How does the coronavirus epidemic affect the finances and operations of NGOs?

BRÎNZAN-ANTAL CRISTINA

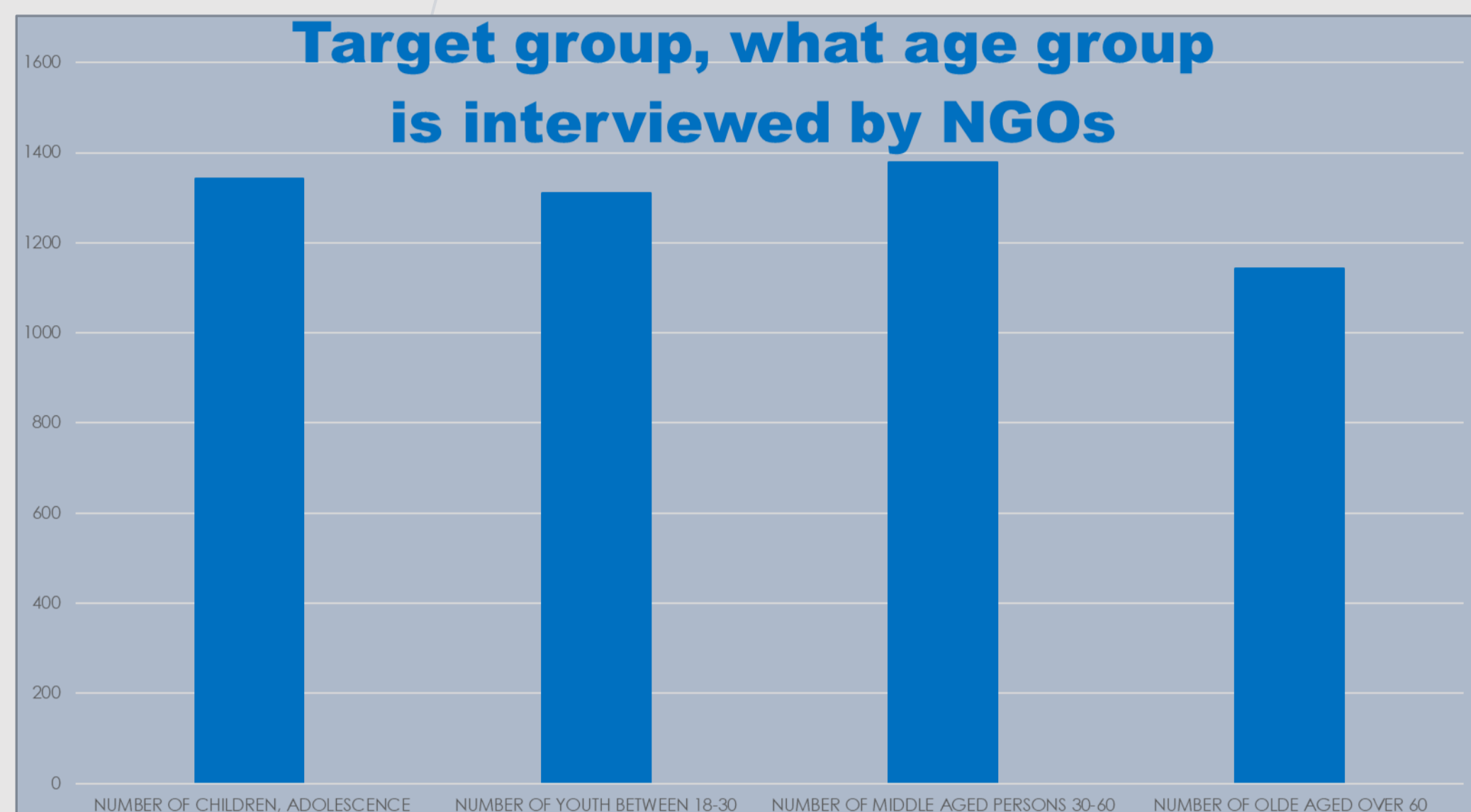### Erdélyi Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület

Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic puts many NGOs in a difficult position. Currently, the financial maintenance of NGOs has become questionable due to the situation caused by governments through security measures. The 10-question short questionnaire examines the operation and sustainability of Hungarian NGOs in Hungary and Transylvania during the coronavirus epidemic, and examines the challenges facing the Hungarian civil society in Transylvania.

