

School-Community Partnership - an effective tool, useful for environmental community development of Romanian countryside

Băneş A. *, Romanian Academy – Timisoara Branch, 24 Bv. Mihai Viteazu, Timisoara, 300223, Romania
Orboi M.D., Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael the 1th" from Timisoara, 119 Calea Aradului, Timisoara, 300645, Romania
Popescu C., Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael the 1th" from Timisoara, 119 Calea Aradului, Timisoara, 300645, Romania
Iancu T., Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael the 1th" from Timisoara, 119 Calea Aradului, Timisoara, 300645, Romania

Suggested Citation:

Băneş, A., Orboi M.D., Popescu, C., & Iancu, T., (2015). School-Community Partnership - an effective tool, useful for environmental community development of Romanian countryside. *International Journal of Learning and Teaching*. 7(2), 56-61.

Received 14 February, 2015; revised 22 March, 2015; accepted 23 May, 2015.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Hafize Keser, Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey
©2015 SciencePark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

Abstract

This paper presents the theoretical and practical implications of school - community partnership in community development of Romanian rural environment by conducting a content analysis of the addressed topic. In most Western countries, the trend of opening the school to the community is obvious. Because the resources for education are falling, the partnership can be an effective tool for better management of local resources, a way of attracting new resources for school, and harnessing the school resource in benefit of the community. Also, to ensure good quality education is necessary for every school to achieve a genuine partnership with its community. Under this partnership it is natural to find their place all social categories and all interested institutions in the development of education: human resources of the education system, students enrolled in schools, students families, government institutions and NGOs. In rural areas, the school is the most powerful institution, vital for community development. The school must be open to the needs of the rural community to identify those areas where it can develop community partnerships: alternative leisure activities for children and youth, activities of road education, health, helping the elderly and poor families, involvement in humanitarian campaigns, etc. The role of the school, parents and local authorities is very great, and the development of an active partnership between these participants in Romanian rural areas would reduce school dropout and integrate children with special educational needs. Schools that have developed genuine partnerships within the local school shows that the benefits are significant.

Keywords: school-community partnership, dropout, integration, community development

1. Introduction

Currently, we are witnessing an extension of a true ideas and action stream, centered on the community and its development. Also we are witnessing to the development of a true social stream that is centered on community and its development. Addressing the issues of school and community discovers its legitimacy in the current trends in educational field spreading from school organization to other educational agents'.

Organizațiile școlare sunt astfel, supuse presiunii diverselor tendințe manifestate în societate.

The school is one of the central institutions of the community, has specific roles, but cannot work and develop without taking into account the specific community in which it operates. The school is composed, in turn, from many educational factors: family, government and non-governmental organizations, businesses, church, cultural institutions, health institutions etc. which, in turn, offer educational explicit and / or implicit. The result is that school organizations are under various pressure tendencies in society.

The school is seen as playing a vital role in contemporary society. The main role is to educate, followed by to provide social services. Through education, society can stand, communicating to the new generations the knowledge accumulated over centuries. Also it is realizing the development of young people potential, helping them to know and accept one other, to internalize the ideals in their identity, to be responsible and involved in society development.

The school must also support new generations to grips with a reality that is in constant change. Young people should be prepared for a future that can offer anything that cannot be provided, and they, by their ability to adapt, creativity and innovation can shape it as they wish. High expectations and pressure are coming from other social subsystems.

The school is on the one hand, an institution that provides social service, being directly influenced by what happens in the social environment, transmits knowledge, develops skills, norms, recognized and accepted socially values. On the other hand, the school has an internal logic of development, reproducing its own norms and values, has its own system of organization. Identification of common values transmitted by school and community agents, development of common points in order to increase the education of community stakeholders (students, parents, various social etc.) is essential today (Staiculescu, 2012).

In the learning process, students should develop their own skills and find rewarding in intellectual or practical educational approach. The school students need to develop their personal and social autonomy that would support the effective integration in the community. The global community is a social entity, is a moral reference to the individual promoting core values and reference to the individual.

In Romania, the community is perceived as a geographical notion with a delimited physical space. Community development, a "fashion" term, is spoken throughout much as a solution to solving local problem and human relations based on mutual support. In most cases this is at the start of crystallization. Communities in Romania must make the effort to become a true community, to discover common areas where people must work together to identify what are the specific needs and the things they value most (Staiculescu, 2012).

