

ANALYSIS OF RURAL HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE SOUTHWEST OLTENIA REGION

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ABSTRACT

The rural environment has always been a challenge for the implementation of projects with European non-reimbursable funding both in terms of human resources and in terms of the implementation of these projects. The number and structure of human resources in rural areas differs from those in urban areas, which should be analyzed with an emphasis on the level of training and training opportunities according to this level and the need of the market. At the level of the SV Oltenia development region, disparities can be found both in the volume and in the structure of human resources depending on the degree of industrialization of each county and the extent to which the relief allows the practice of agriculture. The low level of education of the rural population of the region leads to negative effects both for the population in the area and for the development of the area. The present study presents the main features of rural human resources in the South West Oltenia region, as well as an analysis of the main indicators on labor force.

INTRODUCTION

The number and structure of human resources in rural areas have special features, which must be analyzed with an emphasis on the level of training and training opportunities according to this level and the need of the market.

At the level of the South West Oltenia region, disparities can be found both in the volume and in the structure of human resources depending on the degree of industrialization of each county and the extent to which the relief allows the practice of agriculture.

The low level of education of the rural population of the region leads to negative effects both for the population in the area and for the development of the area: poverty, lack of financial resources, poor

living conditions; seasonal income; unemployment, the need to provide social assistance; deficit of access to medical services; lack of jobs in sectors other than agriculture; lack of qualified and specialized human resources

Agriculture is the field in which the rural population works mostly, this being supported, on the one hand by national support programs, and on the other hand by European programs that provide financial resources for investments in machinery, in agricultural works, in human resources and in supporting agricultural business.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study focuses on the analysis of human resources in rural areas, an analysis conducted in order to find the best solutions for its development and to reduce disparities between rural and urban areas. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to present the evolution of the population in rural areas, in the South West Oltenia region in terms of its number and structure, by area of residence. For this, both bibliographic sources from the literature and statistical data were used. The emphasis was on human resources as the main factor of production in agriculture, knowing that the vast majority of rural labor is employed in agriculture.

Taking into account all these aspects, the migration flows from the South West Oltenia region, the fluctuations by age groups were analyzed, in order to determine the factors that influenced the evolution of the active civilian population in the rural area.

Next, based on statistical sources, the evolution of the active population and the employed population by counties of the region was presented, and by age groups, activity rate, employment rate and unemployment in the region.

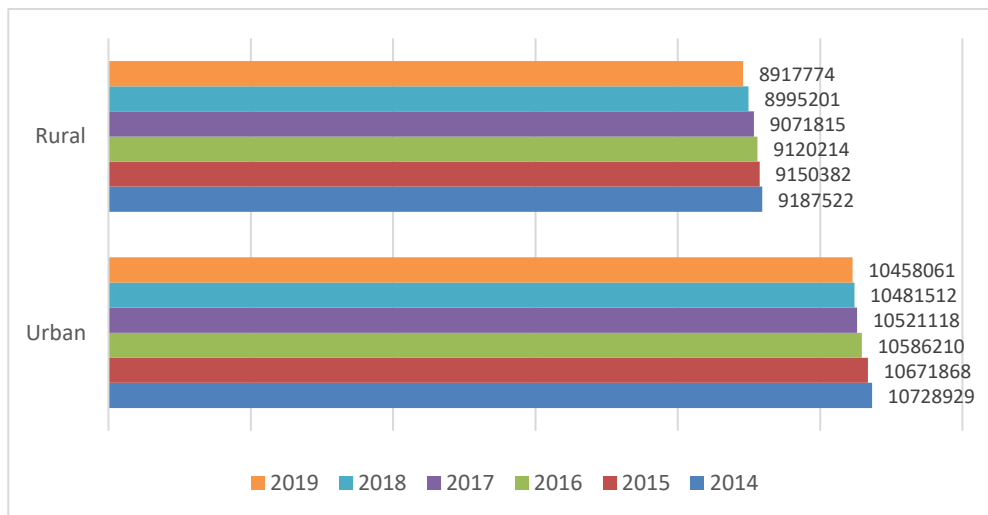
The study we propose also contains an analysis of the impact of the use of non-reimbursable funds on rural human resources, an analysis carried out in order to identify the extent to which people from the South West Oltenia region participated in activities in European non-reimbursable projects, in especially those within the PNDR and POCU program as well as the degree to which they managed to benefit and implement the knowledge and skills acquired in the course / counseling / information activities. The working tool used to collect the data needed for the research was a prospective questionnaire placed in the field, which included a number of 12 questions, of which 2 questions to identify age and sex.

