Schools and local comunities

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Abstract: Schools – along with all the other institutions which operate in a community – are directly influenced by the community's level of development of the community. Basically, the main purpose in the development of a community is the community's progress – which is a living process that sets in motion a multitude of elements, that involves carefully planned actions and requires constant control, and a perpetual reorganisation of subsystems – which are, in turn, in a permanent state of evolution.

The main purpose of community development is securing the wellbeing of the population. Community development aims to form and crystallise, in the members of a community, a feeling of belonging to the respective community they are part of and the desire to play an active social role in the community. Such results can only be achieved by getting people involved in social activities, by enhancing participatory mind-set and their desire to get involved in social matters. In this respect, it becomes natural for schools, families, and the community as a whole to cooperate with each other, to be open to dialogue and communication, and to be willing act. All stakeholders can benefit from partnerships between schools, families, and local communities and these partnerships become a good way to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the means through which each of the stakeholders involved can contribute to the greater good.

Key words Schools, local community, family, educational partnerships, society.

Schools as core institutions within a community

Schools and society are two concepts that have long interested various specialists and professionals who have all tried, within their field of interest, to seize the characteristics and mechanisms which influence the manner in which schools, the stakeholders, to gather data from different sources. Also, researchers have been interested in all school and community related issues, in finding the various "bridges" and communication channels that exist between them, and the ways they influence each other.

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We believe that an assessment of the effects of schools on society may be useful to the local decision making authorities so as to find new means of action in order to bring beneficial changes to the communities. It would be great if the theoretical findings could be, at least to some extent, put into practice.

Schools are one of the core institutions within a community, they have specific roles, but they cannot function and develop without taking into account the type of families catering to and the specificity of the community within which they operate. Also, a community should reflect its specificity in the type of education it practices, promotes and supports. Each community has its own defining characteristics, its own needs and aspirations. Through good cooperation with the decision making factors within a community, schools can properly perform their social role.

The purpose of schools is to provide the society with schooled and trained youth who would integrate easily in the structures of society. Unfortunately, following the graduating from secondary school, young people face great challenges in finding a job, which raises questions regarding the cooperation between schools and communities.

Schools are a vital component of a society, a subsystem of the social system. They are the social institutions especially created and designed to accomplish the schooling of young generations, aiming to shape and train the young generation in line with the demands of society.

Ways in which schools can cooperate with families and the local community. Educational partnerships

Schools – as components of a social system– naturally interact with and relate to other institutions. Some of them can contribute to the delivering of their educational mission, creating the premises of the educational partnership concept. The complexity of the educational process (in particular) and of the human and social reality (in general) are elements which support the development of said concept. From a different prospective, the collaboration between schools (institutions specially created to educate, institutions in charge of providing formal education) and other institutions, places the schools on new coordinates, structured in such a way as to serve the interests of the young generation.

Educational partnerships tend to become a core concept in the curricula type of approach – which means flexibility and openness towards educational issues.

Vrăşmaş (2002) sees the educational partnership as a prerequisite to the efficient management of social and educational institution based on schools and community.

Partnerships imply cooperation. Educational partnerships imply cooperation among institutions and stakeholders interested in education and all related subjects, in the future of children and of society.

Thus, "educational partnerships are the form of communication, cooperation and collaboration which best serve children in the educational process" (Vrăşmaş, 2002, p.139).

Implementing educational partnerships requires openness towards the resources of the community as well as expanding the framework for carrying out school activities in order to integrate said resources. In this respect, we should mention: using the community locations to organize and festivities, sports competitions, etc., getting the local authorities involved in organising various events, attracting sponsors, getting other community institutions involved, NGOs, the social services, in materializing some actions of social protection of children and in integrating some underprivileged and vulnerable children in the educational system.

Băran-Pescaru (2004) states several ways in which the cooperation between schools and society can be maximized:

- through communication channels going from schools to communities;
- by creating various activities through which students can illustrate what they can do for the community, gaining thus adults' trust;
- by designing some activities, opportunities for the members of the community to get directly involved in the students' activities.

By establishing various kinds of partnerships, schools develop their curriculum, and communities observe directly, understand and accept easier the changes in schools. Romania's "the educational system has gone, in the past two decades, through an almost constant transformation, in terms of structure, content and organization. The purpose of these changes has been to increase the equality of opportunity of the population regarding education and to improve the quality of the education system" (Mărginean, Precupeţu, 2010, p.18), which generates changes in the way connections are set with the society as a whole.

The cooperation between schools and families generates effects for society

Schools' cooperation with families contributes without any doubt to the enhancement of families interest in education. It is important to mention that families are the ones that set the basis, create the support on which schools can build on knowledge. But families' contribution to a child's development is not an action which can be limited in time but it is an ongoing process, with limitations in time. Collaborations with schools through specific activities, can make parents become aware of the role they play in their children's education, help them to better understand their children, make them aware of and help them correct any unwanted negative behaviours and attitudes within their own family, encourage them to get active, to get involved in organising various educational activities.

Stăiculescu (2012) lists the social phenomena which influence the evolution/progress of families and the school-family partnerships:

- the birth rate;

- the divorce rate;

- the migration of the work-force;

- going from community families to societal families.

In order for families to have direct relations with schools, they have to get interested and concerned by this topic. But not all families are equally interested in their children's' education, in what education implies, and what schools mean for society. The more parents show an interest in education, the bigger their desire to get involved gets, to contribute in all ways they can in the educational process.

Parents have a different take on the purpose of schools. Attitude towards schools develop over time and are generated by a series of factors, such as: the level of education/ culture/ material, living conditions, standard of living –just some of the factors worth mentioning. Also, it is well known that parents are (their) children's closest role models. Therefore, if parents do not emphasize the role of schools through their actions and discourse, then their children's attitude towards schools will not be one to enhance. The *éducogène* environment of families has a very strong influence upon the development of a child's personality and behaviour which sometimes preserves its educational impact throughout their whole life" (Bontaş, 1998, p.287). It has been shown that children's motivation, especially in their first years of institutional education is extrinsic. Only through increased interest and supervision from families, can the institutional education turn into an intrinsical one. Only by being there for their children, can parents influence their children in getting good results at school.

In turn, families could benefit greatly from such an attitude, and family values will be shaped in line with the values promoted in schools.