Hasenfeld and Gidron interpret organizations that are based on ethnicity, nationality, or other identity as multi-purpose hybrid volunteer organizations. (Morauszki 2019)
Features:

- their mission is to maintain and disseminate cultural values that are different from the dominant and institutionalized values; provide services to their members and the public that express these values and are intended to be a model and catalyst for social change;
- in addition to their instrumental goals, they also seek to fulfill an expressive function by promoting a collective identity; they combine several different goals: they combine the goals of value change, service providers, mutual assistance to a varying degree, and they deliberately mix different organizational forms, collectivist and bureaucratic elements.

A recurring question regarding the Hungarian civil sphere in Transylvania / Romania is how many NGOs exist. József Kötő, President of EMKE, announced in 1999 that 1432 organizations as independent legal entities were registered. Around 2000, the 1500 data also emerges from other sources. The Foundation for Hungarian Civil Organizations in Transylvania, which for many years was the organizer of the most important civil meetings in Transylvania, the Civil Forums, made the number of 2,000 organizations probable through its president (István Egri). I am not aware of a freely available database that verifies this data.

Target group, what age group is interviewed by NGOs

The figure shows the response of the NGOs filling in the questionnaire, what target group they are addressing to and how many. The number of target groups of the responding NGOs is roughly the same. The middle-aged age group is most affected in identifying the target groups of the NGOs that fill in the questionnaire. The target groups are all Internet users (we also know this from the fact that the questionnaire was completed online).

Short theory

Reviewing the literature, the definition of this concept is not uniform. In defining the non-governmental organization, the majority of Hungarian authors quote László Kákai: "A non-governmental organization is a social organization that operates in the non-profit, independently of the government, on a voluntary basis for the benefit of the public good, self-regulating, institutionalized self-organization. In an international approach, they are simply referred to as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), voluntary organizations or non-profit organizations.

Civil society is a constituted area. Civil society is a diverse, identity-forming area, a kind of register of the problems of the present, and an expression of the nature of social conflicts. According to radical democratic theory, civil society is not defined as a coherent area, not by the lack of state regulation, but as a set of many different, competing approaches that come not only from the state but also from the market. Civil society is thus a disputed area, not a closed sphere with boundaries set by consensus.

The framework of the present dissertation is given: the minority Hungarian civil society is the subject of the analysis. That is, minority civil societies in the post-Soviet world may present the framework in which we conduct this research.
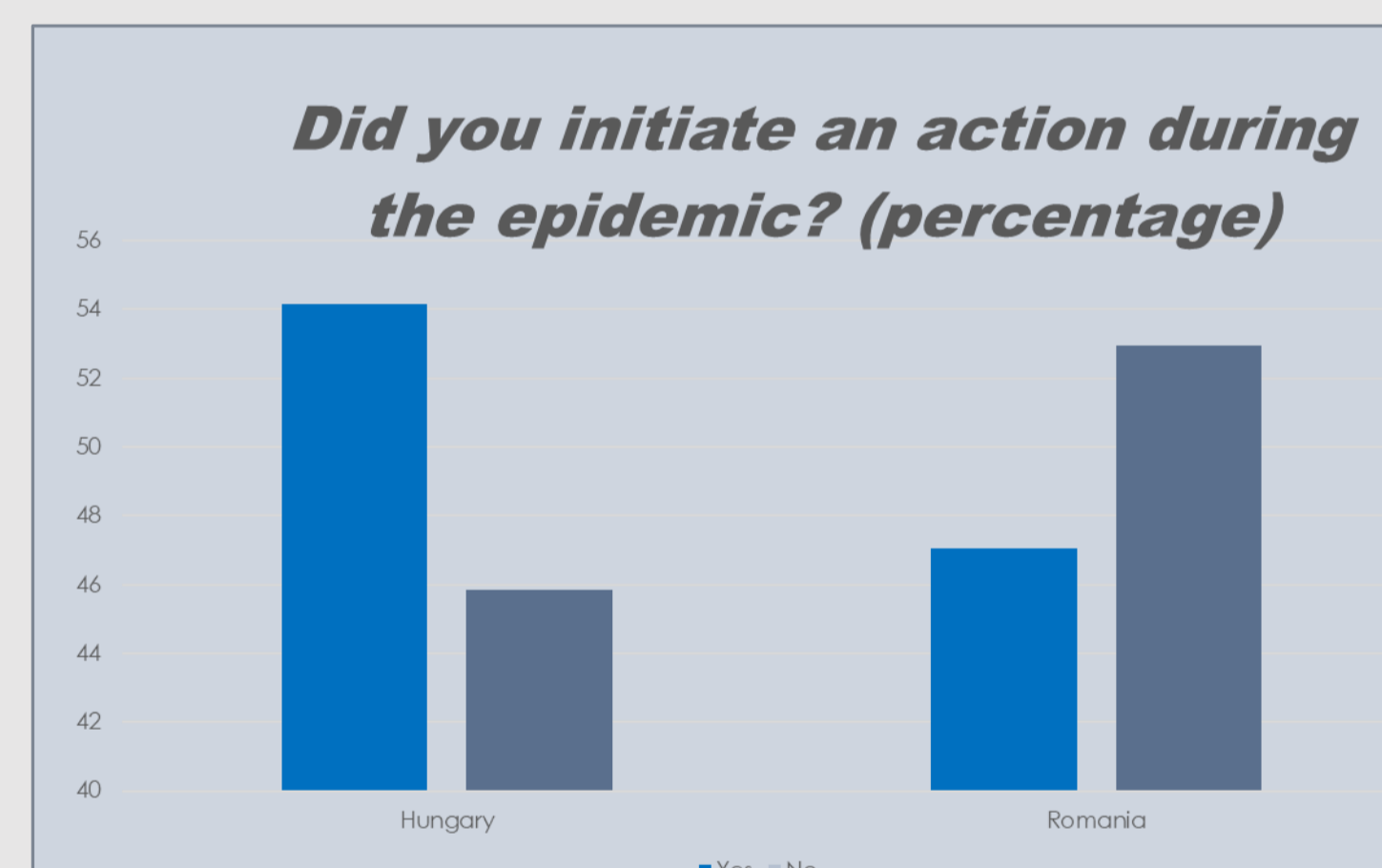
Minority civil society is a slightly researched issue in Western countries. Searching the internet we find few, almost exclusively Eastern European authors.