The idea of partnership between the school and the local community should be based on the principle of social services complementarity offered by the various organizations active in this community. The success of the partnership school - local community is based on permanent, constant bond between agencies and school representatives. Thus, it realizes a balance between change and continuity, between specific and global, between individual fulfillment and social demands.

2. The implications of the partnership between the school and local community

The connection school - community is remarkable in "delicate" problems such as school dropout, juvenile deviance and integration of children with special educational needs. In terms of cultural and welfare, this relationship may result in the initiation of events in which students can prove what they can do for the community: exhibitions, workshops, involvement in community actions (e.g. action for greening parks), involvement in humanitarian campaigns, volunteering etc. Another objective is to create the opportunity of involving community members in student activities: organizing and sponsoring events, participation in campaigns to aid and support pupils with school performance but have limited material possibilities within the family.

Relationship school - community is the perspective from which the school education can help to reduce deviance, only if the school opens to pupils and community issues.

Poor educational and vocational preparation creates prerequisites for high unemployment and precarious financial situation. Those who drop out will not have moral and civic culture necessary for parenthood and community citizen.

Among the factors influencing the relationship school - local community we can include:

- The social environment of community (rural, urban, community size, geographic area, etc.);
- The degree of culture, education level of the population who lives his life in the community;
- Economic and technological development of the local community;
- Dominant professions in the community may dictate a certain orientation of the school to prepare children in professions required by the community and active traders;
- Social representations, attitudes on education of children, families' aspirations on children's education;
- Perception of the school mission in the community;
- The demographic composition of the local community.
- In school - community partnership, the involvement can be [6]:
- Informal - sports and cultural events, excursions, magazines, concerts, contests, volunteer;
- Formal - commissions, councils, projects, information centers;
- Operational - development of concrete short term projects.

The social actors from the community who may be involved in developing partnerships with the school are: parents, local authorities, NGOs, economic agents, cultural and sports associations, the media etc.

In rural communities schools experience shows that:

- Pupils' parents are difficult to approach to support adapting the curriculum to the local context;
- Working with businesses that can provide resources for learning processes, is rather modest;
- Partnership between the school and local authorities in order to ensure school curricula adapted to reality is quite poor;
- Cooperation between schools and NGOs is restricted in rural areas.

Thus, each school should develop specific strategies to attract partners who can support in building and implementing a quality curriculum, adapted to the local context and change requirements, conditions for an effective partnership between school and community.

Adapt rural schools curriculum to the local context, in accordance with the requirements of quality education:

- must be viewed from the holistic approach and integrated curriculum;
- undertake the activities related to the core curriculum, elective curricula, extracurricular activities;
- it is more effective in a dynamic schools, open to change;
- starts from the strategies found in the school and its educational offer;
- requires reducing the barriers that generate resistance to change;
- involves partnerships and work in groups and teams;
- relies on innovation and creativity.

The strategy of each rural school in adapting its curriculum to the local context and reality should be reflected in:

- School development plan and projects / programs / plans arising from it;
- Curricular and extracurricular school offer;
- Set of values, norms, rules, actions, behaviors that define school culture and organizational behavior.

Adapt school curriculum to the local context implies cooperation between members of the school community and school and community partnerships that can actually be achieved in the context of working groups and mixed teams.

Schools in rural areas to ensure their partners are able to offer tuition support should focus on:

- Educating parents by:
 - Informing parents about school offer;
 - Publication and dissemination of information materials for parents;
 - Designing curricular/ extracurricular activities in collaboration with parents;
 - Organizing activities that can facilitate communication with parents;
 - Increase initiative in identifying and parents councils of local resources necessary to attract learning;
 - Organizing educational activities for the benefit of parents.
- Attracting businesses by:
 - Information on the situation of businesses and school projects;
 - Finding businesses interested in improving school offer;
 - Dialogue with operators who can provide resources for learning;
 - Encouraging communication between members of the school community and businesses.
- Convincing local authorities:
 - Participation of local community representatives in meetings of teachers, meetings with parents of school activities;

- Organizing meetings of the City Council, with the participation of teachers, pupils, parents;
 - Design and implementation of extracurricular activities based on partnership between the school and local authorities;
 - Develop a joint program on the education needs of the community.
- NGOs motivation - identifying and attracting non-governmental organizations that are interested in developing education and have experience in: working with members of the school community, preparing students in different areas, identifying resources for learning, attracting partners for education.

