	54.4	36.8	33.4	29.8
Greece	15.9	48.5	35.6	46.2	32.9	20.9
Spain	33.1	23.6	43.3	57.2	18.3	24.5
France	15.2	40.6	44.3	33.2	42.4	24.4
Croatia	9.6	62.0	28.3	28.1	54.0	17.9
Italy	33.0	44.4	22.6	55.0	32.9	12.2
Cyprus	13.7	36.8	49.6	36.0	38.5	25.4
Latvia	9.6	49.6	40.8	8.0	63.3	28.7
Lithuania	5.4	45.7	48.9	4.7	66.1	29.2
Luxembourg	18.0	29.7	52.3	35.5	36.4	28.1
Hungary	13.3	57.5	29.2	20.6	58.9	20.5
Malta	36.4	29.3	34.3	71.8	15.1	13.1
Netherlands	15.3	38.4	46.3	35.5	35.8	28.7
Austria	12.7	50.1	37.2	22.1	54.8	23.1
Poland	5.9	56.2	38.0	14.2	69.9	15.9
Portugal	37.5	30.4	32.1	71.9	13.5	14.6
Romania	18.6	60.2	21.2	32.5	58.9	8.6
Slovenia	7.5	52.4	40.1	20.6	58.0	21.5
Slovakia	6.7	63.7	29.6	12.0	71.9	16.1
Finland	7.5	43.4	49.1	20.4	41.9	37.7
Sweden	12.2	39.6	48.2	22.1	44.8	33.1
Iceland	19.8	33.6	46.6	32.0	36.7	31.3
Norway	15.0	36.5	48.5	21.1	46.5	32.4
Switzerland	9.7	41.7	48.6	15.1	52.4	32.5
Montenegro	10.6	61.7	27.8	23.9	58.2	17.8
North Macedonia	24.1	50.3	25.6	42.7	42.2	15.1
Serbia	14.7	58.8	26.5	31.8	50.5	17.7
Turkey	55.2	20.0	24.8	79.7	10.9	9.4

Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat\_ifs\_9903)



The patterns of educational attainment levels of the Romanian population have changed significantly over the years. On average younger people attain higher levels of education than older ones. In 2020, 21,2% of people aged 25-54 in Romania had attained a tertiary educational attainment, compared with 8,6% of those aged 55-74. 81,4% of people aged 25-54 in Romania had attained at least an upper secondary level of education, compared with 67,5% of those aged 55-74.

(source: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Educational\\_attainment\\_statistics#Level\\_of\\_educational\\_attainment\\_by\\_age](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Educational_attainment_statistics#Level_of_educational_attainment_by_age))

If we take a closer look at the school dropout rate in Romania, we see that since 2011 the school dropout rate is at least 5 percent higher than the average dropout rate of the European Union. The highest dropout rate was registered in 2015 when it reached 19,1 percent. Now it is gradually decreasing to 15,6 percent in 2020.

In 2018 the school dropout rate was considerably higher in the rural areas of Romania than in the urban areas. In the Northwest region of the country, where Dognecea is located, the school dropout rate was 3,7%. This means that this region is among the top 3 regions with the highest school dropout rate.

(source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1103336/school-dropout-rate-romania/>  
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1131454/romania-school-dropout-rate-by-region/>)

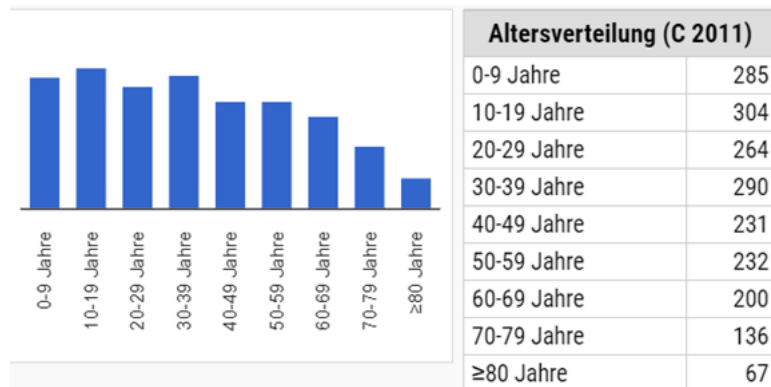
## Families

There is no clear definition for the term "family". Therefore, for the sake of simplicity, the term "family" is used below to refer to parents living in a household with their child or children.

Quantitative Data:

During the conversations and playing with the children, it turned out **that most of the children have 3 or more siblings**. It can be assumed that many large families live in Dognecea.

Qualitative Data:



If we look at the statistics on the population of Dognecea by age group, we can see that there are many children and young people (people under 18 years old) in the village. The largest age group in Dognecea are the 10–19-year-old.

[https://www.citypopulation.de/de/romania/carasseverin/\\_/052696\\_dognecea/](https://www.citypopulation.de/de/romania/carasseverin/_/052696_dognecea/)

Quantitative Data:



4 Picture 2 of how people are living in Dognecea

While walking in Dognecea we noticed a special house - A residential complex with apartments. It seemed unusual, because so far, we saw only single-family houses. We sought conversation with a man who was getting water from a well. He told us that **he was a single father and had a son and lived with him in one of the apartments**. As mentioned above, the single father lived in poor living conditions without running water and gas and with a leaking roof. He told us that he cannot send his son to school because the secondary school is in the next bigger city and the transportation costs too much money. He also had his social benefits cut because he occasionally worked abroad.

## Source list

The Atlas of Rural Marginalized Areas and of Local Human Development in Romania:

<https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/847151467202306122/Atlasmarginalized-rural-areas-and-local-human-development-in-Romania>

[https://www.ghidulprimariilor.ro/ro/businesses/view/city\\_hall/PRIM%C4%82RIA-DOGNECEA/44054](https://www.ghidulprimariilor.ro/ro/businesses/view/city_hall/PRIM%C4%82RIA-DOGNECEA/44054)

<https://de.statista.com/themen/1665/rumaenien/#dossierKeyfigures>

<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/270801/umfrage/lebenserwartung-in-rumaenien/#:~:text=Im%20Jahr%202019%20betrug%20die,8%20Jahre%20bei%20den%20M%C3%A4nnern>

[Rumänien - Arbeitslosenquote | Statista](#)

[csetn02.pdf \(kia.hu\).](#)

<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

(Consulted on 11/04/2022)

<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Educational\\_attainment\\_statistics#Level\\_of\\_educational\\_attainment\\_by\\_age](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Educational_attainment_statistics#Level_of_educational_attainment_by_age)

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1103336/school-dropout-rate-romania/>

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1131454/romania-school-dropout-rate-by-region/>

[https://www.citypopulation.de/de/romania/carasseverin/\\_/052696\\_dognecea/](https://www.citypopulation.de/de/romania/carasseverin/_/052696_dognecea/)