

## PARTICULARITIES OF PARTNERSHIP FOR EARLY EDUCATION

**Ramona Elena NICULESCU (GIURCA)<sup>1</sup>**

**ABSTRACT:** *WITHIN THE CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES OF THE EDUCATIONAL PHENOMENON IT IS INCREASINGLY NECESSARY TO INVOLVE THE TEACHERS IN COOPERATION WITH PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND WITH OTHER SOCIAL FACTORS INTERESTED IN EDUCATION.*

*ACTIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS WITH OTHER EDUCATIONAL FACTORS - FAMILY, LOCAL COMMUNITY, MEDIA, CHURCH, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - MUST LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIABLE PARTNERSHIPS THAT WILL ALLOW A POSITIVE APPROACH TO THE DIVERSE ISSUES OF YOUNG LEARNERS. THE SCHOOL HAS TO FIND THE OPTIMAL FORMS BY WHICH THOSE INVOLVED IN THIS EDUCATION PROCESS CAN MANAGE HUMAN RESOURCES, HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY, AND CAN ADAPT QUICKLY TO CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN THE CURRENT SOCIETY. HOWEVER, THE IMPORTANT ROLE, AT LEAST NOW, IS THE SCHOOL, THE TEACHERS, THE EDUCATOR WHO, THROUGH THE ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED, CAN DEVELOP THE NORMS AND THE SOCIO-MORAL NORMS AND BEHAVIOR, THE STUDENTS CAN DEVELOP MORAL AND CIVIC SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS IN THE CURRENT EUROPEAN CONTEXT.*

**KEY WORDS:** *EDUCATION, PARTNERSHIP, EDUCATOR, KINDERGARTEN, COMMUNITY, FAMILY, CHURCH.*

### **Introduction**

The Romanian school must take on a new perspective on its social role and strategies to ensure its development. From this perspective, involvement in school life must become a key strategic direction in the management of educational institutions. Education requires the individual's preparation for both present and future, in relation to the requirements of society, with the interests and ideals of those involved<sup>2</sup>.

Taking into account the new educational framework in which the pupil, the direct beneficiary of education, is at the center of the processes in the school, the education provider must ensure and measure the progress of the pupil, the added value, the quality, and the community as an indirect beneficiary, to be involved in producing, generating quality in school according to needs and interests<sup>3</sup>.

The school, as an organization, in order to achieve its objectives, needs an adequate managerial system defined by specific functions: design, decision, organization, coordination, evaluation, etc. School management must ensure the functioning and development of the school as an open system, in a permanent relationship with its external environment, with the community in which it operates and not only. In order to achieve its objectives, the school has to attract, allocate and use a diverse range of resources: material, financial, human, informational and time.

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<sup>1</sup> Primary school teacher – Horezu, Vâlcea county - [niculescu.ramona@yahoo.com](mailto:niculescu.ramona@yahoo.com)

<sup>2</sup> Ioan Jinga, Elena Istrate, *Pedagogy Manual*, ALL Educational Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001

<sup>3</sup> Adina Baran Pescaru, *Partnership in Education: School - Family – Community*, Aramis Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004.

The school is one of the central institutions of the community, it has specific roles but can not function and can not develop without taking into account the specificity of the community in which it operates.

The community is: the depository of a common good, is a moral reference element for the individual, promotes basic values (through its laws and traditions) and reference for the individual.

The community is a global social entity where the ties between members are very tight, and the feeling of being very strong and rooted in deep traditions.

In order to strengthen a stable and coherent set of values that support school in children's formation of favorable conduct, a healthy mental, emotional, physical and socio-moral lifestyle, it is important to look at the involvement of the family and the community through a partnership<sup>4</sup>.

### **Educational partnership**

The partnership should bring together the efforts of all those interested in developing a quality education for all pupils in the education system. In order to achieve an educational partnership based on the assumption of democratic values, it is necessary for the Romanian society to achieve a change of values, attitudes and behaviors in all the social factors involved in the realization of education: didactic staff, parents, pupils, representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions . The experience in the field of educational partnership emphasizes the idea that the school should develop constant relations of collaboration with social categories and organizations that are directly interested in achieving a good quality education<sup>5</sup>:

- human resources in education;
- students;
- students' parents;
- central or local governmental institutions;
- non-governmental organizations;
- representatives of the denominations;
- representatives of the economic and financial sector;
- representatives of trade unions;
- central and local authorities.

In order to achieve an effective educational partnership, all those involved should agree with fundamental values such as: equal opportunities in education, civic spirit and community attachment, mutual communication and respect, cooperation and collaboration, discipline and responsibility, balance between general and specific exigencies<sup>6</sup>.

