Developing a Website for Rasnov, Romania as a Strategy for Historical and Cultural Preservation

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Abstract

Rasnov, Romania has been experiencing loss of culture due to changes in demographics and emigration. The goal of this project was to preserve culture by developing a website where users can upload memories they have of Rasnov. The team interviewed residents to better understand motivation for preserving Rasnov's culture, completed case studies of successful websites with similar purposes, and demonstrated mock layouts to our collaborators. The team found that many residents had a strong desire to share and preserve their history. Using all the information gathered the team created the Povesti Locale website with post galleries, an interactive map, and user uploads that allowed for the people of Rasnov to share and promote their stories, preserving their impactful memories.

Executive Summary

Culture helps to preserve social and territorial cohesion as the set of unique spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and material features of a society or group (UNESCO, 2009). Although hard to quantify, culture can change quickly due to factors such as high rates of emigration and gentrification. Quickly changing the culture of a place can lead it to become lost or forgotten. This phenomenon has led to the increase in the awareness of preserving culture through various means such as digitization, storytelling or archiving.

Eastern Europe is facing higher rates of culture loss in the Post-communist era due to the increased displacement of its people. Romania recorded around 230,000 emigrants leaving the country in 2019 mostly due to limited opportunities and government corruption (Alexe, 2019). However, internal migration has also been happening within Romania, as people leave small cities due to lack of educational and employment opportunities, and those with financial resources purchase property in smaller towns to escape the urban crowds. This high displacement of Romanians is causing a notable loss of culture and history, specifically in Rasnov, a small town in Transylvania.

With Rasnov's beautiful scenery, it has become a resort town, gentrifying the surrounding area and increasing displacement within the town (Dragomir, 2022).

Figure 0.1 Image of Rasnov Fortress (Ilie & Ivan, 2016)

In 2019, the Mioritics Association, led by Mihai Dragomir, took steps to preserve the cultural heritage of Rasnov by collecting stories and pictures from interviews with locals (Dragomir, 2022). Transitioning this project to a website would make the process of collecting these stories much simpler. A website would provide opportunities for current and former residents to reminisce on their collective memories and better document and preserve Rasnov's history. Focusing on the creation of this site would accelerate Mioritics' collection process and enable former Rasnov residents around the world to connect. Additionally, other towns could use the online platform developed for Rasnov as an example on the benefits a cultural preservation website can provide.

Approach

To create a website to preserve the culture of Rasnov, the project team identified the following four objectives: to determine the website's key features, general functionality and user motivations; to select a development platform and create a mock layout of the website; to obtain feedback on the mock layouts and website

design; and finally, to refine the website layout and develop a prototype website.

The team conducted a website case study to determine the key features of similar websites and projects with a similar focus on cultural preservation. Next, the team conducted four Zoom interviews with current and former residents connected to Rasnov to explore user motivation for uploading and sharing stories to a website. The team then analyzed the transcripts of the interviews to determine main themes and use them to inform the following objectives. Additionally, the team developed a mockup of the website and presented it to Mihai Dragomir to obtain design specifications. Finally, the team received feedback from advisors and collaborators during weekly meetings, and adjusted the website accordingly to produce and deliver a website to the Mioritics Association for future use.

Results
Results from Case Studies

The project group conducted case studies on six websites with similar cultural preservation goals, two of which were from previous Interactive Qualifying Projects (IQP) that included a website as a deliverable. The team noticed that using galleries and profiles to display information on websites is effective for presenting information to the user. The websites provided an interactive map feature and the content on the pages are neat and easy for the users to follow.
Results from Interviews

The team interviewed four people that either live or have lived in Rasnov.

Coding the four transcripts uncovered the main interview themes: a desire to preserve culture, the rich history of Rasnov, and the importance of nature to residents. Figure 0.2 illustrates that culture and nature were the top two topics these interviewees discussed.
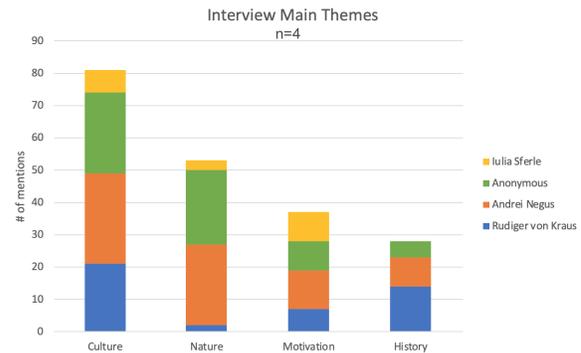

Figure 0.2 Rasnov Interview Main Themes

Website Design

The team then determined design criteria for the website, based on the requirements outlined by our collaborator, Mihai Dragomir. These specifications included simplicity, security, language options, filtering options, and interactivity. The team also made sure to incorporate findings from the case studies and interviews. The next steps were to create mockup pages and review three different prototype designs with the advisors and collaborator. The results of the review concluded in website design decisions and prompted us to use a mix of blogs and galleries for collecting cultural heritage for Rasnov.

Website Implementation

The final website povestilocale.ro contains a **homepage, a stories page, a Rasnov map, and a story sharing page**. Since the purpose of the website is to

encourage Rasnov locals to upload their stories, the main feature is for user uploads.

The ***homepage*** (see Figure 0.3) consists of the latest posts in order of posting. The page displayed each post with a featured image and a small excerpt of maximum 50 characters.

Figure 0.3 Rasnov Cultural Heritage Homepage

The ***stories page*** (see Figure 0.4) contains uploaded posts sorted in a timeline. When a user uploads a story, they must tag it with a time range. The stories page categorizes each post by a time range.

Figure 0.4 Stories Page

The ***map page*** (see Figure 0.5) provides users with another option to navigate posts. As users submit posts, a member from the Mioritics team will geotag the images. Geotagged posts are accessible through the map feature.
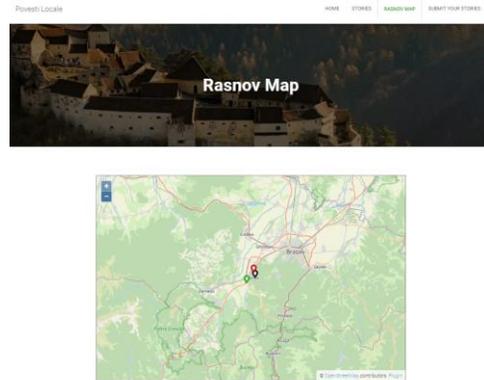

Figure 0.5 Map Page

The ***story sharing page*** is where users will upload their stories. Users submit their storied through a form. Once a member of the Mioritics team has approved the post, it will be readily accessible on the website.

Conclusion

The site had much of the functionality the team aimed for in the beginning of the project. With users having the ability to view, upload, and share stories with others, the team hopes to have left the site in a state for future success. With the site now able to allow people connected to Rasnov to share and see others' stories, the team believes it will have a great impact on preserving the culture of the town.

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1.0 Introduction

Culture is the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or a social group. The importance of culture stems from its potential to enrich social capital and create a sense of individual and collective belonging, which helps maintain social and territorial cohesion (UNESCO, 2021). Although culture loss is an unquantifiable phenomenon that has occurred throughout history, one can more easily quantify roots of culture loss. There are many contributing factors to culture loss including a change in demographics within an area, often sourced by increased emigration rates and gentrification. In 2020, there were 281 million migrants registered across the globe, which equates to 3.6% of the world's population (IOM & UN, 2020) which implies how much migration effects our world. Migration changes the cultural identity of areas, which increases the need for preservation through means of archives, digitization, or storytelling.

Eastern Europe has faced major culture loss in the post-communist era due to the high rates of displacement of its people. Due to the unstable economies of Eastern European countries in comparison to Western European countries after World War II, these nations have faced a larger outflux of emigrants and a minor influx of external immigrants. The external migration is generated by the desire for better quality of life and education, and is higher during times of political unrest and governmental corruption (Tulla and Petrisor, 2020). This imbalance contributes to the loss of culture in Eastern Europe, and is threatening these populations with deep-rooted cultures in the process.

In 2019, Romania reported that approximately 230,000 emigrants had left the country mainly due to governmental corruption and limited opportunities (Alexe, 2019). Additionally, internal migration has been occurring within Romania, as people move to large cities for opportunities, or people purchase homes in smaller towns to get away from the urban bustle. The increased displacement of Romanians is causing a severe loss of history in smaller towns, specifically the small town of Rasnov in Transylvania. Only a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Bucharest and nestled in the Carpathian mountains, Rasnov provides an easy weekend getaway with skiing in the winter, scenic hikes throughout the year, and historic monuments to attract visitors. With Rasnov's location and scenery, it has developed into a resort town, gentrifying the area and contributing to displacements within the town (Dragomir, 2022).

Culture loss is detrimental to a town with rich history and culture like Rasnov; it causes a lack of social cohesion within the community. Cultural preservation for those connected to Rasnov is vital as it enables the permanent access of current and future generations to culturally important stories. The team researched existing techniques to preserve this history and culture, through means of archival, digitization, or even sharing stories. There are a few platforms for sharing this culture and history in Romania, such as the Digital Agenda for Romania or *Formula As* website. These websites promote cultural information and communication tools, and provide readers a place to share their stories to connect with others in their communities (Nocasian, n.d.). However, residents of Rasnov do not have a specific online platform that enables them to share their stories, and as such, the culture and history of the town have been fading from memories. In 2019, the Mioritics Association took steps to remedy this culture loss in Rasnov by going door to door in Rasnov interviewing locals and documenting their stories and pictures to eventually upload on a website (Dragomir, 2022).

Although Mioritics made progress preserving local stories, the process of collecting just 20 households' worth of information was labor-intensive and eventually stopped due to COVID-19 (Dragomir, 2022). Transitioning the Mioritics Association's project to an online platform would help to simplify the collection process. Additionally, a website would encourage former residents to add their stories to the platform and provide opportunities to reminisce on their collective memories to better document and preserve Rasnov's history. Addressing this issue would accelerate the collection process, allow access for more people with history in Rasnov, and enable those former Rasnov residents scattered across the globe to foster connections.

The goal of this project was to develop a prototype website to aid Mioritics in their mission to provide current and former residents of Rasnov with a platform to share their stories in order to preserve the towns peoples' history and foster connections. To achieve this goal, the team addressed the following objectives.

1. Determine website features, functionality, and user motivation.

2. Select a development platform and develop a mock layout of the website.

3. Obtain feedback on mock layouts and website design.

4. Refine website layout and develop a prototype website.

The team conducted case studies to determine the key features of a website that make it successful and user friendly. The team also conducted interviews with those connected to Rasnov, and analyzed user motivation for uploading and sharing stories to a website. Analyzed data from interviews show that users upload their culture because they want to preserve it and create a connection between those with similar pasts. Common themes from the interviews

showed that interviewees enjoy talking about their history and experiences when they are

positive memories. From these results, the team developed a prototype website that would

encourage Rasnov locals and Romanians to share their stories. The prototype website acts as an

example of an effective cultural preservation strategy that other teams could reproduce in

different environments. The team is anticipating that the website will expand to other Romanian

towns.

2.0 Background

This chapter begins by noting the importance of culture preservation and analyzes ethnography as a tool for developing culture preservation strategies. There is a need for cultural preservation in Romania, and particularly in the small town of Rasnov. The introduction to the background contains an overview of Romania's historical and geographical facts, and then describes the history and geography of Rasnov. The next section discusses the changing demographics in Rasnov and the need for historical and cultural preservation. With this useful context the chapter next clarifies the locals' perceived sense of Rasnov's gentrification and displacement, which in turn has affected the cultural identity of the area. The chapter ends by focusing on methods of cultural preservation and analyzes website development to provide a backdrop of the activities of organizations in terms of historical preservation. Taken as a whole, this chapter provides a framework for our culture preservation project based in Rasnov and started by the Mioritics Association.

The Mioritics Association is a non-profit organization founded in 2004 to protect and promote cultural and natural heritage in Romania. UNESCO chose the organization to implement the program *Cultural Heritage — a Bridge Towards a Shared Future* within Romania. The mission of the Cultural Heritage program is to strengthen regional cooperation for better protection and promotion of cultural heritage in Europe. Since 2004, Mioritics has organized and participated in more than 30 events related to cultural heritage in Romania (Mioritics Association, 2020).

Mihai Dragomir, the founder of the Mioritics Association, started the Rasnov culture preservation project in 2019. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, his team went door to door in

Rasnov to collect stories and information about family histories in the small town. They spent six months gathering 20 stories in forms of images, texts, or written transcripts. After the pandemic started, the concept of digitization became more important to the longevity of the project. Digitizing the process of uploading stories will enable Rasnov residents (both current and past) to upload cultural information from anywhere, even outside Rasnov. This will reduce the amount of fieldwork for the Mioritics team, and reach a larger audience including former Rasnov residents who have migrated elsewhere. The Mioritics' vision is a digital platform available on the World Wide Web where those with a personal bond to Rasnov can electronically share their stories and culture and strengthen the connection they have with this Transylvanian town.

Alongside the Mioritics Association, there are many stakeholders involved in the Rasnov project. Due to the rich history of Rasnov, one important stakeholder group is former Rasnov locals that have emigrated to various places around the world. Another group of stakeholders is the current residents of Rasnov that have rich family history rooted within the area.

The demographic changes in the region around Rasnov and the loss of culture over time is the primary reason Mioritics Association wants to implement a strategy for culture preservation in Rasnov. The next sections explore the history and details surrounding the dynamics at play with respect to culture loss in Rasnov.

2.1 Ethnography and the Importance of Cultural Preservation

Culture encapsulates the way of life for a society; this includes beliefs, languages, mannerisms, art, and more. The transmission of knowledge within generations is valuable and is shared to inspire new ways of thinking about one's cultural heritage and carrying it into the future.

Latin is one of the oldest recorded languages in the world. However, it has evolved into 47 different languages and dialects today. Although Latin roots are present in romance languages, the language Latin is extinct. As modernization occurs, many cultural traditions and ideologies diminish. The derivation of romance languages from Latin linguistic roots is an example of cultural knowledge inspiring new ways of thinking. The loss of the original language Latin is a result of culture loss, which is a common phenomenon for many ethnic and religious groups and cities throughout history. Due to the unquantifiable nature of culture loss, it is important to implement cultural preservation initiatives at an early stage. Prior to implementing preservation initiatives, researchers benefit from conducting case studies on similar cultural communities. A unique branch of cultural studies is ethnography; the Mioritics project benefits from the community and interactivity aspect of ethnography.

2.1.1 Application of Ethnography

Ethnography is the study and systematic recording of human cultures. It differs from anthropology because researchers study ethnography from the point of view of the subject, which is usually an individual within the culture (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The objective of ethnographic research is to gain insight into how people interact with their natural environment. This inside perspective allows external viewers to increase their awareness of the traditions and lifestyles of people within a cultural sect, which increases the impact of cultural conservation (Richardson, 2000). Utilizing ethnographic research in cultural preservation techniques contributes to increasing the emotional connection between readers of the research and the culture (Yarrow, 2017).

2.1.2 Motivation for Historical and Cultural Preservation

Over time, the world has seen the extinction of rich cultures including the loss of languages, cultural traditions, and health practices. For example, in 1995, the Transylvanian Saxon dialect spoken in Northern Romania became endangered (Ager, 2021). In fact, researchers at UNESCO estimate that within 100 years, 90 percent of languages will be extinct if communities do not implement cultural preservation practices (UNESCO, 2009).

There is much value that springs from the traditional knowledge that generations pass down within a culture group. The importance of this rich information is the reason that many humanitarian organizations, such as UNESCO have implemented initiatives to support the idea of cultural preservation (United Nations, 2019). In addition to the actions of larger humanitarian groups, individuals can be extremely valuable with respect to the preservation of their family histories. Those individuals who choose to make note of their families' stories or genealogy can offer a more intimate view into their culture (Moore and Rosenthal, 2021).

There are a variety of methods of cultural preservation, such as digitization, that would benefit from the application of ethnographic approaches. Providing a digital platform is a standard method for cultural preservation. The implementation of an ethnographic approach can increase the impact of this method. An example of an ethnographic approach is allowing people within a culture to share their heritage on the digital platform. Worldwide, there are many communities that could benefit from using this approach. The purpose of this project is to preserve the cultural community in the small town of Rasnov.

2.2 Introduction to History of Romania and Rasnov

Romania is an Eastern European country with the Black Sea to its east, Ukraine to its north, Hungary and Serbia to its west, and Bulgaria to its south. The Carpathian Mountain Range almost divides the country in half, setting natural boundaries that help break the country into distinctive regions as seen in Figure 2.1.

2.2.1 Brief History of Romania and Transylvania Region

The earliest written record of people living in the modern-day area of Romania goes back to 440 B.C.E. (Beloe, 1859) but much of the knowledge studied today starts after the onset of Romanization in 106 A.D. when settlers found large deposits of gold and silver in the Carpathian Mountain Range (Deletant, 2015). The Romans eventually abandoned the province in 271 A.D. after repeated barbarian attacks (Deletant, 2015).

Figure 2.1 Map of Romania's Historical Regions (Iovanut, 2018)

The formation of modern Romania began in the 19th century with the Revolution of 1848. In 1868, the European powers recognized Romania as an independent country through the Treaty of Berlin (Mowat, 1915).

The main geographical regions of Romania are Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldavia (see Figure 2.1). The name Transylvania originates in the 10th century while the area was under Hungarian rule. Its Latin roots come from a synonym, "Ultrasilvana" meaning "land beyond the woods" (Verdery, 1985). Transylvania's geography is quite diverse, with mountains, plains, and plateaus all present within the region.

Figure 2.2 Map of Romania (Iovanut, 2018)

In the other Romanian regions such as Wallachia and Moldova, different rulers and kingdoms rose and fell until the Transylvania region became independent. For much of the Middle Ages, Hungarians ruled Transylvania (Verdery, 1985). During the 12th century, the area saw increased settlement from German Colonists known as "Saxons" (Verdery, 1985). Later on, this section will continue with more modern history of the area.

2.2.2 A Brief History of Rasnov

Rasnov is a small town in Central Romania, about 15 kilometers southwest of the city of Brasov. Brasov, which was at one time the regional capital of the Transylvanian Saxons, is a much larger city of the region, holding the title for the seventh-largest city in Romania. Much of the town's history revolves around the Rasnov Fortress (see the top of Figure 2.3), which the Teutonic Knights built between 1211 and 1225 to protect the village from outside attacks. (Mioritics Association, n.d.). A historical resident of Rasnov explained how the town got its name in the following quote:

> They settled in Râşnov; they settled where there was water, that's how it
> was done. And they climbed up the crests and there the Dacians saw that down
> there the rose hips were in bloom. And there were rosen, there were wild roses.
> And they said, it's written down in the chronicle: "This settlement shall be named
> ROSENAU" (Ilie & Ivan, 2016).

