Student Research Programme
Sociological Fieldwork and Research in Torockó (Rimetea)

Between the 16th and 18th of March 2014, the freshman students of the International Relations and European Studies Specialization from the Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania participated in a sociological fieldwork in Torockó (Rimetea), a municipality formed by two villages, Torockó (Rimetea) and Torockószentgyőrgy (Colțești) in Alba County, located at 60 km from Kolozsvár (Cluj).

Under the guidance of three young teachers of the department – Tibor Toró, Emese Balla and Tünde Székely – and as an integrated part of the Social Science Methodology class, the students tried out the learned methods – observation, interview – in order to gather data for their small projects related to the social, cultural and economic life, tourism, agriculture or the living traditions of Torockó. During the three-day fieldtrip, the students made 60 interviews, visited the Museum in Torockó, the cheese factory of Torockószentgyőrgy, and they even had time for a short trip to the nearby castle.

The two villages present an interesting case study of rural life from several perspectives. First, as they are the only ethnic Hungarian villages in the county, they are in a marginal position, finding harder to co-operate with the neighbouring villages. Second, although part of the same municipality, they clearly have a different history, they evolved differently and have different problems and economic development. Third, they have different employment strategies. While Torockó is a picturesque village where large numbers of tourists come every year, the people from Torockószentgyőrgy mostly work in agriculture and farming. Fourth, the relationship between the two villages is not free of conflict although they all agree that they need to work together.

Beyond the student-fieldwork as a public–private partnership, our department proposed to formulate a development plan for the village, locating the main economic, social, cultural and demographic problems, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within the community. In other words, using the interviews and the data collected by the students, the available statistical material, the experts from the Department of Juridical Sciences and European Studies would be able to deliver a viable development plan and strategy for the village.

T.T.