On a social level, a good cooperation between schools and families can generate positive long-term effects.

Schools and local communities

All institutions within a local community are interdependently interconnected and they all have a significant influence on the local community. Together, they set forward the features of that environment. Therefore, it would be best if there were cohesive actions between all of them. "Social cohesion is a fundamental concept which accompanies the development strategies a modern, sustainable society is based upon."(Mărginean, Precupeţu, 2008, p.17).

Developing an educational partnership within a community in which children can grow and develop is a natural prerequisite. Only by working together, prioritizing communication, and setting common objectives focused on students

can outstanding results be achieved. Due to the complex nature of societies, nowadays, schools can no longer work alone. They must be supported by any institution that has any role in children's development. These institutions within the local communities carry educational values and can further develop cooperation among institutions, contributing to a better chance of schools in delivering their mission.

Schools are institutions which carry out their activity within a community. Schools, together with families, statutory authorities, government and non-government organisations, companies, etc. shape people. Schools have an influence on the other factors of education, as schools are the ones to set forth the educational coordinates, and, in turn, are influenced by such other factors. Schools are subject to economic/ social/ cultural/ political circumstances. Schools are influenced by the human and material resources within a society, by the society's current take on the world and on life, by everything happening in that society.

Schools operate within local communities. They have their own "features" and characteristics which inevitably impact their activities. Looking at things from another perspective, the future of the community depends on how schools carry out their mission.

Even from the 1980s, there has been a strong emphasis on a "site-based management" which implies getting all stakeholders within a local community together to take decisions regarding the teaching and learning process, funding schools and employing teaching personnel in the schools within that community. Such a management strategy relies on two arguments: one sustains the idea that people concerned by the education related decisions should be involved in taking such decisions; the other one sustains that decisions, once taken, have better chances to get materialized if those concerned by them have been involved in taking those decisions.

Stăiculescu (2012) states that more than often schools are the ones that initiate the dialogue with the local authorities/ parents/ NGOs/ medical establishments/ churches and other local representative institutions.

The structure of a school's management team which relies on the local community is quite complex but mostly very diverse. It includes teachers, parents, directors, members of the community, students but also members of the local business environment, of the various associations and foundations with an interest in education. Due to the large number of participants, such a type of school management — may be faced with issues related to finding time for meetings, different views on things, difficulty in designing a unitary action plan, etc.

The main reason for setting good collaboration relations between schools and local communities is connected by the desire to support students. When parents collaborate with the other members of the community, students get supported from different directions and, thus, their chances of success increase.

Relations between schools and local communities should be open, should promote mutual respect and a desire to understand the others' points of view, empathy and trust.

Some of the suggestions Iosifescu (2001) makes in his study in terms of making educational partnerships a component of our reality are of great importance also. He suggests adopting several measures which he finds useful to the education system in general. These suggestions concern laws, the teaching personnel and society as a whole. As far as laws are concerned, Iosifescu considers they must be changed so as to encourage and favour partnerships. Teaching personnel should be trained in communication and cooperation strategies as these two are the main coordinates of educational partnerships. Society, in turn, needs to change in terms of increasing the level of attention and care towards education and its needs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Objectives and hypotheses

This study involves a questionnaire based survey carried out in the town of Deva, on 120 persons, non-institutionalized, with ages between 25 and 45 years. The questionnaires have been applied at the respondents' homes (the "face-to-face" method).

Afterwards, the questionnaire has been also applied to two control samples, one from an urban area (50 de persons, non-institutionalized, with ages between 25 and 45, domiciled in the town of Hunedoara; the subjects have been selected based on the data provided by the Town council of Hunedoara), and another from a rural area (50 de persons, non-institutionalized, with ages between 25 and 45, domiciled in Ribiţa, a township situated in the north part of the Hunedoara County, in the Hollow of Brad, in the Land of Zarand; the subjects have been selected based on the data provided by the Township council of Ribiţa).

Objectives of the research

- Assessment of the relation between citizens and public institutions;

- Assessment of the intensity of the feeling of community belonging;

- Assessment of the view on the educational system within the respondents' hometown;

- Assessment of any real collaboration between schools and the community they operate in.

Hypotheses of the research

Following a thorough and methodical consideration on the meaning of my scientific research activity, I have come up with the following hypothesis on the subject:

1. "Schools play an essential part in the development of the youth." – key idea shared by the vast majority of the population.
2. There is no actual cooperation between communities and the schools within.
3. The living habitat has no influence on people's opinions regarding education.

2. Procedures of the research

Methodological considerations with regard to the sampling

a) The population investigated and its size

The sample subjected to the survey involved persons within the population targeted for research – the inhabitants of the town of Deva.

b) Deciding the size of the sample. Reasons

After having made a list of addresses of the multi-home buildings and single-home buildings based on the data provided by the Town council of Deva, I have proceeded with a proportionally layered sampling, based on the variables *living habitat and gender* thus obtaining my sample by selecting its components from each layer, in direct proportion with their number within the whole population investigated.

In order to determine the size of the sample for the layered sampling, I have considered both the level of exactness of the estimation (accepted error), as well as the trust scale. I have thus agreed upon an accepted error of ±5%, at the trust scale of 95%, which, according to the table of *z* distribution, is of 1.96. Finally, I have set the size of the sample to 120 units

c) Framework of the sampling

In this research, the observation unit is represented by the person from which the primary data are collected therefore any person, male or female, living in Deva, between the ages of 25 and 45 years.

Questionnaires were applied in May 2015

d) Selecting the control samples

The control samples have been formed based on the living habitat.

The first control sample has been selected from the urban environment – the town of Hunedoara – and the second control sample has been selected from the rural environment – the township of Ribița; the criterion used in selecting the subjects was their permanent domicile within their localities.

e) Designing the questionnaire

Designing the questionnaire – the research tool that we have employed in gathering the data related to the population of Deva was a process that started having as a stepping stone the hypotheses of the research. Based on their intent, the questions of the questionnaire have been designed bearing in mind that any questionnaire is functional and viable only if it is connected closely with the hypotheses the validity of which they are testing. Chelcea (2001, p.178) states: "besides testing the hypothesis, there is no other value to a questionnaire".

Upon designing the questionnaire employed, strong emphasis has been given to using a language register that all respondents can understand.