Much of Rasnov's recorded history starts in the early 16th century, when the administration of the town at the time took great care of records of the village. In 1532, Rasnov had a population of 182 farmers (Mioritics Association, n.d.) but over time the village grew precipitously into the small town it is currently. Today, there are approximately 15,000 residents living in Rasnov.
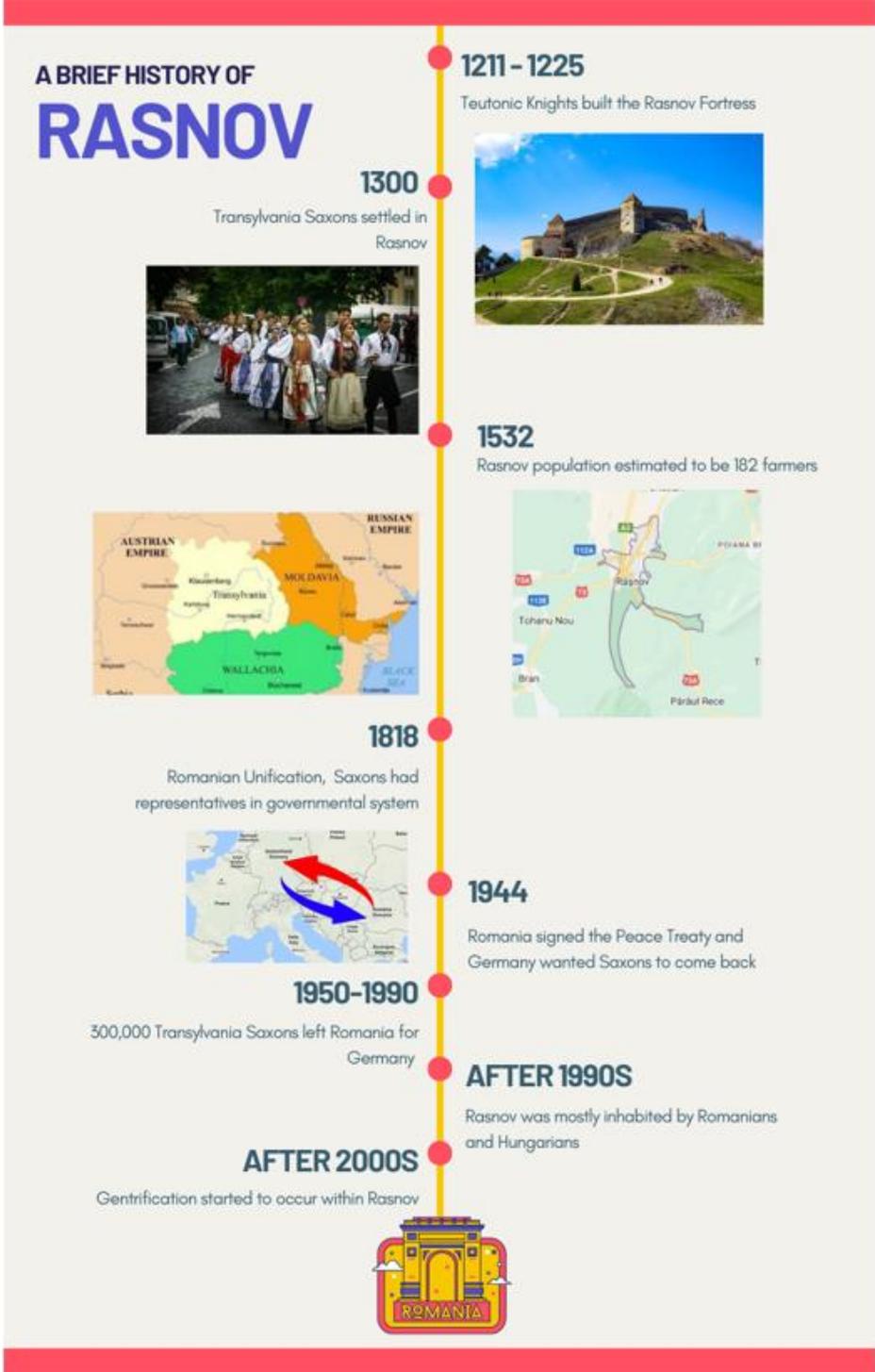
Figure 2.3 Timeline of Rasnov

2.2.3 Transylvania Saxons: The First Settlers in Rasnov

Throughout Rasnov's history, there have been many demographic changes. Originally Saxons settled the town in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; Rasnov remained ethnically German for most of its history (Gallagher and Tucker, 2000). Although the latest census estimates the current population of Saxons in Transylvania to be just 15,000, at their peak they reached a population of over 200,000 people (Campbell, n.d). The Saxons were a nomadic group; throughout history, they continuously migrated to reap economic and social benefits. Initially, Saxons were the main cultural influence in many Transylvanian towns, however, their dispersed population over time has led to a gradual loss of Saxon culture and history in areas (Von Kraus, 2019).

The Saxons remained prevalent in Transylvanian society until the end of World War II. In 1944, Romania signed a peace treaty with the Soviet Union which encouraged the German military to withdraw Saxons from Transylvania (Von Kraus, 2019). Between the years 1950 and 1990, an estimated 300,000 Transylvanian Saxons emigrated, with the majority going to West Germany (Orschlies, 1998). Some Saxons also moved to Hungary and others immigrated as far as the United States. This was an underreported ethnic migration due to the lack of documentation of the vast numbers of Saxons who were leaving Transylvania and as a result, the Saxon people lost much of their heritage and traditions (Von Kraus, 2022). When forced to leave, the Saxons only brought what they could carry, resulting in the deterioration of their remaining belongings and cultural pieces (Riley, 2008).

While a large portion of Rasnov spoke German before the migration, the vast majority now speak Romanian (Von Kraus, 2022). The Saxon community was primarily Lutheran

Protestant, and the current religious profile of Rasnov and Romania is majority Christian. As the

demographic in Rasnov changed, so did the dominant religion, which led to changes in the St.

Nicholas church located in the town. During the Saxon settlement, St. Nicholas was a Saxon

church, but now it is a Romanian Orthodox church (Machat, 2009).

Figure 2.4 Image of Rasnov Fortress (Ilie & Ivan, 2016)

2.2.4 Present Day Rasnov

The Saxons settled in smaller towns all over Transylvania; one of these towns was

Rasnov. During the 19th century, the majority of Rasnov's community were Saxons, with a few

families being Hungarian and Romanian (Von Kraus, 2022). After the outflow of Saxons from

Rasnov in the latter half of the twentieth century, the town underwent serious demographic

changes. Most of the current population are Romanians with few Hungarians and even fewer

Saxons. One can see this new demographic breakdown in the larger metropolitan city of Brasov,

where 87.9% of inhabitants are Romanian, and only 7.7% are Hungarian (City Population,

2021).

Many workers find employment in larger cities and visit Rasnov for vacation homes and festivals. The labor market in larger cities is more diverse and accommodating, and the cost of living is more affordable in comparison to living in a resort town long term. People can work in a metropolitan area but can vacation in the suburbs. As the number of vacation homes increases in Rasnov, more tourists spend time there. The visitors are initially intrigued by natural beauty and monuments such as the fortress (see Figure 2.4), but continue to vacation in Rasnov due to access to vacation homes and other living accommodations. The town also hosts international ski jumping competitions, a thought-provoking film festival, a dinosaur park, and many other unique attractions to entertain locals and attract visitors.

2.3 Changes in Rasnov and the Need for Cultural Preservation

Throughout its history, the town of Rasnov has faced changes in demographics due to the mass outflow of the Saxon population and the inflow of Romanians and Hungarians. These demographic movements in the past hundred years have been continuously shifting the dominant culture of the town, and the more recent promotion of Rasnov as a vacation destination has contributed to the loss of cultural heritage in the area. As so much of the small town has changed and is still changing, our collaborator, Mihai Dragomir, has outlined the need to begin preservation efforts, as many of the residents who have lived through the transformations are aging.

2.3.1 Rural Gentrification

In addition to the demographic changes in Rasnov occurring before the turn of the twenty-first century, the town is experiencing a perceived rural gentrification that is contributing

to the changes in Rasnov's identity (Dragomir, 2022). Rural gentrification is, "the desire of the new population to buy into a version of the rural idyllic lifestyle that the new residents perceive to exist" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Rural gentrification leads to smaller towns becoming resort destinations where locals from neighboring cities purchase vacation homes and build resorts for tourism. The resultant higher cost of living from rural gentrification often leads to the displacement of locals from the town. As an area undergoes rural gentrification, new buildings, architecture, and the restoration process can erode the local culture.

Romania has experienced plenty of gentrification, as changing demographics around the country increase the demand for luxury housing in urban neighborhoods (Soaita and Dewilde, 2021). After joining the European Union, Romania's economy grew steadily and those in larger cities have capitalized the most on the increased connections to the rest of Europe (World Bank, 2019). With raised salaries, those living in cities have spurred gentrification around Romania, which has in turn encouraged rural gentrification in the surrounding areas.

2.3.2 Gentrification in the Brasov Region

In the Brasov region of Romania, richer people from Bucharest and other large cities have prompted more frequent gentrification as they purchase weekend or winter skiing homes in the area (Dragomir, 2022). The location of the Brasov region is a large factor in this, as it is sufficiently close to Bucharest to be a weekend destination but far enough from the more crowded capital. The three-hour drive is a manageable distance and provides an escape with clean air, scenic views of the Carpathian Mountains, and impressive historical sites. However, these weekend homes stand empty for much of the year, harming the economy and community of the area like many other skiing destination towns (Palmer and Mathel, 2010). Although exact

data for the small town of Rasnov is hard to find, the changes observed in the city of Brasov

suggest that many locals from Rasnov have moved into Brasov or other larger cities (Dragomir,

2022). An important impact of this gentrification is its effect on the local culture of the small

town near Brasov. New bonds, such as a different language or holiday traditions, replace existing

social and cultural bonds when changes in demographics happen too quickly, altering the

existing identity of the area (Özcan, 2015). However, cultural preservation can decelerate these

fading social and cultural bonds in time in order to pass them on to future generations.

2.4 Methods for Culture Preservation

There are many approaches for culture preservation, such as display of artifacts in

museums and the restoration of historical architecture and art. However, these common strategies

for preservation can lack accessibility and emotional connection. More personable strategies

such as storytelling, literature, and digital photographs create a greater emotional connection

between the viewers and the culture these strategies provide (Maronate, 2005).

The Mioritics Association proposed the creation of a website to serve as an online

platform for Rasnov locals to share their stories, history, memories, and connect with one

another. By digitizing the platform on which locals and Romanians can share memories and

photos, the project had greater potential for impact.

2.4.1 The Value of Digitization

Due to the global increase in reliance on technology and social media, it is important that

methods of culture preservation incorporate the idea of digitization to increase the longevity and

impact of the preservation strategy. Romania is a nation that would benefit from cultural and

historic preservation and due to Romania's quite modern internet infrastructure, citizens have the added advantage of readiness for digitization. Romania ranked fifth in the world for best internet speed, and reports 78.5% of the population as avid internet users (Melencuic, 2018).

Digitization has the power to accelerate information flow thus reaching a larger audience, and increasing the impact of an online platform. This is a crucial advantage to developing a website for the town of Rasnov, since many residents have left the town due to historical conflicts, rapidly increasing gentrification, or to look for better financial opportunities. Since one powerful tool for cultural preservation is a website, Romanians can easily access it from anywhere in the world (Dragomir, 2022).

Another benefit of digitization is the longevity of the platform. Over time websites typically require some maintenance, however, the use of a website has higher impact and lower cost than restoration attempts involving the storage of physical artifacts.

2.4.2 Applying Ethnographic Research to Website Development

A strategy to improve the impact of the Mioritics website is to increase the emotional connection website viewers have with the culture and town of Rasnov. An effective way to increase emotional connection is by incorporating ethnographic research strategies such as user contribution (Yarrow, 2017). By giving current and former residents of Rasnov a platform to share their stories and memories of the town, potential website users are more likely to find similarities, therefore improving engagement. This method would make it more likely that information uploaded about Rasnov is coming from the people that have lived in the town, which offers an interesting insight and view on the way of life in Rasnov.

Although Mioritics is providing Rasnov locals with a website for sharing stories and fostering connections within the community, other teams can apply this digital platform project to other areas facing similar culture loss issues. Any community facing similar culture loss and displacements could utilize an online platform to preserve parts of their culture and come together as a connected group. Mioritics can use the platform as a blueprint to develop a digital platform for other areas that need a new approach for cultural preservation.

2.4.3 Creating Community over the Net: A Case Study of Romanian Online Journalism

Ethnography exists in many different forms, one of these is a website. A case study by Nocasion of Romanian Online Journalism examines the virtual community that developed around *Formula As*—a Romanian web-based publication with eight million readers (Nocasian, n.d.). The purpose of the study was to investigate the approach *Formula As* employs to bring together Romanians around the world into a virtual community. The role of *Formula As* is similar to the cultural preservation aspect of this project, as the *Formula As* website displays memories from Romanian people in order to form connections between viewers of the website.

To uncover the distinctiveness of the *Formula As* community, Nocasian proposed a virtual community conceptual model containing six conditions—community self, reference, common interests and goals, membership boundaries, shared history, common discursive space, and interactivity (Nocasian, n.d.). Interactivity, an important website characteristic, enables users to comment on others' posts and navigate a website. Figure 2.5 illustrate the *Formula As* website design.

Figure 2.5 Formula As website ("Arhive Lumea Românească," n.d.)

Nocasian's findings of the case study of *Formula As* are that community members sustain

connections and imagine themselves and others as constituting a community through the shared

practices of interpreting the community texts and making public participants' stories of

involvement with the website's community (Nocasian, n.d.). Comparing the *Formula As*

community to the six conditions set by Nocasian, this community covers many of the important

conditions, where shared history and interactivity are the most prominent. These findings are

helpful in the creation of the Mioritics Association website, specifically because the goal of the

website is to connect Romanians living abroad with Rasnov residents' stories of history and

create a sense of community.

2.5 Summary

This background chapter covers research about relevant topics such as ethnography,

Romanian history, demographic breakdown of Rasnov, and methods for culture preservation.

The research provided beneficial background information that aided our project team's

development of an effective website that relays information efficiently to the intended audience. Additionally, this research influenced the team's decisions about methodologies and strategies to employ in delivering a platform to Mioritics, that will enable users to successfully upload their memories and preserve culture.

3.0 Methodology

The goal of this project was to develop a prototype website to aid Mioritics in their mission to provide current and former residents of Rasnov with a platform to share their stories in order to preserve the town's history and foster connections. To successfully achieve this goal, the team had the following objectives to accomplish.

1. Determine website features, functionality, and user motivation.

2. Select a development platform and develop a mock layout of the website.

3. Obtain feedback on mock layouts and website design.

4. Refine website layout and develop a prototype website.

This chapter explains the individual reasoning behind each objective, the methods and analysis the team used, and any limitations the team encountered while accomplishing these objectives. Figure 3.1 illustrates the connection between the team's set of objectives and the methods the team executed to address each objective.
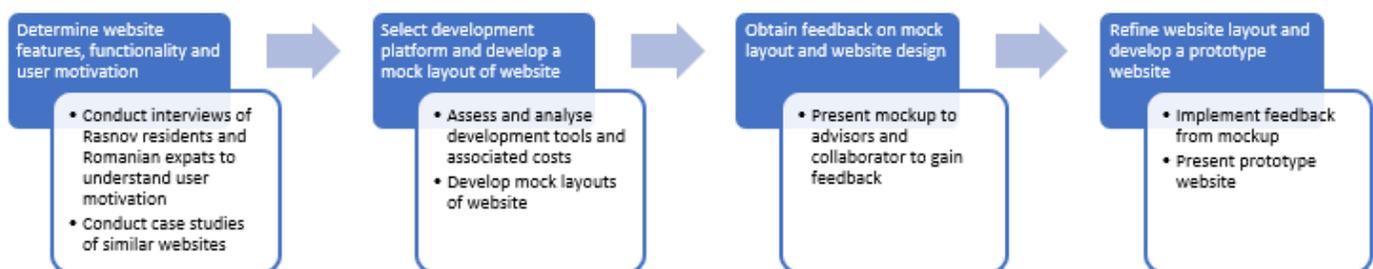
Figure 3.1 Objective and Methodology Overview

3.1 Determine Website Features, Functionality and User Motivations

The first objective was to conduct case studies of websites and previous IQPs with similar purposes. The case study research helped the team determine a list of the most important website functions that would provide people with the ability to preserve the history of Rasnov. In the limited time for the project, prioritizing these features allowed the team to allocate time effectively. Additionally, the team conducted semi-structured interviews of Rasnov locals and Romanians living abroad to understand the motivations of potential users for using the website and the types of culture most important to them.

3.1.1 Website Case Study

The team conducted a case study on websites and IQPs with similar purposes of promoting culture and encouraging preservation. The team reviewed websites with features and functionality that are important in helping digitize historically relevant pieces of information. The team selected four websites to review for the case studies to extract relevant information on effective layout strategies, potential features, and overall aesthetics. The team also selected two previous IQPs with similar project goals and objectives with respect to website design. By researching these six cases, the team compared the concept of the proposed Rasnov website to websites that other teams have successfully built. Table 3.1 outlines the websites and IQPs selected for our case study and provides comments on similarities of purposes and goals to justify the reasoning behind selecting the websites. The team developed criteria to analyze these websites in a standardized and effective manner. Some of the top criteria included website purpose, target audience, prominent features, and ability for user interaction.

Table 3.1 List of Websites for Case Study

Website Title	Background	Similarities
IQP: Kazakhstan: Developing an Informative Website for Promoting a Positive Image of the Country	An IQP that created a website to inform other WPI students about Kazakhstan.	Team produced a website for Kazakhstan because the country lacks global recognition. This is similar to creating a website to give Rasnov recognition.
IQP: Redesigning the PwC Careers Website in Moscow, Russia	An IQP that redesigned a career page website to attract more applicants and make it more user friendly.	The team is required to conduct the same level of interviews and research prior to working on the website. The IQP students also worked on a similar timeline.
Nakem Narratives	Website created by graduate students studying international affairs. Purpose is to preserve Mayan culture in Guatemala by promoting Mayan artisans.	They have an artisan profiles tab which are family stories that they have collected through interviews. This could be a potential scheme for storing the user data for the Rasnov website.
Roma Culture: Conservation and Revitalization of crafts, part of intangible heritage	Website for a project to preserve Roma culture in Romania by promoting artisan crafts.	Project is within Romania and has translation features that are similar to the ones Mioritics wants to see for the Rasnov website. Project background and objectives are also posted and comparing them to the Rasnov project was beneficial.

The Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre	Website that publishes stories about holocaust survivors and their experiences. Stories are created by sharing family backgrounds, pictures, videos, and audio files.	The holocaust survivor stories are separated in two categories, by story and by resource. The resource libraries are categorized by records, videos, and photos. These are two possibilities for sorting data for the Rasnov website.
Town & Country of Nantucket, MA	Official website for the town of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Provides background information on the town, GIS map, and access to public records with a place to post questions.	Certain functionality such as interactive GIS maps with various filtering options, question board, and access to public records, would be applicable to the proposed Rasnov website.

3.1.2 User Motivations Interviews

The team needed to determine user motivations for uploading their own stories and pictures onto the developed website. The team completed this by interviewing Romanian people for whom our collaborator, Mihai Dragomir, provided contact information. The team conducted interviews over Zoom, which allowed for a more personal, face-to-face interaction, as well as the ability to utilize Zoom's built in recording and transcription services. All interviews began with a preamble and consent portion (see Appendix A). This ensured that the interviewee was comfortable with us recording them and knew that their participation as voluntary and they could stop at any time. The team structured the interview questions to begin with a more relaxed discussion on the interviewee's background, then lead into questions directed toward their motivations and goals for uploading their content. The team decided to ask the interviewee about

childhood memories in Rasnov to both get them talking comfortably and collect examples of stories that Mioritics could potentially feature on the website. The team chose to conduct semi-structured interviews that would facilitate extended explanations from the interviewee regarding the project and the website, as well as attempt to set the interviewee at ease. See Appendix B for full interview questions. Table 3.2 identifies the names, dates and method of interviews for the four interviews.

Table 3.2 Rasnov Current and Former Residents Interview Timeline

Interviewee Title	Date of Interview
Rudiger von Kraus	February 4, 2022
Andrei Negus	April 1, 2022
Anonymous	April 11, 2022
Iulia Sferle	April 13, 2022

3.1.3 Interview Transcripts

The interviews produced transcripts using Zoom's built-in captioning feature, and the team went through them alongside the recording to clean them up. Initially, the transcripts were in a large block of text with only time stamps, so each review of the transcript required watching the video recording to add who was speaking and fixing small errors. This process was slightly more in depth for the interviewee's speaking sections, as the transcription feature was for native English speakers, so any Romanian words and accents were harder to pick up. However, the team completed the transcripts to the best of their ability in order to move on to the next step.

3.1.4 Interview Coding

After gathering responses from the four interviewees, the team then analyzed the responses by searching the transcripts for specifically chosen themes in order to inform adjustments to the features on the website mockup. The team used a combination of inductive and deductive analysis, with preselected themes of history, culture, and motivation and added in nature based on the transcripts. Table 3.3 provides the four main themes and various subthemes that came out of the team's coding process.

Table 3.3 Interview Coding Themes

Theme	Subtheme
Culture	Fortress, Childhood memories, Recipes, Cultural preservation
History	Rasnov Fortress, Saxons, Communism
Nature	Forest, Outdoor activities
Motivations	Preservation, Methods of encouragement, Isolation, Fostering connections

From these interviews, the team was able to recognize the value of the website for Romanians both abroad and living in Romania, as well as the motivation of some of the interviewees. Additionally, the interviews provided suggestions for the team to use in website design.

3.2 Select a Development Platform and Develop a Mock Layout of the Website

The team first selected a tool for website development based on recommendations from our collaborator. Then, we created a list of the most desired features that steered our thinking and brainstorming activity about the layout and structure of the website. Next, the team developed a mock layout of the website, using the selected tool, to generate a visual representation of the deliverable to present to potential website users for feedback.

3.2.1 Selecting A Platform for Website Development

Prior to creating the mock layout for the website, it was important to select the best tool for website development. The team's collaborator, Mr. Dragomir, had previous experience in website development so he encouraged us to find a platform that could meet certain expectations. The team conducted a compare and contrast analysis using the following criteria.

1. Language Options – The platform can support multilingual websites.
2. Interactivity – The platform can support websites with user inputs such as posting or commenting.
3. Feature Options – The platform can implement features on a website using plug-ins and extensions.

The team used Mr. Dragomir's expectations as criteria for organizing the analysis for three different website development platforms, WordPress, Wix, and Joomla. The team managed this analysis prior to selecting the most effective website development tool. After analyzing the three different website development platforms, the team chose WordPress. By comparison, Joomla required a level of programming knowledge and a longer development time, which were

resources and skills that the team did not have. The main reason the team chose WordPress over Wix was the implementation costs and accessibility to documentation and plug-ins for fast-paced development. WordPress is open-source software that offers flexibility for features and is user friendly. WordPress is user friendly, easy to customize, and extensively tested. In addition, Mihai and his team were already familiar with the tool, making the eventual handoff easier.

3.2.2 Conducting Cost Analysis

In addition to completing a case study, the team presented a cost analysis for the administrator account for the website, the domain name, and long-term upkeep. Due to the list of selected features from both conducting case studies and the desired features from our collaborator, the team required a premium account on the development platform. The team presented the cost of a premium account and the collaborator approved the purchase.