Local authorities can be involved in education and welfare by providing investment funds for repairs or needy families, for schools, providing material resources for teaching activities, cooperation in order to implement projects to reduce the risk of school failure. Facilitation of extra financial resources for organizing learning activities can be achieved through: organizing competitions, exhibitions, fairs, educational and extracurricular activities designed to promote the acquisition of knowledge and the development of specific skills (painting, modeling, sculpture, etc.), allocation of spaces to be used by school etc.

The partnership between schools and businesses is part of a balance between supply and demand of education. Sources of external financing may include: rental of premises for the conduct of educational or commercial activities, sale of products made by students and / or teachers during exhibitions or fairs, sponsorship for various projects, supporting expenditure on schooling students from rural areas with great intellectual abilities, but with very limited financial possibilities.

School - community partnership brings a number of advantages to social actors involved in this process, such as:

- Family and community involvement in the educational objectives diversification of the school;
- Attracting resources and support needed to perform school-type programs nonformal and informal;
- Develop family and community educational skills to support the education of students;
- Informing students on the activities and programs of educational, cultural, social, health community [6].

School - community partnership is an effective method to optimize school activities, specific to the community which belongs. Projects carried out in partnership must be considered important by all social actors involved, and to pursue educational goals agreed by all partners involved.

3. Conclusions

The school today has more than ever need to respond, through a wide opening to community environment and the need for change, by creating and developing cross-links, by resorting to social dialogue based on the principle of co-responsibility.

Currently, school - community partnership is a priority of the education system, both globally and nationally. Today the school is an educational center, not just where are assimilated different knowledge, a center that meets the real needs of the community

The yield of education depends not only on the partnership school - family, but also the way in which is realizing the cooperation between them and the local community. This is necessary for better cooperation to provide support to the school in the development of quality education

for all, developing a sense of responsibility and belonging to a community, and the school has valences to gather around her children and adults from the community.

The success of the partnership school - local community is based on permanent bond between agencies and school representatives.

Development of community where is a school influence decisive the latter. Practices such as: low birth rate, migration of young labor force, an aging population, changing the structure of occupations etc. affects school life, especially the period of compulsory schooling. On the other hand, underdeveloped infrastructure, difficult access to schools, shortage of education facilities, lack of accommodation places for children whose families live far away from school, lack of sanitation etc., affects the daily life of the school. In a community, interdependence of social issues leads to functionality.

Partnership can be a solution to the allocation and use of local resources at Community level for attracting additional external resources and solving community problems.

Partnership produces beneficial effects both for school, children, families, and community. Schools that have more access to community resources (human, material, informational, technological) develop diverse and focused on community needs manifestations of school - community partnership.

References

- Agabrian, M. (2005). Milea, V, Parteneriate scoala - familie - comunitate, 2005, *Institutul European, Iasi*.
- Agabrian, M. (2006). Scoala, familia, comunitatea, 2006, *Institutul European, Iasi*.
- Palaghia C., (2006). Scoala intre educatie si devianta sociala, *Revista de cercetare si interventie sociala*, 12, Editura Lumen, Iasi, 81-89
- Palaghia Carmen, Miftode V., (2012). Implicatii ale parteneriatului dintre scoala si comunitate in formarea responsabilitatii la elevi, 2012, *Revista de Economie sociala*, vol. II, nr. 3, pp 43-66.
- Popescu M. (2000). Implicarea comunitatii in procesul de educație, 2000, *Centrul Educația 2000+, București, Corint*.
- Paun E. (coord.). Ezechil Liliana (coord.). Metode si tehnici de coaching folosite pe perioada practicii pedagogice, 2013, *Editura Matrix Rom, București*.
- Staiculescu, C. (2012). *scoala și comunitatea locala: parteneriat pentru educație*. Editura ASE.
- Țircă A., Radulescu E., Școala și comunitatea, 2002, *Centrul Educația 2000+, București, Humanitas Educațional*.