The questionnaire has 10 questions, mostly opinion questions. One of the questions is a layering one aimed to provide us with a hierarchy useful in our research.

Results Analysis and Interpretation

1. On a scale from 1 to 12, where 12 stands for "maximum", how would you rate your trust towards the following public institutions:

a. Church - 12
b. Army - 11
c. EU - 4
d. Mass-media - 10
e. Police - 8
f. Legal System - 9
g. Local Town hall - 7
h. Trade Unions - 3
i. President of the country - 5

j.   Parliament -2

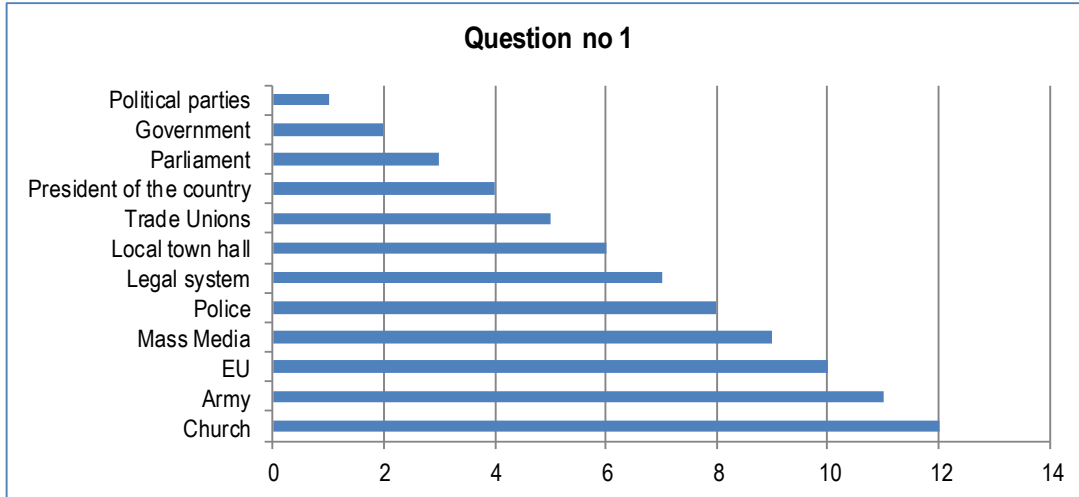k.   Government - 6

l.   Political parties - 1

Fig. 1 Graphic representation of people's trust in the main institutions
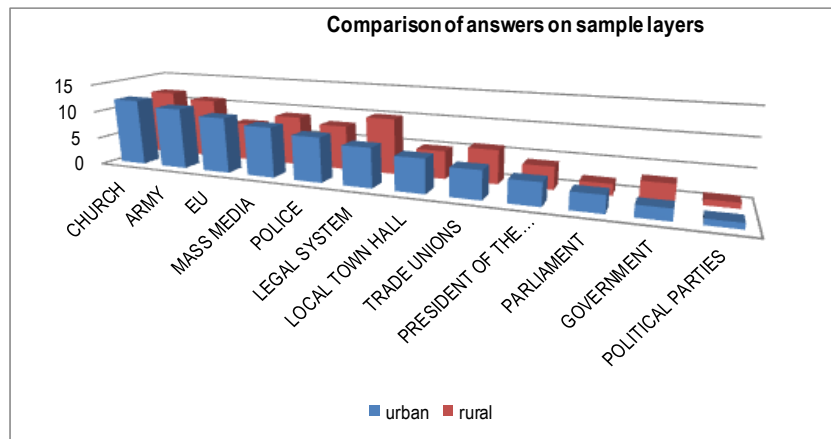

Fig. 2 Graphic representation of the comparison of answers on sample layers with regard to the main institutions

This question aims to investigate the sampled people's trust in institutions. A 1 to 12 score scale aims to provide us with a hierarchy of the institutions based on how much/little people trust them. A 12 point score is for the highest level of confidence people vest the institutions with.

Starting from the above mentioned considerations, the respondents have given the highest score to churches (12 points); next, was the Army (11 points), followed by Mass-media (10 points). The legal system and the Police are in the first half of the confidence in institutions axis. Local town halls are next to the middle of the chart (7 points).

The political parties come last (1 point). Also at the end of the chart we have the Parliament (2 points), followed closely by the Trade unions (3 points), EU (4 points), the President of the country (5 points), and towards the middle of the chart we have the Government (6 points).

Comparing the answers of the people living in an urban environment versus those living in a rural environment (fig. 2), we can notice a shift in their answers with regard to Mass-media, namely that people living in an urban environment award more points to Mass-media compared to those people living in rural areas. The same shift can be notice with regard to the Town hall / Village hall as well: people living in urban areas are less trusty towards this institution compared to their counterparts living in rural areas. The same goes for the Parliament.

2. What role do you think the Church plays in your community?

a. A major role of education and social cohesion – 60%
b. A role of economic and psychological support for the church-goers – 25%
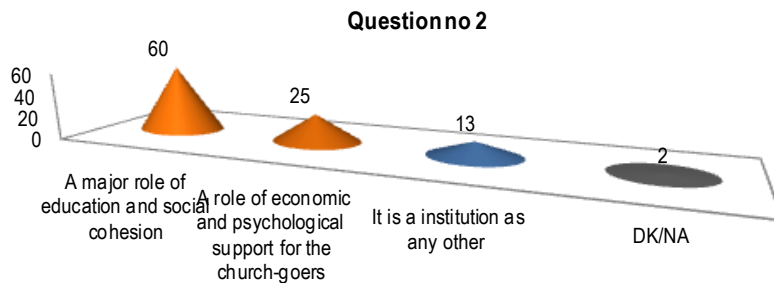c. It is an institution as any other – 13%
d. DK/NA – 2%

Fig. 3 Graphic representation of opinions related to how the Church is perceived on a social level