The questionnaire was distributed to people aged 15-64 in the SV Oltenia region, in rural areas.

Out of the total of 578415 active people from rural areas aged 15-64, 64.7% were employed in 2020, so 374235 people. In this population we calculated a representative sample, with a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$ and a confidence interval of 0.05 which corresponds to a probability of guaranteeing the research results of 95%, Sample of 384 people.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The rural environment is predominant in the South-West Oltenia region, fact for which the human resource is of great importance both in terms of number and structure, and in terms of its availability. At the country level, the evolution of the population by area of residence is as follows.



Population evolution in 2014 – 2019

There is a declining trend of the country's total population in both areas of residence. The South West Oltenia region has a population of over 15 years with the following structure [1]:

Table 1

Population in the SV Oltenia region by age groups and areas of residence

Age Groups	Residence	Years					
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
15-19 years	Urban	52149	50910	49601	48049	46637	45717
	Rural	65134	64916	64309	62329	59774	57369
20-24 years	Urban	53112	51872	51073	50723	49867	48177
	Rural	58656	58758	59017	59421	58966	57841
25-29 years	Urban	64450	60963	56142	51501	48112	46410
	Rural	60232	59429	57061	53857	51095	50057
30-34 years	Urban	68318	64927	61969	60411	59777	58883
	Rural	58648	55899	54668	54799	55403	55743
35-39 years	Urban	78970	77521	75172	72014	68314	64961
	Rural	75903	72983	69796	65915	61412	57598
40-44 years	Urban	78585	76628	75319	75196	76176	76131
	Rural	81804	80385	79713	78776	77297	75205
45-49 years	Urban	82181	86900	90050	87167	79611	75061
	Rural	76025	82775	88849	89479	84440	80727
50-54 years	Urban	65997	62443	58695	61903	71039	77779
	Rural	58708	56447	54942	58400	67063	75326
60-64 years	Urban	59709	61766	63715	65656	67341	67258
	Rural	74214	71957	72331	71816	69955	68549

As can be seen from the table, in the period 2014-2019 the trend was as follows:

In the age group 15-19 years, the tendency is to decrease the population in urban and rural areas, following the country's trend, the population in rural areas being higher than in urban areas.

In the 20-24 age group we also notice a decrease in the urban population, the number of rural populations remaining somewhat constant, with slight fluctuations of growth until 2017 and then decrease until 2019.

The population in the 25-29 age group tends to decrease sharply in both environments. The 30-34 age group is also notable for a decrease in the urban population and an increase in the rural population after 2016.

The population in the 35-39 age group is in a continuous decrease in the analyzed period in both urban and rural areas, a

situation that indicates that many of them preferred to emigrate abroad for a better life.

The age group 40-44 in urban areas has a slight increase in the years 2017 - 2019 and a decrease in the rural population.

In the age group 45-49 we have a different situation compared to the trends of the other age groups, in the sense that the urban population increased until 2016 after which it decreased, and the rural population increased until 2017 after which low.

Similar fluctuations, but in the opposite direction, were registered by the population in the age group 50-54 years.

All this is also due to the fluctuation of the total number of residents in the SV Oltenia region between 2014 and 2019, when, as shown in the chart below, in the age group 45-49 years there were increases until 2016 after which decreases of the number of resident populations, and in the age group 50-54 years there is a decrease of the population until 2016 after which an increase of this number.

