

## **LOCAL STATUS QUO ANALYSIS**

**YOUMIG** - *Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration*

**Activity 3.2: Local status quo analysis of youth migration with involvement of stakeholders**

**YOUMIG**  
**Transnational Youth Migration in Kanjiža: processes, effects and policy challenges**

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## Executive Summary

A database on emigration flows of Serbian citizens does not exist, considering that the citizens who leave to work/stay abroad usually do not deregister from their place of residence. Census data on Serbian emigration, even with a relatively high non-coverage of citizens living abroad, are still the best source for examining the socio-economic characteristics of this population and their territorial origin and destination. The number of Serbian citizens returning from work/residence abroad is even harder to estimate than emigration.

Apart from the census data, we could not make definitive conclusions about migration from the municipality of Kanjiža. In absence of existing qualitative or quantitative data, we used a non-representative research on the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina to map out the movements in the municipality. A study by Gábrity Molnár (2008) studies the emigration of Hungarians from Vojvodina to Hungary. According to the author, the empirical research (mainly not representative) data prove that in the last 25 years, economic reasons were the main causes of emigration from Vojvodina to Hungary. The main positive effect of this process for Serbia is the decline in the number of the unemployed, while the negative effect can be seen in the human capital loss in the country of origin. Apart from migration due to financial reasons, Hungarians from Vojvodina also migrate for educational reasons. According to Szilávit (2005) Vojvodina faces serious disadvantages as a result of “brain drain” and the migration of entrepreneurs and their capital. The majority of emigrants from Vojvodina to Hungary are young specialists who have mastered or can master foreign languages easily and have capital as well.

The presented results of the projection scenarios for the population of Kanjiža between 2017 and 2035 show that even a small negative migration balance could be harmful for the population dynamics and structure of such a small municipality due to the evident selectivity of migrants by age. The municipality of Kanjiža is a sending area which has been struggling with a new wave of migration since 2011. In 2011 the Hungarian community became entitled to applying for dual (Serbian-Hungarian) citizenship, accompanied with the opportunity to get an EU passport, and that had a profound effect on the Hungarian population in Serbia, especially in the municipalities where the population is mostly Hungarian by nationality, as is the case in Kanjiža. Since the economy in the country is still in transition, people do not feel economically safe, and emigration has a tendency to increase.

The Local Status Quo Analysis is based on research activities using both quantitative and qualitative methods (interviews with institutional actors and young migrants, focus group with migrants). Based on life situation and age, the institutional actors in Kanjiža distinguished three groups (and one more which deals with older migrants) based on migration motivations for the young generations. One of these groups is labelled as the migration *to Hungary with the purpose of education* group, because of the possibility to study in the mother tongue. Then, there are the *less consciously planning adventurers* who are in their twenties and want to live the “American dream”. Independent young people have weaker attachments to their home country, they have no jobs, their own family, and as their friends are already abroad, they “only” leave their parents behind, therefore it is easier for them to make the decision to leave. Thirdly, there are those emigrants with *conscious family planning as motivation* to migration, characteristically they are between 26 and 34 years of age, and do not dare to have children in the home country because of an uncertain existence, or they already have small children. In this group, and among the older generations (36 and older) in most cases the male prepares the life abroad and then the spouse, wife, family follows. And finally, there is another group (older age group, 36+ years of age) and their motivation factor for emigration is to secure higher living standards, to be able to secure an education for their children in a more regulated environment. Interviewees claim that since the dual citizenship law was adopted in Hungary, the poorer segment with permanent

unemployment and with no more reserves (from a financial point-of-view) were the first ones to make the forced decision to emigrate.

The narrative interviews show that Hungary remains an attractive destination for educational purposes because it offers the same language environment. The interviewees were socialized in an environment of continuous mobility, which typically began at the time of choosing a secondary school for various vocations, therefore, we can understand why it is so natural for someone to commute every day for work across the border. The interviewees who emigrated and left their homes for work indicated that their decision was influenced by the repelling circumstances in Serbia. The most important motivation factors for emigration are better standards of living, financial security and for those with children: securing a more predictable future for them. The role of networks cannot be ignored in migratory decision-making. The interviewees who traveled far, primarily seeking job opportunities, got a lot of help from capable contacts in the first period. These networks were more of a network of weak contacts (a friend of a friend or colleague), and their nationality was significant. The common points in the life stories of the commuters, those living in two places and the returnees are the driving force of personal relationships and local patriotism. Their life stories are interwoven with the sense of being from Kanjiža, from Vojvodina and Serbia, in other words, by their sense of identity as Hungarians from Vojvodina.

According to the participants of the focus group, the municipality of Kanjiža tries to cope with emigration by creating a more livable environment. However, they highlight that most of the mentioned problems are systemic problems in Serbia and are not in the competence of the municipality. The young interviewees and the focus group participants refer to inadequacies in the fields of education, economy, civil and social sectors, and administration. The main challenges in the municipality are the lack of adequate jobs and the exploitation of high and low skill workers. In the field of education, even with the reforms made on the national level, the interview subjects draw attention to difficulties connected to learning the Serbian language, and that is a factor which makes their success on the labour market less possible, and also has an impact on their studies. Generally speaking, it would be important to create a strategy that focuses on different groups (different life situations) of young generations: to assess the needs of secondary school pupils to help them more effectively, to support them to stay in their home country. Most of the interview subjects agreed on the importance of helping young people, as most of them do not have any vision of their future, there is a general apathy characterizing them.

Official representatives of the municipality earlier did not see the importance of dealing with the migration of young people or any other generation, to control it or to ameliorate it, therefore, there was no strategy generated to directly deal with this issue. The participants of the focus group did not mention bad municipal practices in connection to strategies or projects about youth migration. They only drew attention to some of the issues: the programmes that are not targeted enough, that some are short-term (e.g. subsidization of projects is not continuous), and that the changes are not radical enough to make people feel that something is really changing.

Some of the important findings of our case study of the municipality of Kanjiža were that in order to help vulnerable groups such as career-starters or women towards economic prosperity, language barriers need to be removed, the civil sector needs to be strengthened, the Youth office revived, and the official administration rationalized.

## Project Description

### YOUMIG - Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/youmig/>

This Local Status Quo Analysis on Transnational Youth Migration was prepared in the framework of the **“YOUMIG - Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration”** project, in a series of seven similar analyses prepared in Burgas (Bulgaria), Graz (Austria), Kanjiža (Serbia), Maribor (Slovenia), the Rača district of Bratislava (Slovakia), Sfântu Gheorghe (Romania) and Szeged (Hungary). These analyses provide an overview of the main trends and challenges of youth migration, based on a common methodology. The aim of the papers is to enable YOUMIG project partners to better understand the local processes linked to youth migration, and respond better to its challenges.

*YOUMIG Partners in the Danube region. Cartography: University of Vienna*

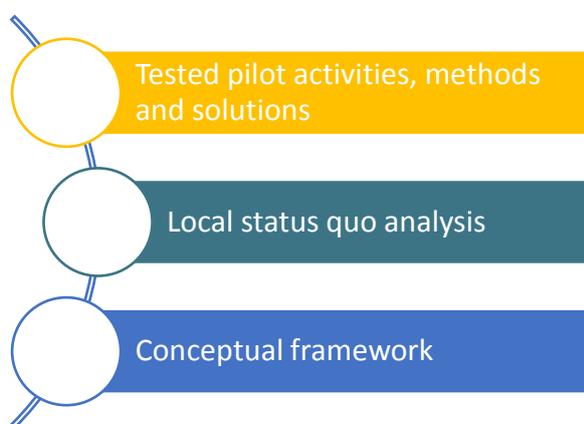


YOUMIG is a strategic project of the European Union’s Danube Transnational Programme, in which 19 partners from 8 countries work together. The objective of the project is to support local governments in tackling the challenges and exploiting the developmental potential of youth migration, leading to a better-governed and more competitive Danube region. The project aims at improving institutional capacities to measure and manage the immigration, emigration and return migration of young people

(aged 15-34). Statistical offices and academic organizations teamed up with local governments for creating local developmental strategies based on improved impact indicators of youth migration, administrative capacity building and pilot activities.

YOUMIG's work is structured in six work packages (WPs). Besides management (WP1) and communication (WP2) issues, thematic work is distributed as follows:

In WP3, a Conceptual Framework provides the theoretical background of the project. In addition, all partners contribute to the better understanding of youth migration and its developmental impacts on the municipality level by elaborating local status quo analyses. This Local Status Quo Analysis is also a part of WP3.



In WP4, a comprehensive evaluation of the locally available statistical data and indicators related to youth migration is carried out. Shortfalls of measuring local challenges are identified and new or improved indicators of youth migration are elaborated and tested.

In WP5, the project improves local administrative capacities to manage the migration-related processes identified by the Local Status Quo Analyses by jointly testing and introducing good practices as pilot activities, and institutional solutions based on a one-stop-shop approach.

In WP6, the project concludes by providing transnationally tested tools for all governance levels contributing to better strategies, policies and services related to the issue of youth migration.

The project runs between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2019. The Local Status Quo Analysis was finalized in December 2017.

## YOUMIG PROJECT at a glance

**Full name:** YOUMIG - Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration

A project of the

**Danube Transnational Programme**

**Start date:** 01-01-2017

**End date:** 30-06-2019

**Budget:** 2,718,853 EUR (of which: ERDF Contribution: 2,055,179 EUR, IPA Contribution: 255,846 EUR)

**Call number:** Call 1

**Priority:** 4. (Well-governed Danube region)

**Specific objective:** 4.1. (Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges)

**Project partners:**

**Lead partner:** Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HU)

**Work package leaders:** University of Vienna (AT), Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (DE), Maribor Development Agency (SI), INFOSTAT - Institute of Informatics and Statistics (SK)

**ERDF partners:** Municipality of Szeged (HU), City of Graz (AT), Institute for Economic Research (SI), Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (RO), Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe (RO), National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria (BG), Burgas Municipality (BG), Municipality of the City district of Bratislava- Rača (SK)

**ERDF partners:** Municipality of Szeged (HU), City of Graz (AT), Institute for Economic Research (SI), Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities (RO), Municipality of Sfântu Gheorghe (RO), National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria (BG), Burgas Municipality (BG), Municipality of the City district of Bratislava- Rača (SK)

**IPA partners:** Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (RS), Institute of Social Sciences (RS), Municipality of Kanjiža (RS)

**Associated Strategic Partners:** Statistics Austria (AT), City of Karlsruhe (DE), Federal Institute for Population Research (DE)

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Other YOUMIG Local Status Quo Analyses are available at the project's website:

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/youmig>

YOUMIG news: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/youmig/news> and

<http://www.facebook.com/youmigproject>

## 1. Introduction

The Local Status Quo Analysis provides an overview of trends in youth migration and the related social phenomena, respectively. The study is based on policy oriented research. The primary aim is to synthesize the findings of YOUMIG research activities concerning youth migration. In this respect we want to characterize and typify the municipalities according to the migratory trends they experience. The second aim is to understand the effects of youth migration, respectively, to identify the policy challenges related to it. Through our applied research we also wanted to provide a brief look into the responses given by local authorities to challenges related to the in- and out-migration of young people. A related goal was to identify the management and capacity gaps in the institutional mechanisms of the local authorities to deal with youth migration and related phenomena.

The level of the analysis is the municipality and each of the Local Status Quo Analyses can be perceived as a detailed case study using multiple methods of data collection and analysis. These case studies cover local administrative units in quite different positions in the system of international migration and of socio-economic interdependencies. Some of our municipalities receive; some of them send migrants while others are both targets and starting points of transnational migratory flows. The municipality of Kanjiža is a sending area, which has been struggling with a new wave of migration since 2011. In 2011, the Hungarian minority was granted a right to dual Serbian- Hungarian citizenship accompanied by an EU passport, and that has had a radical effect on the Hungarian population in Serbia, especially on the municipality of Kanjiža, where the population is mostly Hungarian. Since the country has not developed enough economically, people do not feel economically safe, so emigration is likely to increase. Some of our municipalities are important regional centres, while others are small or medium-sized towns with an economically peripheral position. The municipality of Kanjiža is economically less developed due to bad privatization: the local industry is disintegrated (few workplaces, low wages), young people do not see a perspective in agriculture, and tourism is not sufficiently exploited. In spite of these significant differences, both the data collection and analysis were based on jointly used concepts, uniform methodologies and previously agreed processes. The main focus of the research was on emigration, immigration and return migration. In some municipalities we also included commuting; however, internal migration (even if important in some cases) was not in our focus. The conceptual and theoretical framework of the analysis was provided by the University of Vienna team and the methodological tool by the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities. By using these tools, the comparison of the results will be possible in a further phase. Nevertheless, at the level of the present case study we also tried to reveal the specificities of our municipality.

The research activities were closely connected to other work packages and activities. The results of the present analysis enable local municipalities to elaborate evidence-based strategies to deal with the impact of youth migration. This will be of key importance during the implementation of WP5, where a pilot project concerning the management of the effects of youth migration will be launched in each municipality. Some of the important findings of our case study of the municipality of Kanjiža were that in order to help career starters and women towards economic prosperity, language barriers need to be removed, the civil sector needs to be strengthened, the Youth office revived, the official administration rationalized. The strategy building activities of WP6 will also be based on the exploratory activities synthesized in this report.

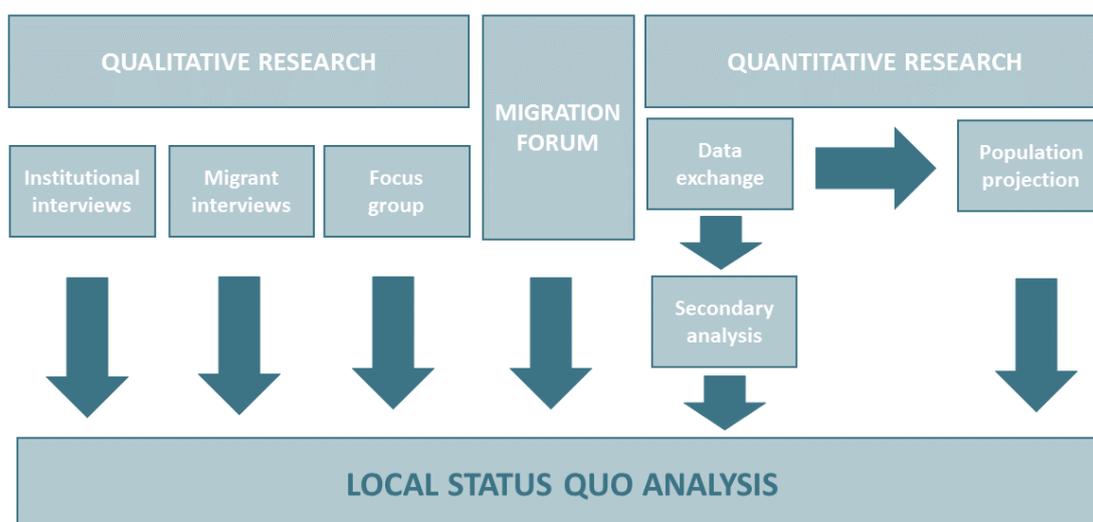
The report is organized into eight chapters. First, we briefly present the methodology of the research. The second part is a general presentation of the municipality of Kanjiža with a special focus on local development. The third chapter is a description of the migratory processes and related phenomena

from a quantitative perspective, relying on available statistical and survey data. The timespan of this analysis is the period between 1990 and 2016. This chapter also includes a municipality-level population projection provided by the INFOSTAT team. The fourth and fifth sections focus on the results of our qualitative research based on interviews with institutional actors and young migrants, respectively, on focus groups and migration forums. We present the characteristics of youth migration, and some typical migrant biographies based on these sources. The sixth part presents the major policy challenges the local authorities have to face and their policies concerning the effects of youth migration. The last section contains our concluding remarks and recommendations.