■ urban ■ rural

60 62 25 23 13 13 2 2

A major role of education and social cohesion

A role of economic and psychological support for the church-goers
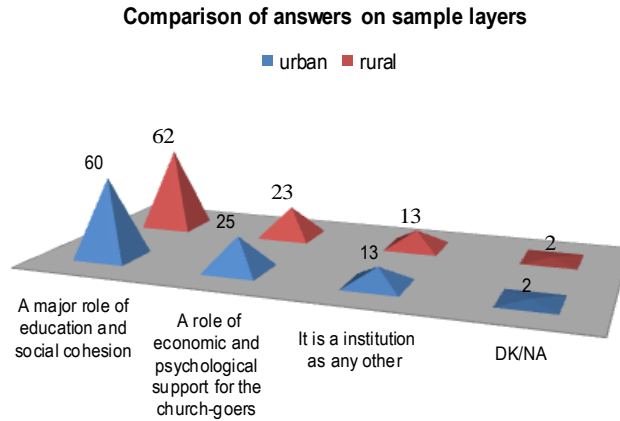
It is a institution as any other

DK/NA

Fig. 4 Graphic representation of the opinions related to how the Church is perceived on a social level from a comparative sample layers perspective of people's answers

The participation of the Church in the day-to-day life of the community, the way this participation is perceived by people is the focus of this question. 60% of the respondents think that the Church has an active presence in their community and that "it plays an important role of education and social cohesion". Vesting the Church with such attributes, roles and expectations underlines a rural type of mentality of the sampled population.

25% of the respondents think that the Church has "a role of economic and psychological support towards the church-goers". These people expect major and exhaustive help from the Church in terms of both psychological and material aid. We think the actual support is more of a psychological one, and that, unfortunately, the material aid is of smaller extent.

There are people who think of the Church, in terms of its participation to the community social life, as of "any other institution" - 13%. These people do not see this institution as one with special, major attributions within the community but as one with obviously its own features, duties, social purpose but with no superior powers or roles – not above all other institutions.

The opinions of people living in urban areas versus people living in rural areas with regard to the participation of the Church in the life of communities du not differ much. We can see (fig. 4) only a small shift, namely that a percentage of 62% of the rural respondents think that the Church fulfils its role of "education and social cohesion" within the community, a mere 2% more than their counterparts from urban areas. This 2% shift goes the same for the next answer but reversed, namely that people from urban areas support less the idea that the Church has a role of "education and social cohesion" within the community. For all the other answers, the percentage remains the same for both rural and urban areas.

3.   What role do you think schools/education play in a person's life?

a.   Essential – Without education we are nothing – 63%

b.   Necessary / Education is a must – Necessary at least the minimum mandatory education –10%

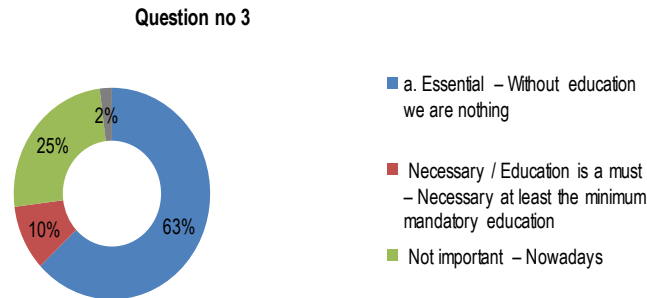c.   Not important – Nowadays, Schools cannot help people anymore – 25%

d.   DK/NA – 2%

Question no 3

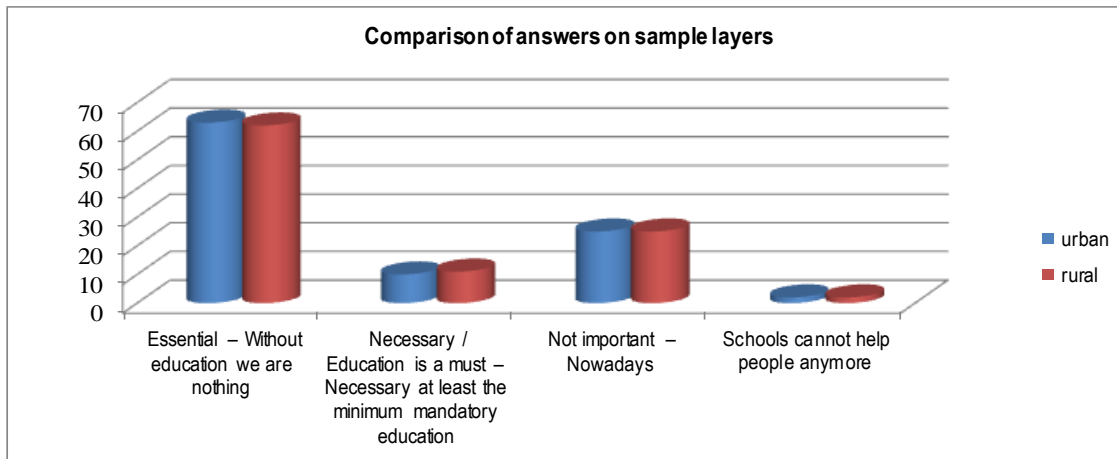Fig. 5 Grapic representations of people's opinions regarding the role schools play in their lives

Fig. 6 Graphic representation comparing the answers on sample layers with regard to the role of schools (education) in our lives

This question focuses on a key aspect – the role of schools/education in our lives. 63% respondents think that schools and education play an essential role in anyone's life "Without education we are nothing" – which makes more than half of respondents agree that education is essential to each individual. Education, along with the ways it is delivered, has a major influence on how people choose their paths in life. Churches and schools – core values in urban environments –

interact naturally as the percentages they score when people are asked how important they consider these two institutions show it.

It is important to mention the percentage of people who have lost their confidence in the force of schools and education – worryingly, there are a lot people who share this opinion. These people do not have good opinions on schools or education and they do not give them any credit anymore. 25% of the respondents do not associate success or failure in life with good academic results; these people think schools are not important in life ("Nowadays, schools cannot help people anymore"). So a quarter of the population of Brad thinks that schools and education have a smaller role in people's lives. Our current education system is not associated with success in life. This opinion stands for and generates a certain attitude towards schools/education. Failure in education, not going to classes, abandoning education come as natural consequences of a mentality such as the one mentioned above. And we should not overlook that the age of the respondents varies between 25 and 45 years. These are people who live life to the fullest, have children upon which they bestow their opinions and raise them instilling such worrying and dangerous attitudes towards schools and education.

10% of the subjects share the consider that schools and education play a necessary role in their lives "There is a A need for at least the minimum mandatory education" – in other words, the minimum mandatory education is necessary but also enough for 10% of the respondents. Therefore, schools have a limited role in these people's lives but this role is not a very important one and one they should allocate more time. Adult education, lifelong learning are concepts that these people do not think they are important.