Active cooperation between schools and teachers with other educational factors - family, local community, media, church, non-governmental organizations - must lead to the development of viable partnerships that will allow a positive approach to the diverse issues of young learners. The school has to find the optimal forms by which those involved in this education process can manage human resources, have the knowledge of psychology and pedagogy, and can adapt quickly to change management in the current society. However, the important role, at least now, is the school, the teachers, the teacher who,

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<sup>4</sup> Akhter Nilufa Khanom, *Conceptual Issues in Defining Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)*, Asian Business Research Conference, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Mircea Agabrian, *Family Partners - School - Community Partnerships*, European Institute Publishing House, Iași, 2005

<sup>6</sup> Mircea Agabrian , *Op. Cit.* p. 64

through their activities, can develop sociomoral norms and behaviors, can develop moral and civic skills and behaviors in the current European context.

In this sense, the school can participate and interact with the families of the students, it can initiate useful activities in school or outside it, it supports the actors involved to get to know themselves and to understand the moral-civic norms, can improve the quality of life and the performance of the pupils, can form independent and critical thinking skills, etc. The family is the key element in socializing the child with other children in the classroom being consulted on educational (extracurricular) activities and on the optional activities that children want to do<sup>7</sup>.

#### **School partnership - community**

The idea of partnership between school and community should be based on the principle of complementarity of social services offered by various organizations working in the community. The success of the school partnership - local community is based on the permanent, constant link between community agents and school representatives.

A balance between change and continuity, between specific and global, between individual fulfillment and social exigencies is achieved. The analysis of the legislation in force indicates the directions of action of the cooperation between the central, county and local authorities with attributions in the field of education as follows<sup>8</sup>:

in the implementation of the children's participation in pre-school education and compulsory education.

developing educational programs for young parents.

organizing training courses for children who can not meet the requirements of the national curriculum and those who have dropped out of school in order to re-integrate them.

Organize and develop adequate opportunities for leisure and rest.

To initiate or initiate the necessary steps to prevent school dropout for economic reasons.

In the community, the police are a reference institution for its inhabitants.

Police roles in education can be divided into two main categories:

preventive

intervention in special situations.

The school, through its representatives, teachers, pupils, administrative staff, must identify students' behavioral problems, collaborate with police in criminals or potential offenders. Of course, not only school and police have to get involved in these situations, it is necessary to collaborate with the representatives of the social services, with the social assistants, with the students' family.

In communities, we encounter different partnership practices from one school to another<sup>9</sup>. Essentially, the areas we encounter school-police partnership are as follows:

◇ Ensuring the personal integrity of students, teachers, community residents in general;

◇ Preventing juvenile delinquency and crime;

◇ Family, street violence within the school;

◇ Prevention of drug use;

◇ Road education;

◇ Prevention of prostitution / pimping, pedophilia;

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<sup>7</sup> Adina Baran Pescaru *Op. Cit.* p. 81

<sup>8</sup> Law no. 233/2016 regarding the public-private partnership, published in the Official Gazette no. 954 / 25.11.2016.

<sup>9</sup> M. Popa, *Public-Private Partnership, economic aspects of the concept*, according to the site: <http://www.competition.ro> accessed on 23.03. 2019

- ◇ Prevention of begging;
- ◇ Prevent child labor;
- ◇ Promoting respect for the law;
- ◇ Promoting human and child rights;
- ◇ Promoting a civilized behavior in society;
- ◇ Promoting the positive image of the Police in the community and increasing the trust in the institution;
- ◇ Collection of information and data of interest in special cases;
- ◇ Maintaining order and public peace in the educational establishments, outside of them (school perimeter, school-to-school course) in the community;
- ◇ Developing / designing partnership programs / projects;
- ◇ Identifying people and educating children to use identity documents;
- ◇ Recruiting the future staff of the institution.

### **Educational roles of the church in the community, areas and forms of the school-church partnership**

The most common manifestations of the partnership we meet in:

- organizing common cultural artistic events (celebrations, exhibitions, performances, etc.) on the occasion of the great Christian holidays: Christmas, Easter, Flowers, Heroic Day, etc. ;
- the participation of church representatives in events organized by the school: the opening / closing of the school year, sanctification of the school site, lecturing with parents, meetings of church representatives with pupils;
  - o organizing excursions, pilgrimages to various church settings (monasteries, hermitages);
- the participation of church representatives in campaigns aimed at eradication: violence, deviant behavior among pupils, trafficking in children, etc.