## 2. Methods

As it was mentioned beforehand, the Local Status Quo Analysis was based on research activities using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Figure 1 synthetizes the data sources and research activities which fed into the present report.

**Figure 1. Methods used to collect and analyse data**



Most importantly, a complex qualitative research activity was carried out by the Kanjiža team of local experts.

- (1) First, interviews were conducted with institutional actors (e.g. leaders or employees of institutions engaged in tackling the effects of youth migration). This phase had manifold aims. It was an explanatory research concerning the patterns and variations of youth migration. It was attempted to identify the general position of the locality in the system of transnational migration, and the general trends of immigration, emigration and return migration. We also wanted to reveal local discourses concerning migration, more specifically the way local stakeholders perceive the relationship between migration and development. Nevertheless, the main aim of this phase was to map the existing policies (measures and activities) focusing on migration and youth. On the one hand, we were interested in concrete measures, activities,

projects or permanent programmes run by institutional actors. On the other hand, we wanted to know whether the interviewed stakeholders and institutional actors thought that they had the institutional capacities to alter (or affect) the migratory behaviour of young people and to deal with the (already known and possible) consequences of migration. The semi-structured interviews were carried out according to a previously elaborated guide. A total number of 8 persons were interviewed. Among the interviewees were the mayor, the president of a local community (“member of the opposition”), the principal of the secondary school, a case coordinator in the field of social affairs, the former leader of the Youth Cooperative, and two local entrepreneurs. Six of the interviewees are Hungarian and 2 are Serbian.

- (2) In the following phase narrative-biographic interviews were carried out with young migrants. We used the narrative-biographic method only partially. The second part of the interviews can be conceived as a semi-structured interview, as we asked questions according to a previously elaborated guide. The narrative-biographical method (which was used in the first phase of the interview) provides a rigorous and previously fixed technique of conducting and interpreting interviews. It is important that in the implementation of this technique we did not subordinate the stories (meaning the self-representation) of migrants to our own scientific or political narratives. The interviewed young migrants had the opportunity to present their stories in a less constrained manner. The semi-structured phase was used to obtain additional data concerning the migrants, and to test some previous hypotheses concerning them. We tried to select young migrants with “typical” life trajectories. As in general during the research, our main focus was on migration patterns in the Danube region (especially Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania). These focuses were taken into account in the selection of interviewees as well as in the questions to be asked during the interviews.
- (3) Focus groups were also conducted according to a previously fixed guide. The focus group method is a par excellence qualitative research method, suitable primarily for mapping people’s attitudes, opinions, experiences, or the discourses that are in use regarding a certain topic or phenomenon. One of the most important advantages of the method is its interactive nature, the fact that participants actively participate in the interactive and collective process of the construction of meanings. Our focus-group session focused on the migration experiences of young people, paying special attention to the administrative aspects of the migration process (i.e. their contacts with the local and other levels of administration, the problems they encountered, their opinion about the policies employed by the relevant authorities etc.). Our goal was to obtain information that can be useful for local decision-makers, policy-makers, stakeholders. Each subject in our focus group had a migratory experience, each of them is a returning migrant. Five people returned “ permanently”, 5 people are commuters (3 of whom are seasonal commuters, 1 person is a daily commuter, and 1 person is commuting based on his/her work and projects). The group consisted of older youth, above the age of 26. Half of them have a secondary school diploma. Two people are doing their PhDs, but they are working, too, 1 of them is planning to do her PhD (she is currently unemployed, working in the civil sphere), the others are working (some of them are working in the grey economy, and some of them are waiting for the working season to start). Four subjects migrated to Hungary, in case of 5 subjects there were several countries that turned up (primarily, those were Hungary and Austria, but Hungary and France or England, too), and 1 interview subject returned from England.
- (4) Migration forums were also used to identify the challenges connected to the transnational migration of young people.

The quantitative research was based on a secondary analysis of existing statistical sources on the municipal level. It should be emphasized that quantitative data provide a kind of framework for the

qualitative analysis, which constituted the major focus of the research and are the primary sources of the present report.

- (5) The collection and acquisition of statistical data took place in the framework of the data exchange exercise. This was based on a common template provided by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and carried out by the Institute for Social Science. These data were used in the secondary analysis according to a template provided by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia and carried out by Réka Ágyas and Bea Sárceivity.
- (6) The quantitative analysis presents the demographic and migratory trends forecast by a population projection based on the cohort-component method provided by the INFOSTAT team. This forecast can also be useful for local level stakeholders.

## 3. The municipality of Kanjiža

### 3.1. General presentation

The municipality of Kanjiža had 25 343 inhabitants according to the 2011 census; on 31 December 2016 this number was 24 094. The municipality is populated by Hungarians (85%) and Serbians (7%), but there are also Roma, Romanians, Croatians, Montenegrins, Albanians etc. These nationalities belong to different religions such as: Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Muslim and other.

The municipality of Kanjiža is in the northern part of Vojvodina, in the North Bačka district next to the border with Hungary, and stands between the municipalities of Subotica, Senta and Novi Kneževac. The municipality of Kanjiža is comprised of 13 settlements: Horgoš, Male Pijace, Martonoš, Mali Pesak, Orom, Doline, Novo Selo, Totovo Selo, Velebit, Vojvoda Zimonjić, Trešnjevac and Adorjan, including a large number of dispersed granges. The administrative centre of the municipality is the town of Kanjiža. The educational institution network includes 11 pre-school facilities in 9 of the 13 settlements, 3 elementary schools and the “Jožef Besedeš” secondary school that educates agricultural, machinery and veterinary technicians, technicians of horticulture within the frame of a four-year program.

According to the 2014 statistics, considering the level of development of the local self-government, Kanjiža belongs to the leading group which consist of 20 units of local self-governments, whose level of development is above the republic’s average. Towns such as Subotica, Senta, Novi Sad, Belgrade etc. belong to this group. However, during the field research, this “positive aspect” did not appear. According to the youth that took part in the research, the people living in the municipality do not feel it.

### 3.2. Local development

The municipality of Kanjiža is a major cultural centre for the Hungarian minority, because it is located in the center of the cultural triangle Szeged (Hungary) - Subotica - Senta. In accordance with the decision of the National Council of the Hungarian Ethnic Minority in Serbia, three institutions from the municipality are marked as institutions of special importance for the Hungarian nationality on local and regional level. These are the Institute of Education and Culture „Cnesa”, the “Jožef Atila” Library and the Regional Creative Atelier.<sup>1</sup> The main activities of the Institute of Education and Culture „Cnesa” are the education and training for adults, but the institution plays an important role in organizing cultural events as well. The Regional Creative Atelier houses the biggest rehearsal hall with a

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<sup>1</sup> Official site National Council of the Hungarian Ethnic Minority <http://www.mnt.org.rs/>

professional dance floor in the region. The Atelier is open to various groups practicing art or artistic movement. The “Jožef Atila” Library has a book collection of nearly fifty thousand volumes. In the library people can attend book and other presentations on different topics. For decades the library has been organizing or co-organizing the traditional Writers' Collony.

The privatisation process in the municipality of Kanjiža lasted between 2001 and 2011. Foreign investors bought the most successful factories which produce construction industry materials, such as Potisje roof tile factory, bought by Tondach A.D., FIM insulation material factory bought by the Italian Tegola Canadese. Potisje-Tondach employed around 40% of the employed population in the municipal industry sector. However, as a consequence of privatisation in 2004, the number of employees was reduced by half.<sup>2</sup> The process of privatization caused the unemployment rate to continue to increase, and the long-term unemployment was 66% (people waiting for employment for 3 and more years) in 2013, and it affected both genders and all age groups. When it comes to older generations, population of 50 years of age and more face age discrimination, and they represent 25% of the unemployed structure. As the industry deteriorated (as a consequence of a badly conducted privatisation processes), many of them lost their jobs; they are struggling finding new jobs, as they cannot afford to learn new skills that would make them more competitive in the labour market.<sup>3</sup> In 2016, 17% of the total number of unemployed was in the category of 55 years of age or older. In 2016, 19% of the total population was older than 65 (Figure 1.).

The statistical reports on the number of unemployed persons in the register of the National Employment Service in December 2016 in the municipality of Kanjiža was 1889 persons.<sup>4</sup> According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia the share of unemployed by age groups in total number of unemployed in the municipality of Kanjiža in 2016, 24.2% are from the 15-29 age group, 58.9% are from the 30-54 age group. The methodological data comparison is possible only for data from 2008 till 2016 due to different data sources. (Figure 2.) In 2013 the risk of poverty rate was 30.3%, and the relative risk of poverty gap was 10.6%.<sup>5</sup> In 2015 the share of social protection beneficiaries for the total population was 14%.<sup>6</sup>

The 2011 Hungarian Citizenship law allows all Hungarians to apply for simplified naturalization if they are able to prove knowledge of the Hungarian language and provide evidence that they indeed have Hungarian ancestry. By acquiring Hungarian citizenship new possibilities are offered to people for getting jobs, commuting to work, studying within the European Union.

Industrial zones in the municipality of Kanjiža occupy a territory of 245.83 ha, that is 22% of the overall municipality territory. The most important companies for the local economy are those working in the field of construction material production and food processing industry (30% of municipal GDP). Development is most dynamic in the construction material, tiles, ceramics and hydro insulation materials industry. In 2010, 40 municipal companies have implemented export-import activities, in an absolute amount of 33.6 million dollars of export and 28.9 million dollars of import, which means coverage of import by export of 116.3%. The names of the biggest industrial actors/companies are: Rosan armature (Kanjiža), Telek paprika (Martonoš), Vitamin (Horgoš), Tegola-FIM (Kanjiža), Martis-Commerce (Martonoš), Keramika Kanjiža Plus (Kanjiža), Potisje-Tondach (Kanjiža). More than 85% of the GDP in the municipality is generated by companies in private ownership. Foreign firms are interested in agriculture and trade, since the municipal territory has good agricultural land, and

<sup>2</sup> SEEMIG Dynamic Historical Analysis of Longer Term Migratory, Labour Market and Human Capital Processes in Serbia <http://seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGHistoricalAnalysisSerbia.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The municipal Employment Action Plan for 2014

<sup>4</sup> Republic of Serbia National Employment Service, No. 172 Monthly Statistical Bulletin, December 2016

<sup>5</sup> World bank and SORS

<sup>6</sup> Republic Institute for Social Protection

significant fossil-fuel and clay resources can be found. Tourism of the municipality is based mainly on spa capacities that use medicinal water: Special hospital for medical rehabilitation “Banja- Kanjiža”, hotels Lupus and Aquapannon, and the river Tisa.<sup>7</sup> In 2016, the municipality of Kanjiža had 349 active companies and 385 active entrepreneurs, 22 of them were newly-established companies.<sup>8</sup>

The municipality of Kanjiža is situated close to the border and migrants just use it as a stopover on their way to the European Union. Serbia is not yet perceived as a country that could attract immigrants. According to the Ministry of Interior, in the period between 2010 and 2015, the number of persons caught in the attempt to illegally cross the border between Serbia and its neighbouring countries rose from 2682 to 14 958 due to the geographical position of the country the refugees and migrants from the Middle East used to get to the European Union via Hungary.<sup>9</sup> Another problem are the social needs of the elderly. The municipal Development Strategy reports that 143 elderly people have no family members to turn for help to, 315 have no means of livelihood and 505 are chronically ill or are disabled. These are the official data, but it is estimated that this number is constantly changing for the worse, as more elderly apply for certain forms of social aid because their family members left.<sup>10</sup>

There is a Roma colony in Horgoš consisting of Roma with very poor educational, hygienic and social awareness. The community is self-isolated from the rest of the population and any official initiative, living mostly on social welfare.

Interviewed officials listed political stability, economic development, human capital as resources and the system of values as the most important factors for development. Translated to the local level, these factors can be broken down to the following: capacity of the local government to support the citizens, employment opportunities and support for local businesses, more attention to legal regulations connected to employment, and efficient strategies for education and youth. The interviewees recommend higher engagement of educational institutions and the civil society sector in the creation of general wellbeing, beside the obvious economic development. The municipality could take part in bringing educational institutions and economic actors closer and securing a background for a better communication. The president of the municipality of Kanjiža spent the past 10 months in re-organizing the municipal structures to secure higher efficiency. The aim is to integrate youth with different ideas and innovative ways of thinking into the already established municipal infrastructure in order to further develop it. The Municipality of Kanjiža is currently working on the revival of the Youth Office.

*Attractive features of the municipality:* Strong NGOs, cultural programs, wide range of camps for kids and youth, different sports clubs, youth office, good relationships with Hungarian NGOs. *Not attractive features of the municipality:* homogeneous environment, lack of knowledge of the Serbian language, passivity, unemployment, lack of financial resources for leisure, bad public transport connections, pessimism, lack of contact with the NGOs in Serbia.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Development Strategy of the Municipality of Kanjiža 2011-2020 [http://www.Kanjiža.rs/invest/docs/strateski\\_dok/development%20strategy.pdf](http://www.Kanjiža.rs/invest/docs/strateski_dok/development%20strategy.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> DevInfo Serbia: Serbian Business Registers Agency  
[http://devinfo.stat.gov.rs/SerbiaProfileLauncher/files/profiles/en/1/DI\\_Profil\\_Kanjiža\\_EURSRB001002004003.pdf](http://devinfo.stat.gov.rs/SerbiaProfileLauncher/files/profiles/en/1/DI_Profil_Kanjiža_EURSRB001002004003.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> SEEMIG Local Strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilization (Proposal for a local strategy data enhancement and utilization on migration, labour market and human capital processes) Kanjiža, Serbia, 2014

<sup>10</sup> SEEMIG Local Strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilization, 2014

<sup>11</sup> Local action plan for the youth of the municipality of Kanjiža in the period of 2015-2020

## 4. Migratory and demographic processes in quantitative perspective

### 4.1. Population change and migratory processes at national level

The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia estimated that the total population of Serbia as of 31 December 2016, was 7 040 272 inhabitants. If compared to the earlier census results, it was less by 457 729 than in 2002, and by 536 565 than in 1991. This means that the largest population decrease took place in this century. Slower population decrease during the 1990s had been induced by the large influx of refugees (more than 600 000) from the other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

Total fertility rate in Serbia dropped significantly between 1988 and 1999 from 1.83 to 1.41, while it fluctuated around 1.45 between 1999 and 2016. Life expectancy for both sexes has been increasing since 1989 but at lower pace compared to the EU-28 average. In 2016, life expectancy of females and males was 78.0 and 73.0, respectively. Demographically, Serbia is one of the oldest countries in the world particularly due to decades of below replacement fertility and net emigration since the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These unfavorable processes reflected in the changes of the age structure of the population. According to the census results, the share of persons below 15 years of age and those aged 15-39 dropped from 15.8 to 14.3 and from 33.2 to 32.2 percent, respectively between 2002 and 2011. During the same period, the share of persons aged 40-64 and those aged 65 and above rose from 34.3 to 36.2 and from 16.7 to 17.4, respectively.

In the past quarter century, since 1990 up till now, demographic development of Serbia was taking place under exceptional socio-economic and historic circumstances. This period can be divided into two subperiods. The first, 1990-2000, was marked by the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, several regional wars, the United Nations Security Council's hard sanctions against Serbia and the international isolation of the country. After all, during the NATO bombing, traffic and energy infrastructure has been significantly damaged and the ruined industry was totally destroyed. The second subperiod started in 2001, characterized by the political, social and economic recovery as well as deep reforms. Both periods were characterized by personal and social insecurity of the population, and by rising unemployment. During these years, the number of unemployed persons rose from 467 000 in 1990, to 722 000 in 2000 and reaching 828 439 people in 2016. Also, in 2015 the at-risk-of-poverty rate achieved 25.4%. During the whole period, 1989-2016, population policy in Serbia is mainly oriented towards pronatalist measures, although without comprehensive approach.