Research part

The research method used in the dissertation is the questionnaire. Questions: 1. Basic information; 2. What target group does the organization address to?; 3. Does the organization have employees? If so, can you ensure the salary and emoluments of the employees during and after the coronavirus?; 4. Do you think the organization will be sustainable for the next year?; 5. Has your organization applied for grants? If so, where?; 6. If you have applied, do you think you will receive less for the applications you have written than for applications from previous years?; 7. How much can the NGO count on the help of the municipality during this period?; 8. How much can their NGO count on the help of the church during this period?; 9. Has your organization initiated any action since the outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic?; 10. In your opinion, does the epidemic affect the future and operation of non-governmental organizations? If so, how?

The questionnaire was filled in by 45 Hungarian and 52 Hungarian NGOs from Transylvania. The organizations that are partners of the Transylvanian Association of Hungarian Civil Organizations (MCSZESZ) were included in the sample. Therefore, the number of cases is not representative of the total population, but it assesses the situation of MCSZESZ's partner organizations during an epidemic.

We also asked employees of the interviewed NGOs. We can see how burdened each NGO is in terms of the tasks it has to perform each year. If an NGO does not have a staff and needs human resources for its programs, it may be more difficult to seek help be-cause of a malfunctioning, unde-veloped civic network.

Did you initiate an action during the epidemic? (percentage)

Further questions:

- 1. How have your programs evolved since the outbreak? - online, whatever it may be, there are those who are afraid of having to pay back their application money
- 2. Were all planned programs implemented? - most of the applications had to be postponed or made online, so the completion period was extended

Conclusion

During the coronavirus epidemic, many NGOs operate online. In order to ensure the sustainability of the organization, there is a need for an interface with the help of which the organizations can communicate continuously with each other, in terms of situation reporting, settlement of applications and requests for assistance. For regular smartphone users, it may be worthwhile to build a powerful mobile app. This solution is recommended if a relatively large amount of content (organizations, news, tenders, news) is posted on the website relatively often.

If there's one common theme that connects nonprofits, it's that money is always short, plans are big, and long-term. They usually rely on donations and volunteers for the nonprofit to function properly. Maintaining a budget for most novice, and even long-established, nonprofits is an ongoing struggle.

Fortunately, there are plenty of companies offering free tools to nonprofits to help them achieve their noble goals. Not only that, but there are plenty of free online ways that can really help nonprofits in many aspects of their work. Mobile apps can be especially good when organizations are looking for free ways that can increase their efficiency without having to spend money.

Whether organizations are looking for ways to increase efficiency or increase an organization's online awareness, this step has become necessary. All of these apps are free to use by nonprofits, which serves as an added bonus.

Literature

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