At this stage, the team provided Mioritics with a set of recommendations detailing the potential long-term cost of producing the website to decide whether the selected tools are appropriate and within budget. After the selection of the development tool, we utilized the information gathered to complete background tasks such as determining cost of website development and presented it to our collaborator.

Once he approved the use of WordPress, Mihai gave the team access to the administrator dashboard to start working on the website. The next step was to create a mockup of the proposed layout for the website.

3.2.3 Creating a Mock Layout

The team began the development of a mock layout of the website on WordPress by using input from our collaborator. The team initially employed blocks or fill-in images to act as placeholders for content on the website. The team created a mockup to illustrate a preliminary visual appearance for the expected layout of the website. In addition to the WordPress mockup, the team utilized PowerPoint to demonstrate three potential layouts for user content. The purpose of the PowerPoint presentation was to demonstrate different directions the website could take.

Mockups require less time and resources to see where changes need to be made prior to the sizeable investment of website development. This was an important benefit of beginning with a mockup given the time constraint of seven weeks to complete the project. Using mock-ups ensured that there was a level of approval and critiquing prior to starting the next phase of implementing functionality on the website.

3.3 Obtain Feedback on Mock Layouts and Website Design

The purpose of obtaining feedback on the mock layout of the website was to get approval from our collaborator on the layout and expected functionality. Discussing desirable features and appropriate layout that would encourage a better user experience was beneficial to the process of website development. After getting feedback from Mihai Dragomir, the team reviewed his insightful feedback regarding his needs and expectations for the website. To accomplish this the group gathered feedback by presenting the mockup during a Zoom meeting in the fourth week of the project.

3.3.1 Present Mockup to Collaborator and Advisors

The team first presented the mockup to Mihai Dragomir and the project advisors during a meeting on April 5th to get feedback on the overall layout and proposed sections. The team displayed the WordPress website with blocks to mark the locations of features. At this stage, the mockup contained the overview of sections and tabs for the website but did not have information on the pages.

The majority of feedback came from selecting an effective method for user uploads. After presenting three potential methods to organize user uploaded content, the team had a constructive feedback session with Mihai and the project advisors about the pros and cons of each method. The team utilized this valuable feedback to start implementing functionality of the website.

3.4 Developing the Prototype Website

The final objective was to develop the prototype website by implementing functionality to the layout that the collaborator and advisors approved during the review of the mockup. Once

the team received feedback on the overall layout of the website, they finalized a list of realistic functions for the site. After deciding on the list of features and selecting an efficient method for user uploads, the next stage of the process focused on implementing the agreed upon functionality on the website.

3.4.1 Finalizing Website Features and Aesthetics

The team used placeholder images and text during the mockup demonstration on WordPress. After the team implemented the layout on the WordPress site, we were able to continue working on the functionalities. After meeting with our collaborator, Mihai gave the team specific design criteria:

1. Simplicity
2. Security
3. Language Options
4. Filtering and Organization Options
5. Interactivity.

Following these criteria, the team settled on implementing three main features:

1. Secure User Uploads
2. Content Sorted by Time Ranges
3. Interactive Map.

After implementing the main features, the team left additional suggestions for future developers.

The website includes a simple and clean homepage with recent posts and a smart goal, which is a brief statement that encapsulates the goal of the website and project. In addition to the homepage, there are three pages for each feature, Stories by Time, Map, and Upload Form.

3.4.2 Design Explanation

Since the major purpose of the website is to enable users to share their stories, the team debated the appropriate method for user uploads. There were two main options that the team evaluated. The first option was to have users create an account on the website, which would give them access to the main dashboard to upload posts. The team decided against this because over time many users would get access to the WordPress dashboard which poses a security risk. The second option was to have users submit content through a form, which an admin would then approve and allow it to be posted to the website. The final functionality included utilizing a user upload plugin where contributors would complete a form with the content that they want to share. Users do not need an account on the website to submit the form and share their stories. After users submit the form, the content needs approval, so Mioritics has authority to only post valid user content.

To keep us guided, the team made a Gantt chart to organize our progress. The chart includes sections for each of our objectives and IQP assignment deadlines. The chart is in figure 3.2.

RASNOV TEAM PROJECT TIMELINE

		Details	Week 1 (14 15 16 17 18)	Week 2 (21 22 23 24 25)	Week 3 (28 29 30 31 1)	Week 4 (4 5 6 7 8)	Week 5 (11 12 13 14 15)	Week 6 (18 19 20 21 22)	Week 7 (25 26 27 28 29)
1	Determine Website Features, Functionality and User Motivations	- Conduct Case Studies	██						
		- Conduct Interviews of Rasnov Locals and Emigrants		████████	████████	████			
2	Select a Development Platform and Develop a Mock Layout	- Analyze Account Costs		██					
		- Select Development Tool		██					
3	Obtain Feedback on Mock Layout and Website Design	- Create Website Layout Mockups			██				
		- Present Mockups to Mioritics			█				
		- Present Mockups to Advisors			█				
		- Analyze Results			█				
4	Refine Website Layout and Develop a Protoype Website	- Domain Name Purchasing				█			
		- Account Purchasing				█			
		- Connect Backend to Database				████	██████	██████	████
		- Implement Results of Feedback				████	██████	██████	████
5	IQP Assignments and Deadlines	- Methods 1			▪				
		- Presentation: Goals and Objectives			▪				
		- Presentation: Methods				▪			
		- Background 1				▪			
		- Methods 2				▪			
		- Presentation: Background					▪		
		- Background 2					▪		
		- Presentation: Preliminary Results					▪		
		- Preliminary Results					▪		
		- Presentation: Results and Analysis						▪	
		- Results 2							
		- Final Report							▪
		- Final Presentation							▪

PROJECT COMPLETE

Figure 3.2 Gantt chart of project

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4.0 Results and Implementation

This chapter presents the main findings our team collected. We first conducted case studies as a part of objective one. Additionally, the team conducted a series of interviews to gain a better understanding of the motivations behind users wanting to share their personal stories to preserve a town's history. Results from objectives two and three are split into the design, implementation, and final website section. The design section describes the design solutions the team used to satisfy design criteria, and the implementation covers the process of creating the final website. Lastly, our team incorporated results regarding the editing and feedback of our final deliverable in the revision section.

4.1 Website Case Studies

The team researched and analyzed six different case studies to ascertain the advantages and disadvantages of each site itself. The purpose of these case studies was to understand what the best practices were in terms of website design, usability, and overall functionality. The team conducted case studies using eight criteria that our team derived from background research, which included:

1. Development Platform – what were the tools and software used?
2. Purpose – what was the main goal?
3. Target Audience – what type of user does the website anticipate?
4. Features – what are the main attractions and functionalities?
5. Layout – how are the pages and information organized?
6. Theme – how can the overall aesthetic be described?

7. User Input – what are the methods of user interaction?

8. Developers – who created the website and what was the level of expertise?

The team used the criteria to standardize the process of analyzing the six selected

websites and IQPs and extract relevant information and website characteristics that contributed

to developing an effective approach to creating the Mioritics website. Appendix D provides notes

the team compiled during the case study for the six sites using the eight criteria.

4.1.1 Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Center Website

The Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Center is an educational exhibit located in the

University of Huddersfield in the United Kingdom. The website is a digital version of the center

containing collected artifacts such as photos and physical remnants. The major takeaway from

this website was the various strategies the designers implemented to display information. A key

part of the Mioritics website is to display user uploaded information in an intriguing manner that

would attract other users. The Holocaust Exhibition website sorted content by story (see Figure

4.1) and by resource (see Figure 4.2). Items organized by story means the website design

associates each artifact or image with a specific holocaust survivor under a section with their

name and image.
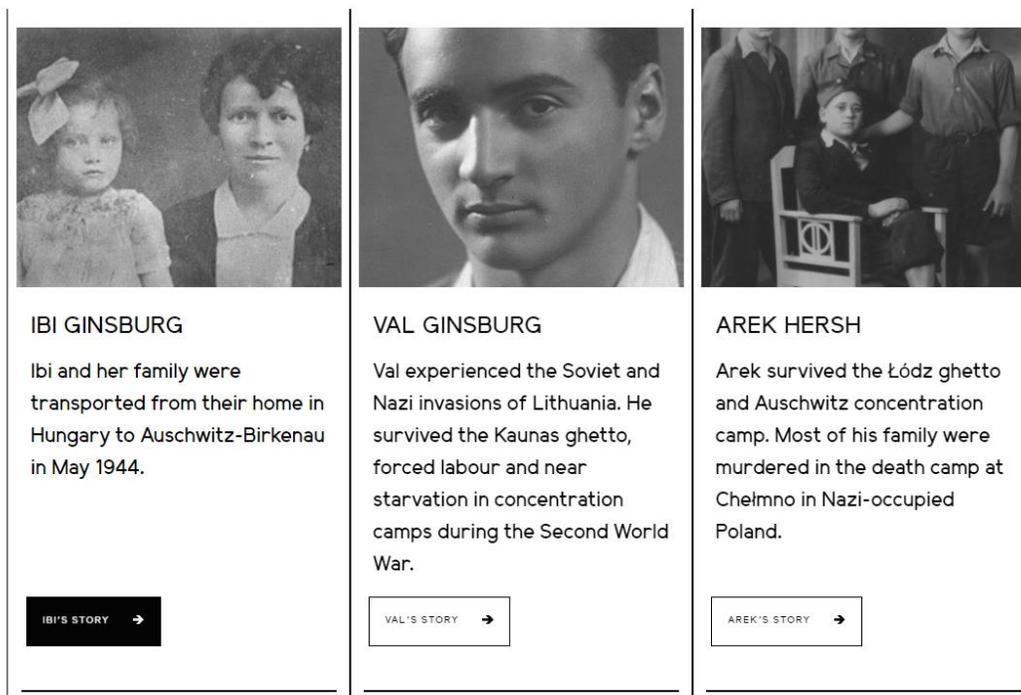
Figure 4.1 Screenshot of Content Sorted by Story (Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association,

n.d)

Organizing items by resource implies each image or artifact had a separate clickable page

with additional information. Utilizing multiple methods of filtering content is a desired

characteristic for the Mioritics website. (Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association, n.d).

Figure 4.2 Screenshot of Content Sorted by Resource (Holocaust Survivors Friendship

Association, n.d)

4.1.2 Roma Culture: Conservation and Revitalization of Crafts

Developers of the Roma Culture website created the platform to support the

development of local Romani businesses in Romania and promote Romani cultural practices.

The Romani are a minority group in the country and often face legal rights issues and

discrimination, which means their businesses and culture would benefit from additional

promotion and recognition. The goal of the Roma Culture website is to preserve Roma Culture,

which is a similar goal to the Mioritics website which is to preserve the culture of Rasnov. The

Roma Culture website contains a blog tab which has various articles and pictures about local

Romani businesses and artisan crafts. Incorporating a blog section is a common approach to

facilitate user interaction. The option to develop the Mioritics website with blog capability has many advantages including easy access, interactivity, and good security (Costea, n.d).

4.1.3 Nakem Narratives

Nakem Narratives is a website made to help preserve the culture of Guatemalan Artisans. This website showcases stories, through text, photos, and videos of these people's lives (see Figure 4.3), so that users gain better insight into how these people live their daily lives. The site uses galleries and profiles to organize its information, allowing the user to scroll through photos and profile pictures; clicking on either one leads to a story or any supporting information from a photo.

Figure 4.3 Screenshot From Nakem Narratives Profile Page (Jenks, 2016)

One attractive aspect about the Nakem website is that it implemented a map feature. This enables users to visually connect specific locations in relation to the posted stories, a key feature desired for the Rasnov website. One negative aspect our assessment noted is users may perceive the site as a bit bare. Moreover, looking at the profiles and galleries the website includes, there is no available method for someone to contribute themselves to these profiles or galleries. This leaves the site a bit empty, especially since its creators appear to have moved on and not added any content in quite some time (Jenks, 2016).

4.1.4 Town & County of Nantucket Website

Another case study the team conducted was on the official website for the Town and County of Nantucket. This site's main purpose is to be a hub of information for the people residing in the town and county of Nantucket. The site uses a series of tabs to help store information and direct users to the information they are seeking. Furthermore, the site plays on the unique scenery of the island, by featuring many engaging photos for background images and to fill void space (see Figure 4.4).
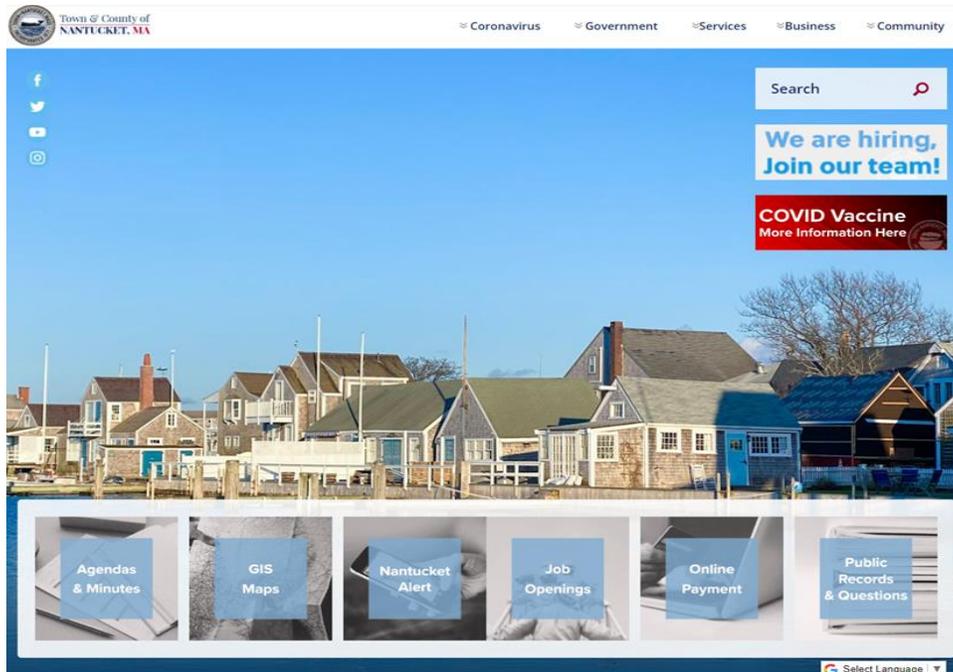
Figure 4.4 Screenshot from the Town and County of Nantucket Website (Nantucket, n.d.)

Overall, the site's main focus is not highly related to the one our team is trying to create, but the review yielded a few key takeaways from specific aspects of the site. One characteristic that jumped out is the overall look and feel of the website, as its use of scenic photographs of the area likely draws in users (especially potential tourists to the island). Another interesting aspect is the use of a GIS map, where users can locate specific items of interest in the area. Lastly, Nantucket's tab features facilitate easy navigation of the website to quickly find the information they desire (Nantucket, n.d.).

4.1.5 Redesigning the PwC Careers Website in Moscow, Russia

Our team conducted an analysis of a previous WPI IQP project tasked with delivering a website. The goal of the project was to redesign the careers page on the Price water house Coopers (PwC) website for Moscow, Russia. The purpose of the project was to make the careers

page more user friendly and approachable in order to boost recruitment at the PwC office. The Moscow IQP team researched the specific factors that lead to making this a user-friendly website. The research concluded that simple themes and easy navigation were the most important factors. The team defined simple themes as layouts that are uncluttered and use basic colors. Our team created a baseline for the Mioritics website based on the information research and presented in the Moscow IQP paper. Namely, our team decided to stick to a simple theme to produce a clean and straightforward design of the website. In addition, the concept of utilizing tabs and various spacers for easy navigation that the Moscow project advocated will contribute to easier usability for the Rasnov website (Spear et al., 2015).

4.1.6 Kazakhstan: Developing an Informative Website for Promoting a Positive Image of the Country

The final IQP case study our team conducted was to review Kazakhstan: Developing an Informative Website for Promoting a Positive Image of the Country. As stated in the team's title, the goal was to create a website to promote Kazakhstan. Due to their short project timeline, this team decided to use GoDaddy, a website building tool. This site strived to have users become aware of many different topics about the country, such as its history, politics, and culture (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Screenshot from the Explore Kazakhstan Website (Aigozhin & Issayev, 2014)

Our team's overall assessment is that the site itself is a bit 'loud' in terms of theme and design, and the IQP team most likely picked the design from a premade template. The Kazakhstan site also has no capability for users to upload any information they might have to share about the country. But the site did contain many types of information, with a mix of photos, videos, and text (Aigozhin & Issayev, 2014).

4.1.7 Main Takeaways and Strategies from Website Case Studies

Overall, there are a few key points to take away from these case studies. In regard to overall layout and theme, three out of the five sites used galleries and profiles to display information. This approach is a good way forward for our own website as both galleries and profiles are effective for organizing and presenting information to the user.

Four of these sites provided an interactive map feature for users, which is another important aspect for our site as it provides users with a geographic reference built into the website. Lastly, a key result came from evaluating the specific types of information the sites supported. When a site had too much of one type of data, such as photos, text, and videos, our team felt it imbalanced the overall feel of the website itself, possibly making it less enjoyable for the user. In considering the Rasnov website features, our team decided to strike this balance with our website to keep from making a similar mistake.

4.2 Interview Results

The team's analysis of the interviews produced valuable results that had a strong impact on the website design decisions. Our collaborator, Mihai Dragomir, provided the contact information for interviewees, all of whom had a connection to Rasnov, whether by currently living in the town, or having lived in the town previously. The interviewees Dragomir chose ranged in age, demographics, and background. The interviews represented a broad sample of those who would potentially contribute to the website. However, due to the limitations of completing the project remotely, the team only conducted four interviews which are unlikely to yield the full scope of Rasnov's opinions.

4.2.1 Rudiger von Kraus

The first interview the team conducted was with Rudiger von Kraus. The full transcript of the interview is in Appendix E. Rudiger lives in America but immigrated from Romania in 1976 and continues to have a strong connection to Rasnov. He had already started the process of recording his family history in Rasnov through the publication of his master's thesis, titled Artisans and Nobles (Kraus, 2017). Rudiger gave the team a detailed history of the town and its

residents, going into the changes in demographics from the first settlers of the town to the migration of the Saxon population—which he took part in. While he has made individual progress in preserving the culture of the town, he agreed with the need to provide the wider section of locals and former residents with a platform to connect and share their history. He suggested the team avoid making the focus of the website a showcase of older photos or photos of artifacts, and explained that while some exist, many people lost them during the turmoil of the Communist rule and subsequent displacement of Saxons in Rasnov. He then suggested the possibility of seeing the changes occurring in the town through more recent pictures on the website. Rudiger provided the team with excellent background information regarding Rasnov, as well as added a few cautions with respect to the ideas the team had initially brainstormed.

4.2.2 Andrei Negus

The second interview the team conducted was with Andrei Negus, a current resident of Rasnov (see Appendix F). Andrei is a man in his mid-forties, who works in the information center in Rasnov. He told the team stories about growing up in Rasnov and spending time in the surrounding forests; how in his childhood they were wonderful, imaginative places for the children of Rasnov to play in all day. He recalled stories about swinging "like Tarzan" over the valley from the longest vines they could find, and making giant forts in the woods, then holding mock battles with other groups of children. He then tied these stories into user motivation for other Rasnov citizens (current and former) to share their stories on the platform. He believes stories could convince others to share their experiences after reading positive stories like his. He emphasized that having examples like his stories would jog others' memories of similar activities, and they would then be more comfortable sharing their personal memories. He agreed that Rasnov residents would be very appreciative of having a dedicated place specifically for

them to share their stories. He ended his interview with the following message regarding the use of the website.

> "Such a project should be encouraged with priority, and considered an exceptional chance to keep alive the memory of the past with its charming stories. Such a project saves both the past and the future, and of course, the chance to show those who are coming after us. The chance not to forget, to appreciate what they have and to carry on the story being full of inspiration."

Hearing his opinion regarding the potential of the website to act as a time capsule for the younger generations cemented the team's belief that those with a connection to Rasnov desire the website and the information it would provide would have a positive impact on the town.

4.2.3 Anonymous

The team conducted a semi-structured interview with a person that chose to remain anonymous (see Appendix G). This person grew up in Rasnov, but as of recently, lives in Brasov, Romania. From this interview the team learned that this person spent their high school years making trips to the forest, snowboarding in the winter and biking in the warmer months. This person mentioned that Romanian expatriates are fairly isolated from each other, and a website is a potential digital mechanism for Romanians to talk to other Romanians, as seen in the following quote:

> "To stay outside Romania, to live there, and not to have other expats from Romania to oh, and talk with them! It's really, really hard, and I think it

will be easier to share with I think it's easy for expats to share their lives

with [other] expats."

Additionally, locals, like the person interviewed, say that locations in the forest are important and locating them on a web map would be useful to Romanians that are not familiar with the area. This person also believed that sharing recipes was a good feature to include as it will serve to connect people.

Based on the interview, the team gathered that having a website to communicate with those that share your culture, language, and history is an invaluable way to regain a connection to one's home country. A clear finding from the interview was that the team should prioritize implementing a map into the website that would allow users to pin locations, including within the forest. This anonymous interview gave the team more insight into the potential that the website could have for connecting those who use the website— whether they live in Romania or not.