Table 1. Serbian population in country and abroad, 2002 and 2011

Census	Total population (in country and abroad)	Population in country	Population abroad	
		Number of persons	Number of persons	Share in total population (%)
2002	7 893 125	7 893 125	414 839	5.3
2011	7 470 798	7 470 798	313 411	4.2

*Source:* Calculated according to the census data

Table 2. Main countries of destination of the Serbian population abroad, 2002 and 2011

Country	2002		2011	
	Number of persons	Share in total population abroad (%)	Number of persons	Share in total population abroad (%)
Total	414 839	100.0	313 411	100.0
Austria	87 844	21.2	70 488	22.5
Germany	10 2799	24.8	55 999	17.9
Switzerland	65 751	15.8	41 008	13.1
Italy	20 428	4.9	23 340	7.4
France	27 040	6.5	20 231	6.5
USA	16 240	3.9	13 504	4.3
Other	94 737	22.8	88 841	28.3
<i>Source: As Table 1.</i>				

According to the census rounds in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the size of emigrant stock was 414 839 in 2002 and 313 411 in 2011. However, based on the available data on Serbian immigrants reported in the main countries of destination, it may be concluded that the emigration stock was considerably higher than the one recorded by the Census data. Currently, the main destination countries for Serbian citizens are: Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and France. The recent average net emigration is estimated at about 15 000 persons annually. Serbia loses considerable number of its young and educated working-age population due to emigration.

During the 1990s, the following factors in particular seemed to have a strong impact on migration patterns in the country: armed conflicts, ethnic tensions, international isolation, economic and financial crisis. Since 2001, several new factors emerged: political and economic transition, liberalization of the visa regime, EU enlargement to the East, a possibility of gaining dual citizenship for ethnic minorities whose mother countries recently joined the EU.

According to the migration cycle theory, Serbia could be perceived as a country in the pre-transition stage, but still far from the transition to a net immigration country. For a long time Serbia is presumed only as a country of emigration.

## 4.2. Population change and migratory processes at municipality level

International migration on municipal level is hard to calculate as there are no insights into these directly. Data on population change and migratory processes on municipal level can be aggregated from several migrant specific databases (Migration database, Ministry of the Interior, Immigrants, Asylum seekers, Acquisition of citizenship, Irregular migration, Return of citizens of RS, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration) or indirect and incomplete data sources (Social Security Database, Database of the Centre for Social Work on illegal migrants, Register of financial aid beneficiaries who came from Kosovo and Metohija, List of submitted Renunciations of Citizenship). Some databases (SSD) are not used for migration statistics. There is no insight into different types of international migration on municipal level.

In Serbia the roles and the activities of every relevant body for migration are defined by a law specifying regulation and management of migration issues. The greatest challenge in Serbia is coordinating actions, which includes monitoring and managing migration. The need for coordinating competence between various institutions that monitor migration and migrants and for an improved cooperation between the relevant national institutions as the first precondition being harmonisation of definitions and updating of databases was recognised with the latest change in regulation of migration management, which anticipated formation of a coherent system for the collection, organisation, and exchange of data on migration.<sup>12</sup>

The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia estimated that the total population of municipality of Kanjiža as of 31 December 2016, which is by 3290 inhabitants less than in 2002 and by 5334 less inhabitants than in 1991. The total fertility rate in the municipality grew significantly between 1994 and 1996. In 1993 it was 1.66 and the following year was 1.93, but dropped after 1996. In 2016 it was 1.20. In the 2014-2016 period Life expectancy was 72.94. Kanjiža is demographically old, and shows no tendency of improvement, as population ageing is directly influenced by the low birth rates and the continuous outmigration, especially of young people at reproductive age. In 2016 the average age of the population in Kanjiža was 43.4 (44.8 in the case of women, 41.8 for men). The ageing index was 143.14. In 2015 in the municipality 17% of the population was under 17 years of age, 64% was between 18 and 65, and 19% was older than 65.

During the 1990s, 712 refugees came to the municipality of Kanjiža: 90% of them came from Croatia and 10% from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The 2011 census registered 832 persons from Kanjiža municipality who have been continuously residing abroad for at least one year or less than a year, but with the intention of staying abroad for at least one year. These persons are considered as emigrants and therefore are not included in the total usually resident population of the municipality.

According to the census in the 2011 the number of emigrated population on municipal level was 566 persons. Statistics show that men emigrated in greater number- altogether 303 (143 of them younger than 35). Their main destinations were Hungary and Germany, but many of them emigrated to Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia.

In 2016, the internal emigration from the municipality was 173 persons. Before 2000, it did not even reach 100 persons a year. The international emigration flows of native born national citizens at

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<sup>12</sup> SEEMIG Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and major data sources in eight South-East European countries <http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/outputs/SEEMIGDataSystemsSynthesisReport.pdf>

municipal level in 1991 was similar to the national data of the municipality as well. This number was high- 48 persons. After 1991 there is a decreasing tendency (the average number being 20). In 2001 it was twice as big (44 persons) and in 2016 it dropped to 9. Internal immigration to the municipality in 2016 was 201 persons- from the given NUST3 68 and from the capital just 2 persons. The international immigration in 2016 was 9 persons, out which 7 nationals and 2 foreign citizens. If we look at the rate between genders, we can see that mainly women immigrate to the municipality. The international return migration at municipal level in 2016 was just 6 persons, 5 of them women. The migration balance in 2016 was 28, and the most outstanding was in 2012, when it was -63 (Table 3. And 4.).

### **4.3. Presentation of the results of the population projection**

Given recent trends on population dynamics, including the statistics on fertility and mortality, and available data on migration flows, it is projected that population of Kanjiža will undoubtedly decrease by at least 9.8 percent (high migration scenario) or at most 14.6 percent (low migration scenario) between 2017 and 2035. According to the medium migration scenario (defined as the most probable one), which assumes the future migration characteristics will remain as the contemporary ones, the decrease will be 11.8 percent. The majority of the decrease (98%) should result from the negative natural change implying that current direct impact of migration component (the loss of 57 persons during the period) on the total population dynamics of Kanjiža is negligible. Yet, the comparison between medium and zero migration scenario indicates that indirect migration impact during the period would be more noticeable resulting in the loss of additional 173 persons (6.2% of the total negative natural change) due to prevented natural growth (that would result from young emigrants had they not emigrated).

The low and high scenario, which represent the two opposite paths of future migration changes, indicate that the migration impact could be very important for demographic change of the municipality. The optimistic one would reduce the total negative natural change by 11.5% (272 persons), while the pessimistic one would increase it by even 16.2% (572 persons) between 2017 and 2035. The severity of the projected rise in negative migration balance (low migration) during the period could be reflected most notably through the indirect migration impact, which amounts to additional loss of 330 persons (11.2% of the total negative natural change) caused by the migration induced negative natural change. On the other side, the positive migration future would almost cancel the indirect migration impact.

Currently, the most populous age groups in the municipality of Kanjiža are those 50-64 years old pointing to the baby-boom generations similarly to the rest of the country. According to the projection scenarios, those peaks will be moved towards younger ages (45-59 years) by 2035 indicating domination of the echo of the baby boom (descendants of baby boomers) in the age structure against notably smaller generations born after 1990. Contemporary sex composition of age groups points to emigration pattern particularly caused by mobility inside the country because females (as being more migration active than males in internal migration flows) are more numerous only in the ages above 65 years. This is typical for all border and less economically developed municipalities in the country. The sex structure across age groups will not be changed even by the high migration scenarios not only because the assumed positive net migration is small but as it refers only to males – net migration of females is assumed to be zero during the period.

Presented results of the projection scenarios for the population of Kanjiža between 2017 and 2035 show that even a small negative migration balance could be harmful for the population dynamics and structure of this small municipality due to clear selectivity of migrants by age. This should be a quite convincing message for local and national policy makers that it is of crucial importance for the future

of small municipalities to try to keep its own youth to stay in their birthplace and if possible to attract young migrants from outside.

## 5. Characteristics of youth migration in the municipality

### 5.1. General characteristics

Emigration flows of Serbian citizens are significantly underreported, as is typical for emigration countries, because citizens who go to work/reside abroad mainly do not deregister their place of residence.

Although it is not expected for a Census to provide a realistic size of emigrant stock, it still represents the best available source of socio-economic characteristics of emigrants (Predojević-Despić, Penev, 2014). The 2011 Census registered 873 emigrants from Kanjiža. That makes 3.4% of the total population of the municipality, which is higher than the share of emigrants in total population of Vojvodina (2.6%), but lower than in Central Serbia (4.2%). Compared to previous censuses, in 2002 the share of population from Kanjiža abroad was around the same level (3.6%), but significantly higher than in 1991 (1.9%). Compared to the share of emigrants from Vojvodina, in 2002 Kanjiža was at the same level as Vojvodina (3.4%), but at the lower level than Vojvodina (2.4%) compared to 1991. However, regardless of the relatively low share of emigrants in the total population, Kanjiža suffered significant negative consequences of emigration. Spatial distribution of municipalities in Serbia observed according to the *Brain Drain Ratio* (BDR) values indicates that very high values are present in the municipalities in the north and north-east of Vojvodina. Kanjiža is included into those municipalities with the highest BDR values reaching 526, along with Mali Iđoš, Senta and Čoka with over 400, as well as Subotica, Bačka Topola and Nova Crnja with over three times bigger likelihood of emigration of persons with higher and high education than those with lower education levels (Despić, 2015:135).

There is low research incidence and a relatively small sample of respondents from the viewpoint of migration oriented research especially for the municipality of Kanjiža but we can see some migration trends from Serbia to Hungary. The emigrational territories (from where the labour force emigrated) were not the most developed regions of Yugoslavia, nor the most densely populated ones where living circumstances were harsh. Migration was encouraged by the unemployment and dissatisfaction with social-financial standards. The rate of emigration from the present territory of Serbia was the highest in Vojvodina, though this part of the country was the most developed. Within Vojvodina, the most intensive emigrational regions were the relatively underdeveloped South Banat and North Bačka, which, on the other hand, was economically and culturally the most developed area. According to Gabrić, from 1990s up to now, approximately 50,000 Hungarians emigrated from Vojvodina.

According to the analysis by Gábrity Molnár [2008], the most important emigration types from Vojvodina to Hungary from 1990 until present day according to the length of migrant stays are the following:

1. **So-called temporary foreign employment, “guest workers”:** they mostly migrated to the West (between 1989 and 1991) and return home country only occasionally (2-3 times per year). Maybe this group will return only after Serbia’s admission to the EU or after significant improvement of the economic situation in Serbia.
2. **Entrepreneurs, businessmen:** they try to benefit from cross-border economic opportunities. At the beginning of the war in former Yugoslavia and hyperinflation (1992–93) mostly entrepreneurs left the country (their estimated number in Hungary is approximately 500).

3. **The economic emigration of the unemployed people** – During the 1990s (1991–95), the “technological labour excess” of public companies became the new unemployed population, who tried to look for jobs abroad. Their estimated number, including their families, was higher than 10,000.
4. **Daily or weekly cross-border commuters** – From the 1990s people living on the territory of the AP of Vojvodina who lived near the border started commuting to schools or workplaces on a daily or weekly basis to Hungarian towns. In 2010 about 1,400 young people, a half of the Hungarian students in Vojvodina, were studying in Hungary – since the possibility of acquiring Hungarian citizenship (2011) this number can only grow. This resulted in periodical, but permanent commuting and absence from their home country. There were mainly construction and industry workers who travelled home every 2 or 3 months, secondary school and university students who commuted on a weekly basis but also smugglers who commuted daily.

Nowadays, due to brain drain, Vojvodina faces serious lack of human and financial capital. The majority of emigrants from Vojvodina to Hungary are young specialists who have mastered or can master foreign languages and have capital as well.<sup>13</sup>

In one of very few researches related to migration issue among the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina (Ágyas, 2017) shows that according to a non-representative research among the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina, 56,5% of the secondary and tertiary students would not leave their homeland, unless they were unable find a job in Serbia. Almost 35% of them are still uncertain about that decision, they do not have specific ideas yet.

Compared to the number of emigrants from Serbia, the number of Serbian citizens – returnees from work/residence abroad is even harder to estimate. It is only possible to indirectly estimate the number of pensioner returnees on the basis of total inflow of foreign exchange pensions from abroad.

## 5.2. Perceived characteristics of youth migration in Kanjiža

In May 2017, 8 interviews in total were made in the municipality of Kanjiža. Among the interviewees were the mayor, a president of a local community (“member of the opposition”), a principal of the secondary school, a case coordinator in the field of social affairs, a former leader of the Youth Cooperative, and two local entrepreneurs. Among the interviewees 6 were Hungarian and 2 Serbian. Considering the lives of the interviewees, they have a wide insight of various fields (many of them have experience in both public and private sector), municipal administration, as well as the processes on provincial level. Also, some interviewees who are less sympathetic towards the current state/local leaders, or who are more independent, were also included in the research.

Most of the interviewees (6-7 interviewees) emphasized that the sparks of immense emigration that characterized the past 4-5 years, could have been felt in the 90s. They are talking about a generation that is mostly divided by migration, socialized in war conditions. After the period of Milošević, the anticipated changes did not happen, which strengthened the thought of emigration among the citizens of Serbia. They see this period of almost 12 years, as the period that totally disrupted Tito’s flourishing regime, from which the country still cannot recover. After that, the period of privatisation begins, and many skilled and unskilled workers are left unemployed. However, from a political point of view, this is a calmer period in the country, but the anticipated progression did not happen in the economic, nor

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<sup>13</sup> Szilávitý 2005:70

in the industrial or agricultural point of view, and the market could not deal with the unemployed (due to the privatisation of factories), which led to an increasingly growing discontent among the citizens - claim the interviewees. According the principal of the local secondary school, the first wave of migration emerged when the “quality” disappeared: „... *at the beginning, quality was important and not the quantity. These young people probably could have been in leading positions, not all of them, but a big percentage perhaps... this youth did not come back.*” There was a unified position among the interviewees on the current emigration wave, claiming that it started off by the tangible freedom of movement: „... *people were able to acquire dual citizenship, it was a huge rocket I think, a lot of people set on this plane (Interviewee no. 3 of the institutional actors)*”. On 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010, the Hungarian Parliament approved the modification of the law on Hungarian citizenship, which simplified the naturalization procedure from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011, so the Hungarian nationals living outside the borders of Hungary with the right to vote became a part of the political community of Hungary. According one the interviewee: “... *I think we got the opposite effect when the option of Hungarian dual citizenship was given to people. I think they probably wanted to keep people here and we got the opposite- they used that document to go abroad (Interviewee no. 7 of institutional actors)*”.

The public mood and the decline of economy which caused this stagnation, resulted in today’s youth seeing the effect it had on their parents and themselves on making a living in Vojvodina and especially in their municipality: “*First of all, they see that they can’t show up at home, they see that their parents don’t know what to do with the agricultural land, and they see that in Europe you can have normal agricultural support while here they give people some change, so people aren’t motivated to be in farming or agricultural production ( Interviewee no. 8 of institutional actors).*” That is the reason the young people do not see any perspective in their native country. A strong parochialism can be observed especially among Hungarian minority in Vojvodina, therefore the inner migration with the purpose of employment is not so significant. If education is the purpose for migration, the distance (financial aspect) and the ethnicity (to be able to study in Hungarian, or partially in Hungarian) plays a great role in the decision making of Hungarians.

The motivations to migrate ought to be assessed on several levels: age and life situation, ethnicity, education and financial background.

Even though the interviews focused on the migration of younger generations (15-34) from the aspect of future perspective and plans, we must not forget the mobility of the middle-aged generations (35-45), as they are the ones taking away the future generations. Based on **life situation and age**, the interviewees distinguished three groups of migration motivations for the young generations.