Comparing the answers of people who live in urban areas with the answers of people who live in rural areas, the findings do not show a significant shift in opinions therefore, the living habitat does not generate such differences of opinions (fig. 6).

4. How would you rate the quality of schools/high schools in your town?
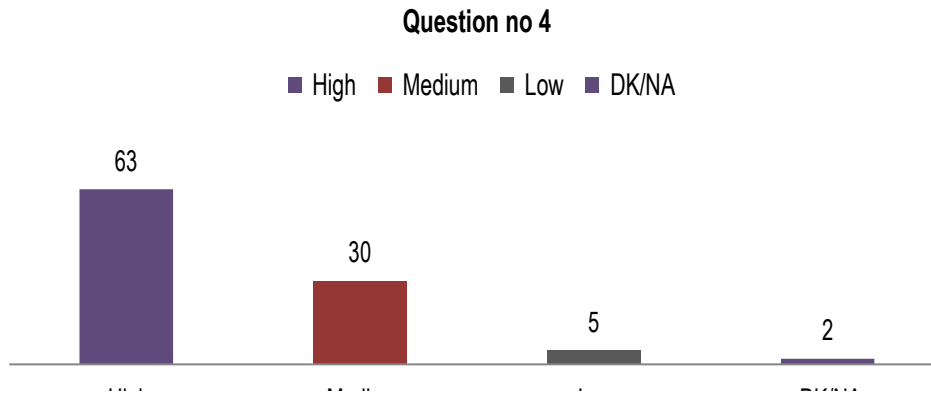
a. High – 63%
b. Medium – 30%
c. Low – 5%
d. DK/NA – 2%

Question no 4

■ High ■ Medium ■ Low ■ DK/NA

63

30

5

2

Fig. 7 Graphic representation of opinions regarding the quality of schools in your town

Comparison of answers on sample layers

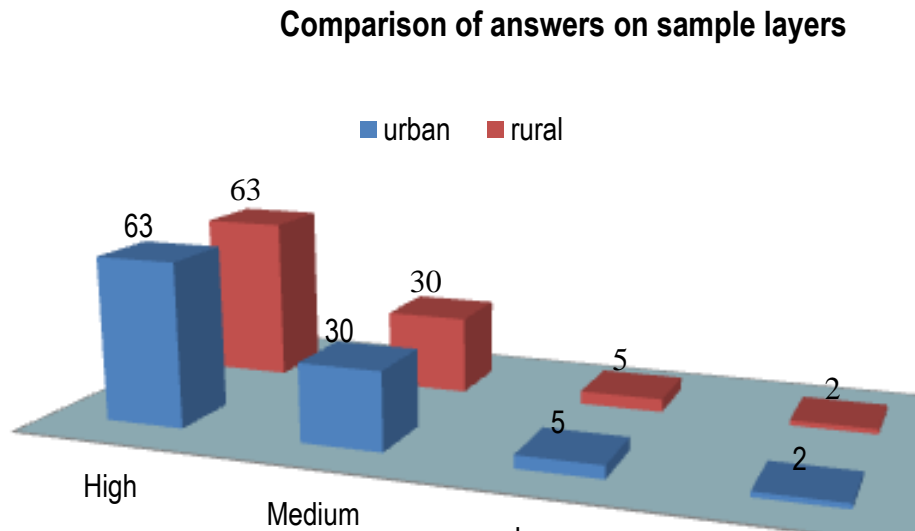■ urban ■ rural

63 63

30 30

5 5

2 2

High

Medium

Fig. 8 Graphic representation of the comparison of answers on sample layers, regarding the quality of schools in your town

It is important to underline that more than half of the respondents (63%) consider that the education and training process in the local schools is one of good quality. A lot of respondents consider the quality of the educational establishment is of a high nature. 30% of the respondents believe though that the quality of these institutions is a "medium" one and 5% think that it is a "low" one.

The positive opinions regarding schools relate perfectly with the percentage of the answer to the previous question where schools are considered as playing an "essential" role in people's lives. The same percentage (63%) is valid for both choices of answers to the two questions together. This makes us think that they were the same people who have chosen those answers too – namely, that the people who think schools play an "essential" role in people's lives also believe that the quality of the local educational establishments is a "high" one.

The same correlations can be made between the other answers as well. Summing the percentages from the two answer options to this question, we can see they overlap with the sum of the other answers given to the previous question. Equally, negative opinions concerning the role of schools and education in people's lives can are associated with the quality of the educational process delivered in the local schools.

Comparing the two layers of the sample group – layers formed based on the criterion of the living environment – generates similar answer which means that the said criterion does not generate differences of opinion in terms of the quality of the manner in which local schools function (fig. 8).

5. Do you think that the current educational system supports students in process of their social integration and in their integration on the job market?

a. To a great extent – 15%
b. To some extent – 60%
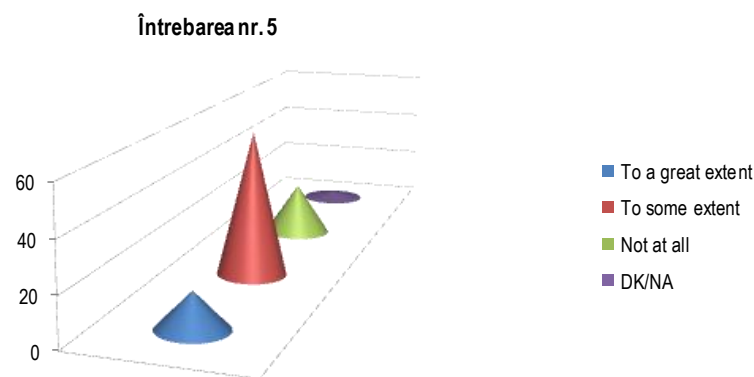c. Not at all – 22%
d. DK/NA– 3%