4.2.4 Iulia Sferle

The fourth team interview was with Iulia Sferle, a current resident of Rasnov (see Appendix H). Iulia is a teenager who has lived in Rasnov her whole life and is currently studying computer science in high school. She told the team that she loved growing up in Rasnov because it is such a small community where everyone cares for one another. She explained that just walking on the streets, people will say hello and ask how you are doing because they know you. She mentioned that one of her fond childhood memories was caroling door to door and receiving small sums of money and pieces of traditional sweet bread from her neighbors. Although her memories and connection to Rasnov are strong, she emphasized during her interview that those who have migrated may still have strong feelings towards their home country.

"[Those who leave Romania] get out of touch with the traditions or what

is in your soul that is tied up with your hometown or your country, so

maybe if you're sharing to them things like the place that they left it will

bring some memories to them."

Additionally, the website is a good idea to preserve the history of the town, as "people

don't read books anymore, or—I don't know—I don't watch TV anymore, and people in my

family don't watch TV anymore". Iulia also mentioned that people would be more willing to

share information on the website based on a perceived reward they would receive, whether it is a

physical or emotional reward.

Julia's statements aligned with previous interviewees that the website would be very

helpful for Rasnov, as it would provide the families with an online avenue for connecting to one

another. Those who have left may have lost those traditions of caroling and sweet bread, and the

website could provide a platform to preserve these memories in time. Her statements on

motivating participants were also helpful for the team to be able to inform Mioritics on the future

of the website. Something such as fully explaining the impact of the project could provide an

emotional reward to those who contribute. Or a more physical reward like a certificate for

participating could act to encourage sharing on the website.

4.2.5 Interview Coding Results

After completing the transcripts of the four interviews the team conducted deductive

coding using the themes specified in the methods (see Table 3.3). One difficulty the team

encountered while coding was the overlapping of the themes. The team initially believed that the

transcripts could be neatly broken up into the various themes, but found that the actual process of

coding was more complicated. However, the team proceeded to use their judgment for the main

themes. Figure 4.6 captures the total number of mentions of the main themes by the four interviewees.

Interview Main Themes
n=4
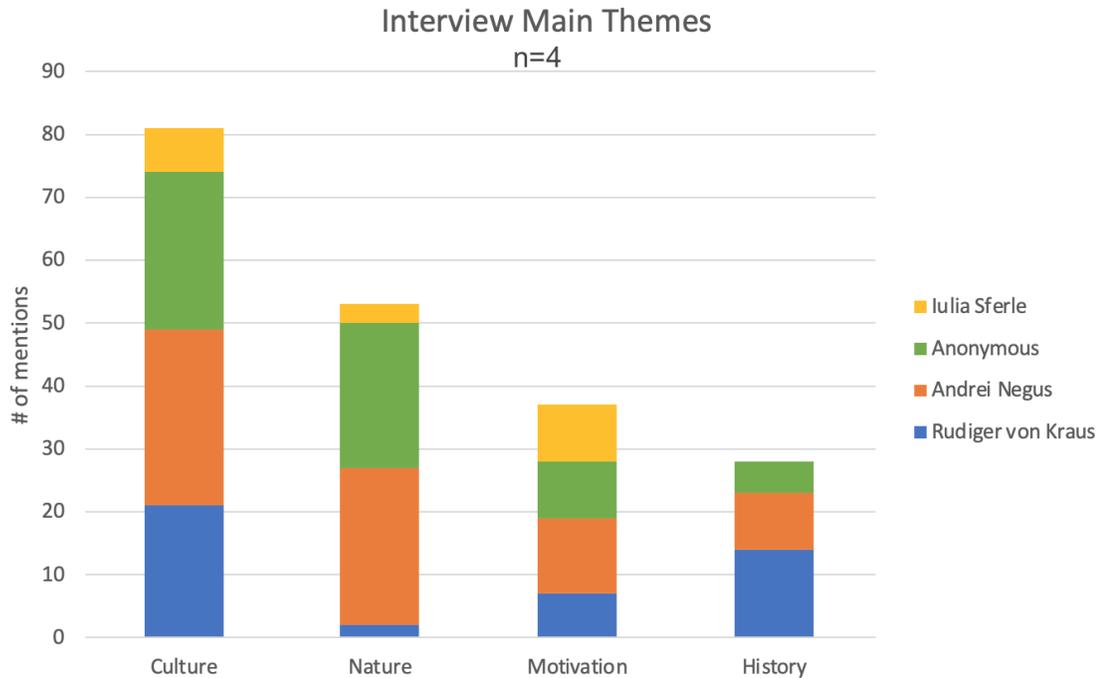
Figure 4.6 Number of Mentions of Interview's Main Themes

The team had expected that culture would take a large portion of the coded responses, as much of the project and questions revolve around the main idea of culture loss. However, a surprising result of the coding was the frequency that interviewees mentioned nature. The sub-themes of the forest and outdoor activities (like skiing, biking, and hiking) took up a majority of these mentions, and all interviewees were extremely positive in their recollection of them.

In summary, the team gained more knowledge of what Rasnov locals and non-locals believed was important about the town. The team learned how impactful the nature surrounding Rasnov is to many children and adults, and that the overall history of the town, especially the fortress, is less of a concern to everyday life. The team now recognizes how much cultural

preservation means to the locals of Rasnov, and the positive impact the website could have on preserving the culture of the town.

4.2.5 General Interview Results

One of the main results of the interviews was the repeating theme of connection to nature and the surrounding forests. Three interviewees talked about the forests around the town and two went into detail on the nature-focused activities they experienced in their childhood. Whether it was snowboarding and biking in the mountain's forests or childhood games of building forts and swinging on vines, the three interviews suggest that the people of Rasnov have a deep and very positive connection with the surrounding nature. The team considered a couple different ideas of how to incorporate that into the deliverable product of a website, as the team did not initially consider it as a strong part of Rasnov's cultural heritage. Adding geotags to locations in the forest that locals commonly visited or sharing stories about the forest in a dedicated gallery on the website could provide the same type of importance to nature that the three Rasnov locals emphasized.

Additionally, two interviews mentioned that having stories already on the platform would inspire and motivate others to share their Rasnov experiences. Having visitors to the website view existing stories could hopefully spur their memory and encourage them to upload their individual stories.

4.3 Website Design

Together with the design specifications outlined by Mihai (section 3.4.1), the team utilized findings from case studies and interviews to propose the layout and features of the

website. The team presented the mockup and design solutions to Mihai, and after receiving

feedback, the team made final edits to the design solutions and worked on the functionality of the

website.

4.3.1 Design Specifications

Mihai gave the team specific design criteria, each of which the team found solutions for

its design. The general expectations yielded the use of a plug-in or the addition of a feature. The

following table matches each design specification with the design solution.

Table 4.1 Design Specifications and Solutions

| Specification	Solution
Simplicity	The team created a simple layout with minimal text and images to remain simple and easy to follow.
Security	Since the main feature of the website is the user upload, the team was able to maintain the security of the website by requiring users to submit posts for approval rather than direct publishing. This way, a member of the Mioritics team is controlling content and no generic user will have administrative access to edit the website.
Language Option	The website was declared as a multilingual website by utilizing a plug-in that allows users to translate between English and Romanian.
Filtering and Organization Options	Users are able to access stories and posts in various different ways including through the homepage, a timeline, and a map.
Interactivity	Users can upload content to the website by submitting a form for approval, they are also able to comment on posts to interact with other users.

After conducting research and a mockup, the team satisfied the design criteria outlined by Mihai at the start of the project. The team met each design specification with a solution that we implemented on the final website. After settling on these solutions, the team decided to create separate pages and tabs for each major functionality on the website.

4.3.2 Case Studies and Interview Incorporation

The key takeaways from the case studies influenced website design in various aspects such as themes, layout, and interactivity. After conducting case studies, the team concluded that a simple theme that was heavy on imagery would aid in users developing an emotional connection to the website. For example, the team incorporated a large header picture of Rasnov to draw in the audience to the town. The team was able to maximize interactivity for users by having the bulk of content be user submitted and by having each post be open for comments. The additional benefit that came from increased interactivity was that users did not require an account on WordPress in order to contribute to the website.

4.3.3 Evaluating Method for Displaying User Uploaded Content

In addition to presenting a mockup of the layout on WordPress, the team presented various methods for the display of user uploaded content. The team presented three different options using PowerPoint. The first option was to use galleries (see Figure 4.7) where each content type would be together, for example, all pictures are in one gallery and all text files in the other.
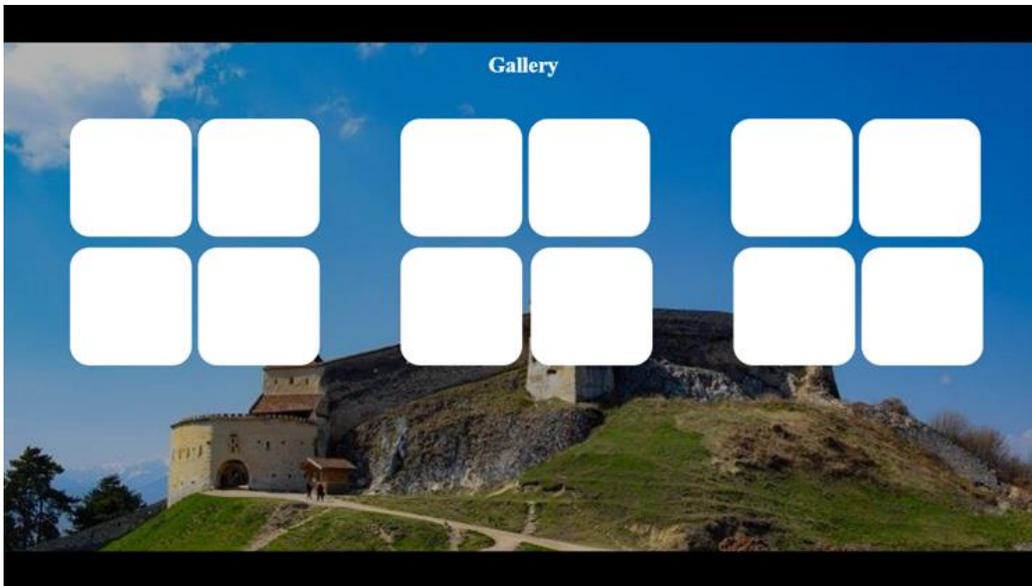
Figure 4.7 Gallery Option for Content Organization

The second option was to use profiles. Each user would create a profile and all of the stories they shared would go under their profile (see Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Profile Option for Content Organization

The third option was to use a general news display (see Figure 4.9). Each story would be using a featured image, title, and short description.
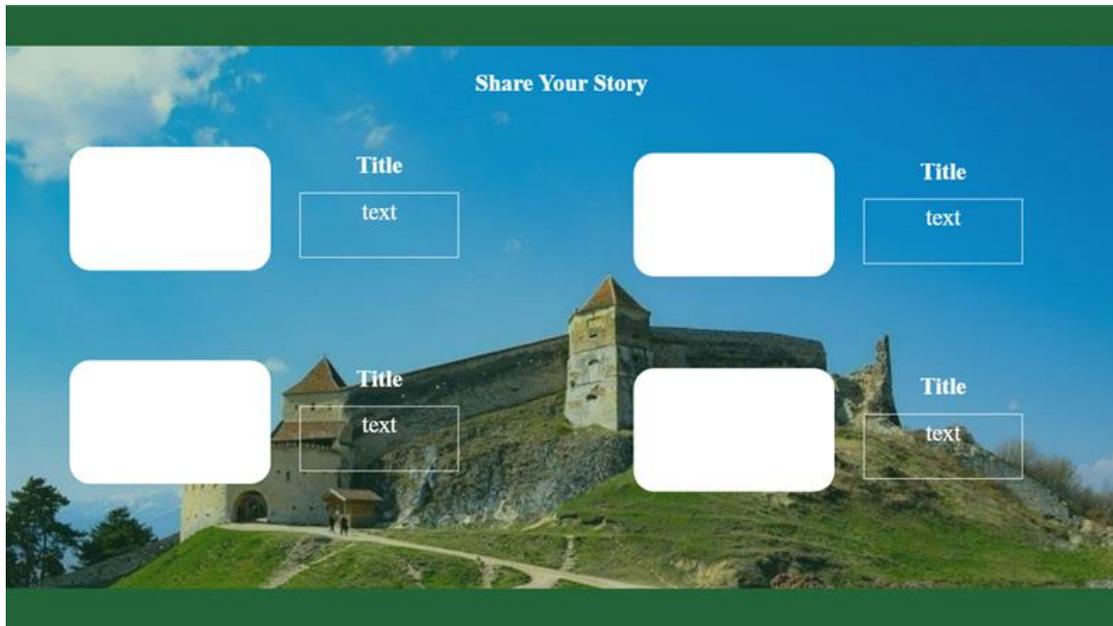
Figure 4.9 News Option for Content Organization

Ultimately, the team decided to use a general news display and then have additional features to navigate through the posts. Mihai suggested avoiding the use of profiles since the main purpose was to attract viewers to the town itself and not the people. In the final design, the homepage used a blog display, however, the team provided additional organization options for user uploaded content, the posts were in a time ranged gallery and an interactive map.

4.4 Website Implementation

The team utilized WordPress to develop the working prototype of the Mioritics website. In order to increase flexibility and functionality while maintaining security, the team took advantage of using plug-ins. Many of the plug-ins on WordPress simplified the process of implementing certain features such as the map.

4.4.1 Tools and Plug-ins

The team's implementation utilized three main plug-ins - GTranslate, Open Street Maps, and User Submitted Posts. The GTranslate add-on uses Google translate to create a multilingual website on WordPress. When setting up the plugin, the website administrator is able to select which language options are available and where the drop-down menu for translation is on the page. For Mioritics, the team selected the GTranslate option to only be in Romanian and English.

Open Street Maps was the extension responsible for the map functionality on the website. To create a map with links to the user posts, the administrator must add geo-tags to each post. The site adds the geo-tag when editing or reviewing a post. The administrator must select and then place a pin onto the map and then save it. Once the administrator has geo-tagged each post, the site generates a map on the maps page that contains pins for each post.

User Submitted Posts is a plug-in that gives users the option to submit posts for the website without giving them administrative access. The user submits posts through a form. The administrator can edit the settings for the form in the dashboard settings for the website.

4.4.2 Dashboard Settings for WordPress

The team implemented main features using plug-ins but the team used the dashboard settings of WordPress to adjust the aesthetics and layout of the website. First, we created a page for each tab. In the settings, we set the home page to display all of the user submitted posts, but we created new pages for the stories' timeline, map, and the share your story form. The stories timeline page uses widgets for the latest posts and then sorts each widget by a category. The team simplified the implementation of the map page by using the Open Street Maps plug-in. Finally, the team implemented the share your story form by utilizing the User Submitted Posts

plug-in. Once the team created pages for each tab, we created a menu to make each page

accessible from the website.

4.5 Final Website

After the design and implementation process, the team delivered a functioning prototype

of the website. The title of the website is ***Povesti Locale*** which means Local Stories in

Romanian. The final prototype of the website had four main pages including the ***homepage***,

stories, ***map***, and ***share your story***. Each page served a purpose in demonstrating the main goal

of the website. In the following section, the team discusses explanations of each website page

and provides screenshots of the final prototype.

4.5.1 Homepage

The ***Homepage*** displays the latest user posts to bring in viewer attention. The team

wanted to display all user posts on the homepage to draw the attention of new website visitors.

By displaying the online community created on the website, the ethnographic approach used

increases visitors' emotional connection to the website. Additionally, The main image of the

homepage (see Figure 4.10) is a beautiful picture of Rasnov to draw attention to the town.
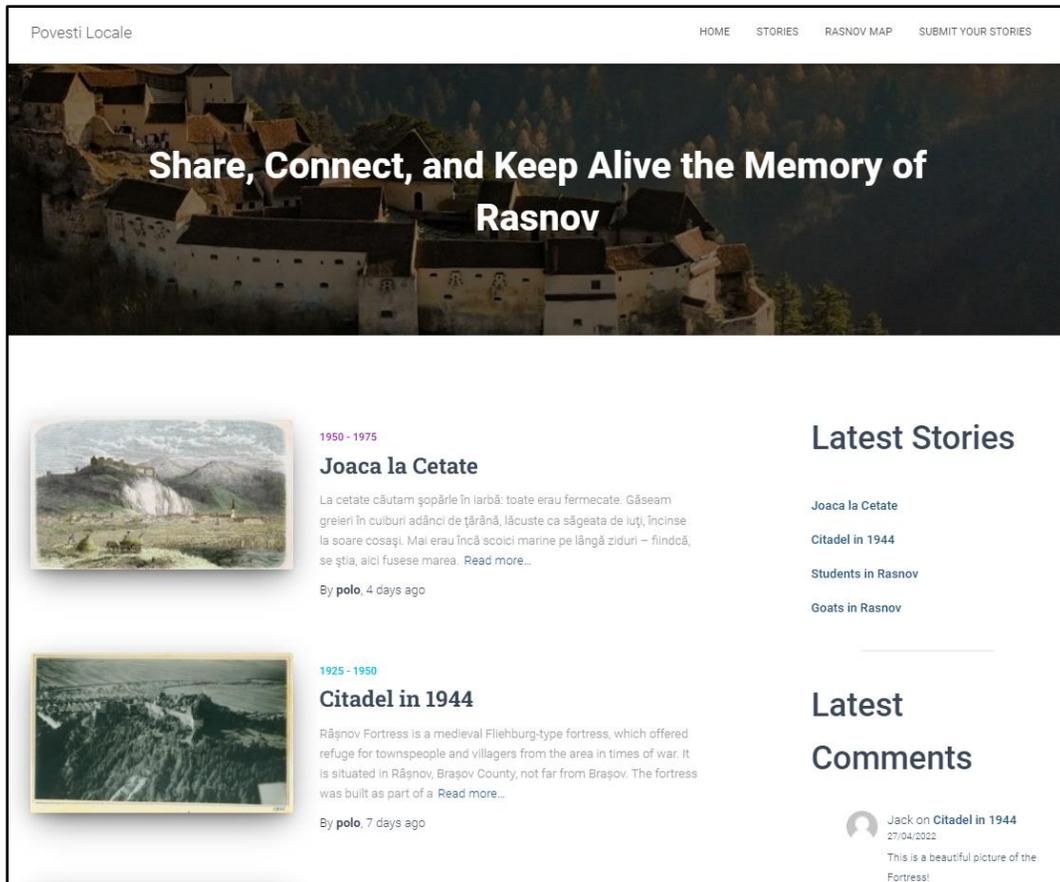
Figure 4.10 Screenshot of Home Page on Povesti Locale

4.5.2 Stories Page

The *Stories* page organizes user posts by time ranges, similar to a timeline. When users upload a story, they must select a time range as shown in Figure 4.11. This page is a way for users to visualize how the town has changed over time and how this has affected the images and memories associated with Rasnov.

Stories

2000 – 2025

Goats in Rasnov

Once upon a time there was an old goat. She had seven little kids, and loved them very much. One day she wanted to go into the forest to get some food. She said: "Dear children, I have to go into the forest, be careful of the wolf. If he [...]

1975 – 2000

1950 – 1975

Joaca la Cetate

La cetate căutam şopârle în iarbă: toate erau fermecate. Găseam greieri în cuiburi adânci de ţărână, lăcuste ca săgeata de iuţi, încinse la soare cosaşi. Mai erau încă scoici marine pe lângă ziduri – fiindcă, se ştia, aici fusese marea. Tot mai descopereai câte-o scoică ascunsă de rău atâtor copii [...]