1) *Migrants to Hungary with educational purpose*: this wave of migration started off in the 1990s, when a strong lobby was felt aiming at skilled students (which means Hungarian schools and companies came to headhunt), however, it still plays a strong role today due to high quality of education, diploma recognized in the EU, and the possibility to study in the mother tongue. The former president of the Youth Cooperative highlighted an issue in our education system too: „*these high schools have the goal to support talented pupils and are training [Hungarian] young people to continue their education in the Hungarian education system.*”

2) *The less thoughtful adventurers*, who are in their twenties and want to live the “American dream”. According to mayor of municipality: “*The popularity of emigration spreads like wildfire among of youth ... travelling to the west with a one-way ticket because a miracle is waiting there.*” These are independent young people, who have weaker attachment to their home country, they have no jobs, their own family nests, as their friends are already abroad, they leave “only” their parents behind, therefore it is easier for them to make this decision: “*If we are talking about those young people who*

*already started their lives and who have no bond here- except their parents, they have no real estate, no jobs. I think those young people go away for the adventure. They are attracted by western light (Interviewee no. 5 of institutional actors)."*

3) Emigrants with *conscious family planning motivation*: they are characteristically between 26 and 34 years of age, who do not dare to have children in the home country because of uncertain existence, or they already have small children. The interviewees have a same view about this: *„The most important reason is that if young people want to start a family, they don't dare to do it here because there is nothing here... they may inherit a bad house from their parents... (Interviewee no. 8 of institutional actors)“*. The social worker sees it the same way: *„From the age of 25, when the time comes to start a family I see such frustration. If parents can't help you, you need to rent an apartment and pay the bills, to buy basic stuff and unfortunately no money is left [to start a family].“*

Among this group, and among the older generations (36 and older) in most cases the male prepares the situation abroad and then the spouse, wife, family follows: *„It is so strange for me if someone has a house, a car, family bonds, maybe some land, and cuts all those ties from one day to the next and goes out just to earn a lot of money which you do not have time to enjoy and spend... (Interviewee no. 4 of institutional actors).“*

According to the interviewees, in the case of those of 36+ years of age the motivation factor for emigration is to secure a higher living standard, to be able to secure education for their children in a more regulated environment. Many Hungarians want to step out of the minority status, but one of the interviewees strongly judges the Hungarian national identity of those children who socialize in Germany, Austria or Great Britain. Furthermore, it is unimaginable among the second-generation immigrants that they will return to Serbia. They see this country as the country they come from, but they have no bonds to Serbia, so they totally secede from their community for good.

As Kanjiža's population consists mainly of Hungarian **nationals**, the Hungarians leave this settlement in biggest numbers. This is characteristic of Hungarians living in Serbia in general, as many of them have dual citizenship which gives them opportunities (but recently, those living in Southern-Serbia increasingly tend to move abroad, too). Emigration is not massively characteristic for the Serbian and Roma population of the municipality. Yet, the interviewee representing the social sector claims that in the past 4-5 years the members of the Roma population tend to join their relatives in Germany living on state aid. Some of them return, as they are banned for circumventing the system: *„ Some people come back because there is a tough system, not so smooth as ours. There, if your children don't go to school or kindergarten... then the benefit and the flat will be taken away, finally they will be banned (Interviewee no. 3 of institutional actors).“*

The emigration of **the skilled and the unqualified** workers is influenced by different factors according to the interviewees. The unqualified workers are primarily motivated by higher salaries, while the skilled workers or those with higher education diplomas are seeking professional excellence and acknowledgement. According to one of the interviewees *„if you are working at the conveyer belt in a factory no matter where it is, in Szeged (Hungary) or England, the point is where they give you more money. Those who are able to do intellectual work, they probable go to Hungary because there is a better, higher valued job for them (Interviewee no. 2 of institutional actors).“* As it was stressed several times by the interviewees, the country still could not overcome employment through nepotism or personal relations (“connections” as used in local slang), which in many cases also means political engagement, while the economies of Hungary or western countries are open towards a knowledge based economy: *There are not enough professionals and that's a big problem. Through a political line*

*people get in lead position not because of knowledge or suitability (Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors)."*

From the aspect of **financial situation**, those who are very poor, living permanently on social aid, are less likely to emigrate. On the territory of the Municipality of Kanjiža, there are about 700 families receiving social aid (among them are elderly and Roma). Approximately half of them are entitled to request aid throughout the year, having several children or being unable to work. Those who emigrate are not in this group, presumably most of them are satisfied with their current situation, they can keep up their low standards of living from the aid. There were some who received aid, left abroad, they requested aid for maximum 3-6 months in the winter period, and they worked seasonal jobs which enabled them to secure a small capital to leave.

Interviewees claim that since the dual citizenship law was adopted in Hungary, the poorer segment with permanent unemployment and with no more financial reserves were the first ones to make the forced decision to emigrate. However, we can see that in the last period, those having a moderate livelihood, considering Serbian relations, having stable jobs, also choose this path – many of them describe it as an escape, that they chose the easy way out, or that they lacked national sentiment. According one interviewee *"Unemployment or a salary of 100, 200, 300 euros makes people give up this existence... they have some kind of livelihood here – house or apartment, car and sort of work... and they [make this decision] at age 40-50 (Interviewee no. 5 of institutional actors)."*

An also important pulling factor perceived are the people already living abroad. According to the interviewees there is little information about the difficulties they face abroad, as proportionally the number of those who return is minimal. Serbia's hopeless economic situation (few jobs, small wages), disorganization (the institutions serving the society, the public sector cannot perform their work as it should), and the still ruling corruption are all push factors. According the social worker: *"It is a fact that there are not enough jobs in the municipality, or if you manage to find a job the wages are so low that you cannot fend for the family, but they can't find job in the neighbourhood either... this is the biggest problem. ...I saw families which couldn't pay utility rates in the winter or it was a challenge for them, so I wouldn't call it an adventure. It is a final step, because they start a new life abroad without any language skills."* The mayor of municipality also speaks of the difficult situation: *"Here in Serbia every day is a challenge, I never know what will happen, we are not in a system, it is a rather big anarchy. But you can get used to it, you also need a different way of thinking, a global view."*

The immigration to the municipality is minimal<sup>14</sup> according to the interviewees. Those who settle in usually represent a challenge for the community. They either come from other territories of Vojvodina or Southern-Serbia having even worse economic and social parameters. There are community and social challenges mainly in Martonoš and Horgoš, due to the Roma coming from Kosovo of whom there is no precise information. According to social worker *"There is a problem with school integration, language, children are unregistered... practically we don't know who their mothers, fathers are. ... they are strangers to us who enter a small community the capability and flexibility of which is questionable. Therefore, there are conflicts, temporarily we can smooth them out, but in the long run this will be even a greater problem for our municipality."* As they are not open to honest communication with the social workers, their integration will be a tougher challenge.

According the interviewees the daily commuting is increasing in municipality: *"The people who want to work and who are dissatisfied with the wages here commute [to Hungary]. This leads to that, for*

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<sup>14</sup> Internal immigration to the municipality in 2016 was 201 persons- from the given NUST3 68 and from the capital just 2 persons. The international immigration in 2016 was 9 persons, out which 7 nationals and 2 foreign citizens.

*example, in Horgoš one of my friends can't find a worker who can pick peaches or go to plough. These blue-collar workers mostly commute to Hungary (Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors)."*

The emigration from the municipality has great impact on development, and the two influence each other in a spiral. As long as the municipality is not capable of securing more jobs and adequate wages for the citizens, this problem will continue to deepen: *„The people are disillusioned, and they say that are not willing to work for that much money. The family must be kept... Although, I think if the companies increased the salaries by 25% then it would be solved, people would stay here (Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors)."* The successful companies and factories operating on the territory of the municipality are planning expansions and development, but for the production to be marketable and to be able to secure adequate wages for their employees, they primarily have to focus on cost-effectiveness (like Germany does), which demands automatization depending on big investments. Currently, the equipment in Kanjiža is so undeveloped, that its development is absolutely justifiable according to economic actors: *“To be at the top in the world in any industry means having many more expensive machines. We have no such machines. Their strength is that every three years, they invest in new, better and faster technology. We are far behind that (Interviewee no.6 of institutional actors)."* However, due to migration there is a lack in qualified labor force, which makes development and expansion projects more difficult – moreover some believe that that is withholds investors. According to entrepreneur: *“I think this conception or politics is a bit late, most people emigrated ... the people you could count on. We want to expand, to give new opportunities to employees but for that we have to find proper land. There is an ever-growing problem that when we need someone with skills, we find that those workers had already gone (Interviewee no.5 of institutional actors)."* Another entrepreneur has the same opinion: *„...there can be problems in the future if we do not stop the migration of young people despite municipality's vision and good plans for development (Interviewee no.7 of institutional actors)."*

Because of the above mentioned, many feel that the municipality is stagnating, in both social and economic aspects. Several interviewees also believe that the integration of foreign capital could be the solution, utilizing the territory's excellent geographic features: *"... The resources are primarily the geographic location, the position that we should definitely take advantage of in the future. [Serbia is] a transit country, and geographic location is very important (Interviewee no. 7 of institutional actors)."* Among other features, the state border is close, the highway is close, there is a potential for more rational use/sale of oil deposits, and for the further development of the spa. The interviewees see potential in these projects, which could meliorate the emigration. According to interviewee: *„We have been stagnating for a couple of years. I do not feel that the local government found the right way. We need those things which could import the capital here. I always bring up the border, the Hungarian, the EU border is a big advantage, and we should find a great idea for this. We have oil, the oil deposits here... I feel that we get back less money from this what we should. We cannot make any tourist attractions, natural treasures, anything that can attract people here (Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors)."*

Overall, the interviewees are expecting an intervention at a national level to take rational steps to improve the economy. Some interviewees think that the country still licks its wounds from the war and bombing, and the nationalism still defines the economic relations: *“... we hold the sack for this, the European Union's intentions don't work, we cannot get out of this war situation because our rhetoric about it did not change... we cannot reconcile with a single country with which we had a conflict. It economically reduces us... because in our country the arrogance always affects the economy – normally, countries don't go this way – they sell products even when they are angry (Interviewee no. 2 of institutional actors)."* According to the mayor of municipality: *“Our past is hindering us, we cannot ignore our past, it won't be 1-2 years to set these things right, it will be a decade-long task.”*

## 5.3. Results of the interview with young migrants

In total 10 interviews were made, with 7 women and 3 men. The majority of them is highly qualified (6 of them, and 3 out of 6 are on their PhD studies). Regarding marital status their ratio is 50-50% of those living in partnership (formally or not formally: 3 of them are married, other 2 are in partnerships) and singles (4 singles and 1 divorced). Majority of interviewees have children (6 persons).

The type of migration varies among the interviewees: four of them emigrated (one among them is commuting weekly from Vienna, Austria, to visit her children at home), four interviewees are commuters and two interviewees returned home. Half of the commuters travel daily to work as their job is in Hungary, the other half is traveling due to their studies (one of them not on regular basis), also to the Hungary. Two of the interviewees had short-term migrations, 4 months in the USA, while the other talked about an experience of 5-6 months in the UK.

Regarding their professional status, half of them are economically active, while the other half is not: 5 of the interviewees are currently employed, 3 of the interviewees are completing their higher education, 2 of the interviewees are unemployed. One of the unemployed persons is active in the civil sector, while the other unemployed interviewee is currently thinking about starting a private business.

As for the targeted destinations, Hungary appears primarily, typically for continuing higher education, some of them also mentioned planning to work in Hungary (or planning to get involved in temporary projects through contacts). We also did interviews with people who chose “characteristic” countries for those with Serbian citizenship, like: Austria, Germany and the UK. Altogether, the dialogues indicate that the North-Vojvodina - Budapest axis of attraction can be considered as home for the Hungarian population, therefore they make migratory decisions more easily within this territory, either for educational or work purposes.

The interviewees socialized in continuous mobility, which typically began at the time of choosing a secondary school for various vocations. Most of them gained migratory experiences in their teenage years already, in the case of six interviewees we talk about internal migration, while in the case of one interviewee it was migration abroad. These experiences formed a part of their daily routines, and their approach to this was typically neutral, which is probably the reason for not having special feelings regarding their current daily commuting to Szeged or Budapest, or Vienna even. Within the families both internal and international migrations are present among the siblings, the parents typically had internal migration.

In the case of the majority of the interviewees, their difficulty to identify with not so distant culture and community of Hungary due to their identity as Hungarians from Vojvodina is displayed vigorously. Many of them consider that regardless of the same linguistic, cultural and historical background, they still felt as aliens in Hungary: *“The feeling of being Serbian is present in everyone, somewhere deep down. Not simply being Hungarian, but Hungarian from Vojvodina, who lives in Serbia, someone who gets in touch with the language, who’s a little bit tougher in a sense, who absorbed a little bit of this Slavic toughness, if there is such a thing, or maybe we just convinced ourselves, but there is such a thing. We are glad we are a bit tougher (Interviewee no.10).”* According to them, the diverse culture they socialized in strongly determines their personality and mentality, even if they cannot identify themselves with being Serbian either, due to the fact that many of them speak Serbian language poorly: *“My culture is a mix even if my Serbian is weak. One grows up in this (Interviewee no.7).”* This feeling of otherness led to their commuting home (whether from Budapest or Szeged) during their studies almost without exception. The primary reasons for returning home among the commuters were emotional: family, friends and the small-town milieu. These interviewees often imply being

irritated and indignant by the waste of time due to waiting at the border when their home is just a couple of kilometers away, so it caused difficulties in their lives. They emphasize the waiting time, the vulnerability they felt in front of the border guards and/or degrading treatment.

Strong local patriotism is often confirmed among the interviewees by their engagement in informal organizations: sports associations, folk dance troops, scouts associations, amateur theater and other type of civil society organisations, but for others the “cultic” places (the bank of the Tisa River, Járás (salty marsh in the vicinity of Kanjiža), churchyard) and the local legends and events that give them the real spirit of Kanjiža: *“Malomfesztivál” is an important event that I will attend even if I live in Hungary or the other side of the world (Interviewee no.8).* Their attachment to these informal organisations led to active community activism in the municipality of Kanjiža even in their adulthood.

### **Migration with educational purpose**

The attraction of Hungary for educational purposes does not diminish, due to the same lingual environment. Among the interviewees higher education purposes are primary, but there are some who completed secondary school education in Hungary. 7 of our interviewees joined, or are still part of the Hungarian education system.

The strong recruitment from Hungary is not so present anymore, which earlier targeted the settlements with Hungarian population in Vojvodina, nevertheless Hungary was the solely targeted destination in this sense to our interviewees. The dialogues indicated that Szeged is very attractive to the population of Kanjiža (the Hungarians from Vojvodina in general). It is not far, not in the aspect of distance nor culturally, moreover it is closer than Novi Sad, which also offers similar mixed choices in vocations.

Beside the vicinity, the possibility to continue studies in Hungarian, and the wider range of possibilities in professions also served as important motivational factors among those who emigrated with educational purposes. The interviewees who are seeking professional development and new challenges, described their decisions as conscious and thoughtful. This is also reflected by the 3 interviewees, who are completing their PhD studies, one is currently considering to do so – and these are (will be) achieved in Hungary. Self-accomplishment is very important for them, as some of them were dissuaded to continue their studies at home by deficient Serbian language skills. What is interesting is that one of the interviewees, coming from a mixed family, emphasized that she gained negative linguistic experiences during her university years (she completed undergraduate studies in Subotica). Just like the other Hungarian students, she tried to avoid tasks that demanded communication, so she did not take extra tasks, which was also a burden on her professional development: *“So, I could have gained much more from my university training, and I could have got even higher grades if I had dared to speak (Interviewee no.10).”*

Only two of the interviewees mentioned personal relationships beside their profession as motivational factors in choosing between Hungary and Serbia for continuing their studies. Both interviewees described it as a decision based on compromise, since one of the interviewees, whose mother tongue is Serbian, had great educational opportunities in Belgrade, with the possibility to become an assistant professor, while the other interviewee claimed in her interview that she never wanted to leave her country, Hungary was rather repelling for her. *“The funny thing is I didn’t want to. Somehow, ever since I was little, I had this certain feeling in me, not fear, but attachment to the place (Interviewee no.10).”* But as both of their partners had stronger professional ties to Hungary, it was more rational for them to move, but none of them spoke about that negatively.