Întrebarea nr. 5

Fig. 9 Graphic representations of the opinions referring to the support given to students by the educational system in their process of social integration
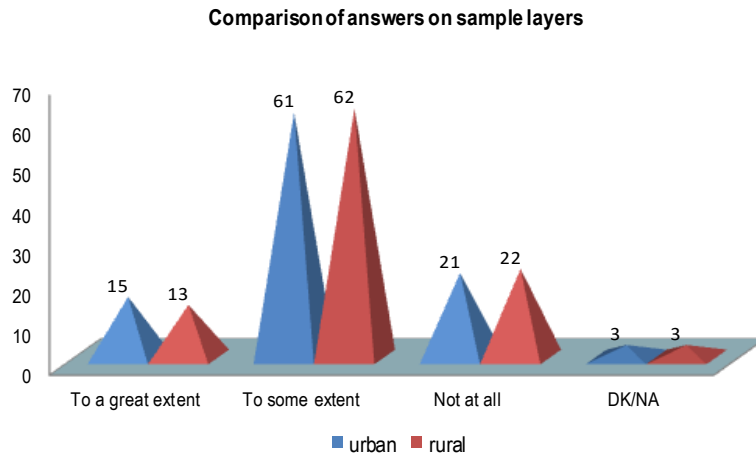
Comparison of answers on sample layers

Fig. 10 Graphic representation of the comparison of answers on sample layers referring to the support the educational system gives to students in their process of social integration

Asked whether the current educational system supports students in the process of their social integration and integration on the job market, 15% of the respondents stated that this happens "to a great extent"; 60% of the respondents say it that happens just "to some extent". It is worth mentioning that there is rather significant percentage of respondents – 22% – who say that the current educational system does not support students "at all" to in their integration in structures of the society as well as on the job market. 22%; therefore, the number of those who notice the gap between schools and the needs of society is quite large. Schools and the educational system should be an integral part of the society, and due to their prospective characteristics, schools should know the society's needs, which, respondents' perspective, does not really happen.

The difference in answers from people living in town versus those living in villages/rural areas is of 1-2 percents so their domicile and the area where it is situated do not generate a difference in opinions (fig. 10).

Those indecisive or who did not wish to answer to this question make up 2%.

6. Would you support your children financially and morally so they can go on a school exchange programme/professional internship abroad?

a. Yes – 72%
b. No – 24%

c. DK/NA– 4%

Question No. 6

Întrebarea nr. 6

DK/NA
4%
NU
24%
DA
72%

Fig. 11 Graphic representation of people's willingness to support their children in going on a school exchange programme or doing a professional internship abroad
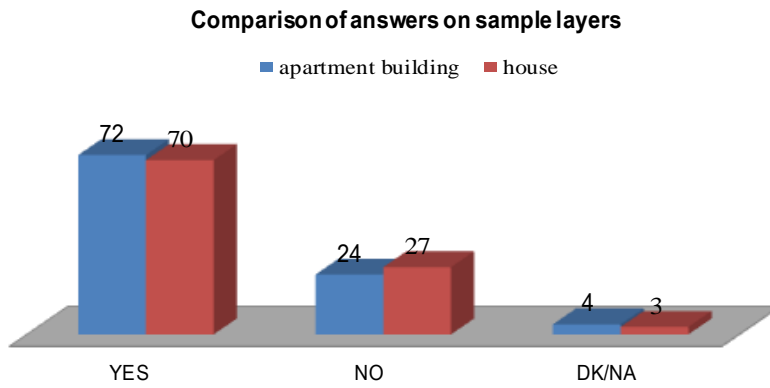
Comparison of answers on sample layers

■ apartment building   ■ house

	YES	NO	DK/NA
apartment building	72	24	4
house	70	27	3

Fig. 12 Graphic representation of the comparison of answers on sample layers related to people's willingness to support their children in going on a school exchange programme or in doing a professional internship abroad

A great majority of respondents – 72% – would like to help their children in going on a school exchange programme or in doing a professional internship abroad. For these parents, their children would benefit greatly from an

educational/professional training programme abroad. The high percentage of people who would sustain both financially and morally their children in embarking on an educational or professional training programme abroad shows the high level of trust the people of Brad give to the idea that investing in one's education and profession will definitely pay off. Also, going on such an educational or professional training programme weighs in more if done abroad.

But there are also people who would not support their children in going abroad on such programmes. The data collected following the questionnaire shows that 24% of the respondents would not support their children's initiative in going abroad to get an education or a professional certificate.

There is no significant difference of opinions between the people living in urban areas and those living in rural areas on this topic. Although the difference is only of 2-3%, we can notice that people from Brad – who are living in an urban area – are more interested in supporting their children in going abroad for their studies or profession.

7. How proud do you feel as a member of your community?

a. Very proud – 40%
b. Quite proud – 36%
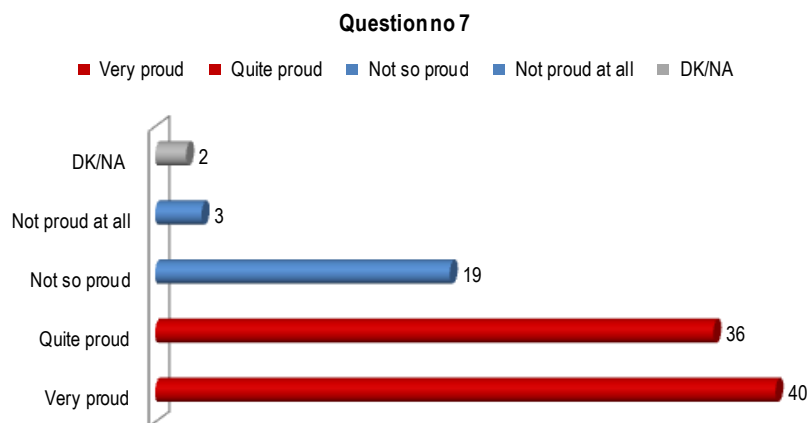c. Not so proud – 19%
d. Not proud at all – 3%
e. DK/NA – 2%

Question no 7

■ Very proud ■ Quite proud ■ Not so proud ■ Not proud at all ■ DK/NA

Category	Value
DK/NA	2
Not proud at all	3
Not so proud	19
Quite proud	36
Very proud	40

Fig. 13 Graphic representation of opinions regarding the feeling of pride of being a part of a community

