

## EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION IN THE ROMANI COMMUNITIES IN THE BRAȘOV AREA

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**Abstract:** *The paper presents the results of the needs analyses carried out in March and November 2016 in two communities from Brașov county where the Romani are predominant, the analysis being performed for the preparation of two EU-funded projects aimed at the integrated development of these communities. This type of community, because of their high poverty level and the growing population, is an important source of internal migration (mainly for looking for a job) and also of external migration (within the space of the other EU countries). Following the investigations, different types of interventions were designed in order to enhance the quality of life (through social and legal services, better housing, etc.), the main component of the program being the educational one, from the perspective of intercultural pedagogy.*

**Keywords:** *community; education; intercultural pedagogy*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Budila and Tărlungeni Communes (located in the Brașov metropolitan area, in the center of Romania) are included in the "Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas and Local Human Development in Romania" (2016:66).

All school units in Budila and Tărlungeni are nominated by the Ministry of Education and Research as being located in the most deprived areas in Brașov County. As such, the two communities are included in the list of communities in which an integrated set of educational innovations can be developed through the "School for All" program (*DLI 360*). These communities submitted a project under this program in December 2016, hoping to be funded through the Human Capital Program - POCU (co-funded by the European Union).

### 2. QUANTITATIVE DATA ON EDUCATIONAL FIELD

In these two communes, two marginalized areas inhabited by the Roma were delimited, where community-based surveys were carried out (in March 2016) to substantiate the application for funding under another POCU program, namely "Development Integrated Local (*DLI 360*) in marginalized communities where there is a

population belonging to the Roma minority". These analyzes were undertaken (by submitting the project) by the local public authorities. The most significant passages on education are given below:

**Budila village:** According to the survey, in the Roma community the share of children and young people (0-17 years) of the total population is 50.66% of the total population in these marginalized areas. In total, the population of children and young people (0-17 years) is 1,255 people. The main reasons why children in the marginalized area do not go to school are the consequences of high poverty and limited financial resources: lack of clothing and footwear, lack of food. In concordance with community-based survey, the most serious problems that may lead to the risk of school dropout have been identified: clothing and footwear (51.4% households); food (44.1% households); school supplies (42.3% households), means of transport (14.1% households) and other housing needs (12.7% households in the marginalized area). According to the preliminary analysis, only 409 people are employed (32.5% of the 18-64 year-old population in the marginalized area), the unemployment rate for the entire marginalized community being 62.3%. The main reasons people face hardship in employment are marginalization, discrimination, low level of education, precarious skill level or lack of jobs in Budila. The main occupations of the

targeted population are day-work, collecting plastic bottles and scrap metal, practicing various low-skilled jobs.

As far as **Tărlungeni** is concerned, the data gathered in March 2016 are expressed succinctly, in numerical form: Children's data: Number of children in the community: Preschoolers 327/15 groups; Primary school 537/28 classes; Gymnasium School 452/23 classes; "Second chance" Programme: 46/3 classes; Children belonging to vulnerable groups: preschool 225 preschoolers; Primary 420 students; Gymnasium 318 pupils; „Second chance” Programme: 46 students; Children with absences, abandonment: Primary 25 students; Gymnasium 37 students. Repeated class pupils: Primary 23 students; Gymnasium 25 students; Family data: Parents with low education – 75%; Percentage families living on social benefits 60% Teacher data: Supplementary Teaching Staff 54%; Percent of comute lecturers 81%; School mediators 2 people.

### 3. QUANTITATIVE DATA ON EDUCATION

In November 2016 a focus group was organized in both of those two communities (Budila and Tărlungeni) with an common topic, the development of education. The focus group was attended by the school management team, representatives of local public authority, business environment, parents. Interviews with pupils at the end of the education cycles (sample of 30 children in the 4th grade and 30th grade in the 8th grade) were also organized in order to determine the needs they experienced, a questionnaire which includes final and clarification questions addressed to legal guardians / parents. The main conclusions of the qualitative research (R.L. Andronic & A.C. Piroiu, 2016) are the follow:

- The school has insufficient results at the level of potential beneficiaries, both in terms of school attendance (school drop-out) and school performance (earnings perceived as a result of receiving educational services);

- Low school leaving (a low level of school perceiving as a place where you enjoy going) and the low financial possibilities of families in vulnerable groups are powerful factors that influence school dropout and lack of school performance;

- Non-participation in the national assessment increased sharply in 2012 and a further increase in the non-participation rate also manifested in 2013. This phenomenon requires a much more careful analysis as those who do not participate in the capacity examination show a higher rate of school dropout;

- The following factors have been identified, which increase the risk of school dropout and not to promote the school year: reduced family support (reduced educational capital of parents / tutors and low cultural capital); The existence of an unfriendly, non-inclusive school environment; Small grades obtained by the pupil in class (reflects the representation and valorisation of education itself); The transition from one educational cycle to another; Belonging to a vulnerable group;

- School abandonment is correlated with the very low level of parental education. The higher the level of parental education, the lower the risk of school dropout;

- The inequality generated by the report of the pupils with the school is also reflected by the positive correlation between the family's precarious financial situation and the risk of school dropout. Practically, students whose families have lower financial resources drop out of school to a greater extent.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

A first conclusion is that it is necessary to assume as a central objective of the educational policies (developed at the level of the two communities) the principle of ensuring equal opportunities in education (both in terms of participation and in terms of developed skills), by promoting especially inclusive education. In this process, the role of the school should be defined as a primary responsibility body in responding to the needs of all pupils and in creating the conditions for school performance to depend to the greatest extent on the child's individual talent and work and less on factors such as poor material status and the level of education of the parents.

Another direction of action is the promotion of integrated service delivery programs. It is necessary to approach educational inclusion both from the point of view of supporting the pupil's schooling and also from the perspective of supporting the economic integration of the family, child health, living conditions, etc. to effectively support children from disadvantaged groups.

It is also necessary to promote a new approach in which the responsibility for the effective realization of the right to education belongs to the community. If there are obstacles to the realization of the right to education, the state (through schools and other institutions) must take the necessary steps to remove these obstacles. From this perspective, there is a need for an awareness of the role and responsibility of the school management

in ensuring the effective realization of the right to education of all children.

In relation to the above mentioned, the following activities were included in the project activities that were submitted under the "School for All" program: (1) A set of specific intervention tools set in abandon prevention programs and inclusive schooling; (2) An transparent and non-discriminatory teacher selection methodology; (3) Modalities of multi-criteria evaluation of the training (initial evaluation questionnaires, impact assessment questionnaires, focus groups); (4) An integration assistance and counseling methodology, which targets all categories of educators and includes: a set of support / counseling tools; monthly / half-yearly scheduling of parental education sessions; a selection methodology for students; monitoring records; monthly / half-year planning of counseling / group sessions; counseling reports; organizing community development and integration activities.

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