An important educational and philanthropic mission is given by parish priests. Thus, given the Christian values they promote and their humanitarian vocation, priests can contribute to:

- education on the rights of the child and the benefits that it brings to the whole community;
- Organizing excursions, pilgrimages to various church settings (monasteries, hermitages);
- participation of church representatives in eradication campaigns: violence, deviant behavior among pupils, trafficking in children, etc.
  - reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation;
  - involvement in problem solving through consultative community structures;
  - mobilizing the community to support families and children in need;
  - engaging in the development of child and family services at community level;
  - organization and involvement in cultural events of the community and the school.

From a formal point of view, according to the legislation in force, economic agents may participate in the management of an educational institution by appointing representatives on the board of a school.

From the point of view of partnerships related to schooling cycles, the activities carried out can be multiple:

- for primary and secondary school: visits to economic agents, open lessons, sponsorships given by economic agents for various events, participation of representatives of economic agents at lessons aimed at the economic education of small schools;

□ in the gymnasium cycle, these activities can be diversified by involving students in productive activities that will implement different knowledge acquired in school, professional counseling, activities for the purpose of school and professional orientation, presentation of various professions, etc .;

□ For the high school cycle, the activities, in addition to the above, can be a specialization practice in certain economic fields according to the specialization provided by the school.

The partnership in this case has a formal aspect, with clear collaboration agreements between schools, school inspectorates and business partners<sup>10</sup>.

**Concretely, school and businesses can collaborate through:**

□ the provision of premises and equipment necessary for practicing within the economic units, thus leading to the formation of the students' professional skills;

□ employing graduates. They are economic agents who select graduates for employment, some even grant scholarships to students with good results, conditional upon the award of the employment scholarship to the respective economic agent, such as organizing internships, meetings with people in the company management structure, professional success models;

□ organization and implementation of in-service training programs for employees in schools or for teaching staff in economic units;

□ implementation in partnership of human resources development plans;

organization of fairs of the exercise firms, job fairs for graduates;

□ provision of information, guidance and career counseling services for students.

Legitimization of school partnership - NGOs from the perspective of the public - private axis

School is an institution that operates in a community, at the intersection of a multitude of other organizations. Their influences may be direct or indirect on the school. Some of the organizations that have the most active influence on schools are non-governmental organizations.

Decentralization in education implies<sup>11</sup>:

□ Redistribution of responsibilities, decision-making authority and public accountability for specific educational functions, from central to local level;

□ Participation of non-administrative factors, representatives of civil society in the decision-making process (parents, NGOs, business environment, professional associations, social partners, etc.).

□ Transferring decision-making powers from central to local and / or organizational levels, to bring decision closer to the beneficiaries of the public education service.

The local community school relation is influenced by a multitude of factors among which we can list:

- the social environment of the community (rural, urban, community size, geographic extent, etc.);
- a degree of culture, the level of population studies that live their lives in the community - also influence the life of the school. The social model of successful professions, models offered by those close to children also influence their degree of aspirations;

- the economic and technological development of the community;

- a value awarded to studies and professions;

- the dominant professions in the community - can become models for children but can also dictate a certain orientation of the school towards the preparation of children in the field of professions required by the community, by the active economic agents;

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<sup>10</sup> Cerghit, John, Neacșu, Ioan, Negreț Dobridor Ioan, *Pedagogical Lectures*, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2001

<sup>11</sup> Adrian Gorun, *Law on National Education (Project)*, Academica Brâncuși Publishing House, 2015

- social representations, mentalities and attitudes regarding child education, the level of family aspirations towards children's education;
- a perception of the school's mission in the community;
- the demographic composition of the community: the rhythm of demographic growth, the age structure of the population, the type of families, the occupational structure of the inhabitants, etc.

### **The relationship between the community and the kindergarten**

The relationship between community and kindergarten is mutual determination and support. Many times the kindergarten is in a position to solve a series of problems that, by its size and place, can not be solved without proper support and direct support from the community<sup>12</sup>.

On the other hand, the community is trying to take over everything that society offers and equally the interventions of the education system.

#### **1. The community - a real partner**

A community that places education among its priorities is a community that acts consciously to the benefit of all its members. It is well known that, in the long run, investment in education is the most valuable for society.

In a community, the kindergarten and the school are institutions that provide children's education but also support the concern and need of adults for continuous improvement and lifelong learning.

The Kindergarten is community support and not just a place where children acquire knowledge. For this reason, partnerships must be seen as an essential and necessary component in the organization of the kindergarten and the group of preschoolers. When community members are involved in kindergarten activities such as concerts, celebrations, shows held by children both in kindergarten and outside, or when children participate in environmental activities or visit to know the local specificity, all those involved are experiencing valuable learning experiences in new situations.