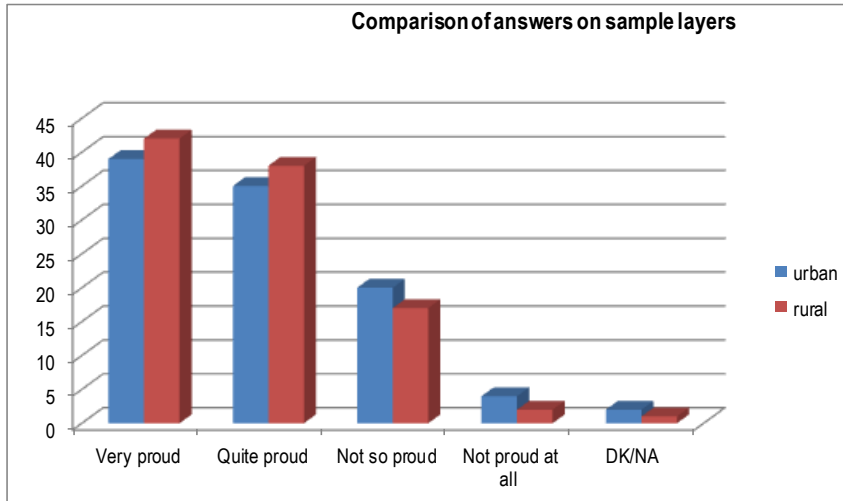**Comparison of answers on sample layers**

Fig. 14 Graphic representation of the comparison between answers on sample layers, related to the pride felt as being part of your community

This item refers to people's feelings and attitudes in reference to them being members of the community. 40% of the respondents say they are "very proud" they are part of the local community where they live and another 36% of the respondents are "quite proud" of the same thing. Another 19% of the respondents say "not so proud" and some 3% are "not proud at all" (fig.13).

People living in rural areas are more proud for being members of their community than their counterparts living in urban areas – the difference between the two sample layers based on the habitat criterion is small though, of only 2 percent.

8. If you had to choose between a job in your home town and a job abroad, which one would you choose?

a. Definitely a job in my home town – 40%
b. It all depends on the salary and work conditions – 38%
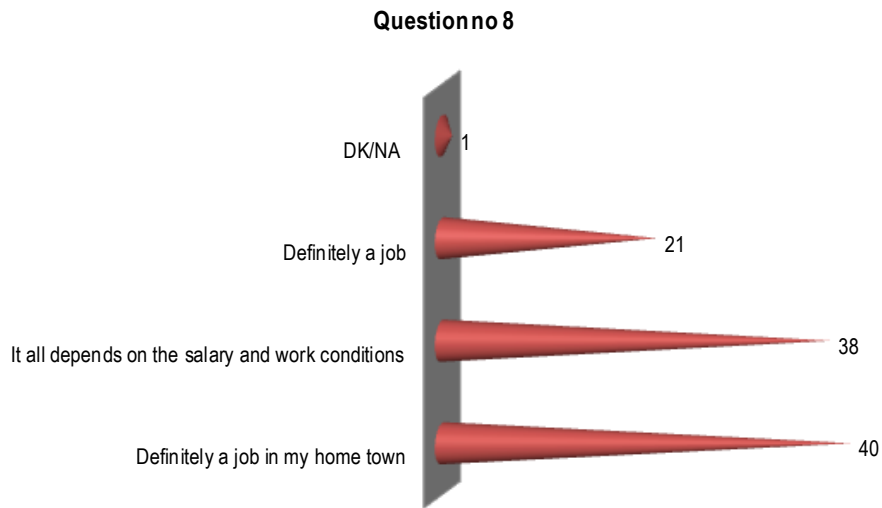c. Definitely a job abroad – 21%
d. DK/NA – 1%

Question no 8

- DK/NA — 1
- Definitely a job — 21
- It all depends on the salary and work conditions — 38
- Definitely a job in my home town — 40

Fig. 15 Graphic representation of the answers referring to the location of a desired job

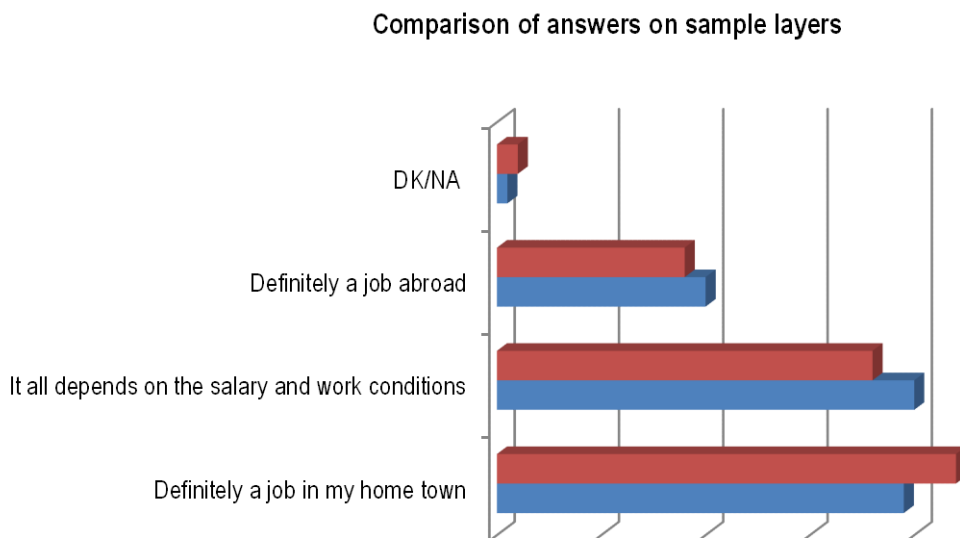**Comparison of answers on sample layers**

- DK/NA
- Definitely a job abroad
- It all depends on the salary and work conditions
- Definitely a job in my home town

Fig. 16 Graphic representation of the comparison between answers on sample layers referring to the location of the desired job

Given the choice – whether to go for a job in their hometown or for one abroad – a lot of respondents, 40%, would choose a job in their hometown. For these people it is of great importance to have a job close to their family – this provides them with a sense of security and control.

Some 38% of the respondents are more cautious in taking a decision regarding the location of their job and they would not take such a decision without weighing in all the pros and cons as the money/salary aspect is an important criterion for them besides having a job in their hometown.

21% of the respondents would definitely opt for a job abroad as for them what is important is working abroad. They want something different, to live in a new place, to experience a different way of life.