## Emigration of young labor force

The interviewees who emigrated and left their homes for work, indicated that their decision was influenced by the repelling factors of Serbia. The rational causes are appearing strongly and can be traced back to economic reasons. Most of the interviewees are not seeking opportunities abroad because they were unemployed, they are not from the lowest economic layers, nevertheless, they felt their situation was hopeless and that was their reason to make this well considered decision, which was in most cases preceded by months or years of reasoning. Even though they had jobs, they could not secure the standard of living for themselves nor for their families which they thought they deserved for the amount of work they had done, they could not move forward in this sense, so the country and its economy forced them into a making the decision to leave. The most important motivation factors are better standard of living, financial security and for those with children: securing a more predictable future for their children.

Some of the interviewees commute daily to the other side of the border, primarily for better work conditions and appreciation, and better wages. In the case of highly educated interviewees the primary motivational factors are getting a job and reinforcement within their profession, and possibility for further development.

They usually talked about a mutual decision, but some interviewees also talked about the case of their spouses, when the motivation was adventurousness, and they supported this decision. *Of course, one is driven by curiosity, adventurousness, to try things yourself...to get to know yourself. In my opinion, he was rather driven by the fact that... ok, we know what is life like here, but what would it be like abroad? It wouldn't be good to live with the "what ifs"...if he doesn't go abroad, if we don't go abroad, there would always be that "what if" we had gone abroad. At that time our goal was to go abroad to try things. Our daughter was 3.5, so we were thought we don't have anything to lose. We can return until the school starts.* This decision was not necessarily consciously formed, but their partners were influenced by the others, almost everybody left to "try their luck" abroad, and in the beginning there were not many information about the difficulties of living abroad, on the other hand, there was the desire to prove one's self as a probable factor too, to prove that they were capable to get along abroad. At present, both interviewees moved back to Kanjiža, one with her family, the other with her child, without the husband.

The interviewees talked about the work conditions, and indicated great differences. It is clear that the material appreciation of their work is a lot more significant abroad, and many emphasize the great number of job opportunities (e.g. part-time or temporary job opportunities). Many stress that work is not easy abroad either, but the wages and the standard of living they can secure, compensate for the difficulties, opposite to the experiences at home, where their, so to say, "slave" work was hardly paid for and their rights were also limited. There were many similar experiences: *"...I will run the story on two levels. Slave labour and the way it is paid. Both Serbia and England are slaveholders. Here, my own nation treats me as a slave plus they do not pay for my work. In England you are a migrant and you are working 20 hours a day...but they pay for it. Working in Hungary as a Hungarian...maybe they are the most humane (Interviewee no.4).*" One single mother, for example, stresses that the employers in the private sector do not bother to be humane with workers with families, while that is not the case in Hungary, where she works currently.

Many of them mention housing problems as one of the difficulties of living abroad. It is hard to find adequate apartments, it is hard to find them at affordable rates, especially for families, that is why it is important to start off abroad with adequate financial capital: *"...he struggled to find an apartment. One should know about Germany and housing that many times people who have cats and dogs get an*

*apartment sooner than those who have children (Interviewee no.5).*” Many emphasize that everyday living is more expensive abroad indeed, however if both adults work, they can save some money, even if they have children.

## **Emigrating with family ...**

Four of the interviewees have children. During the interviews it was outlined that the focus of their decision was the future of their children: *„... life is a lot more livable here, we had to progress a lot to reach this. So I didn't regret moving at all, I really feel that this will show a return after some time, moreover, it already compensated us in many ways, and it will especially compensate our children, the path we pave for them will be easier for them to walk on (Interviewee no.1).*” This goes also for those who gave up everything and left their home for the unknown for a better standard of living, security and a predictable future, to build their new home, and also for those who left with similar expectations, but in the end they returned home to the insecurity, because of their families. There are typical migratory trajectories for the families, married couples, where the husbands leave abroad first to prepare the situation, then as they succeed in securing a sufficient funds, the other members of the family follow abroad. In many cases this period is usually very difficult both emotionally and financially for the families, the solitude and the detachment for an uncertain period of time is a true ordeal for the couples and children who were used to the traditional family-model: *”...we were married for four years, but we lived separately a lot, or it was three maybe, I don't know, as our marriage existed only in paper. He went to work, as he had to support the family, and we stayed at home (Interviewee no.4).*” Based on the dialogues, it seems that after the first very difficult period – which can last over a year – if they succeed to pull through, then comes the turning point in their lives. Still, good relationships, helpful colleagues or employers and a welcoming community are indispensable. Mothers claim to be very lonely, one also got depressed. The reason for that was mainly that they did not, or rarely worked, they were usually at home with the children as the integration into the system of pre-school education took a lot of time: *”My daily routine was the following, I woke up in the morning, and like a robot, I prepared the breakfast, I put the child here, I put things there, I felt like a person with no emotions. And it was hard, since you have two children, and you suffer and you are lonely. But if you didn't experience it, you can't understand it. I was eagerly waiting for the sun to go down, to go to sleep and stop thinking (Interviewee no.5).*” Once the family admitted that they were unhappy in the small apartment out there, they decided to finish their adventure and return home to their friends and relatives: *”...we were sitting in the living room all day long. I was nursing the baby and my daughter was watching TV. I thought it's not normal. She is 5, she shouldn't watch TV, but play with friends outside. I was torn, not only because of myself, but also because of her. She doesn't need this life (Interviewee no.5).*” The motivation behind their return home was the close and broader family and relatives and the security they provide (they do not feel like strangers among them), then the higher quality life at home (family house in their property, just as for the commuting employees) – though none of them see Serbia as a family-friendly country.

## **The role of networks**

The role of networks cannot be denied in migratory decision making. During the talks they did not appear as a pull factor when making the decision, except for those who had partnership for their motivation in making this decision. Still, those who moved to Hungary with the aim to continue their studies all claimed to have a network of contacts of Hungarians from Vojvodina. They are the ones who paved the path for them and helped them through administration or getting along everyday – though they did not need that because of language barriers, as the language is the same – but they were not motivational factors, the interviewees did not choose those faculties, departments or the cities because of their friends.

The interviewees who traveled far, primarily seeking job opportunities, got a lot of help from the adequate contacts in the first period: *“With the help of this friend, I’m grateful ever since... he took care of my husband in the first couple of months... without someone’s help you cannot take care of these basic things, you can’t even start (Interviewee no.3).”* These networks were more of a network of weak contacts (a friend of a friend or colleague), and its national character was significant. Many interviewees claimed in their interviews that their boss was of Hungarian nationality, then their colleagues were in majority Hungarian, and this was all formed consciously. One interviewee started her own business in Germany, she for instance “took” many of her friends from home abroad: *“... for instance, just half an hour ago I received a message from home asking whether I was looking for someone- “my wife is moving here”, so I already had a lot of interested persons from home, too, but of course it’s not that simple, if someone does not know the language at all, I can’t employ them (Interviewee no.3).”* Others also talk about similar convergence, for example in Vienna the guest workers from Serbia have their own communities, they formed their own “clans” to help each other out: *„There are these small communities out there, they stick together, well, there are these small clans... we must stick together and help each other out (Interviewee no.1).”*

### Thinking of return

Many of them do not really want to return home, as most of them formed their current life or are planning to form their life in a way that will not to break away from their homes. *“It’s not a long distance...to travel via Đala. It takes less time. It was a bit better. And as time went by I came closer and closer to my home, and actually that was my intent (Interviewee no.6).”* According to the interviews there are several factors that affect the subjects, like the small-town milieu, calm environment, quality living space, friends and family, and last but not least, the environment and the culture they feel good in – despite the everyday difficulties - that is what they really consider home. *“This is a basic starting point for me, namely that I cannot get along anywhere else. I simply can’t. I cannot do things the way I do at home, for example, when I go down to the River Tisa. I go down, here, and I swim, or I go fishing...if I cannot do anything else here, I go down to the River Tisa. It’s a kind of everyday thing that I can kill time with. I know the region and I like it, too... And obviously we grew up in a small town. I don’t know where does it come from, but it has a great impact on people. It is more of a peaceful town that has different pace (Interviewee no.6).”* Only two interviewees with families suggested that they do not plan to return home, one of them already gave up their home, sold the house in Serbia, the other one claims it might be possible they will return home or move to Hungary when they retire: But they are the ones who consciously bring up their children in a German or Austrian environment (or plan to do so). Their life stories reveal that the chance for them to return home is fading, as they do not have any friends left in Kanjiža, and as they claim, beside the scent of the river Tisa and the paprika processing plants, there is nothing else they miss.

### Thoughts about development

The interviewees have mixed feelings concerning the development of the country and the Municipality of Kanjiža. Some stressed that there is not a big difference between Hungary and Serbia for instance, *“I think it’s obvious. I think it’s obvious that Hungary is more developed economically. Serbia is a totally unstable country (Interviewee no.9)”*, however they characterize Serbia as a “mafia-state”, while Hungary is constitutional. There is a contradiction in certain aspects, as they claim some things at home are more functional than in the overregulated western world. Most of them emphasize the technologic development of the western countries, and its advantages which appear not only in everyday life, but also in administration and in public transport. Many claim that the Serbian bureaucracy is not transparent and is slow, they refer to corruption and the pressure of political parties, therefore those who join the adequate political party are better off than others. But some claimed that people are the

factors which pull back development, as they keep putting responsibility on the state and they are incapable to recognize their own role in this whole process. Moreover, the older generations socializing in emigration and apathy will be even less in a position to change that: But during the talks, some see potential in the municipality, and they hope the EU accession will bring progress both for the country and the municipality, as Serbia primarily needs financial resources to catch up, as most of them see the lag as a result of economic downturn and instability: *"There would be no problems neither in Serbia, nor in Vojvodina. The problem is rather the leadership...there is a lot of money here, in my opinion, but most of it ends up in someone's pocket. I mostly see that. There would be lot of opportunities here, but this is not allowed, that is not allowed, thus the money stays in someone's pocket...the situation would be better, if the leadership changed (Interviewee no.5)."*

## 6. Typical biographies of young migrants

The narrative interviews with the youth can be classified according to some of the emigration types institutional actors highlighted: migrants with educational purpose, emigrants with conscious family planning motivation ("pioneer").

Overall, the first characteristic turning point appears at the selection of secondary education, and for 6 of them that meant daily commute to other municipalities. The next turning point is the selection of faculty, of higher education when the young choose between studying in Serbia or Hungary. Internal migration that started after the secondary school shows the archetype of a Hungarian student living in Vojvodina: continuing studies as close to home as possible, without putting a serious effort and money in it. Among the Hungarians in Vojvodina that often meant a dilemma between continuing education in their mother tongue or in the official language of the state: *"During the fourth year of the secondary school, when we had to think about where to continue our studies, I realized that I am very interested in philosophy and aesthetics and that I would like to deal with that. I decided to look for opportunities here in Serbia...there were no opportunities in Novi Sad, at that time, only in Belgrade, naturally in Serbian language. I didn't have the sufficient level of knowledge of Serbian language at that time, so I didn't dare to risk it (Interviewee no.2)".* The young who went to study in Hungary have the dilemma whether to come home or not all the time during their studies and after it, and they find a solution in characteristic commuting even during the studies. The interviewees highlight this difficulty: *"This is my everyday life. I try to overcome this situation, so it does not to get on my nerves, crossing the border is tiring, that is the most tiring part. If it hadn't existed, everything would have been different. But, of course, it would be the best if there were normal job opportunities here, at home (Interviewee no.6)".* We can see that it was a conscious and firm decision to migrate to Hungary for educational purposes. The migratory trajectories are completely related to their studies and professional development opportunities and self-realization too.

"Older youth" appeared among the interviewees whose life stories are about the crisis in creating a base for the future and progress (lack of material security). The life stories of three interviewees present the typical "pioneer" families' stories: *"As a well-proven method, my husband moved first, I stayed at home alone with our 3,5 years old son. We didn't know how long will we be apart. We were aware that it could be 3 months, half a year, or a year before we can go after him (Interviewee no.3)",* stories of those who moved abroad to secure better living: *"... I added things up, here I earn as much in one day as I did for two weeks' work at home ... people really don't leave so they can buy a good car, or go on holiday here and there, but literally to survive and also to be able to evolve and not regress (Interviewee no.3)."* This was backed by the fact that in the past couple of years almost all of their

friends moved abroad searching for a better life: *"Meanwhile, we saw that this one went abroad, and that one, too (Interviewee no.5)." They wanted to live a "normal" life, where they do not have problems paying the bills, sending the children to school, and have opportunity to go on excursions, holidays with the children: "We couldn't afford things that can be considered natural, for example things that are natural here for everybody, to be able to go on a holiday with their children for two weeks once a year, to relax a little. That was pretty hard to solve while we were at home (Interviewee no.3)." They wanted to provide a more secure future for themselves and for their children, too. They didn't have good job opportunities in Serbia, they felt their lives to be insecure: "In the past we said that we would never leave this place. We had our own house. Our parents, friends, everything was here...but then time went by, and I became unemployed. Our daughter was born and I stayed at home. My partner's employment became questionable or so to say, the functioning of the company he worked in became questionable...the salary was late, etc., as it was happening in most of the companies (Interviewee no.5)." They always had the feeling they are working in vain and going backwards: "It was hard to maintain ourselves even with two wages. I'm not saying we couldn't survive, but just simply from one day to the other, so we couldn't progress at all, it was impossible. We fought a lot because of that, we were more irritable (Interviewee no.3)." Many times, their employer did not register them officially, they had seasonal jobs. Year after year, as the children got older, they realized they did not create anything for themselves, they had the feeling they would not be able to secure the basic standard of living for their children. One of the interviewee's husband left to Germany in autumn 2015, where he got a good job, but he was very far from his family, he could come home every second or third month only for a weekend, so they decided they do not want to go that far. In summer 2016, he moved to Austria (Vienna), which was easier to reach, he could come home almost every weekend. After half a year, the interviewee joined him, as they thought it will be easier if the two of them are together. The children stayed with their grandmother. The interviewee comes home every weekend (because of the children who stayed home), but their long-term aim is to move the whole family, and maybe once they are old they will move back home, or to Hungary.*

One of the interviewees speaks openly about their difficulties which are the same in the life story those migrants who migrate abroad (not to Hungary) such as: they speak openly about making the decision, and about the period the family spent apart, the difficulties of the first year, housing issues, homesickness, language difficulties, loneliness and integration. According to interviewee: *"You are a complete stranger there. So, we went somewhere, for example to an office, to the doctor's or somewhere else, and you feel stupid, since you cannot speak the language...it lowers your confidence (Interviewee no.5)." Another one talked about same experience: "... okay, it is difficult in the beginning, it was for me, too, the language is foreign, they expect 200% from a foreigner, so literally as Darwin's Law claims: only the strongest survive. A lot people return home by the way, because they can't take the obstacles, but if we plan long term, it's worth to hold on, it's worth to stay strong, because it will pay off, it will pay off for our children for sure (Interviewee no.1)."*

In one of the narrative interviews appears the perspective of a mother, a wife who is sitting at home alone, "doing nothing"; and through the perspective of the family. What was life like abroad, living alone with a child, then being pregnant, while the husband was working all day. In fact, the family was the reason of their return home: *"When you are abroad and you do not speak the language, you have nobody there and I am pregnant, and my daughter and I went out, and I started to panic- where should I go in case of trouble, who could I run to. When you are at home, you can turn to anybody, they know me or I can say who I am, but there, I couldn't count on anybody, and it was extremely scary (Interviewee no.5)." Since her husband worked a lot, she was at their little apartment with the children, and she was not happy anymore. She was saddened by the quality of life she could offer to her daughter. She could not fit in at all and did not have friends. They never went anywhere except the*

playground. She did not have personal relationships. Many times she was afraid that she could not turn to anybody in case of trouble. Like when they were standing in front of the kindergarten with her daughter: *"I closed my eyes, trying to make no contact with people, since maybe I will be able, but maybe I won't be able to understand them (Interviewee no.5)."* In fact, the family was the reason of their emigration and returning home too.