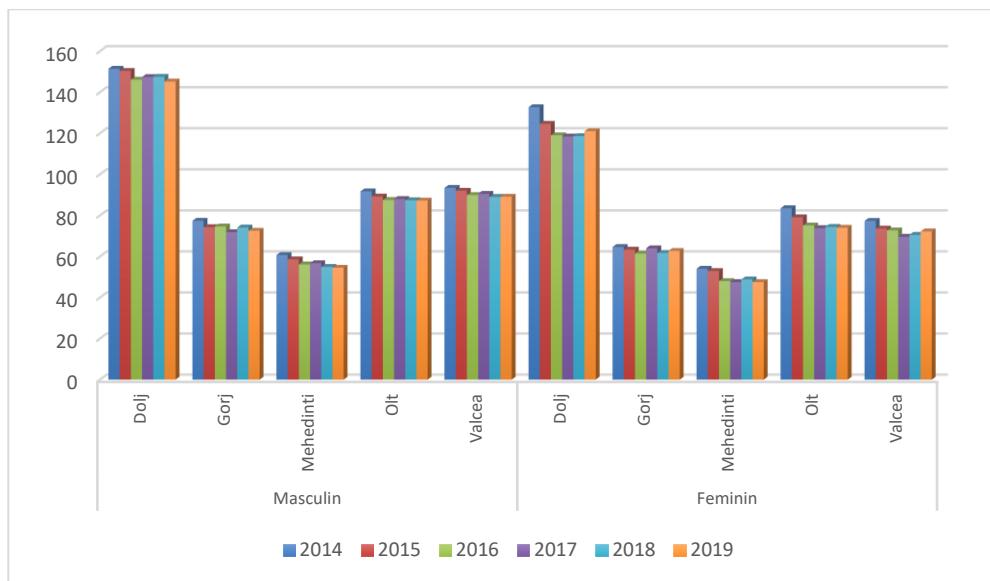
Regarding the evolution of the number of resident populations in the South West Oltenia region, the situation is as follows:

The population in the 55-59 age group is decreasing in the analyzed period, and if we take into account the residence averages, we can observe, in both environments, a decrease until 2016 and then an increase, following the general trend of the age group.

The last analyzed group, 60-64 years old, has an atypical evolution, in the sense that the population in the urban area gradually increases during the analyzed period, and the one in the rural area decreases every year.

This analysis was performed in order to determine the factors that influenced the evolution of the active civilian population in rural areas.

The labor force (or the economically active population) comprises all persons aged 15 and over who provide the labor force available for the production of goods and services during the reference period, including the employed population and the unemployed [2]



Evolution of the active population, by counties in 2014 – 2019 (thousands of people)

As can be seen from the graph, the active population registers a decreasing trend in all counties of the SV Oltenia region, which is a consequence of the decrease in the number of the population in general, as presented in the figure above. The same trend is observed throughout the region.

Regarding the active population in rural areas in the SV Oltenia region by age groups, the largest number of active people has the group 45-49 years followed closely by the group 40-44 years and 35-39 years. At the opposite pole is the population of the groups 24-34 years and 50-64 years.

The employed population includes all persons aged 15 and over who have carried out an economic or social activity producing goods or services for at least one hour during the reference period (one week), in order to obtain income in the form of wages, payment in kind or other benefits. The employed civilian population remained approximately constant during the analyzed period, in all 5 counties of the region, with small fluctuations of 2-4% from year to year.

Also, at the level of the entire region, the employed population remained between 770 and 820 thousand people, with decreases until 2016 and increases, then, until 2019.

The largest share in the employed population is held by people aged 35-49. It's the generation born in the '70s. Employed people aged

25-30 are already the generation after the Revolution of 1989, when the number of people born was in a sharp decline, which explains their lower share.

By age groups, there is a certain constancy in the evolution of the activity rate on the two areas of residence, the highest activity rate having, as is natural, the population in the age group 25-54 years and less the from the beginning of the interval (15-24 years) and the one at the end of the interval (55-64 years).

From the point of view of the environment of residence, we notice that at the first and last age group the activity rate is higher in rural areas, in the middle interval being a fairly balanced distribution in both areas of residence.

And in total region, the trend is upward, except in the period 2014 - 2016 when in most age groups there is a decrease in the activity rate. At the age of 15-24, the activity rate decreases from 2014 to 2016 and from 2017 to 2019.

Throughout the analyzed period, on all age groups, the employment rate fluctuated from year to year, decreasing most strongly in 2016 in all age groups and increasing slightly after this year until 2019. And in 2020 it is observed a slight decrease in this rate, with the exception of the 55-64 age group.