1925- 1950

Citadel in 1944

Râsnov Fortress is a medieval Fliehburg-type fortress, which offered refuge for townspeople and villagers from the area in times of war. It is situated in Râsnov, Brasov County, not far from

Figure 4.11 Screenshot of Stories Page on Povesti Locale

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4.5.3 Map Page

The *Maps* page displays geo-tagged posts on a map of Rasnov. This page is an interactive interface for users to navigate through the posts. The map also provides viewers with a way to familiarize themselves with the structure of the town.
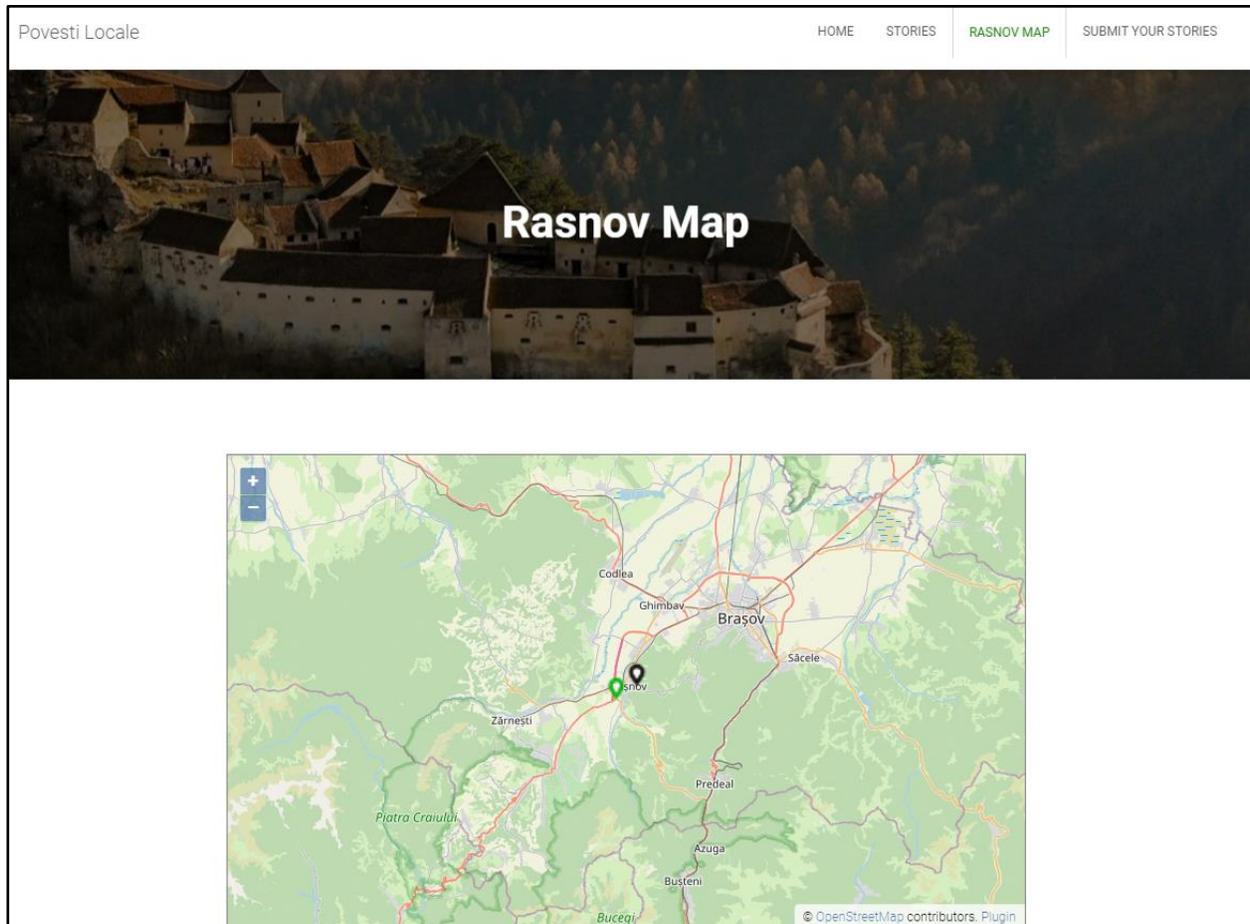
Figure 4.12 Screenshot of Rasnov Map on Povesti Locale

4.5.4 Share Your Story Page

The *Share Your Story* Page contains the form that visitors to the website would fill in to submit a post for the Rasnov website. The site requires the visitor to input an email address where Mioritics will notify them once the administrator approves the post. The process of

sending emails to visitors that submit a post is automated. Each submission must include a title for the post and an approximate date. Each form has space for unlimited text and a maximum of 10 images.

Figure 4.13 Screenshot of Submit Your Stories on Povesti Locale

4.5.5 Sample User Upload

The process for a user to share their story to the website is simple. First, the user should

navigate to the ***Share Your Story page*** as shown in Figure 4.14.
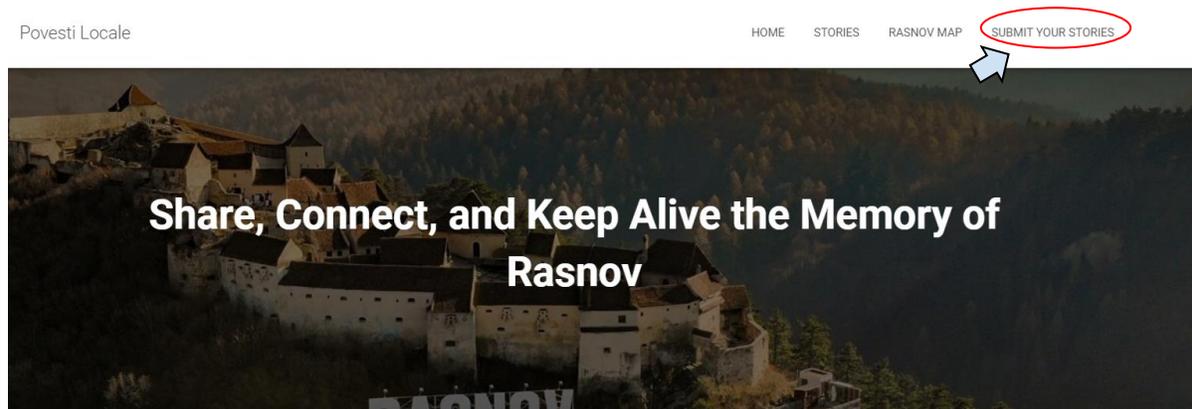
Figure 4.14 How to Navigate to Share Your Story

Next, the user will complete the form. For this example, let us say the user's name is

Daniel Aldea and he is uploading an image of his family's house in Rasnov from 1976. Daniel

would fill out the form as shown in Figure 4.15.

Figure 4.15 Completed User Form

After Daniel has completed his form, he will submit it. Then a member of the Mioritics team will need to approve it. After submitting the form, the user will see a success message as shown in figure 4.16.
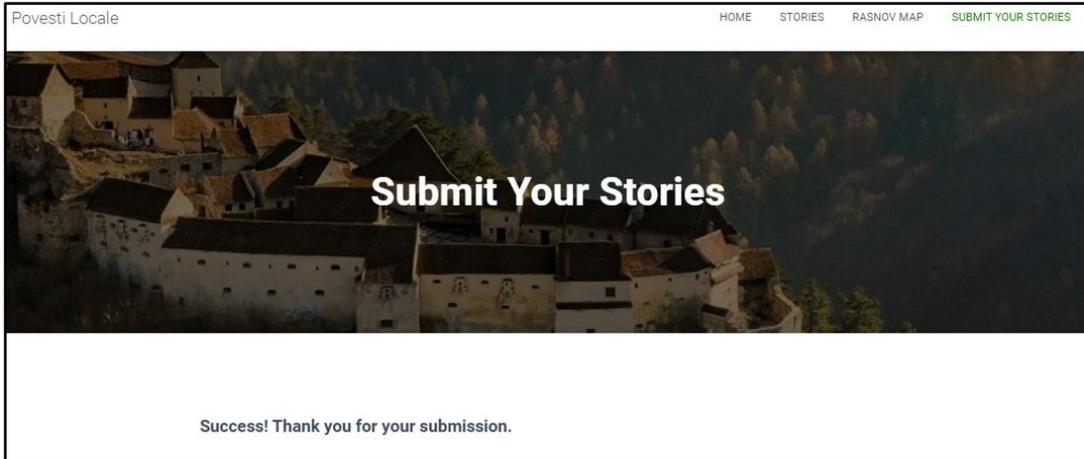
Figure 4.16 Success Message After Form Submission

After approval, the site, *Povesti Locale,* will display the post. The post is in three areas.

First, the post will be visible on the **Homepage** as shown in Figure 4.17.
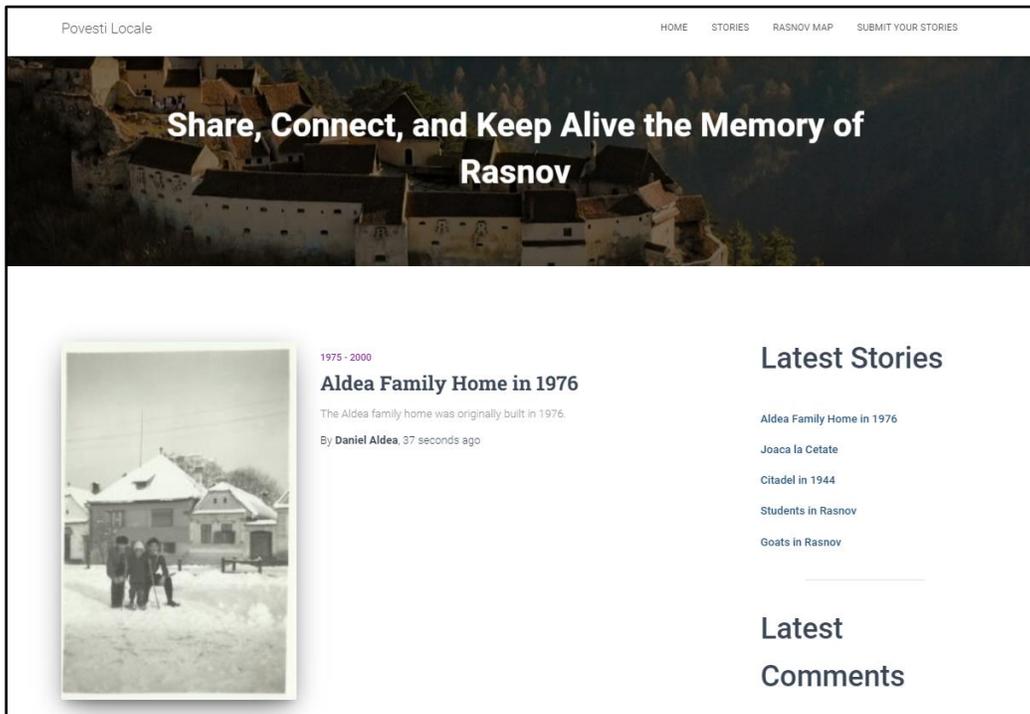
Figure 4.17 User Submission on Homepage

The post will also be visible on the **Stories** page in the respective time range the user

selected. In this case, Daniel selected the post to be between 1975 and 2000 (see Figure 4.18).
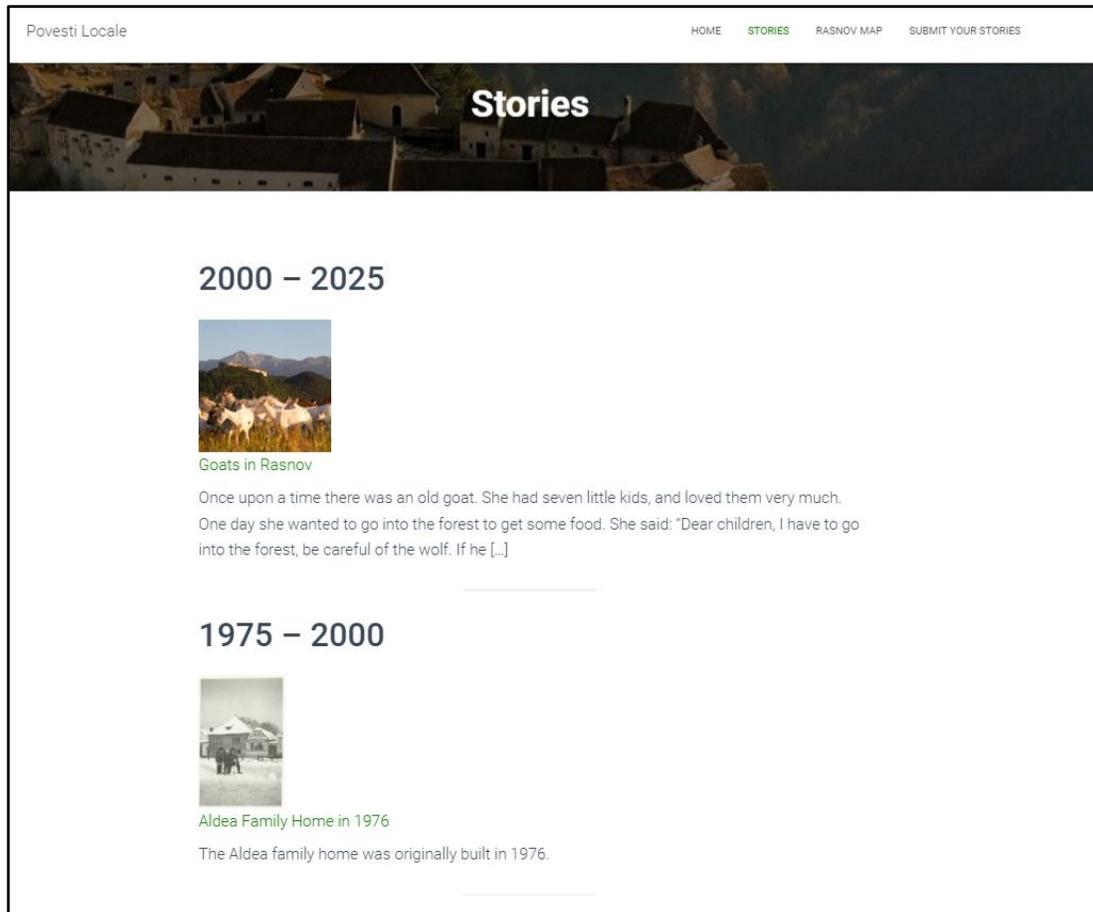
Figure 4.18 User Submission on Stories Page

Lastly, the post will be visible through the interactive map. Website visitors can navigate through the map to associate a location in Rasnov with the post. In this example, the location of the pin on the Rasnov map corresponds to the location of the Aldea family home built in 1976 (see Figure 4.19).
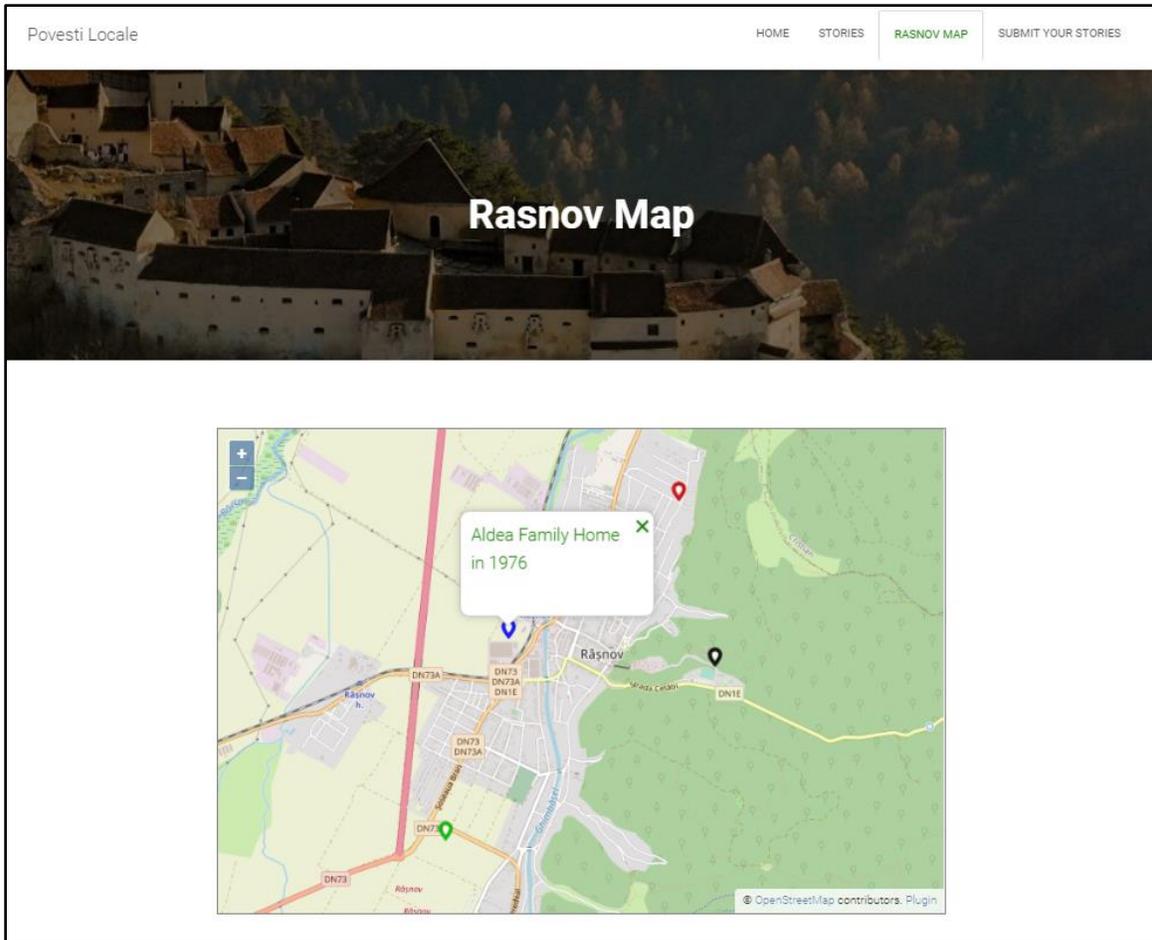
Figure 4.19 User Submission on Rasnov Map Page

4.6 Revision

After the team implemented the above tabs and pages, our collaborator, Mihai Dragomir, and our advisors, Professors Danielski and Kinicki provided us with final feedback and comments on the overall design, features and usability of the website. The team either implemented this feedback, or noted it for areas of future work.

4.6.1 Collaborator Comments

First, our collaborator, Mihai Dragomir, gave feedback on certain aspects of the design. One point of feedback was related to the stories on the site home page. Due to the varying sizes of images uploaded by users, the excerpts would also change in size and shape, causing the page to be less organized. Mihai suggested the team consider setting the excerpts to a standard size.

Additionally, our collaborator gave feedback on the Open Street Maps feature. When users first navigate to the map, the site does not center the map on Rasnov specifically, but on Europe as a whole. Mihai suggested the team change the map to initially center on Rasnov. Lastly, Mihai suggested that the team change the process for approving user comments. In the site's current state, users upload comments automatically, without any approval. Mihai suggested that those with admin permission must approve comments before users post them.

4.6.1 Advisor Comments

From our advisors, the team received a few points of feedback. One is the addition of a mission statement to the site. This would allow users to gain a better understanding of the site's purpose. Furthermore, the team received feedback on the geotagging of posts on the site. Professor Kinicki suggested the site could auto-tag posts by using metadata embedded in the photos themselves if the user took them on a modern device (e.g., a smartphone).

The advisors recognized that due to the time constraints of the project, our team was unable to complete user testing for the website. Professor Kinicki suggested that we work with Mioritics to complete this user testing once the project is complete.

5.0 Future Work and Conclusion

5.1 Final Deliverable

The final deliverable presented to our collaborator, Mihai Dragomir, is the prototype website "Povesti Locale" (meaning "Local Stories") under the URL of https://povestilocale.ro/ where the Mioritics Association has all rights to the domain and server. The project team turned over admin rights and full access to the site to Mihai's team so they could promote and maintain the site for the foreseeable future.

5.2 Future Work

Although the team worked to accomplish and implement as many features as possible within the prototype, there remain items future teams could accomplish to improve the overall function and usability of the website.

5.2.1 Additional Features

Many of these action items revolved around user uploads. One feature that could improve functionality is the ability to upload video and audio files. Currently, the site only allows users to upload text and pictures, so the ability to upload these forms of media would be useful in diversifying the information and history preserved on the website.

In terms of the map and post geotagging, currently the site requires admin intervention to add specific posts to the map. A future improvement would be to automate this process by allowing users to tag a specific location within Rasnov while they are creating a submission for a

post. This would add to the functionality of the site overall, and would decrease the burden of Mioritics as they currently have to manually do this work.

Another aspect future teams could potentially look at is the category and filtering options. The functionality of the site could improve if the website automatically created categories based of specific topics mentioned within the posts

5.2.2 Maintenance and Promotion

Following the creation of the website, there are two main concerns to ensure its future success. First, future admins must properly maintain the site, so that it does not go into disrepair, and that Mihai's team promotes the site so it has a healthy base of users and a community constantly adding stories and memories to the site.

Regarding maintenance for the website, Mihai and his team, along with any others who work on the site will have to take a few things into account. One of the main concerns is the review and approval of user posts and comments. The site is currently set up to email the admins of the site when users post, as the content will not be public on the site until given direct approval. Those managing the site will have to monitor incoming posts and determine if they are suitable for the public to see them.

5.2.3 Platform Expansion

Another avenue for future work is to look into expanding the platform beyond Rasnov. Our collaborator, Mihai Dragomir, has expressed interest in this website being a starting point, where in the future other towns, whether in Transylvania or even other countries, may one day be

able to develop similar websites. Researching and accomplishing this could be an overall project for another team, and a potential starting point for future work.

5.3 Conclusion

As our team has seen through background research conducted, interviews with locals and non-locals, and work with our collaborator, Rasnov, Romania is a uniquely beautiful place with a deep and vibrant history. This makes it necessary that the people of Rasnov protect the history and any memories associated with the town, which was the main goal of this project from the beginning. Our team created this website to help with this issue of preservation, and we are confident the platform we provided can be a place where the people of Rasnov can easily see and share memories of the town, as one of our interviewees said, "what is in your soul that is tied up with your hometown." Our team believes this site will flourish in the time to come, and that it not just gives an avenue to share these memories but inspires others to preserve the history and culture of Romania.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Preamble and Consent for Interviews and Questions

Preamble and Consent for Interviews

Introduction

     We are students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), an engineering and science university in Worcester, Massachusetts in the U.S.A. [*each introduce ourselves with name, major, year*]. We are conducting research alongside the Mioritics Association to find information regarding your opinion on website features for a platform to help preserve the history of Rasnov, which is a small town in the Transylvanian region of Romania. We plan to develop a website that will provide current and former residents of Rasnov with a platform to share their stories through blog posts, pictures, and videos and connect with one another. We are conducting interviews with current and former Romanian residents about their motivation to share information about their history, as well as listening to stories similar to what would be featured on the website. The Mioritics Associations hopes that this will preserve the rich history and culture of Rasnov and provide an example that other towns around Romania can use.