The common points in the life stories of the commuters, those living in two places and the returnees are the driving force of personal relationships and local patriotism. Their life stories are interwoven with the sense of being from Kanjiža, from Vojvodina, by their sense of identity as Hungarians from Vojvodina: *"the Tisa by Szeged is somehow different from the way it is at home in Kanjiža (Interviewee no.8)".* A frequent and emphatic element of the life stories is coming back- coming home: *"It was extremely good to be at home. I started to feel so much gratitude for being at home. I started to appreciate my life... It felt so good. I became open. I really started to appreciate my life. I looked around the house and said yes, this is our house, I can look through my own window (Interviewee no.5)."*

## 7. Challenges connected to youth migration and policies aimed to deal with them

### 7.1. Young migrants on policy challenges

According to the participants of the focus group, the municipality tries to take on the fight with emigration by creating a more livable environment: *"As I see it, the events, programs that exist here, are all short-term, unfortunately, they have no long-term effects. The municipality is trying to do something... (focus group)".* Although, participants highlight that most of the mentioned problems are systemic problems in Serbia and are not in the competence of the municipality. The young interviewees and the focus group participants refer to inadequacy in the fields of education, economy, civil and social sectors, and administration and propose (partial) solutions at the same time.

#### 1. EDUCATION:

Education reform is a topic that always comes up when discussing various topics during the focus group, however, interviewees know that it would be a very slow process and that it should be done on national level as for now migration is impossible to stop. Fast reactions would be needed on lower levels.

The participants of the focus group think that it is necessary to help **to acquire the official language of the country more successfully** (language equality). From the point of view of Hungarian minorities, a lot more students would continue their studies here, if they could overcome language disadvantages at a young age: *"It is not a foreign language in schools and it is a kind of necessary evil to them. If we examine all this from point of migration, not only Hungarians migrate – many Serbian people migrate too, but it's a huge advantage if you speak the language of the neighbouring country, so it is simpler to go to work there (focus group)."* They think that parents do not find their children learning Serbian language important at all – they rather make their children learn English and stimulate them to go abroad. Yet, studying in Hungary starts to become a prestige among students of Serbian nationality, too. *"North Bačka is so close to the border that people are absorbed by it anyway. Even those pupils are absorbed who attend the school in Serbian language, even they go to study in Hungary. It was fashionable in the past, for some time, that Serbian children, or half-Serbian and Croatian children attended grammar school in Budapest. It was prestigious, it was more interesting (focus group)."* Although, it is a fact that students go to study from municipality of Kanjiža, and most of them who go to study to Hungary cannot fit back in the Serbian medium. *"It is not in the interest of Serbia that the*

*minorities prevail in any way. It is not in the interest of the country that you speak your mother tongue properly, however you should know their language or some other foreign language (focus group)."* Yet, economically it would be a positive thing to exploit them more, as these border residents could be mediators between the different countries (in terms of language and culture).

According to the participants of the focus group, **educational reforms** are needed. The participants are aware that changes should happen at the national level and that they are slow and not radical enough (that is why they do not feel the change). The participants did not only highlight the teaching of Serbian language, but also the transfer of practical economic knowledge, and emphasised the importance of teaching of human rights and labour rights. On the other hand, schools should deal more with the **distortion of the value system**, more emphasis should be put on the youth to get to know practical things in everyday life– **life counselling**.

## 2. CIVIL SECTOR:

According to participants of the focus group, municipal supports the civil sector in the fields of culture and entertainment too (by supporting programs, listening to community opinions) and promoting sport activities.

They feel that the town of Kanjiža provides the necessary infrastructure, but other settlements are far less developed: *"There is the Youth Home, the infrastructure of Kanjiža looks great, but people cannot live on culture...but one can look at Horgoš, Martonoš, and that there is a bit of a centralisation in the municipality (focus group)."*

In the interview, recruitment of people for various initiatives is a recurring problem and it is getting more and more difficult. They think that one of the reasons could be the decrease in the population within the community, or the events are not interesting enough for young generations. *"However, there is a problem in the Youth Office, whose staff is currently very active, namely that they have only a few people, there are only few of them who visit these events. Few people remained here, at home (focus group)."* Sometimes the events are not free and that is the reason there are no visitors, and sometimes the information do not reach people.

According to younger interviewees depression and lethargy characterize the community: *"This is an everyday atmosphere, this poverty. Lethargy is in the air (Interviewee no.6)."* During the focus group and some discussions with younger migrants the individual and the community responsibility also came up: *"...people always point to others. They do not comprehend how big influence they have on everything. But everybody should have their self-awareness, what and who am I in this process. If it had happened, maybe something would have changed. But, here everybody accepts this sh\*t and will accept it in the future, as well (Interviewee no.6)."*

According to participants it would be important to **strengthen community involvement, highlighting community values** as early as possible. *"To help sub-individual organisations...neither I, nor does my great-grandmother expect it from the country, but maybe these initiatives on lower level would keep us going (focus group)."*

It would be important to **support non-profit** sector because the current non-governmental infrastructure cannot subsist because the financial support is not continuous. Two civil societies (Barka day-care, Gnezdo), that work with and care for disadvantaged families and disabled people highlighted that even their functioning is cumbersome as they are functioning with the help of financial resources from projects, and that is typical for other civil organizations.

## 3. ECONOMY:

Some participants of the focus group are skeptical about the possibility of reducing the large-scale emigration (with the help of strategies), which started in the last few years - partly because people go abroad primarily because of livelihood difficulties. They think those people who stay here, they stay because of their strong feeling of patriotism and not because of events organised and possibilities of local involvement. *"People do not emigrate because of lack of programs, but because one cannot make ends meet, if one is not supported at all (focus group)."*

Younger migrants highlighted the unpredictability and low wages in the country and the lack of adequate jobs as a major problem in the municipality. *"... People really don't leave so they can buy a good car, or to go on holiday here and there, but literally to survive and also to be able to evolve and not regress (Interviewee no.1)."* We can see many similar experiences: *"At that time the legal monthly minimal wage was 15,000 Serbian dinars, the amount that I signed the contract for. Yet, I only got 8,000 Serbian dinars in cash, only the half of it. So, it was very hard at that time, but what could I do, I worked. I lived somehow (Interviewee no.5)."* Nevertheless, it is particularly difficult to find a job within profession in the municipality. The participants had negative opinion about the employees of the National Employment Agency branch in Kanjiža. They said that the employees are phlegmatic and they are not helpful at all, plus they do not have up-to-date information. Moreover, they do not help the citizens to find jobs that they are qualified for: *"In the Employment agency, they asked if I want to get a job based on my qualification. I said yes [he got his university diploma from the Hungarian Department, currently doing his/her PhD] and they called me 2 weeks later that the gas station in Horgoš needs a gas filler and everybody knew that the gas station is going to close within 3 weeks (focus group)."*

Many of participants think that the worst problem is unemployment, they feel they do not have any chances when someone is a beginner or is older, not even when someone has sufficient professional knowledge. Even more challenging situations are reported by single mothers, who highlight that it is difficult to find a part-time job or online jobs: *"I miss that there are no opportunities, only for full-time jobs, there is no opportunity for you to get a part-time job here, only illegally...while I can easily find a part-time jobs abroad (focus group)."* They highlight that there is a public works program in the local self-government that has more flexible working hours, yet it is seasonal work for very low wages. Therefore, it would be important to help **people (mostly young beginners and mothers) to get in the labour market and also economic reforms** are needed to **increase job openings and average salaries** – it should happen at the national level.

Generally, they talk negatively about the Serbian labour market: few jobs, low wages and exploitation, ignoring laws (there were subjects who were fired from their jobs while they were pregnant) – all these factors make living in this country more difficult. *"You have to work a lot for very little money. There are jobs and you can go to work there, but you cannot make a living of it...you work 12 hours a day, even on Saturdays. This is the reason foreign companies come here, everything is allowed, they can make you work, they do not have to pay for extra hours...when I worked here, I couldn't get a free Saturday, when I wanted, for a year (focus group)."* Still, they are optimistic about opportunity of country. They think that the country has extremely good **economic and geographic features**, moreover **the EU surrounds the country**, and they think that is something that needs to be developed.

During the focus group the **idea of prioritizing the interests of local people** came up. It means that the local government and the country could help the locals, e.g. food and produce for school meals should be bought from local craftsman and small farmers. The same rules should apply to the labour force (the development of private sector could be influenced by taxes).

#### 4. SOCIAL SECTOR

Most mentioned problem was the need for reforms at national level in this area, but **better utilization and coordination of existing systems** could make changes at the municipal level.

According to the participants of the focus group it would be necessary to **reform the financial aid system**. According to them, there are many able-bodied people who get financial aid, they highlight how the Roma abuse the system: *"... that allowances don't motivate them to work (focus group)."*

They think that the family policy is inadequate (**should be connected with the youth policy**), and it is not supportive at all. It would be a good practice at the municipal level that if there are job cuts, people who have families should be the last ones to be sent off, and also to bring back the mother-baby package which was withdrawn in municipality of Kanjiža recently: *[Nobody is interested in the fact how much do you have to work as a mother] "and it's sure that I am never going to bear another child here, in Serbia (focus group)."* Besides those, tax benefits for people who have families could encourage population growth, too.

#### 5. ADMINISTRATION

Office administration in Serbia is overcentralized, many people complained about having some administration to do in another municipality, where the attitude of clerks was also negative. They usually have a negative opinion about offices, more precisely about clerks in Kanjiža. They treat the client in a disdainful manner, they are not helpful, and they pointed out many times that the clerks are incompetent for the positions they fill in: *"If we are talking about Kanjiža, one has to know that it is a village, everyone is someone's relative here. If you are someone's relative, it doesn't matter that you do not have the appropriate qualifications, you are hired for the job, even if there are other 100 people, who are more suitable, more qualified or have a lot more experience...no, we are employing "the daughter of Böske" as we are doing our nails at her salon (focus group)."* There were people who talked about the language barriers they faced in their homeland (Serbia) when handling documents, as they do not speak the official language of the country on an appropriate level, plus the clerks were not very helpful (not the way they were in e.g. England). *"I've asked my father, many times, to come with me, despite the fact that it is embarrassing, as I am 30, as they do not help, and I sweat and I suffer and we cannot move from point A to point B (focus group)."* Although, there are clerks in most offices who are/speak Hungarian.

Besides a lack of knowledge, they think that the administration processes are slow because of underdeveloped technology. They saw good practice abroad which **should be introduced to the administration at municipal level like establishing administration via internet or telephone, queue management system, introduction of an online appointment booking** (things that function this way in Serbia do run smoothly). According to them it would be reasonable **to separate information requests from administration** (not to queue if someone only needs information).

The second cardinal problem are the difficulties with the nostrification of diplomas gained abroad. The central office is not customer friendly, the process is expensive (a Master's degree is about 500 euros). Despite the fact the expenses are reimbursed by the Hungarian National Council in the end of the procedure, it is difficult to pay in advance). In spite of recent "facilitations" (it is centralised in Serbia), the process lasts too long. On the other hand, some people think it is absurd that a diploma which is recognised in the EU has to be additionally nostrified in Serbia: *"For me diploma recognition is nonsense, I mean, I was like, excuse me, why is recognition needed...Diplomas from Szeged are accepted all around Europe...I mean, one has to laugh at Serbia (focus group)."* This is the reason that many of them have either not started the procedure of diploma nostrification, or they thought that they could not find a job here with their qualifications anyway: *"It's probable that I won't do the*

*procedure of recognition of doctoral dissertation, as is very unlikely that I will get a job here with this qualification (focus group)."*

Those who returned home have difficulties with the health insurance. People whose children were born abroad and do not have Serbian citizenship, had more problems with the Health Centre of Kanjiža, where they constantly encountered difficulties and were treated with disdain and negativity (by the nurses, however the pediatrician was nice). Most of them agreed that they could only achieve what they need when they talk in a condescending manner, or in "Balkan style"- not politely, rather quarrelling: *"...I never went there to ask them to help my child for free. I went there and told them our problem, namely, that s/he is not a citizen and that s/he doesn't have health insurance, but s/he needs their service...nurses are complete jerks [in the Health Centre of Kanjiža], I just can't say anything else...when I went there for the fourth time and I started to yell that I have had enough of them, only then the pediatrician came out and said that now we can come in (focus group)."*

Many of the participants of the focus group said that employees at the Town Hall of Kanjiža tried to rationalize administration and that they were usually helpful (in comparison to others). In the Town Hall of Kanjiža: *"everything seemed more reasonable there, the huge bureaucratic labyrinth does not exist there.", "Everything is written in capital letters both in Serbian and Hungarian, who to refer to", "I think that the Town Hall is among the better ones (focus group)."*

Besides these fields, participants of the focus group and young migrants are criticizing the political situation in the country. According to an interviewee, corruption is slightly lower in Hungary than in Serbia, which she characterizes as a "mafia state": *"Serbia is a really corrupted country. Mafia country (Interviewee no.9)."* She does not feel the pressure to join the actual leading political party in Hungary to get along in the same extent as in Serbia, where this is more accentuated and that is depressing.

Generally speaking, it would be important to **create a strategy that focuses on different groups (different life situations) of young generations**: to assess the needs of secondary school pupils to help them more effectively, to support them to stay here, at home. Most of the subjects agreed on the importance of helping the young as most of them do not have any vision of their future, general apathy characterises them, moreover, there are cases when their parents work abroad to send them money home, and they are doing nothing. *"20-30% of those people, who are still here in the country, are here because they live from day to day. They do not plan for longer periods of time, so it is ok for them that their fathers and mothers support them (focus group)."* They think that it is not a healthy vision of future for them, as they should be the ones to build our futures on. Thus, it is important to pay more attention to secondary school students. Experiences show that making targeted programs for this group is the most difficult. It is very difficult to take the fight to the online world, but young people live in that world, and this is the reason why it is so hard to get to them.

## 7.2. Policy competences, institutional actors involved

Serbia is a country in the process of decentralisation, meaning that the most of the competences still lie on the national level. The government makes the decisions in the areas significant for this project: migration policy, education, social affairs, employment policies. The local self-government is limited by the scope provided by the state and can act only in its confines, having little maneuvering space concerning independent decisions in these fields.

The local self-government is responsible for local development and local affairs in general. It operates the municipal kindergarten network, provides the necessary conditions for the primary schools and the secondary, provides certain social services, deals with local planning, municipal property

administration, support for the civil sector, etc. The local self-government and its scope of authority concerning youth migration is limited.

National ministries are in charge of migration and migration related issues. The most important ones for the municipality Kanjiža within YOUMIG activities are the Ministry of Interior as they have official data concerning people travelling abroad, and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy which has a Sector for active employment policies. Concerning the situation of the municipality of Kanjiža as a sending/ageing municipality, the work conducted in the area of birth rate policy and internal migration within Cabinet of the Minister without Portfolio in charge of Demography and Population Policy are also of great importance.

On the level of the province of Vojvodina, the Provincial Secretariat for Economy and Tourism operates a Sector for work and employment, the Provincial Secretariat for Education, Regulations, Administration and National Minorities – National Communities is also important as the municipality of Kanjiža has a population of 88% of Hungarian minority, and due to their right to a dual Serbian-Hungarian citizenship, they are the ones who emigrate, particularly young people.