The unemployment rate is important in the analysis of the labor force of any region. This shows the ratio between the number of unemployed and the active population, expressed as a percentage.

Table 2

The evolution of the unemployment rate in 2014 - 2019 (%)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
TOTAL country	5,4	5	4,8	4	3,3	2,9
SV OLTENIA	8,2	8,2	8,3	7,3	5,9	5,2
Dolj	9,4	9,5	9,8	8,8	7,4	6,7
Gorj	7,5	7,7	7,4	6,3	4,4	3,5
Mehedinti	10	11	9,6	9,4	7,7	6,8
Olt	8,2	8,1	9,2	7,4	6,3	5,5
Valcea	5,6	4,7	5	4,2	3,1	2,8

In the region, the unemployment rate is much higher than in the whole country, most of the unemployed being found in the counties of Mehedinți, Dolj and Olt.

Research results on the impact of the use of non-reimbursable funds on human resources in the South West Oltenia region [3]:

The research aimed at the impact of using non-reimbursable funds allocated through the National Rural Development Program, the Human Capital Operational Program and others on human resources in the South West Oltenia Region (Mehedinți, Gorj, Olt, Dolj, Vâlcea) in the current economic and social context.

The age category of the respondents follows the trend we identified following the analysis of employed people in the South West Oltenia region, namely the fact that the vast majority of respondents are in the category 35-49 years with 173 people, followed by category 25 -34 years with 94 respondents, the last category being that of 15-24 years with only 38 respondents.

Regarding the sex of the respondents, 62.24% of them are male, 37.76% being female. This is due to the fact that, in rural areas, women are more housewives, men being the ones who work for the most part.

Regarding the studies completed by the respondents, the vast majority of respondents, 173 have primary education, 139 people have secondary education, and 49 people are without education. Only 23 of those surveyed graduated from college or college.

Most respondents, 225 people are farmers, at the opposite pole being unemployed or unemployed. Among the people who have benefited from vocational training courses are self-employed (49) but also workers (53) or employees with higher education (32).

Out of the total of 384 respondents, only 83 accessed non-reimbursable funds, and 296 people participated as a target group in European projects.

Out of the total of 296 people who stated that they participated in activities in projects with non-reimbursable funding, 158 people participated in POCU projects, 114 in PNDR program projects and only 24 stated that they participated in the activities of other types of projects (Programs of cross-border cooperation in particular). Within these projects, the beneficiaries participated in information activities, vocational counseling, training and mediation on the labor market.

As a training activity within the projects implemented in the SV Oltenia region, mainly, the respondents participated in Qualification courses (level 1, 2 and 3), followed at a fairly long distance (almost half) by the initiation or improvement courses. 49 people mentioned that they did not participate in professional training activities but in other types of activities: information, counseling, setting up companies.

Surprisingly, many of the respondents (93 people) stated that they did not use in any way the activities in which they participated in projects with European non-reimbursable funding.

The 101 respondents who stated that they used them to a large extent, are predominantly those who participated in PNDR projects, the activities using them for the implementation of projects on agricultural measures.

Asked if they use these training programs, 66 people claim that they do not use, at least for the time being, these courses or the certificates they have obtained, 89 consider that they use them to a small extent, and 92 use them to a large extent.

CONCLUSIONS

The human resource in the rural environment of the South West Oltenia region, as well as in the whole country, is a deficient one in terms of studies, occupation and employment opportunities. Mostly, people in rural areas are employed in agriculture, an occupation that is mostly seasonal and does not bring a constant income to the family.

European-funded programs can lead to the development of human resources in rural areas by involving them in various activities of information, training, vocational counseling, labor market mediation or even the establishment of agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises, which increases their chances of employment, or increased income. Thus, by participating in various project activities, they will acquire skills and abilities that will help them to commit or advance in their career.

The research conducted in the study led to the conclusion that, although most people in rural areas had access to the activities of European non-reimbursable projects, the results they obtained were more or less used, which what made them participate in these projects being rather the subsidies received, so the short-term benefits and not the long-term ones.

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