People living in rural areas are more conservative and more attached to their hometown (fig.16). By comparison, people living in urban areas are less attached to their country, to their hometown, in general. As the difference between the two sub-sample groups is not significant, we can say that in this case the living habitat can be a factor which may generate different opinions and mentalities.

9. In general and at this moment, do you think that there is a actual collaboration between schools and communities?
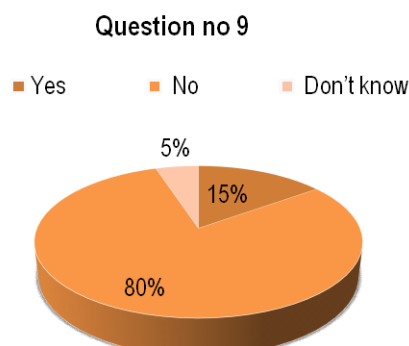a. Yes – 15%
b. No – 80%
c. Don't know- 5%

Question no 9

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Don't know

5%

15%

80%

Fig. 17 Graphic representation of the answers referring to whether or not there is a actual communication between schools and communities
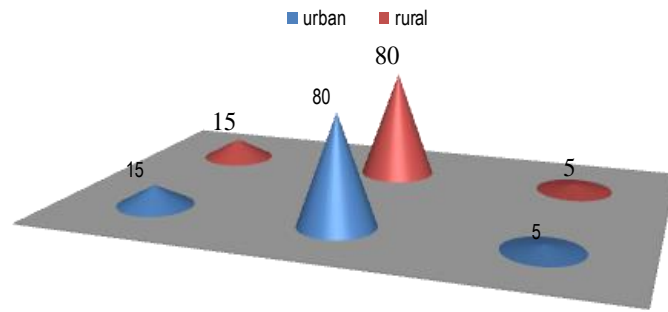
■ urban   ■ rural

 Fig. 18 Graphic representation of the comparison between the answers on sample layers on whether or not there is a actual collaboration between schools and communities

80% of the answers to this question are negative. Only 15% of the respondents think that schools and communities cooperate. The comparative analysis of the answers of people living in urban areas and those from rural areas shows there is no difference of opinions generated by the respondents' habitat.

10. Has the relation between schools and communities improved, remained the same or got worse?
a. Has improved – 10%
b. Has got worse – 55%
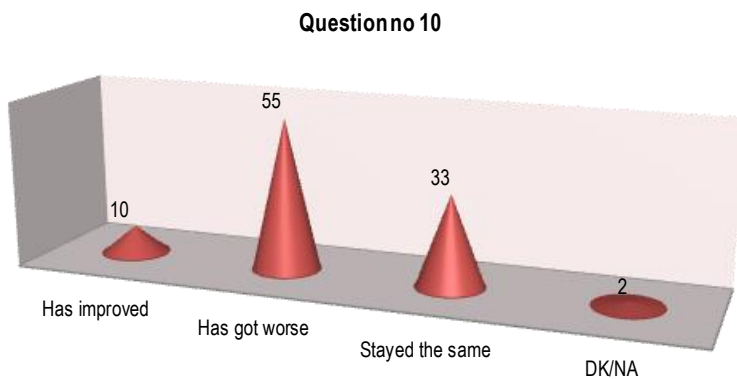c. Stayed the same – 33%
d. DK/NA – 2%

Question no 10

Fig.19 Graphic representation related to the evolution of the relations between schools and communities

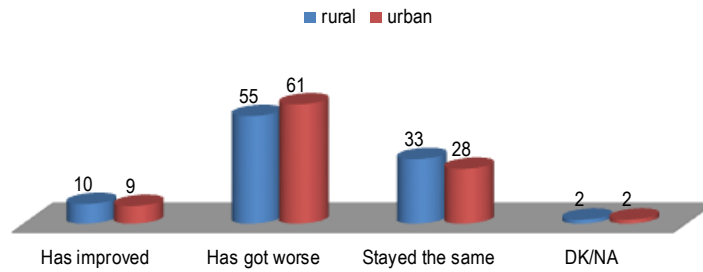**Comparison of answers on sample layers**

■ rural ■ urban

Fig. 20 Graphic representation of the comparison of the answers on sample layers, referring to he evolution of the relations between schools and communities

Instructed to consider the last 20 years, respondents were asked to assess the evolution of the relations between schools and communities. A little more than half (55%) of the respondents believe that this cooperation "has got worse", 33% say "it has remained the same", and 10% believe that "it has improved"

The comparative analysis shows some differences between the way the urban population and the rural population think, namely that the latter are more demanding, stating that cooperation schools and communities "has got worse".

Conclusions

Local communities should be regarded as a complex system constantly transforming itself; they are like living organisms that live among people who, voluntarily or involuntarily, shape the future of their communities.

Schools are an essential component of the local communities and their role/purpose is to shape and train the young generation. The first hypothesis of this research survey focuses on the key idea according to each "schools contribute in a decisive manner to the shaping of the youth, an idea to which the communities adhere to". The questionnaire data analysis and interpretation underlines that a major segment of the population (63%) thinks that schools are essential to individuals, and that education is vital. The same way goes for the role of the Church within the community. Basically, schools and churches – key institutions for people living in rural areas – are also important for people living in urban areas.

A major aspect of this research survey showed that a lot of people have lost confidence in schools and that they do not give much credit to schools. 25% of the respondents think that education does not provide people with a certain professional path and that success or failure in life does not depend on education. Behaviours based on this type of

mentality may be very dangerous as the respondents who support this type of attitude are between the ages of 25 to 45 therefore likely to instil their own children with an indifferent attitude towards school and education.

Thus, even if the majority of the population considers school have a positive impact on their lives, the concerning opinions of people who do not value schools and give them second or third degree importance in their lives and communities it is not to be overlooked .

In theory, the relation between schools and communities works great. In practice, however, even though the schools within their communities are viewed as positive aspects of their lives and the level of training provided to students is seen as a "high" quality one, the cooperation between schools and community is rather poor. In fact, it is widely believed that this relation has been on a descending path in the recent years. This means that people do not notice an active presence of this partnership in their lives which reveals a series of serious consequences.

As far the habitat is concerned (urban versus rural), it does not seem to influence greatly the way of seeing things, as the differences in answers are not significant.

Therefore, in our opinion, people would benefit greatly, – socially and attitude-wise, from the schools' active participation within communities.

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