Confidentiality Statement:

     We want to reiterate that we fully respect your desire for confidentiality. Records of your participation in this study will be held confidential so far as permitted by law. However, the study investigators, the sponsor or it's designee and, under certain circumstances, the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Institutional Review Board (WPI IRB) will be able to inspect and have access to confidential data that identify you by name. If you are comfortable with us recording this interview, only the investigators will have access to the interview recordings, and they will be transcribed and coded for common themes. If you are willing, we would appreciate associating your interview with your name. However, you have the option to remain Interviewee A; if you choose that option, the records of your participation will be kept confidential and any publication or presentation of the data will not identify you. You may decide to stop participating

in the research at any time without penalty or loss of other benefits. Subsequent to completing our work, we will share our findings, including the transcript of the interview, with you for approval before we submit our project. During your approval, you will have the option to redact or drop portions of the interview.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Questions for Current Romanians:
(The interview is semi-structured, and questions will be asked based on the listed ones but not

word for word.)

1. Could you give us some background on you?

    a. Where do you live in Romania?

    b. How long have you lived there?

    c. May I ask how old you are? You don't have to answer that specifically, of course,

       but it will help us to know if you're willing to share.

2. Do you have some strong memories of your childhood and younger years in Romania

   that you'd be willing to share?

3. Are you comfortable sharing your stories and history? (*if no we only ask questions 6-9*)

4. How would you feel about sharing some of your stories and pictures online with others

   who are from Rasnov , or with people who want to know more about Rasnov?

5. Do you have historical photos of your family in Romania?

   (*Mention how causes for immigration can leave bad memories and affect willingness to*

share stories.)

6. How do you think other people can be motivated to upload their stories?

    a. Do you think there is a correlation between the nature of their memories and

       willingness to share?

7. What would you get out of connecting to other Romanians who are no longer living in

   Romania?

   Expand on Idea and Motivation behind Mioritics Website

8. What features would you like to see on a website that meets this criteria?

9. What value do you think a website dedicated to preserving and sharing Romanian History will bring?

Questions for Romanian Expatriots

1. Could you give us some background on you?

    a. Where did you live in Romania?

    b. How long did you live there?

    c. When did you leave Romania?

    d. May I ask how old you are? You don't have to answer that specifically, of course, but it will help us to know if you're willing to share.

2. What is your level of connection to Romania after moving?

3. Do you see value in connecting to other Romanians that have also left the country?

4. Are you comfortable sharing your stories and history? (if no we only ask questions 6-9)

5. What is your opinion about sharing your personal stories and pictures online?

6. Do you have any pictures from your time in Romania?

    (Mention before asking causes for immigration can leave bad memories and affect

willingness to share stories.)

7. How do you think other people can be motivated to upload their stories?

    a. Do you think there is a correlation between the nature of their memories and willingness to share?

    (Expand on Idea and Motivation behind Mioritics Website)

8. What features would you like to see on a website that meets this criteria?

9. What value do you think a website dedicated to preserving and sharing Romanian History

   will bring?

Appendix C: Compare and Contrast Analysis for Development Platform

Table C.1 Development Platform Cost Analysis

Criteria	WordPress	Wix	Joomla
Language Options	WordPress has a multilingual plugin that you can use to translate the website	Wix has an automatic translation tool for creation of multilingual website	To create a multilingual Joomla website, content in all languages has to be manually uploaded
Variety of Data	Users will be able to post articles containing pictures, videos, audio clips, and text	An upload button will need to be created and added if users want to upload different data types	User upload can only be enabled if a file upload field is programmed into the website
Interactivity	Users will be able to comment on articles and blogs posted	Comments can be enabled for websites, however it will be a comment section rather than on every post	Social comments can easily be added to a Joomla website – even in the free version
Feature Options	Map filtering has been used on WordPress; however a premium version needs to be paid for	Google maps can be linked to a Wix website in order to filter by map	An embedded google maps has been added to a Joomla website

Additional Comments	There is no programming involved which means the learning curve will be easily achievable in the short timeframe	Wix has limited plugins for additional features such as multi-data upload	It is a software that must be downloaded so collaborating throughout the development will be difficult

Appendix D: Notes from Case Studies

Redesigning the PwC Careers Website in Moscow, Russia

Development Platform: The project was redesigning an existing site, so new website was not developed from scratch.

Purpose: Make the existing website more user friendly and approachable in order to boost recruitment at PwC, specifically in the Moscow, Russia sector.

Target Audience: Potential applicants including university students, recent graduates, and full-time professionals.

List of Features: The project was solely focused on the careers page on the PwC website.

Layout: Main careers page was split into 3 sections, university students, recent graduates, and professional experts. The 3 path options allowed for easier navigation.

Theme: Simple and easy to follow, utilized PwC color palette of warm tone reds and yellows

User Input: Users are able to open applications through the career page, but this was not programmed or developed by the student team.

Developers: Student IQP team from WPI which includes Frederick Gergits, Scott Spear, Hasson Harris Wilcher, and Ziyao Xu

Roma Culture: Conservation and Revitalization of Crafts

Development Platform: Personalized website supported by a grant. No development platform is cited, so it is likely that the website was programmed.

Purpose: Strategy for supporting the development of local businesses and promoting Romanian cultural values which fall under the aspects of sustainable development according to the Youth for Sustainable Development in Europe Association. Targeted these YSDEA aspects by partnering with Romers Rettigheter to promote the marginalized Roma culture in Romania. Romers Rettigher is a Norwegian non-governmental organization that promotes legal rights for minorities.

Target Audience: Potential tourists, Romanian population with desire to learn about Roma culture, and historians.

List of Features: News section with relevant articles and stories, linked social media pages such as Roma Culture group on Facebook, and a list of relevant events including Roma festivals and workshops. Translation feature available for English and Romanian.

Layout:

Home Page: About project description, link to news, and link to social media

About Project: Split into 3 sections, objectives, activities, and beneficiaries

Blog: containing news and blog posts about related topics

Contact: Users can submit messages

Events: Split into Shukar fest, craft workshops, and project launch conference

Theme: Plain and simple, white background with black text and headers. Many photographs for visual aid and logos for sponsors.

User Input: Only feature that allows for user input is the contact us section that allows users to submit questions or concerns. Users are unable to upload blog posts or even comment on the ones selected.

Developers: Project team working under the Youth for Sustainable Development in Europe Association.

The Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre

Development Platform: The website is a digital version of the Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre, so it was privately created for the center. The overall project received over 1 million in funding. The domain name is also .org which typically represent nonprofits and charities.

Purpose: Small group of Holocaust survivors and refugees created a mutual support group named the Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association (HSFA) to share their experiences and stories. Over time HSFA have worked with organizations to deliver learning resources, events, and creative projects for people to learn about experiences and stories during that time to promote understanding and tolerance. One of the projects was digitizing the stories that HSFA

shared, the website is a product of the digitization. The website follows the structure and stories displayed in the Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre in the University of Huddersfield.

Target Audience: Historians and general audience that are interested in learning about the history of the holocaust and its survivors.

List of Features: List of collected stories that can be filtered by story (each individual) or by resource (records, videos, etc), Subscription for staying updated, ability for

Layout: Events, Visit US, Stories, Learning, Donate, Partnerships, Blog, About, Contact, Social media

Theme: Similar to a museum or photography exhibition website. Clean colors and easy to read, but very heavy with visuals.

User Input: Users are able to sign up to stay connected or to donate, but not to make edits or upload information to the website.

Developers: Team working under the Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre

Kazakhstan: Developing an Informative Website for Promoting a Positive Image of the Country

Development Platform: GoDaddy website builder

Purpose: Educate visitors on interesting facts and general information about Kazakhstan to improve the image of the country.

Target Audience: The WPI community

List of Features: Video, audio, image galleries, social networking integration, maps and a link to the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Layout: Main landing page has large video/picture with pages listed on the left of it. The pages have more text on them if clicked, with some pictures contained in their articles

Theme: A bit loud and dated, blue and yellow to match the flag of Kazakhstan but not the right shades.

User Input: None

Developers: Student IQP team from WPI: Temirlan Aigozhin and Adilet Issayev

Town & Country of Nantucket, MA

Development Platform: Developed by CivicPlus for the government using their paid website plan.

Purpose:

Official website for the town of Nantucket in Massachusetts. Provides background information on the town, GIS map, and access to public records with a place to post questions among many other features for access to town resources.

Target Audience: Those living in Nantucket, visitors/tourists, those wanting more information about the town.

List of Features: Covid information/guidelines, government services and departments, businesses in the area, community events, interactive GIS map of events/places, question/discussion board

Layout:

Home page has a large photo of scenic Nantucket with top banner of links, scroll down to more info on the recent news. Links at top redirect to more wordy pages containing the specified information

Theme: Light navy blue and white, simple and easy to navigate and read

User Input: Able to sign up through CivicPlus and create accounts to post on discussion board

Developers: Unsure exactly but CivicPlus team most likely hired to produce the website for them from a template of theirs

Nakem Narratives

Development Platform: Possibly SquareSpace

Purpose: Promote rights and preserve Mayan culture in Guatemala by showcasing female artisans.

Target Audience: Anyone interested in Mayan culture, tourists to the area, current artisans wanting more information on heritage.

List of Features: Links to the Maya Traditions Foundation, info on Mayan culture, artisan profiles with their photos and stories.

Layout: Home page with some photos, top banner with links to various pages. Other pages have photo collages where hovering mouse over them reveals a story/link to learn more about.

Theme: Simple and modern, mostly white and gray with very colorful images throughout the pages that pop. A lot of squares and grid layout.

User Input: No user input features

Developers: Graduate student at The New School who used SquareSpace

Appendix E: Rudiger von Kraus Interview Transcript: February 4, 2022

Rudiger von Kraus

-order to do well in your course for which you do this research, I'm all with you. Okay.

Alex Lagle

Okay awesome thank you.

Rudiger von Kraus

Yeah it's actually I got here. This meeting is being recorded so I'm on the record now. All right got it. No no no no again whatever I can do to help you, I'll do without any conditions.

Annika Keck

Yeah. Um we wanted to give you some background kind of of what you'll be agreeing because I guess um so we're doing an I. Q. P. Project right now for WPI which is our interactive qualifying project. Um so it's kind of this group project um where teams of students who are juniors usually um kind of from different majors, different backgrounds. We come together to complete the project semester that's this combination of science and social issues. So it's not just technology which I think is really good different for us because we're used to such engineering basis.

Rudiger von Kraus

Um so we faces are for whatever it is not frozen so I really don't know what the mass on who is talking.

Annika Keck

It's in the middle Annika- Annika.

Rudiger von Kraus

Yeah. Okay. No I can't tell because the your faces seem to be frozen, your eyes are fixed for whatever it is. So uh so this is more of a, you said a social research or engineering or I mean you are a technical university right?

Annika Keck

Yeah it's the project like kind of pushes us outside just technical. Um So it does take on a social issue. And so we're kind of in the preparation phase these these these these seven weeks we're kind of halfway through our seven weeks um prep phase and hopefully in March we will get to travel to Bucharest and um kind of complete the project, interview people with our collaborator um and have a completed project by the end of the year, end of the school year. Um So each team gets assigned a collaborator in the area. And so we have my Mihai Dragomir as our collaborator for the project and we're working with his association, the Mioritics Association. So we're mhm does specify what might be specified is that he wants to develop this platform um where like locals and was not for people who used to live there can upload and share family history or artifacts until like in order to preserve the history of the town as it's kind of going through all these changes which I'm sure you're very aware of kind of the demographic changes in Rasnov. Um And yeah, it's pretty we're providing the platform for those people um who want to share.

Rudiger von Kraus

Ah interesting whether you will find at least on the Saxon side, I can speak for the Romanian side which might be more available but artifacts on the saxons, they were taken all by the by the people first, the relatives that were in Germany and then after the most of the people from the Rasnov of immigrants to Germany whenever they made a visit, they took some of those old things with them. So it's tough. I tried and that's when talking about it, I try to find some things and uh, tough to find. But in church, the Saxon church protestant church has a little museum. You'll see that and you can take pictures of them. But I don't think you can take them with you unless you pay high prices. And the church says, okay, we consider the donation. I'll let you take this with you. Mm hmm. But yeah, on the Romanian side, because all my, I went to high school in the Rasnov of in the Romanian high school. Up to that point, I went to the german school which existed at the time. And all my former colleagues are, most of them are still there.

So the, the romanians are from Rasnov did immigrate as much as you did. But not like the Saxon the saxons. And it was an exodus. I mean took off. There are only about 20. May be left behind. Mihai have the exact number. Huh? So artifacts on the Saxon side, probably you can take pictures of them in the church museum. But I don't think you will find many to take with you on the Romanian side. And the romanians have, you know, uh, they might let you take a few with their costumes, for instance, their traditional costumes. Or they might let let you take them with their beautiful, beautiful artifacts actually.

Annika Keck

Yeah, I think a lot of the focus would be on like photos or videos and um, yeah like digitizing stuff.

Rudiger von Kraus

Yeah. And, and uh just to make it a little bit spicier for you with the region of many young people from Bucharest for instance were sent by their parents to spend their vacation in Rasnov because it's a picturesque place and ah nice people and very hospital and all that stuff. So you will, you will notice that social issues. God uh I got to know the mayor of Rasnov at the time whenever that happened with with the fortress because I have a relative in Bucharest through my wife my wife is remaining uh actually her cousin, her cousin's husband, I was high in the olympic committee in Romania and he had built uh some ski things in Romania and got to know the mayor very well. And supposedly the mayor also lined some of his a little bit his pockets while he was there. He he invited us to a place I think it was a bar or even a restaurant. And so who are you right relatives there say yeah this is, this is, he owns this probably. So uh Romania was very corrupt. How much of that is taken out? Uh I actually when I talked to my Romanian friends and again my wife is Romanian. So I'm not biased either way. I'm probably the fairest in that respect. I can't categorize Romanians as another place to the Rasnov of two. I get think some of them are so honest and I think in a way they try to compensate for the corrupt people in Romania. Ah So You will find two kinds of inhabitants in regional those that you can trust more than you can trust anybody in the United States and others that will take advantage of you. I know you'll be there for a brief time and all that stuff but you will notice that and Mihai probably also tell you more details. I mean even names and so on as for who is the corrupt with it's usually

known. Uh But that's that's uh a social issue that with the entrance into the european union, the honest side has got a lot of support legal and all that stuff. But even today there are still some legal I don't know about Rasnov but in Romania, some legal issues where people corrupt people refused to cooperate and all that stuff. Some of them went to jail, Others wouldn't be able to put to jail because they had other connections and all that stuff. So it's still a fight between and probably the young people that went overseas and then returned probably are the best to actually fight that because they've seen how successful a society can be without corruption. Whether it's France romanians are very connected to France. But today they travel to Germany. Many work in Germany in order to get hard currency and use it to build a housing in Romania. Ah but they come back with the baggage of knowledge that allows them to be very forceful. And of course you have also people that were there from the beginning, the honest people uh but they didn't have that much power because usually the corrupt people got the powerful positions in the political spectrum of Romania. And of uh like I said vegtau who has been one of the most successful mayors of romanov probably was corrupt. He moved up, you know, he's probably now high up in a the whole bigger administrative position, a higher administrative position outside of regional, part regional or I don't know exactly but you Mihai probably can confirm that there are people that went through a transformation from being corrupt because that was the environment 2030 years ago and you couldn't get anywhere without being corrupt. But the transformation is happening even people that mate Corrupt things that were corrupted 20 years ago have turned honestly. In the meantime you also see that ah it is uh Transylvania in general compared with the rest of Romania is much more cosmopolitan because of all the barriers. Ethnicities that existed there. The saxons being one of them. But the Hungarians um where the Up to the 16th century I think were the predominant population in Transylvania and then the romanians took over ah I'll tell you a little ah anecdote from one of the Saxon writers ah who actually was uh and and uh and maybe I can show you the place where he was born. He was born in in uh regional, but then moved to Brasov next door, hans Bergel and so Mihai made sure that people, they put a plaque on the house in which he was born because he has become a famous guy in Romania in general, particularly Transylvania. But in one of his novels, he talks about a Saxon Hungarian Romanian were friends and they met every I think once a week and talked about, you know, various aspects, this was before communism took over Uh in 1947. And you know, he talked about what each of them would their group, their ethnic group contributed and

so on and so forth. And the Hungarians and romanians, usually even today, when you allow them, they go head on about who has the primary claim on Transylvania, it's still a fight going on. We saxons stayed out of it because we didn't have anything to lose or gain from it. But they still, even today you have some fire heads. Their that claim, they have the rights to it. And of course the romanians ended up with it and after the First World War, but anyhow, hans bergel, in one of his novel, I forgot which one uh talks about these three guys beating and you know, Hungarians. Well, we, you know, we rule this place which is right until the you know um First World War and all that stuff and and the Romanian yobbo, you were were here from way before you came. You know the Hungarians came for one of those nomad people originally. Uh and then the Romanian answers or maybe the Saxon said that yeah but you guys didn't win anything or Transylvania with by the sword, you know fighting for it. You uh took it over with your and now ladies excuse the expression but that's in the book With your prick because they multiplied. So the Romanians multiplied much faster than the Hungarians and that's why in the 17th century they took over as the number of people that lived in transylvania. So you will see not so much in a version of because there are not that many Hungarians international but there are parts of Transylvania in which the Hungarians are still You know 70% of the population used to be the case also in some Saxon as I remember I was sent to a camp summer camp in an area mhm West of world Rasnov and the summer camp was in a village of course 100% saxon. I was amazed. I was not used to it from Rasnov. There was only one Romanian family but all that has changed. They all emigrated mostly like I said to Germany so you'll see today primarily romanians there are a handful of saxons left in the uh huh in a region of and maybe another handful of Hungarians. I mean they didn't emigrate, they remain there. So from an ethnic point of view, you have gypsies actually. That's interesting. Yeah. Uh Rasnov has two gypsy places which may be today don't even exist anymore, but they existed in my youth, one of them with the one with the gypsies that uh we're able to be assimilated and they pretended to be romanians because it was kind of derogatory to be a gypsy for roma to be correct in today's uh notion. Ah and on the outskirts towards yeah, I can give you the details. I think that that still exists where the gypsies, the ones that you know, we're never really assimilated into the Romanian majority and they still speak actually their language, which is of course, you know, the gypsies originally came from India how much of indian languages there? I don't know. But that's an interesting aspect from a social point of view. Many of them integrated and communism actually helped them because

they were kind of push the side outside of the mainstream group, ethnic group and communism gave them an opportunity to move up uh more easily done before. So I had to tell a classmate of mine in the german school uh gypsy whose father became pretty big party. I and again they were able to uh communism helped them get elevated ah anything else out of religion off when you said you have also not only social but technical aspects what what would that be? Uh taking care of water supplies or what what what was with those technical sides be.

Vanshika

So I primarily um Mihai kind of like requested to make like the platform that we mentioned earlier that will be somewhat of like a website that people would have access to to upload stories that they wanted to or like pictures that they have any like you previously mentioned, like a lot of them may have gotten lost due to like displacement and like immigration and stuff like that. But we were kind of hoping to like on the back end help him construct the platform. So like um we wanted to ask your opinion on like the platform that were previously suggested and like do you think that the targeted audience would be willing to share that information kind of like higher willing to share with us? Like do you think it would be perceived well in the community?

Rudiger von Kraus

Uh I think yes the answer is yes and I think it's an excellent idea. I know that Mihai is transplanted guy he comes from, I don't know whether he told you that but he comes from the area that is next to the Black sea from the broader ah so completely far away from Transylvania but for many romanians, Transylvania because of its cosmopolitan which by the way the project was to in a way but with other people Turks and Russians and so on us for. But Transylvania was even today many people from the rest of Romania outside of Transylvania when they come to Transylvania, I had a I started a business here, so I have a partner That owns 50% of the business and we went together to ah Romania one point we try to get certain things made in Romania for us here in the States. I used my connection, former colleagues and so on as for to to do that. It didn't work out but anyhow, so when I crossed with bob my partner the Carpasian mountains from Bucharest into transylvania, you looked around and said, are we in a different country. So Transylvania is unique from that point of view, meaning there will be any any platform that you create, any gathering of things that define Rasnov or Transylvania in general will find an

audience. So I think your effort will be taken will have a very positive effect for many people because like bob when he crossed my mind it was where are we? You know this is like Switzerland in a way. So it is it becomes it's not very well known worldwide when I do my jogging here in the woods in boston some people say where are you, where the where the accent is I said well it's Transylvania. Oh dracula and that's the only connection they make with Transylvania. It is so much more and you will see that when you're there. So creating a platform to inform people that shows some interest in Rasnov. Ah it's a great idea.