An important body for the Hungarian minority is the Hungarian National Council which provides financial support in nostrification of diplomas, Serbian language courses, and propagates the rights of the Hungarian minority in Serbia. The Council provides many programs on the fields of culture, education, use of Hungarian language and media that indirectly fight against constant migration. One of the main program is the scholarship program for students who choose tertiary education in Serbia. Through this program the Council try to increase the number of high skilled professionals who will be much more successful at labour market.

The Prosperitati Foundation was set up in 2016, which aims to implement the economic and regional development strategy for the Hungarian communities in Vojvodina. Through the Foundation will be realized the strategic agreement of the Government of Republic of Hungary and The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ).

The municipality has a Development Strategy 2010-2020, but it does not have a chapter concerning emigration. There is an active Local action plan for the youth 2015-2020, which has the same issue. That can be explained by the fact that the outmigration intensified after 2015, and the topic was not alarming when those documents were drafted.

There are numerous civil organizations operating in Kanjiža which offer involvement in various subjects- sports, environmental protection, culture, tradition, art, organic farming, protection of animals, nature enthusiasts, volunteering, etc. They connect the community and strengthen the ties between individuals. Sometimes they represent an anchor which help people decide to stay in the municipality. Most of them get financial support from the municipal budget.

Due to the centralised approach, specific situation of Kanjiža cannot be separated from other municipalities'. The local context for municipalities in central Serbia and those on the border with the EU are by no means the same. Yet their independent operation to work in the best interest of its citizens and the county in general is not possible. Even though all mentioned public sector bodies cooperate in many fields, there is no tailor-made policy which could influence particular needs of particular settlements.

To the question of who is responsible for solving the problems, the focus group thought a lot. Each and every level appeared during the conversation. For some projects changes should be made on the national level, but individuals also feel their own responsibility. This is why they think that parents and future parents should be the ones to appeal to, they should be helped: *“as it is not the child who wants to go away, but if they saw the circumstances under which they grow up, they wouldn’t want to remain here, so I think that it is the parents, and future parents who need a safer future.”* They also think that it would be important to talk about the quite different values abroad where traditional family values and human relationships are secondary. *“..the child is the responsibility of the mother. Should I teach the child that the family is the best place to grow up in, or should I teach him to give a sh\*t about it and go abroad. We, the four of us, are going to get on well, and when we come home, the granny will not understand you, as the child is speaks partly English and partly Hungarian...she does not even know the child, as she sees him every six months (focus group).”* All this raises a question – who will care for older people left behind. The traditional family model is no longer the norm, and that is what the children grow up in. It is also frequent that parents go abroad and leave their children to the care of the grandparents, who cannot care about them appropriately. Thus, we come to the point that the participants feel responsible for the grandparents and for the community as well. The group agreed on the fact that teachers also have a huge responsibility in passing on good, everyday family values. Primarily, the country should provide the opportunity for people to be able to earn a decent living (they highlight here that people do not crave for luxury, they simply do not wish to live from day to day, and that they could save some money). There is a strong disillusionment with the country (institutional system, authorities, government, etc.). It is very interesting that the participants do not count on the state to take care of its citizens. They do not see that anybody on higher level wants to help them, the problems should be solved on the level of the subject, as they see it.

## 7.3. Policies aimed to deal with the consequences of youth migration

### Challenges – the negative and positive consequences of emigration

According to interviewees those who left the country in the past couple of years plan to leave their home country forever, closing everything behind themselves, while this was not characteristic in the case of emigrants of the 1990s. That is why it is feared, that this emigration can be considered as a final decision, which will be a challenge in a long term in various aspects, nationally (the rapidly shrinking Hungarian population in Vojvodina), also from the aspect of qualified labor force and aging population, not only for the municipality but also for the country, and especially for the Hungarian community. According to an interviewee, *“after 10 years, when migrants have children it will be very difficult to get them back (Interviewee no.6 of institutional actors).”*

According to interviewees the biggest challenges appear in the labour market, field of education and in the community power.

The interviewed individuals **miss the civic layer in the community**, which would be able to move the situation forward from zero – many of them claim, that currently the municipality is stagnating. According to interviewee: *“Kanjiža is characterized by apathy, lack of interest and it is very difficult to bring the youth together (Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors).”*, although in other communities it works better (those cities with more high schools or universities).

Each of the interviewees, both from the public and private sector, agreed that the biggest challenge of young people’s migration is **labor force shortage, lack of professional background**: *“there are the unemployed, here is the lack of labor, but somehow these two do not meet ...*

*(Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors).*” Several people think that the innovators disappear from the country, and they are pointing at a generational gap in the future. “...it is a fact that our specialists are there [in Germany]... here there’s no professional knowledge and experience on which we can build *(Interviewee no.3 of institutional actors).*” By contrast, the other group, the highly educated young migrants complain that it is difficult to find a job within the profession (someone did not plan to nostrificate their doctoral degree because they already know that there are small chances of finding an appropriate job). The reason for this is that the capabilities of the graduates do not fit the labour market expectations, that is why the entrepreneurs miss the professionals while highly educated people forced to go abroad: „People with diplomas go out to wash the dishes... they get humiliated ... *(Interviewee no.3 of institutional actors).*” But this process began earlier, when the young people did not learn and educate themselves because of the lack of perspective or the selection of a profession with which the labour market is already supercharged with, and in the lack of employment, they chose going abroad. These two groups’ needs could meet if we map the labour market opportunities within the municipality and with this we could also help young people’s career orientation.

Even though the interviewees are trying to be optimistic regarding the country’s future, they feel it will be very hard to get out from this migration spiral. The economic actors claim that today it is much more difficult **to find adequate labour force**, since the people who left are the ones that feel they will find their way abroad and these people are more or less intellectuals, wanting to work, who could have been the foundation for the future. “*This layer who stayed here are not really employable. When there is labour shortage, they don’t measure up to work. Now they do not have the opportunity to work, so maybe they will leave even if they need to do more difficult manual labour (Interviewee no.2 of institutional actors).*”. As long as the country offers such low wages, this will not change because the young migrant mostly emigrates because of economic reasons. Some reported that there will be a battle for qualified labor force in the home country soon. This is the most critical consequence of the youth migration. There are many successful projects for economic development from Hungary but they will be difficult to implement because of the lack of labour force.

There might be **new challenges in education**. The low fertility will cause the merging of classes in schools in the municipality, which will be even more stressed by emigration (this issue will emerge on the entire territory of Vojvodina), and due to the rationalization of education the decrease of the number of departments is also expected. „... they took their children with them... in schools, the number of children is decreasing, they are calculating how many classes will be opened in August *(Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors).*”.

The interviewees claim that the positive effects of migration cannot appear in Serbia, since the country is losing its qualified labour force. Some mentioned that if Serbia would succeed to stabilize and move the national economy forward, some of those who emigrated would return home, not massively, and they would invest their knowledge and capital gained abroad at home. According to interviewee: „*first of all, we need to legislate... lot of Serbians are abroad, they have seen so many things... they would come back if they saw that there is certain legal background, a bank which believes in people and gives them money .... Because the potential is in those people who have learned how to work in democratic business (Interviewee no.2 of institutional actors).*” Moreover, they also mentioned that the successfully functioning companies give higher wages in order to keep the labor force here: “*In Kanjiža we reached that magical number because of the increase of migration and in last few years salaries are rising incredibly. Problem is that municipality is offering a 35 000 RSD salary for engineers and in my company a low skilled employee is getting 40 000 RSD (Interviewee no.6 of institutional actors).*” In the reality it works just in some successful companies because young migrants are complaining about low wages. However, they believe that the country is slowly moving forward, but Germany’s

absorption capacity of labor force (whether qualified or unqualified) continues to grow rapidly, and not many countries can take part in this competition so it will be a challenge to stop migration.

## **The opportunities of policies related to youth migration**

The previous official representatives of the municipality did not see the importance of dealing with the migration of young people or any other generation, to control it, to meliorate it, therefore there was no strategy generated to directly deal with this issue. According to the mayor of the municipality *“they did not even see the weight of this, everyone thought that this is a momentary fad and that they did not need to deal with it.”* According to the president of the local community the municipality had a lot of strategies, but nothing was realized in the most critical field: *„There was a time when strategies were built without reason... but they have forgotten about it... There is no strategy for the vocational training which is related to employment and they do not even want to hear about migration.”*

According to the participants of the focus group, there are no bad practice concerning strategies or projects about youth migration. They only drew attention to the fact that the programs are not targeted enough, that they are short-termed (e.g. subsidization of projects is not continuous), and the changes made are not radical enough to make people feel that something is really changing here. According to one of the young migrants, we can see good action plans to recall young people: *“If we look at Hungary, there is a situation too, but they have some recall programs, they are trying to bring back the young people. In our country this is not even planned, not even the spark of this [idea] exists yet.” (Interviewee no.3).*

An interviewee from the institutional actors group highlighted the narrow margins while they are criticizing each other. Some interviewees expect an elaboration of a unified strategy on the national level (elaboration of a politically independent strategy), and these strategies should indirectly affect the migration of young people and the middle-aged generations. Some interviewees see the solution in elaboration of local strategies: *„The culture of Vojvodina cannot be melted with Serbia. The south part of Serbia and this region have completely different values. On the other hand, Vojvodina is too big to be on the same page (Interviewee no.2 of institutional actors)”*.

They see the way out of this situation in economic development projects to be implemented on the territory of Kanjiža. They suggest the following directions: agriculture, manufacturing and the development of tourism. According one of the interviewees: *“If agriculture is successful then the smaller industries will develop too, and that will be good for the farmers... then there will be a development opportunity for the other sectors as well. We must forget about creating large factories here (Interviewee no4. of institutional actors)”*. The municipality already has the bases but they have to re-strengthen them: *“Even in this poverty, and lack of professionalism and skilled workers, this country still has a positive force, energy and economy which can be built. We have the river Tisa, forests, medicinal water, here are those factories which were built down, therefore it wouldn't be necessary to start everything from the beginning (Interviewee no.3 of institutional actors)”*.

The municipal budget has little space for economic development, it foresees only 0,6% (4 million RSD) for this purpose, and that is why it is precepted that there hardly is any production activity: *“...in Kanjiža we support economy with 4 million dinars which is 0,6% of the budget for one year. My opinion is that that is not enough at the moment ... Schools and cultural institutions are developing, which is good, but there is too little money for economy... Economy literally does not exist. Water supply utility company and the Health Centre may be employing, and perhaps some companies, but that is it, the rest is agriculture (Interviewee no.3 of institutional actors)”*.

One of the primary obstacles to the implementation of these policies could be the community itself. It is feared that due to the lack of labor force caused by migration (even though there are only about 1800 unemployed, but this low rate might be the outcome due to emigration) the realization of these policies is doubtful: „ *if someone wants to open something ... I'm not sure they will find a worker here, the quality is below level (Interviewee no.2 of institutional actors)*”. Some reported that they do not have information on the type of professionals living in the municipality and their qualifications (or information on students and whether they plan to return after their studies), since the National Employment Service data do not reflect the realistic state. The mayor of municipality believes that the expansion of the developmental programs of the European Union, the economic development subsidies that are in progress donated by the Hungarian government, and the politically peaceful situation could favor these development initiatives: „... *but there's a need for people who will figure things out, to do things, who will work through this, who will bring the money because without them it won't work.*” According to one of the entrepreneurs it is to be feared that we are not ready despite of expectation: “*The Secretary of State has announced that later this year part of the European funds will be available to Serbia and we will be surprised and not ready for them. Mandatory own participation in these projects will be 20-30% for those funds to be utilized (Interviewee no.2 of institutional actors).*”

In the case of the economic development programs the municipality should be cautious and it should be supportive rather than managerial. Some criticized the municipal administration leaders' forceful intervention in economic processes, since they think the municipality's task is to secure space and infrastructure, for example, for industrial zones. “*I have been in the local government for the previous year but the general function of the municipality shouldn't be to interfere in economy directly. Its function is to help the economy with infrastructure, at least to provide water supply and electric power to some locations which we will call industrial zones (Interviewee no.6 of institutional actors).*”

Those working in economy possess the ability to bring change about (they strongly follow the migration processes, since it is important for them to keep the trained staff for a longer period), but they feel that the state restrains them, jeopardizing their survival and development. One interviewee reported that with high taxes the state forces them into a semi-legal gray zone: “*I do not know which country can withstand 70% duty. We are always at almost illegal zone so our data are not real (Interviewee no.6 of institutional actors).*”

We can detect faltering in the communication and cooperation between the municipal administration and the private sector. The local government claims that the entrepreneurs do not deal with the community, however the interviewed entrepreneurs reported on numerous activities focusing on community support, corporate social responsibility (CSR): “*I will always think as a local patriot and I will always do good things for the community (Interviewee no.6 of institutional actors).*” The municipality could take part in bringing educational institutions and economic actors closer and securing a background for better communication.

The interviewees recommend a bigger engagement of educational institutions and the civil sector into economic development, and that was mentioned by young migrants too. According to the principal of the local secondary school they are trying to activate pupils with some programs but the legal framework and the human resources limit their scope: “*On the one hand, the laws define what activities can the institution do, on the other hand, there are the human resources... I mean the teachers who can't change their profiles and obviously the material- the pupils. Their level of knowledge and social situation are also determining... but within this, there is a lot of freedom which are achieved through programs.*” A starting point could be if the schools could serve positive examples, presenting success stories, showing that young people can be successful at home too, and to assist young people in their career orientation. According to one of the entrepreneurs, if dual education would get a

stronger emphasis, the newly graduated generations will be able to find jobs more easily on the labour market with gained practical training, namely, they highlighted the lack of practical knowledge: *“Like in the developed counties- 3 days for practice, 2 days for education... We have a technical secondary school in Kanjiža but we have no technicians – which is unbelievable (Interviewee no.6 of institutional actors).”* It would be also important to develop appropriate vocational training in line with the planned economic development directions.

The leader of the municipality of Kanjiža spent the past 10 months in re-organizing the municipal structures to secure higher efficiency, directness; community-friendly, youth and profession-oriented structures with a more open leadership: *“It's terribly difficult when you're the outsider, you're the one who comes from outside and you want to change a system that worked the same way for 20 years. Absolutely nothing happened over 20 years [within the system].”*

Their aim is to integrate youth that thinks differently inside the already established municipal infrastructure tending to further develop it. According to the mayor, in the past 10 months more young people got a job in this system of management than altogether in the past 30 years. But other interviewees do not see this change, since they criticized the aging municipal structures. The municipality of Kanjiža is currently working on the revival of the Youth Office. Young people claim the municipality is open towards young people and towards their ideas through creating an environment where a thriving young person can feel good and at home: *“It would help a lot in this story to create a public mood, to feel good in your own skin, to have a good time in a community. I'm not saying that this is a solution because I don't really know what the solution could be.”* One of the interviewees claims that the question of disappearance of critical mass which could do something for the municipality may be raised, but either is everyone is fed up with bitterness, or nobody sees a solution for this problem: *„I miss those young people, at least 20 of them, who wanted to do something here. We need the “hard core” (Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors).”* Those people who were involved in the research pointed that the community resigned: *“Kanjiža is a town of silence... it cannot be changed. It looks to me as if the time had stopped, we'd given up completely, whatever happens will be fine, we just go with the flow (Interviewee no.1 of institutional actors).* They think – it also appears in the focus group discussion – that the change of values, globalization and virtual world increasingly absorb young people, that those are the factors responsible for the disappearance of the sense of community and the disappearance of its importance. The municipality wants to change, so that the (still existing) next generation would not be left with this current example to follow.