#### **2. The role of the kindergarten in the community**

Every day children learn about people and places in their community when they accompany their educators or parents in walks and visits, but also in the activities of the kindergarten.

The Kindergarten, through the implementation of the projects, seeks solutions that will be useful to the society but also looked at the investments and the hopes.

The kindergarten partnerships can lead to:

- creation of a community support network, complementary to the kindergarten, for achieving objectives;
- knowledge of the cultural specificity, the values of the community environment;
- involving community members in making decisions on the development of kindergarten;
- providing material and cultural support to children in the kindergarten;
- inviting community members to festive moments or important events in the kindergarten;
- participation of children in the kindergarten at some festive events organized by the community;
- continuous stimulation of learning and introducing the child into the school environment through the formation of school representations.

The great challenge for today's educator is to propose and run some partnership activities that require creativity and imagination in initiation, dynamism in organization and deployment, tolerance and flexibility in decision-making, and accountability in assessment.

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<sup>12</sup> Adina Baran Pescaru, *Op. Cit.* p. 126

To carry out a successful project in partnership with community actors, we need to know the art of knowing how to respond equally to the needs of the community.

A successful partnership involves:

- identify goals, common interests, useful to partners and the entire community;
- find the optimal way to achieve the proposed goal;
- organize and manage the resources available to reach the proposed goal;
- Identify the skills of those involved in projects appropriately using them;
- can effectively combine attitudes, approaches and different techniques that can apply to different tasks;
- make a successful use of change for the benefit of the kindergarten and the community.

Possible kindergarten partners:

- parents, parents' associations;
- Educational institutions: kindergartens, schools, high schools, universities, children's palaces, educational resource centers or psycho-pedagogical assistance etc .;
- Educational agents: teachers, specialists (psychologist, school counselor, speech therapist, psychotherapist, physical therapist), librarians, museographers, non-governmental organizations working in the field of education and child protection etc.);
- members of the community with an influence on the child's growth, education and development (doctors, church, police, local councils, school mediators, health mediators, etc.);
- Representatives of some institutions: Town halls, dispensaries, cultural institutions (theaters, museums, libraries, etc.), religious institutions, firemen, police, environmental protection agencies, foundations, non-governmental organizations, economic agents.

### **Benefits of partnership**

I. Dialogue and collaboration facilitate the exchange of ideas between the parties

Partnership is the way in which two or more parties decide to act together to achieve a common goal or to solve a problem. Some issues are easier to detect and explain, others do not. That is why, in addition to the form of collaboration that it offers, the partnership can look at various aspects that we have not been able to analyze individually. Dialogue and collaboration facilitate the exchange of ideas between parties, tangling the most important aspects of a problem. Some of the issues may be known, others may be new. The partnership makes it possible to complement the strengths of each party, generating new ideas.

II. The partnership anticipates and prevents some problems

Another benefit of the partnership is to anticipate and prevent certain problems and avoid other problems as collateral effects of our intervention. Because issues are interrelated, solving one can cause a number of effects.

Partnerships should be seen as an essential component in the organization of the kindergarten and the group of preschoolers. They are no longer considered merely an activity with an optional character or a public relations issue.

III. The partnership offers an alternative

If the partnership is analyzed from an institutional perspective, then it can be seen that the co-operation can be an alternative to certain actions that the specialized institutions have to carry out. Sometimes institutions can not carry out their tasks without the support of others either because they do not have material resources or because they do not have the necessary skills - specialized human resources. For example, kindergartens must offer a wider range of optional subjects or educational programs, and in this

case, partnerships with specialized firms or non-governmental organizations active in the area of interest (eg health education, ecology) could produce a coalition based on common interests and values.

IV. The partnership encourages innovation

Partnership is a good environment for creating new solutions, new ways of working. Where more than one person or institution analyzes a situation, reflects on solutions and proposes variants, increases the chances of formulating new ideas, building creative ways of working, offering ingenious solutions.

V. The partnership stimulates the active and responsible participation of everyone in the life of the community

The degree of activism and interest of citizens is varied: some are very active, others are less.

There is also a category of people who are interested in participating, but lack the resources and capacities needed to act effectively. The partnership offers this opportunity to exchange resources. Citizens interested in community problems and prospects can play a role in developing and implementing development solutions or directions. This process contributes to the dynamism of community life and influences the degree of citizens' participation in community life. Moreover, the partnership stimulates those who are less interested, demonstrating that there is always an alternative to passivity and indifference.

The partnership is also a motivating factor: for some, the satisfaction lies in the fact that their ideas are valued and appreciated by others, and for others, in that they can be useful with something the community they are part of.

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