Annika Keck

Um Is there anything like specific that you would like to see? Mihai said like a map where like if you click on like you're if you said like your old house you can see pictures that people would have like and you can see stuff in the back.

Rudiger von Kraus

Is there anything um that like in my case and I'm biased in my answer of course I would but it would be somebody that you know first time looks at the website and be interested in in my particular house. I don't know because right now it's pretty rundown because the state took it over and then my siblings I was against it. But I was the only one among five, they decided to get money from the state for the house rather than you know taking it over. We had that option after Communists fell. So the house is inhabited now by renters. It's owned by the town I think and three families live there. Well one of them is in Spain and I don't even know whether they still live there but they kept their part of the house and then at the lower level is a store they make coverage. Mihai told me they make coverage. Some kind of no not ah it's run down. So I would not think that anybody that wants to visit Romania would be interested to see the yard completely falling apart the stairs to the upper level. I don't know how the people that live there today can make it up those stairs and those were oak stairs. I mean very solid stuff. The walls are like at the lower level like At least three feet wide? So it was very solid home and it's kept its dilapidated. It's so I don't know there might be some homes. My neighbor for instance the dentist took over, he passed away but his wife probably had enough money left over made it like a palace. So yes there are there are places but renovated homes that probably put a lot of uh modern stuff in in that renovation that it doesn't really give you any historical perspective my

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home as history because nothing has changed but it is so dilapidated that I don't know anybody would like to look at it unless to get a negative impression of Ransov. So how much detail? No that platform should show. I don't know. I would be interested to see the home even dilapidated because you grew up there. And I even ask a lawyer from across the street. He has his office right across the street from there. I said to talk to these people because I want to buy the place from all three of them. That's how I found out that one of them, the family is actually in Spain and he had a tough time getting ahold of them. The lady that lives in the main part of it. But Children are away, they went to study and one of them, the son is a doctor. She told me she's not interested. So unless you have a few people that statins that emigrated to Germany and then came back and renovated their old homes. So you have those and those might be of interest to show as the new version of and places of interest. In my case it didn't work out and there are a lot like mine. Ah and probably when they the renters passed away, I think that's the only time when propaganda because Romania is more like other european countries. It's not, it has kept a lot of social laws that are related to social issues like rent control and stuff like that. Which here in the States. Yeah, you find them in new york and in big cities and all that stuff. But the renter in Romania has more rights than any renter here in, in America for instance, you will notice that. So although I want to would like to turn my native house into something positive, put some money in there and make it great. I can't do it because the renters have all these rights that I can't get them out of them and not And I actually, no, I told them you can stay here. But you know, they are afraid that if I own the place that I will kick them out. Which was not often not my intention. But because renters have saw such right staying right, they can't be kicked out in any way unless you know somebody owns the place. Ah, not a not a town which is the owner right now. Ah, So it's a mixed bag. That's my answer to your question. How much detail you should uh, include Mihai probably has a better feeling for what goes and what doesn't go than I do to tell you the truth. He like an outsider here sees things much clearer than I do as a former uh, guy from there. And I will, I am helping him actually just send me some proposals because I mentioned to him he should form a an NGO in order to formalize all these activities that he does the annual festival and all that stuff. I mean, the guy is mm hmm has great ideas. Is very innovative. And he already created certain things that I could not have done in Rasnov. And put it on the map from that point of view cultural issues festival. So, he probably can help you there much more than I I will be. But I'm giving you my opinion. You can create that uh, get mosaic for you together in order to

uh huh do the right job. But I'm glad he ask you to help him do that because you probably can't can come with some ideas that he's not even aware of on how to present it and how to technically get it in place and make it as available as to as broad an audience as possible. Did I answer that question of yours or did I just cause more questions on your side?

Annika Keck

I mean, I think that's good to hear. I think we'd like to get every perspective of people who really live there and have your experience. So and the information you can provide. It is perfect.

Rudiger von Kraus

But the high is the right again. I'm I'm amazed how much he was able to do just with his enthusiasm and he got sponsors. And you know, I just asked him what you we talked about how to organize this NGO and all that stuff and clothing. I'm available if he wants me to be part of it. I come to I go to use before the pandemic. I used to go every year to Romania. We have Roxanna and I, my wife and I have an apartment in Bucharest, that we bought after the communists fell and it's right in the center of the city and you'll see the Bucharest is um interesting town uh used to be called little paris. Um and a lot of that is reviving now after the fall of the communist ah and then of course every time I also make a side trip to Rasnov to visit my uh dad's grave there. My mom Came to Germany and died in Germany. So she is buried in Germany. But my dad was in 1979 when he passed away is buried in a beautiful cemetery. Actually, the Saxon cemetery you might want to visit that. It's really was honestly, you don't like cemeteries at all because it might, it's usually a farther place, but it is a beautiful cemetery.

Annika Keck

Um, So you mentioned that there are kind of a few saxon and people still living in.

Rudiger von Kraus

And actually actually Mariani, she is the one that organized one of them organized. But she lives right there next to the church in the, I think it's the former uh, priests house that is ah

she lives and then the saxons have what you call a courtin father civilian, not a clergy, that kind of creates that connection between the church and the population. In this case, the Saxon population aging father means church. Father translated. Uh, and they had a role to organize things and when you needed something, they were able to help and so on. So you have a very, in the last five years, I would say very active korean father. Uh, never met him before until I met him five years ago. But according to Mariani who is there, I knew her from my childhood. She actually just turned 80 this year last year. But she's the one that can give you details and he probably knows her. And I assume that I also knows this catching father. I don't know his name. Ah And they can actually tell you exactly how many saxons are still there. I I don't have the number but it's not many I have what what happened? We have a magazine that is published twice. Good evening, twice uh twice a year. The rules are not much after the the newspaper they call it. Although it's a magazine form as you can see I contribute every in every issue for the last 25 years. Ah And there we have they congratulate also the for their birthdays. The people in Rozehnal embassy for half a year. So we just continent double them in order to get there for the whole year gives you an approximate where the hell is that? Here we go. Alright. 123456789 10 11 4 13, 15, 16, 17, 18. So probably about 40 people. 35, 40 people I guess Based on this. I mean there were 18 in one half of the year. So I just doubled him.

Annika Keck

Yeah that's I think Mihai was specifying that those kind of people would be able to contribute to the platform to um and then many of their relatives. Our end result could also comment or contribute and like really build that sense of community that.

Rudiger von Kraus

Yeah. No. Uh Mihai seems to have a good connection there. I don't know the details but I'm pretty sure all the questions that he asked me told me that he actually knew. He got my name from our our treasurer. The community's treasures within Germany. So our treasurer of our community neighborhood community in Germany gave me my connection so far behind. Probably no, it's more than probably knows them personally. All of them. I don't know them. I see the name. I know only one of them. Actually tell you two for two of the 18 ah Leaving when

I was 17. I left already for brush off crunch that I used to play team handball. Ever heard of team handball.

Annika Keck

Yeah, Mihai mentioned it.

Rudiger von Kraus

It's used to be the second after soccer, the second most popular sport in europe. Uh and even if today I think maybe basketball might have taken over in some countries. So it would be the 3rd 3rd most popular sport as a team handball. It's similar to basketball only like you have goals rather than the basket and the ball is rather small about your dribble and you everybody goes, oh every and I went to try to get my lockers become a professional handful player. And then I went to the University of Bucharest and it was just too much because we had to train every single day and I was neglecting my studies and then I fell in love with like today's wife. So courting a lady also took time. So I gave up my handful career at that time. So but I left basically Rasnov when I was 17. I know only a slice of people that were maybe a day a year older and maybe one or two years younger than me. That's the slice. I know everybody else. I didn't get to know.

Annika Keck

I'm not sure how related this is. But I definitely want to say that your paper you published the artisans and nobles. It was like very very interesting. Really good to read. Um I can also provide a lot of background for our project. And so I felt like some of the parts were like so just like a movie almost kind of like your relatives like Irwin and it's like on the run and like how auto escaped and how your family moved.

Rudiger von Kraus

Yeah well but Rasnov is just a small part of it because my father comes from the town cordelia or Sidon. Uh john my name and that and then before that was forgarage which is the forgarage is also the the one of the few names were the town name is basically the same unless

well just the letters are a little bit different but sounds the same forgarage and forgarage to Germany forgarage and forgarage Romanian name. Ah that's where my father's side comes from. So you didn't see much from in that in that right up in that paper of mine, uh, about the Rasnov, but it tells you about the Saxon community and it gives you a good idea. If you want me, I can send you some more. I'm just getting published right now in the leading german paper which is in Bucharest argument five, A series of five articles about Mongol invasion in 1240 one and 42. I don't think Rasnov appears, you know. Oh yeah, no, because the the looks like the fortress was destroyed and then rebuilt in stone. It appears I can send you that to an ical send you the, that's right up to. It's also interesting about the history of Transylvania because the um Mongols didn't go through the southern part of today's Romania and they just went through Transylvania into Hungary and then also back when they went to Hungary. Ah they were in a hurry. So they didn't do too much damage on the way back the ah, did everything they forgot to do when they went to Hungary, they plundered and destroyed and caused a lot of damage. I'll send you that. It's just About 30 pages or so.

Annika Keck

> *That would be great. Thank you.*

Rudiger von Kraus

> Yeah, no, I'll look around and whatever else I have that comes close to as any mention of Rasnov, I might even have some, I'll think about it, whatever I have interestingly enough, I have a three volume chronic of uh chronicle of uh rosemary written by saxons. It's of course biased on Saxon side portrayed as you know the better side. But if you overlook that, it's very interesting. Uh and let me see if I can scan the pages. There are a few pages that I've used in a right up for the society of Romanian Studies. Ever heard of them? Srs it's a US based academic ah organization that deals only with only I would say 95% of them, I'm an exception. About 95% of them are all teachers at various universities here in the states or in Canada ah society of Romanian studies. If you look it up, it's interesting and they had a conference uh Occasioned by the 100 years of Transylvania being integrated into Romania. And I wrote pretty expensive paper for that conference in Bucharest ah must have been two years ago, three years ago. Yeah, three years ago, I think it was 100 years off Transylvania becoming part of. So I can send you that too

interesting because it shows you the Saxon site which tells you the story about all the details on how it got integrated and officially the saxons were for it. But being a minority, they were just pragmatic about it. But at the street level and I that I got from this three volume chronicle, there were, you know, people killed each other romanians killed saxons. And uh there there was uh some hate in Rasnov at the time. Yeah, that that actually that probably will be more interesting to you than than the Mongol invasion. But I'll send you both.

Annika Keck

That would be great. I think a lot of the issues we're finding, I mean, it's hard to find research on like sometimes for Romania, but then specifically is always difficult to find sources.

Rudiger von Kraus

Yeah, you're right. It's not, I mean, it was interesting when I wrote my master thesis, the one that you you you you read ah Charles Mayer, the professor, that was the director of my thesis. When I gave him the outlined for him to decide whether he wants the director of my thesis. You said I never heard of these people about the saxons. Ah and we have, I don't know how it's in your school but in my school, uh you have a coordinated thesis coordinator that helps you find a director, a full fledged professor to become your director. So the coordinator, Don Ostrowski, ah When Charles Maier agreed to become a director said I never And he said he helped about 75 Students before me to find a director, he always was the coordinator for about 75%. It's the first time that the Harvard professor admitted that he doesn't know something. So Charles maier never had heard about the pennsylvania Saxon. So you're right, we are not a very well known quantity.

Annika Keck

Okay, so um I think our meetings only are said to end go until one. Um but I think this has been super helpful. I mean we are so grateful for your time and going to talk with us.

Rudiger von Kraus

Um Yeah I know and I'll send you now that we talked about it. You probably will get a pretty good picture actually from this uh srs uh society of Romanian study paper that I wrote.

Annika Keck

And also with Marianne. Would it do you think she would be willing to talk to meet with us and talk with us or is that something we should go through my high to um figure out. I think she would be a great resource once we're there.

Rudiger von Kraus

Marianne.You have to know how to pronounce the german version of this. Not Marian, it's Mariana. Yeah, Mariana and I have let me see here. I have also her last name, Mariana because in in this magazine they always tells tells you if you want to get in contact with ah with with the people the saxons in Rasnov. You should contact Mariani because they also ring the church bells whenever somebody dies in Germany maybe when I pass away here, maybe they will bring to in original which is an interesting tradition. But yeah, it's Mariana Rumor. I'll send you her name and with all the details. Again. Me. Hi. I'm 99% sure he knows her but I'll send you her details to Bang email.

Annika Keck

That would be great. Thank you. Thank you.

Rudiger von Kraus

Who I think She she just turned 80. So she was older than I was. But I remember her from my time in uh in uh and she's very active. She takes care of the you should see the yard that it's beautiful by the time you get there in March there's probably some greenery is already there. She takes care of the garden and everything. Huh? She's not getting younger. But she also takes care of the the cemetery and all that stuff.

Annika Keck

Well, again, thank you so much for your time. Yes. If you have any questions we'll email you. But this has been super helpful.

Rudiger von Kraus

Yeah. No, you you have my email, I have yours so we can community. If you have, I mean right now you probably will digest this and other things that you are before you leave. So any questions just and I'll send you the material that I mentioned and if you have any questions about that, I'm semi retired so I have time.

Annika Keck

Thank you. Thank you so much.

Rudiger von Kraus

And good luck in the in your enterprise. I would really like to see the entries or whatever. The platform that you form the website and all that. Ah I'm pretty sure you you or you will and share it with me. Of course, yes, I'm happy to. Good, good luck. And again until March you still have a whole month. Well let me know if you have any other questions. Thank you. Thank you. Good luck, yep. Bye

Annika Keck

Bye

Appendix F: Andrei Negus Interview Transcript: April 1, 2022

Annika Keck

Can we associate your name with this? If not, we can keep you Interviewee A, and you may decide to stop participating at any time without penalty. You can, after we conduct this interview. we'll share our findings, including the transcript of you, just for approval, to make sure that everything is to your liking. But you are allowed to stop answering questions or redact any part of the interview whenever you'd like.

Andrei Negus

For sure.

Annika Keck

So yeah, from the questions we sent you, can you just kind of give us some background on yourself?

Andrei Negus

If you if you want to ask me the questions, and we can take them in order. If it's okay for you yeah, so first of all what would you like to know?

Annika Keck

So about you Where do you live in Romania?

Andrei Negus

Okay, I'm blessed to live in Rasnov, in in my opinion it's a wonderful town. It's in the heart of Transylvania, part of Romania. It's a very interesting area, for history a very important one, it's a wonderful city, surrounded by forests, close to the mountains, with a lot of legends and histories that are revolving around our fortres because the fort is it's the heart of the community, in my opinion, because something truly special for Rasnov, it's a medieval, important fortress, and for me it's it's very special it's very important.

Annika Keck

    I definitely think we were excited to hopefully visit. Maybe Still? But it does look so beautiful from the pictures that we have seen.

Andrei Negus

    Yeah, I strongly suggest if you have time, you can Google it. You can search like, Rasnov fortress, and select images and you will see that in terms of landscape, it's one of the most beautiful places in the whole world in my opinion.

Annika Keck

    How long have you lived in Rasnov?

Andrei Negus

    I was born in Brasov, that's very close to Rasnov and I lived almost all my life there, about 46 years. And now I can say for sure i'm happy to have lived here.

Annika Keck

    Do you have any memories from your childhood, or of being in Rasnov?

Andrei Negus

    I have I have a lot of memories about my childhood, and if it's okay, for you i'd like to read you because I put them like in a text, because I don't want to forget the important ones.

Annika Keck

    Yeah, yeah, that'd be great.

Andrei Negus

    Okay, let's find them So from yeah, So about my childhood, I want to tell you that I had the fairy tale childhood, and i'm not exaggerating at all our favorite places to play being the forest and the fort of Rasnov which at the time was partially ruined and abandoned, and it was surrounded by a forest that looked like a real jungle, and I know it's hard to believe something

like that. But it was like a jungle if you want to believe me. There were many liana's, a sort of tree vine and we used them a lot trying to imitate Tarzan. Some lianas can still be seen today in certain places around the fortress. That's important because sometimes I showed them to people who didn't believe me at all.

So, The days of our childhood were very long days of play, they seemed endless. I remember with pleasure that we were obsessed with building handmade huts out of tree branches, and sometimes from pieces of wood. They were of all kinds, terrestrial, underground, and even tree huts. We were obsessed with that. So we were hiding all sorts of things there, and we thought we could really live inside. We were free, and we felt like with real, true masters of the forest. All day long we were in the forest so sometimes we engaged in real battles between different groups of children, and we were trying to find the enemy's hiding places and huts to occupy them, so that's why, our huts were so well hidden. It was a art of hiding them. So imagine we dig them, and sometimes, and we had underground like a small cave. For us. It was like a house. So every group of children had its forest area. They control them, and they try to hide the handmade hut to not find them. Yeah, it was a lot of fun and the venture and the action all around them so very important for us. Then their we're the real big swings hanging in the trees. From a partially abandoned factory we took out some long belts, and binding them together to obtain some sort of impressive swings that were sometimes tens of meters long I don't know how to explain, you have the imagine yourself like sort of ropes, plastified ropes, very strong. So we binded them together and made like a very very tall swing. Okay, So the ticket was to find the right place and swing so that you could fly over the entire valley. So we played a lot of games and the swing on the swing, and many times we managed to hang on with the swing 3 or 4 children at the same time. Sometimes one ulucky one fell, and curiously no one was seriously injured, even if someone were falling from very high altitiudes. It was absolutely amazing, I remember, that and it's hard to believe for me but very, very tall trees, very tall and high, like swings, and we were balancing all over the valley.

Okay, then there were times when we were in constant competition with other rival groups of children to see who managed to build the longest and tallest trees swings. We did a lot of competitions between us and a lot of acrobatics things, too. We were very busy all day long, and we were so happy.

So now from now I will go further to the younger years. You want to ask me something about about what I told to until now, or will we proceed?

Annika Keck

Are you sure no one got hurt when they fell?

Andrei Negus

No, nobody was, nobody was hurt and we fell a lot.

Alex Lagle

When you're speaking earlier about the forest that you played in when you grew up you made it sound like it doesn't exist anymore. Is it still there?

Andrei Negus

Yes, we have a lot of forests. They were cutting a lot of trees and areas down. Put them down, but it grew up again so now, I can say It's a lot of forests around in all directions. It's a lot of forest, you have to imagine yourself, we were missing all day long. Yeah, we didn't have access to mordern devices no smartphones, television that we had for a few hours, so we played.

Okay, I would tell you about the younger years. so well, when we grew up, one of our passions was to go and explore the caves in our area. Fortunately we have 2 quite large and impressive caves near us. One of them even entered the tourist scene a few years ago, and can be visited today with the guide. It's a nice one. It was a real adventure and pure adrenaline. We had improvised the equipment and questionable light sources from old flashlight torches, and even kerosene lamps. We protected our heads by wearing helmets of workers and even firefighter helmets. I can remember we had firefighter helmets, red ones, big ones, so we spent a lot of time inside, sometimes up to 8 hours in a cave, exploring all the corners and looking for other exits and a few times we happened to get lost, and when we saw a glimpse of daylight it was as if we have discovered the light at the end of the tunnel, you know, feeling like you're free, you've escaped everything it's okay.

When we came out of the cave we were extremely dirty, from head to toe, and looked worse than miners from the last century. Those were absolutely incredible times, and our parents who have seen our faces. When we came back, they couldn't believe it.

Oh, there was another interesting period, and I remember about it was the goal fever of treasure hunting that hit us. We tried to dig in many places around the fortress to find treasures. We were thinking about the valuable gold coins and even secretly managed to enter the fortress in its underground galleries. They still exist today, in the hope of discovering something valuable, but we have never discovered anything valuable. Instead, one of the guards of the fortress discovered us, and another one, his guard dogs chased us. Fortunately no one of them managed to catch us. In that period the fortress had a guard but he wasn't always there.

It looked like a look like the ruin. So for us It was a real excitement. However, the excitement and the emotion of a possible discovery did not leave us for a very long time. It's also interesting that I ended up working today in my favorite place of my childhood.

Annika Keck

What do you do for the work there?

Andrei Negus

I have the chance to coordinate the cultural heritage, so we're trying to try to offer information we're selling quality stuff it's it's a very nice activity. We're trying to promote We have cultures agenda a lot of events, and the best part it's that i'm talking all day long with a lot of people from all over the world. We're sharing information so it's very nice. I'm finding a lot of things about other countries, it's good, very nice.

That's what I have about the younger years, those are the I think are my memories that I remember very, very clear and that are impressive for me.

Annika Keck

Makes me want to go on a swing. I don't know if I would be brave enough. You've shared these wonderful stories with us. Would you be willing to put them on to like a platform or some website and share them with other people who want to learn?

Andrei Negus

Yeah. Yeah. For sure.

Annika Keck

Do you have like photos of this time, Or are there any records? Or is it kind of more just oral stories?

Andrei Negus

No no, Nothing important, nothing interesting.

Annika Keck

With a lot of the people that we have talked to before, some of them, are especially the ones who were in America, Romanians in America, they have mentioned that when they left they don't really have many more ties to Romania, and that they're not really motivated to share or motivated to learn more, have you met people like that who wouldn't want to share their stories, or who kind of have this bad memory for various reasons.