### **Target countries and their role – in the context of Danube countries**

The interviewees universally agreed that the most emigrants are leaving from Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina and some mentioned Macedonia. Different target countries appear among the Serbian citizens, depending on the motivation for migration. For those who are interested in education, Hungary is the primary target country. They claim that those who leave with this purpose seldom return home, here they face difficulties due to Serbian language and lack of connections: *„Those who came back, whatever knowledge they had, they didn't speak the Serbian language, they couldn't build relationships... so they were quickly disappointed because they didn't reach that social position that they had expected (Interviewee no.2 of institutional actors).”*

Several interviewees claim that in the past couple of years Hungary's role as a target country is decreasing for those seeking employment, except for highly trained professionals - the brain drain process is still very strong even today - *„we are producing smart and good people and the state can't appreciate them (Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors).”* On the other hand, more and more people commute daily to Röske, Szeged to their workplaces: *„The people who want to work and who are*

*dissatisfied with wages commute [to Hungary]. This leads to that, for example, one of my friend in Horgoš can't find a worker who would pick peaches or go to plough. These blue collar workers mostly commute to Hungary (Interviewee no.4 of institutional actors)."*

According to the interviewees, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Benelux states and Finland are becoming target countries for those whose motivation for migration is employment. Our discussions pointed out that these countries "need" young people, it is especially beneficial if the individual is qualified, as due to low fertility their social system is starting to falter. According to an interviewee "Germany is waiting for qualified professionals with open arms, even the unskilled workers... they can earn 1000-1200 euros monthly, and this is much more than they could have made at home (Interviewee no.8 of institutional actors)." At the same time, it is worth for them, because "... they see us as cheap labour force above all (Interviewee no.7 of institutional actors)." On the other hand, they can easily assimilate: "Serbian, Romanian, Hungarian people can easily assimilate, they become parts of the society they are in in 10 years ... I think societies snatch at the chance because everyone likes people who do not bother with their culture (Interviewee no.2 of institutional actors)."

## 8. Outlook, conclusions and recommendations

The municipality of Kanjiža is a sending region, immigration into the municipality is scarce. Based on **life situation and age**, the interviewees distinguished three groups based on migration motivations for the young generations. One of these groups is labelled as the migration to Hungary with the purpose of education group, tapping on the possibility to study in the mother tongue. Secondly, there are the *less conscientiously planning adventurers*, who are in their twenties and want to live the "American dream". Independent young people have weaker attachments to their home country, they have no jobs, their own family, as their friends are already abroad, they leave "only" their parents behind, therefore it is easier for them to make this decision. Thirdly, there are those emigrants with *conscious family planning motivations* to migrate, characteristically they are between 26 and 34 years of age, who do not dare to have children in the home country because of an uncertain existence, or they already have small children. In this group, and among the older generations (36 and older) in most cases the male prepares the situation abroad and then the spouse, wife, family follows. And finally, there is one more group (older age group, 36+ years of age) and their motivation for emigration is to secure higher living standards, or to be able to secure an education for their children in a more stable environment.

The return of young people who emigrated in order to study is not likely due to few employment opportunities. Those who do not continue their studies after secondary school see their way out in working abroad and do not plan to return home as they do not have any perspectives there (due to the lack of employment possibilities and life goals). Those who left the country with the motivation to start a family are "lost" to their home communities, as they integrate successfully into their new environment. People involved in the research are unanimous in their opinion that it is more and more obvious that the young generations are disappearing from the municipality.

The main challenges in the municipality are the lack of adequate jobs and the exploitation of high and low skill workers. In the field of education, even with the reforms made on the national level, the interview subjects draw attention to the difficulties connected to learning the Serbian language, and that is a factor which makes their success in the labour market less possible, and also has an impact on their further studies. The Hungarian minority rather chooses studying in Hungary or professions they can learn in their mother tongue (usually the market for those professions is overestimated). Other difficulties raised by the interview subjects are the abuse of welfare subsidies and the family policies which do not work at all. Apart from that, they mentioned the need for strengthening the civil sphere

in the municipality, rationalisation of official administration and a need for a more user-friendly approach.

In light of all the above, the following pilot actions are possible:

### **1. Assistance to beginners in business in order to facilitate their position in the labour market**

Young people starting out in business and those who continued their studies after secondary school (in the home county or abroad) need to be motivated to come home. The results of the research show that there is no appropriate channel of communication between the economic actors and job seekers, and that is the reason there is a duality between the lack of work force and workplace. Apart from this, the retraining of youth should be supported so that the planned investments mentioned by economic and institutional actors can be achieved. The first step to do that would be to conduct a market needs assessment, to create a database of the skilled and unskilled young work force (interactive business register for entrepreneurs and job seekers), and in the end, to create an online and offline (Youth cooperative, forums, job fairs) communication platform. As this can only lead to a win-win situation, no serious challenges are expected.

The Youth Office had a project idea approved by the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The goal of this project was to help young people enter the labour market. Unemployed young people who finished secondary school were given monthly salaries after finding a craftsman to learn from and work with. The project lasted for 6 months and 5 out of 6 young people successfully completed their training. Before this project a Youth cooperative operated in Kanjiža and its goal was to connect young people and entrepreneurs. It is still operating, but on a small scale, as there have been changes in staffing. It would be good if its activities would not subside.

### **2. Assistance with inclusion of women into the labour market**

The research results indicate that women, especially mothers, are in a highly disadvantageous position in the municipality. The economic actors need to be motivated to create part-time jobs and work-from-home positions.

This is an area with which the municipality has not dealt with, and it needs to be emphasised. Economic actors may have challenges to provide such positions, so it is advisable to motivate them (eg. tax deductions).

### **3. Removal of language barriers**

It would be important to provide assistance to the Hungarian minority to acquire Serbian language skills (for the minority it is not a foreign language in schools). If this happens at a very young age, it is possible that those involved will consider studying at home in greater numbers. Language courses for job seekers according to their profession (so they can learn the jargon they will use in their work within the municipality and that employers require). The Hungarian National Council implements such programmes for secondary school pupils and students, and in cooperation with them, that programme could be brought to the municipality.

### **4. Revival of the Youth office**

The research results indicate that Kanjiža has the appropriate infrastructure, but that there is a lack of content. Cultural and entertainment programmes need to focus on the strengthening of relationships within the community; thematic events which are meant for various generations need to be organized. The interviewees in the focus group think that it is important to assess exactly what programmes and initiatives are interesting for the secondary school generation within the municipality. In their opinion,

that generation is the most elusive and we know the least about their needs, and they are also most susceptible to migration.

The Youth office is being revived presently; the scope of its activities needs to be reassessed.

## **5. Reforms in administration**

The results reflect that the municipality needs to modernize the administration field. It needs to create possibilities to take care of administration online or via telephone, and also to create separate online and offline platforms for basic information provision.

The Town hall and the municipal management are new, so there are some developments in this area, and there is a chance for further improvement. Challenges that the municipality can face here are financial.

## **6. Assistance to the civil sector**

The interviewees recounted of a relatively well established non-profit sphere, although their work is often impeded because of financial difficulties. Since the municipal budget has a defined frame for the support of civil organizations, the municipality could support them by providing more open access to the existing infrastructure (this way non-formal grass root civil initiatives could get support), and they could receive assistance in the field of administration (from local counsellors, accountants, project managers).

The civil sector has been supported by the municipality, but it is presumable that the allocation of support was not targeted. From the point of view of efficiency, this segment needs work for the municipality to perceive the benefits.

The municipality has so far worked on the development of the aforementioned areas and it would be reasonable to continue in a more targeted manner. A pilot project on the municipal level can be organised according to these recommendations, and it would be even more successful if they could be interrelated (e.g. to have the pilot carried out within the Youth office).

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SEEMIG National Strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilization for Serbia

SEEMIG Local Strategy for enhancing migration data production and utilization

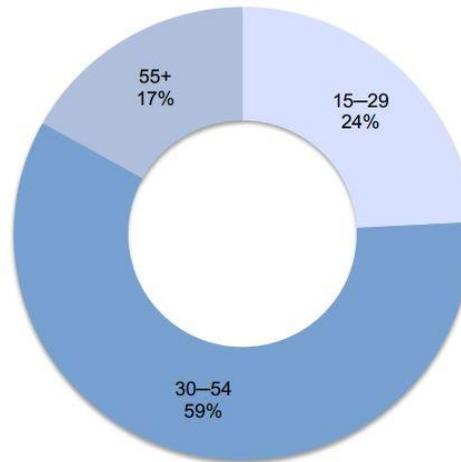
SEEMIG Analysis of existing migratory data production systems and major data sources in Serbia

SEEMIG Dynamic Historical Analysis of Longer Term Migratory, Labour Market and Human Capital Processes in Serbia

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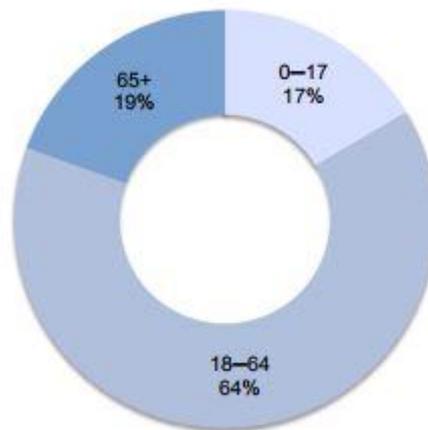
## ANNEX 1: Tables and graphs containing the main results of the demographic projection

Figure 1. Share of unemployed by age groups in total number of unemployed in the municipality of Kanjiža, 2016



Source: National Employment Service.

Figure 2. Population by age in the municipality of Kanjiža, 2016



Source: Vital statistics, SORS

Table 3. Internal emigration from the municipality by sex, region of destination (total, NUTS3, Capital city) and age groups (0-14, 15-34, 35+) in 1990-2016

	Total (To outside municipality)												To the given NUTS3		To Capital city	
	Total				Male				Female				Total	15-34	Total	15-34
	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total	0-14	15-34	35+	Total				
1996	8	40	26	74	2	22	13	37	6	18	13	37	34	18	2	0
1997	10	48	19	77	5	23	7	35	5	25	12	42	38	24	1	0
1998	6	22	23	51	4	15	10	29	2	7	13	22	21	11	6	2
1999	7	29	23	59	3	10	6	19	4	19	17	40	36	22	2	0
2000	18	96	68	182	12	41	34	87	6	55	34	95	72	46	6	2
2001	27	112	89	228	11	45	34	90	16	67	55	138	98	52	2	0
2002	30	104	92	226	14	47	43	104	16	57	49	122	91	43	3	2
2003	12	89	85	186	8	34	39	81	4	55	46	105	71	39	5	1
2004	20	90	76	186	9	35	29	73	11	55	47	113	74	36	2	0
2005	44	95	102	241	24	36	43	103	20	59	59	138	103	51	5	0
2006	27	89	72	188	12	33	43	88	15	56	29	100	91	47	1	0
2007	31	120	98	249	19	48	52	119	12	72	46	130	95	52	1	1
2008	41	107	107	255	17	46	44	107	24	61	63	148	96	50	3	0
2009	23	91	88	202	13	34	41	88	10	57	47	114	80	35	1	1
2010	27	72	77	176	12	33	34	79	15	39	43	97	66	24	2	1
2011	21	74	69	164	12	23	24	59	9	51	45	105	63	38	0	0
2012	26	110	87	223	16	38	41	95	10	72	46	128	91	46	5	1
2013	18	84	70	172	4	32	31	67	14	52	39	105	66	34	3	0
2014	26	100	60	186	16	41	21	78	10	59	39	108	57	32	2	0
2015	26	84	69	179	14	26	35	75	12	58	34	104	55	24	9	6
2016	14	74	85	173	6	33	43	82	8	41	42	91	60	31	6	1

**Table 4. Yearly population change, natural change and migration balance at the national and municipal level in 1990-2016**

Year	Population on 1 January	Livebirths	Deaths	Immigration	Emigration	Population on 31 December	Population change	Natural change	Migration balance	Crude rate of total population change (base 1 January)
1991	29645	297	457	381	438	29428	-217	-160	-57	-7.32
1992	29428	302	522	345	401	29152	-276	-220	-56	-9.38
1993	29152	290	416	249	304	28971	-181	-126	-55	-6.21
1994	28971	335	469	164	124	28877	-94	-134	40	-3.24
1995	28877	321	503	196	184	28707	-170	-182	12	-5.89
1996	28707	327	514	227	211	28536	-171	-187	16	-5.96
1997	28536	291	463	263	244	28383	-153	-172	19	-5.36
1998	28383	267	514	255	244	28147	-236	-247	11	-8.31
1999	28147	247	450	312	262	27994	-153	-203	50	-5.44
2000	27994	258	509	367	346	27764	-230	-251	21	-8.22
2001	27764	239	492	364	304	27571	-193	-253	60	-6.95
2002	27571	273	511	388	337	27384	-187	-238	51	-6.78
2003	27371	272	463	302	276	27206	-165	-191	26	-6.03
2004	27206	249	444	313	284	27040	-166	-195	29	-6.1
2005	27040	242	476	384	335	26855	-185	-234	49	-6.84
2006	26855	243	474	349	320	26653	-202	-231	29	-7.52
2007	26653	238	439	443	417	26478	-175	-201	26	-6.57
2008	26478	202	408	411	379	26304	-174	-206	32	-6.57
2009	26304	214	430	369	354	26103	-201	-216	15	-7.64
2010	26103	214	442	296	311	25860	-243	-228	-15	-9.31
2011	25423	216	401	272	281	25229	-194	-185	-9	-7.63

2012	25229	165	399	288	351	24932	-297	-234	-63	-11.77
2013	24932	179	399	345	324	24733	-199	-220	21	-7.98
2014	24733	178	398	356	349	24520	-213	-220	7	-8.61
2015	24520	200	431	302	299	24292	-228	-231	3	-9.3
2016	24292	174	400	306	278	24094	-198	-226	28	-8.15

## ANNEX 2: Table with interviews with institutional actors

	<b>Institutional actors</b>	<b>Serial number of the interview</b>	<b>Date of the interview</b>
1	Mayor of the municipality	1	06.05.2017, (15:10 – 17:20)
2	Education system: the principal of the local secondary school	2	05.05.2017, (16:00 – 17:45)
3	Field social worker	3	05.05.2017, (18:00 – 19:30)
4	Ex head of The Youth Office of Kanjiža	4	06.05.2017, (9:00 – 10:40)
5	Local entrepreneurs	5	06.05.2017, (17:30 – 18:45)
6	Local entrepreneurs	6	12.05.2017, (16:00 – 17:30)
7	Local entrepreneurs	7	26.05.2017, (9:30 – 10:45)
8	The “politically incorrect” localist, who is retired and he is a local community president since 3 mandates	8	06.05.2017, (11:00 – 12:20)

**ANNEX 3: Table with interviews with young migrants**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Position</i>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	3
	Female	7
<b>Educational attainment</b>	Primary education	0
	Secondary education	4
	Tertiary education	6
<b>Family status</b>	With children	6
	Without children	4
<b>Type of migration</b>	Returning migrant	1
	Short term migrant	0
	Commuter	4
	Emigrant	4
	Immigrant	0
<b>Employment status</b>	Student	3
	Employed	5
	Unemployed	2
<b>Country of origin/destination</b>	Hungary, Austria, Germany and the UK	

**ANNEX 3: Focus group, characteristics of participants**

	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Country of migration</b>	<b>Duration of the stay</b>
1	28	female	England	3,5 years
2	26	female	Hungary	5 years
3	34	male	Hungary, Austria	8 years, 7 months
4	32	female	Hungary, Austria	9 years, 7 months
5	27	male	Hungary	2 years
6	34	female	England, Hungary	2 years, daily commute
7	30	male	Austria, Hungary	4 months, 3 years
8	29	female	Hungary	4 years
9	40	female	Hungary	6 years
10	27	male	Hungary, France	7 months, 6 months