Andrei Negus

Fortunately, I don't remember meeting somebody like that the people I met, generally speaking, they were happy to share memories and talk about those times.

Annika Keck

Is that kind of through your job that you get to meet people like that? Or is from meeting people in Rasnov?

Andrei Negus

I met people, not in my job. Outside my job. I have met friends of my friends and in occasional discussions I found out that they are, generally speaking, happy to talk about Romania.

Annika Keck

That's good to hear. I'm not sure how much Mihi has told you about our project. We want to make a website for Miroritcs and for Rasnov, where you, anyone who's lived in there or used to live there and has left, or who just wants to learn more, can see it and read stories like yours about your childhood. And maybe if you have older friends who don't live in Rasnov anymore, they can comment and say, "oh, I remember this cave or this location." Is that something that you would see value in or you would want?

Andrei Negus

Yes, I think it's very, very important, and I put my thoughts in text, I want to read that, so I will answer you to the question 5, because it's important what I want to say here, So I believe that others can be motivated to share their life stories by giving them our own example, so then by making them understand the special importance of enriching the collective memory of the city in which they live. This is an honor, and in my opinion it's a chance not to be missed.

So. Second, Yes, there is certainly a connection between the nature of personal memories and the desire to share them. Those who have bad and unpleasant memories, my opinion should not be forced to share them. If by our good or inspired actions we succeed to open them. Some new, beautiful memories. then probably they will be willing to open their heart.

So I'm thinking that we have to give an example, offer them that example to motivate them. I think that's a good way to approach that problem.

Annika Keck

I'm wondering how many other people have similar experiences growing up in Rasnov, and if they took advantage of the the natural beauty.

Andrei Negus

Let's hope that there are, i'm sure they are a lot of them, and they want they will be willing to share their memories. And about that I can tell you about a few things about your question number 7 if it's okay, for you.

So yes, I think it's important to be able to connect with Romanians no longer live in Romania. It's an exchange of experience and personal enrichment. In general I believe that those who left Romania have a sort of nostalgia I told you about, because this is a very beautiful country, with wonderful people. So many times those who feel that we are open-minded and ready to listen and understand them, decide, to return home sometimes, or, if not at least to start new projects in Romania. Communication is always welcome, and sometimes it creates new, amazing opportunities. I think its a place to improve and a lot of empty space to fulfill, to fill it with memories with.

Annika Keck

With the website, we would definitely want to have you like people like you able to share their stories and then you would also be able to comment or contribute to other people's stories.

Is there anything else that you thank you you'd want to have on that, like the map, or timeline sort of thing or information about Rasnov?

Andrei Negus

Generally speaking, this site is very very welcome, because it's a real opportunity to share your memories because you have a phone now, you can very, very easily take a video like an interview by yourself at home. I make an interview with my grandfather So it's a good opportunity.

I think that the website dedicated to this proposal is more than welcomed. Such a project should be encouraged with priority, and considered an exceptional chance to keep alive the memory of the past with its charming stories. Such a project saves both the past and the future, and of course, the chance to show those who are coming after us. The chance not to forget, to appreciate what they have and to carry on the story being full of inspiration.

Appendix G: Interviewee A Interview Transcript: April 11, 2022

Annika Keck

> *Is that okay with you to record the interview?*

Interviewee A

> Sure.

Annika Keck

> *I will start that now. Okay, perfect So and will we be allowed to use your name with this interview? If not, you can be Interviewee A.*

Interviewee A

> Yeah, let's be Interviewee A.

Annika Keck

> *Okay. Yeah. Okay, And you can decide to stop if any other questions kind of make you uncomfortable. If you just don't want to do it at any time you can just stop, and you will not have any penalty or loss of benefits after the interview. With the transcript, we can send it to you just to approve before we submit our project, and you can remove parts of the interview or drop parts of it based on what we send you.*

Interviewee A

> Okay, so that I hope I will have the right answers or so, and I don't have much to say but I'm not a traditional person.

Annika Keck

> *No, I think that is what we want. We want everyone's opinion, I think. So can you give us kind of some background on yourself. Where do you live in Rasnov?*

Interviewee A

At the moment I live in Brasov near Rasnov. It's like 15 kilometers right and for 2 months. Yes, so not long. Okay, I'm reading from your questions and answering. Okay, yes, I'm 32 years old. Okay you can use that I don't mind.

Annika Keck

Yeah, and kind of the next is do you have any kind of strong memories of your childhood. I know it probably was in Rasnov.

Interviewee A

But no, it was in Rasnov actually I didn't have a grandparents in other cities than Rasnov. So yeah, all my childhood was in Rasnov or at the sea, because we were going there a week, or something like that up Marea Neagră, the Black Sea.

Annika Keck

Oh, yes, I've heard if it

Interviewee A

I can use it also in Romanian, and I'm used to to tell I have German colleagues, and I tell them it also in German and i'm used to it. Okay, so yeah, my grandparents were umm basic people. They work the ground on the ground, and that was it. My father is, actually was, he's not working anymore, an engineer. Yeah, he was the first one that graduate, especially high school. So from the family. Then I was the second one, yeah we don't have a tradition this way yet but it will come. Yeah, something else about my childhood. I- I started to go in the forests only when I was like 16 or 17 like that, because I didn't have so many friends to play with, and in high school I meet all the other people that's all went with me in the forest, for example, or on the mountain. I was for the first time on the mountain [mountain name] is near us, [mountain name other]. Maybe you heard of it it's also near Rasnov. Rasnov is somewhere in between here is one mountain, and here is another one it's like 20 kilometers. I was on the mountain for the first time when I was in university. I studied topography. Yes, and we were there to to study actually the plants. Well, it was amazing, and after that I- I started to learn to snowboard. Yeah. So my life began with my twenties.

Annika Keck

I think yeah, we've heard from other people that yeah, a lot of the childhood was in the mountains or in the forest. So definitely a bummer that we can't visit Rasnov we're supposed to go.

Interviewee A

Also, with the bicycles. Yeah, as a child, I learned to go with the bicycle first, then in my twentys with the snowboard.

Annika Keck

Okay, so do you have are you kind of comfortable I mean, I know you're talking with us, but are you comfortable kind of sharing out your stories, or just personal history?

Interviewee A

I don't really have a lot to share. That's why I wouldn't, I will skip the questions between 3 and 5.

Annika Keck

So a lot of also the people we have found say there are these people who, when they leave Romania they leave for obvious reasons, and they don't have very good memories of the place. And they don't really want to talk about it and do you think there a way that would motivate these people to share their stories?

Interviewee A

Hmm. Yeah. I'm thinking now about the friend that I have in the Netherlands, and I was visiting him 2 years ago, and he was like [Interviewee A name] you don't understand how it is to to stay outside Romania to live there, and not to have other expats from Romania, and talk with them! It's really really hard, and I think it will be easier to share with um, I think it's easy for expats to share their lives with expats. Because I've heard also from friends that lived in

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Germany for example, that it's very hard to make friends with the German people, or from the people who live there. So I I think will be at the beginning a really difficult for the Romanian who are living outside Romania to share their history, past and now lives with you. But let's see how to make it easier. Maybe maybe, that it could be a problem the language. Maybe. Yeah, but there are many, many people I would say at the beginning, maybe the education but now there are many people that like to share stories although they don't didn't study anything, or I don't know. Yeah. So they, if they have something to say, they will say it they if it's important for them for them to tell you.

Annika Keck

Yeah, no, I think That's a really great point especially for the people who kind of don't have the community when they're abroad or have left Romania, having someone yeah that speaks the same language and kind of knows the same history as you would really sure. So thank you. What do you think you would get out of being able to talk with these Romanians who are no longer living in Romania? Would it be something that you'd be willing to do and share your stories with them, to get them to share with you?

Interviewee A

I didn't quite understand the question. It was too long like.

Annika Keck

Sorry, what would you get out of kind of connecting with other Romanians who don't live currently in Romania?

Interviewee A

What? What would I share with them?

Annika Keck

Yeah. Would you benefit from it? Would you like to?

Interviewee A

I would ask, what what beautiful side of Romania have they visited? Because we have a beautiful land, and I didn't visit a lot of it. Yeah, I don't own a car and I don't drive so it's a bit difficult to take the bus or the train, and go in the mountains or I don't know other places, but yeah, there are so many beautiful places, and maybe they have grandparents there, and they could share. You would like to visit Rasnov, but there are so many many beautiful places like Rasnov, or even better, depends on the view. I don't know how is it on your side, where do you live? Is it? How is it? Well, do you have a forest there?

Annika Keck

Yeah, we both go to school in Massachusetts, and it's kind of in the middle of the city, so it's not very pretty but you can see some nice forests if you drive out of the city I think you don't get the same kind of mountains that you do in Romania.

Interviewee A

Let's see how it is on Google, Massachusetts. I don't have a view right now, an image okay you- you're near the sea. Also see water. Okay.

Annika Keck

I think the water is usually very cold so it's not fun to go in.

Interviewee A

Yeah, it's an ocean. The oceans are cold, normally. You have many natural parks. We have also natural parks, because the land is so small it's near us.

Annika Keck

Okay, so we kind of mentioned that we would be making a website and kind of people who live in Rasnov or have connections can type up a story about maybe their childhood, or something they remember and or that they just recently did, and those who either have similar experience can comment on it and talk about it, and kind of connect with others. Or people can

post pictures that they have family pictures or kind of it's like the mountains or just kind of scenery. Is like this something that you think you would use or that's benefit from?

Interviewee A

I like food. I would like recipes, recipes culinary. Yeah, it will be amazing because I don't know if Mihai told you. You know that in Rasnov have lived a lot of German people, Saxons and there are very there are many. No, there are a few now that live there and the others went back to Germany actually, and they had great recipes. And when I was in high school I talked one of them and they gave me a cake recipe and a spaetzle recipe a pasta. So yeah, it's it's amazing of course there are there are also the what they wore under special occasion. We have pictures we have seen pictures with those. But yeah, I would be interested in culinary art.

Annika Keck

Oh, yeah we didn't even think of that. That would be great, I think. I love cooking too, so i'd love to see what they would have. I think it's a really good way to connect to people.

Interviewee A

Yeah, yeah, we have yeah, tasting, it's different for everyone.

Annika Keck

So kind of the last question is, what value do you think that website would have?

Interviewee A

I think it's important, we don't really have a tradition, and that's what Mihai tried to do in Rasnov. We don't have so many places to go there or many activity to do there. But it's important that we can see what was in the building next to us. There were building that bake bread a lot of them, or we don't know what buildings were, or now what they are. We have blocks. Okay, but old building we don't have a panel or something that's written near them what it was, and to have it on online I think It's great, or to have also an application to see with the SQR code to see the history of the building because you you have managed to collect information about it will be nice. There are also so many places in the forest, because we like forests, and there are places

there everybody calls something. Yeah, they have a special name, but if you ask where it is it's so complicated to show it on the map you need to go there. See it with your own eyes. Yeah, yeah, that that's I would like to see this special place in the forest, for example, not like Blair Witch Project. Do you know the film Blair Witch Project?

Annika Keck

Yes, its horror. I've never watched it, too scary.

Interviewee A

It's the first of its kind it's a good movie.

Annika Keck

That would funny to add to the website.

Interviewee A

But no, no, we have the Bran Castle for that, for the scary stories.

Annika Keck

Well, okay. So I think that is all of our questions. Your answers were amazing, I think also the food idea and language stuff it's been very helpful.

Interviewee A

I'm happy to hear that I was a bit nervous because I was reading the questions, and I was like, I don't have so many things to say about me. And yeah, and I don't know if you know [name of person]. She also works with Mihai and she told me 'I thought it was a great idea for you to talk with me. Yeah, because because you you have you search all the events on Facebook on.' Yeah, I share the events with the other people in the area, because I like to have Facebook. I have Facebook its for old people. I know but there I can find a lot of events in Brasov or in Rasnov. Yeah, and I can share it with them and they're so happy that someone told them about something because we don't also have the a poster to see.

Annika Keck

Yeah, I mean that is something that could be added, upcoming events.

Interviewee A

Yeah, yes, upcoming events. Yeah, you can collect from Facebook yet. But who knows maybe there won't be Facebook in 10 years. I don't know. Well, maybe twitter it will become the new hype in also in Europe, because it's not actually. But Elon Musk buying.

Annika Keck

Yeah that is still very big in the US.

Interviewee A

So yeah, I heard, Yeah.

Annika Keck

Okay, Well, thank you so much for your time and your answers. They were amazing. They were great, thank you and good to talk to you

Interviewee A

So it's nice meeting you, and if you have other questions you can write to me. I can also give you my whatsapp number you can write there, because I also have a lot of span emails, and I might miss it. Yeah. And yeah, you can ask, Maybe I can have my be not.

Annika Keck

But yeah, I mean, you helped us a lot already. So thank you!

Appendix H: Iulia Sferle Interview Transcript: April 13, 2022

Annika Keck

If you're comfortable with us, recording the interview only us will have kind of access to this is that okay?

Iulia Sferle

Yeah, let's start that.

Annika Keck

Also, we would appreciate kind of associating this interview with your name. But if not, we can put you as anonymous as you have any preference.

Iulia Sferle

It's Okay, you can associate with my name

Annika Keck

Okay, Great. Thank you. Also you can decide to stop participating at any point. There's no penalty if you don't want to answer any questions. We can just stop it, as well as kind of remove things from the transcript subsequent to this. After we complete this work, we'll share our findings with you including the transcript if you would like. Also, before we submit the project, you can remove parts of the interview. If any issues come up, you can.

Iulia Sferle

Okay, Thank you.

Annika Keck

So I had sent you these questions if you'd like to give us some background on yourself.

Iulia Sferle

Yes, I'm, Iulia, I'm 17, I live in Rasnov in Brasov county. I'm studying at a computer science high school and I've lived here since I was born. I don't know what would you like to know.

Annika Keck

No, that's that's perfect, just kind of some general information on you. Yeah, so given that you've lived in Rasnov your whole life do you have kind of any strong memories with the town or kind of growing up there that you'd like to share?

Iulia Sferle

Well, I do. I- I love the fact that it's near the forest and near the mountains, so it released clean air and kind of holy little town. So everybody knows everybody and it's always nice to walk on the street because you greet everybody and everybody asks you how you are. So it's really nice of most of the year here, and I have some stone memories from when I was little. I used to go caroling on Christmas Eve. And here they give you of course, a little sum of money but it's unimportant, and a piece or some pieces of our traditional sweet bread, which we call here Cozonac ark it's with walnuts and raisins, and we make it on Christmas Eve and on Easter.

Annika Keck

So you'll have it again, soon?

Iulia Sferle

Yes, in a few days!

Annika Keck

Sounds great, also what you mentioned you're studying computer science, too! I mean, I think that'll be an interesting insight for our project, because it is very computer science based what we have to do but neither of us really have any experience of that.

Iulia Sferle

I actually don't like it but and I don't know much about it but i'm studying it just for the sake of it.

Annika Keck

Yeah, I tried, and I disliked it too. so it's not- it's not nice. So given that you kind of shared with us, and in just kind of conversation are, you would you say you're also kind of comfortable sharing to a larger audience, or maybe putting these types of just like little snippets of stories about Rasnov online?

Iulia Sferle

Yeah, yes, I would feel comfortable. Usually, I would feel exposed but now I choose how much I can share so it's all right,

Annika Keck

Yeah, so would you be willing to share with others who are from Rasnov, or like outside of Rasnov as well, or just kind of people who want to know more about the town and kind of like the traditions and the history of it would you be willing to share them?

Iulia Sferle

Yes, I would with the people at once more about about this note.

Annika Keck

So a lot of the other kind of people that we have, or some of the other people we talk to have mentioned, though that, especially people who have left Romania as a whole, there are many reasons that they did leave and kind of some of them said like I don't want to talk about my time. there. Is there anything that you think that like would motivate those people to share?

Iulia Sferle

I think that usually get motivated by the fact that they know that they will get the reward. Even if it's a physical one like a certificate that you've participated in this project, you know

more it's a psychological one that they get. I don't know- that knowledge that they helped you achieve. something.

Annika Keck

Yeah, I think that's a good point I think we yeah, if we make clear that they will help us, or something like that. So that is cool. So do you think, there is kind of a correlation between people having negative memories, and then not peeling to share, or like in other cases, having positive memories, and them being more willing to share?

Iulia Sferle

Well, people, I think the people usually share what they are comfortable sharing, or what had a great impact on them. If they truly hate something, or if they love something.

Annika Keck

Do you think you would get anything out of sharing with other Romanians who don't live in Romania?

Iulia Sferle

Yeah, I would get a reflection that i'm talking to them, and that they know something about their country that I mean. Usually when you leave, I think because I haven't left for a long period, but I think that you get out of touch with the traditions or what's in your soul, a word- I what is in your soul that is tied up with your home town or with your country, so maybe if you're sharing to them things like the place that they left it will bring some memories to them, and they may be a little bit homesick or yeah.

Annika Keck

No, I think that's yeah. Yeah very important to make sure they can feel still connected. Okay, Vanshika,. If you kind of want to talk a little bit about project.

Vanshika Rohera

   Yeah, so I don't know how much we don't know how much you've heard about like the project that we're doing with like Mihai and his team. Basically, they kind of approached our school in the project, because they wanted to preserve some of the culture in Rasnov. So like kind of like a lot of families, and, like the history, have like, moved in or moved out until they they want to find a way to like people who are from resolve and maybe have left. So the idea is to essentially create like a website that would work kind of like an online platform, but it would work only when they could. More uploading stories, so like you could upload like pictures of your family, and like your family's history and Rasnov. And then somebody like, let's say they move to germany for example, like 50 years ago, they could be like, Oh, like I used to live in that house, and now I was a kid or like kind of you guys can gain this interaction with each other, and they would also upload stories that they have about risk. Now, just to kind of get some more attention to the town itself, and kind of like preserve what's like slowly being lost over time so so that's kind of the motivation behind the project that we're doing. That's what we were saying how it would be really interesting, like viewpoint for you since you are studying computer science.

   There's like an interesting approach in terms of like understanding like why users would use the website. and why they don't like it. Do you have any like suggestions or like things that you would like to see on a platform like that? Or do you think like It's a good idea in the case you know, since you live in Rasnov, I mean.

Iulia Sferle

   I think that it's a great idea, but for people who are comfortable with going online and stuff, because here in Rasnov, a lot of old people, or people that hate technology, and they are not in touch with it or with websites, But a website, is great because on the other hand, it's more comfortable to access it's them reading a book, or something about it is not. I think it's simple without complicated words so everybody can understand it with a great design that attracts people, and yeah, and simple, so like in terms of design.

Vanshika Rohera

What do you think is attractive to like people like, for example, like if you want to use it, or like someone in your family that might be a little older like, what do you think is something that would like, attract them to the website?

Iulia Sferle

I think that the fact that it has stories about the regional and history about it, because there are a lot of things of others, not like the citadel and the picture with it, or a website with the picture of the citadel, but nobody cares about that I mean everybody it's easy. Then it's in everybody's mind but like stories from people that live in Rasnov, where they're used to living. If you like discovering, like playing a hide an object game, you know, because maybe some stories from some families connect to each other, and then you can see like a whole map of stories from people that are connected here.

Vanshika Rohera

Okay, I think that's definitely, some good feedback. And I think that's like kind of the reason behind why Mihai wanted it to be like interactive, so that you know you can upload and then also see what other people are uploading, and then like even if people are just interested in hearing about Rasnov only they can go see like how families within like the place where like which is nice. So I guess our kind of big last question would be like do you think there's value in developing this website? Or do you think there's like another way to preserve history in Rasnov?

Iulia Sferle

Well, I think that right now this is the best way to preserve history because people don't read books anymore, or I don't know- I don't watch Tv anymore, and people in my family don't watch Tv anymore, because it got boring and they, I think people with will like it because it is comfortable. and maybe some people they want to know about more about the section of Romania, and, you know, can read the website, and maybe they would want to come here and see it.

Vanshika Rohera

> **Okay that's good to hear.**

Annika Keck

> *Ok, well, we want to thank you for taking the time to talk to us today. We're sorry about the whole confusion with timing!*

Iulia Sferle

> It's okay it's no problem. I actually I'm the kind of person who stresses a lot so I saw that the time was odd, and that was like no what if I did something? What if they didn't get the mail but I sent it so I was scrolling and scrolling, and refreshing refreshing refreshing. So it's like no I sent it I know i've sent it. Oh, no!

Annika Keck

> *Hahaha, well either way, it was great talking to you. And I think you gave us really some great answers and I think definitely, having someone closer to our age is a good person to talk to because we have talked to a lot of older people in the town. So we should be done.*

Iulia Sferle

> Do you need the answers in the mail, because it's almost done, and maybe it is more helpful to you to see them.

Annika Keck

> *Yeah. And if you would like to send him, that would be great.*

Iulia Sferle

> Yeah, I will send them. Yeah, Thank you so much.

Vanshika Rohera

> **Thank you.**

Iulia Sferle

    Well, this was nice.

Annika Keck

    Okay, well, good luck with everything else. We can end this meeting now.