

# **EDUCATION, A NECESSARY FACTOR FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANIA**

**Teodora Andreea GĂINARU (OLAH) PhD Student  
University of Craiova  
Doctoral School of Economics  
Craiova, Romania**

**Abstract:** In Romania, education is a major objective for which significant efforts have been made focused on improving the education system. However, over time, economic, social and cultural factors have led to a significant decrease in the percentage of graduating high school and university students. The general objective of this article is to represent it the main indicators that limit the sustainable economic development through education in Romania, in order to identify the educational means for counteracting them. I will consider analyzing the rate of early drop out, but also that of young people who are neither employed nor involved in further education or training. Thus, in order to eliminate this situation of young people in Romania, I will identify strategies and programs that improve the current education system.

**JEL classifications: O15**

**Keywords: education, sustainable development, Romania, young people**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Education is an important factor for society to reach the standards of sustainable development, and it is also a right life of human. This is a basic tool for the best administration and for making decisions that are appropriate to the needs of the citizens, promoting democracy in a sustainable way. Through education people are offered the power of exploration and the creation of new ideas, visions, concepts, methods and means of action. The structure of this article is made up of three sections, each presenting ideas that support and reinforce the importance of education for the proper functioning and development of society under the conditions of European development strategies. The first section highlights the importance of education among young people so that Romania can align itself with the sustainable development, the second part of this paper presents factors that reduce sustainable economic development through the education of the society and the entry of young people into the market workforce. The third section lists some of the strategies and programs adopted by the Romanian state in order to solve the issues facing the education system for human resources development.

## **2. THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION IN THE PROCESS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Education means the connection between the individual and society, which influences the whole social life. This represents an uninterrupted exchange of

information from society to the individual, which is realized for the good functioning of the community. The implementation of "education for sustainable development" represents a great challenge for any society. However, formal education cooperates with the non-formal education sector, but also with the informal education sector, with the aim of reaching local sustainability goals and educating as many generations as possible. This huge task of education should be shared by all three forms of education. In this sense, this effort sharing would reach many people and would avoid unnecessary efforts (McKeown and Rosalyn, 2002).

Education is an important condition for achieving the goals of sustainable development, which shows people the importance of good relationships with the environment. Romanian public universities started to become more involved in the introduction of programs, debates on sustainable development, projects, courses of sustainable development, having increasingly positive reactions (Novo-Corti et. al, 2018). Education for sustainable development wants an evolution among young people, namely their reflections on their actions, but taking into account the social, cultural, economic impact they have. This type of education aims to train young people to proceed under complex conditions in a sustainable manner, that is to explore new ideas and to be active in the social-political space, aiming at the progress of society in accordance with sustainable development policies. (Leicht et. al, 2018).

The lack of education among the people in Romania, especially the young ones, pushes most of them to migrate to other economically developed countries. But, this migration has a negative impact both on the economy of our country, on the labor force and capital, but also on the family relations, the future development of children from disorganized families. In this sense, "migration generates complex economic and social consequences upon migrant sending and receiving countries" (Noja et. al, 2018, p. 894). The migration process has grown over time, and Romania should also be a host country for immigrants, as it needs citizens to support economic and social policy in order to develop sustainably (Marcu et. al, 2018).

Therefore, for Romania, this use of sustainable development values, represents a priority purpose and a mandatory condition for the radical improvement and division of educational offer of the education system, and from vocational training. The realization of a sustainable education starts with recognizing the problem, and then the allocation of resources, followed by assuming the collective responsibilities for the current situation and the conclusion of several constructive partnerships. "Education for sustainable development" identifies a new argument for improving the educational act, in the sense that it gives those involved the chance to participate in the best way in identifying solutions and calculating alternatives for achieving a sustainable future.

### **3. INDICATORS THAT ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION**

Education is a way of disseminating knowledge, developing skills, but also creating values, but the training contents follow both the cognitive components that bring together intellectual aspects specific to the education offer, the action components that encompass specific skills, manners, abilities and competences specific to the training profile and the direction of specialization, as well as the affective-attitudinal components that concern receptivity, flexibility, motivations, attitudes and beliefs, feelings, in a word the conduct of the subjects to be educated. In this process of

economic growth, human capital is defining, not only through its quantitative side, but also through its qualitative side.

According to the National Institute of Statistics, in the year 2018 (Table no.1), in the rural area there was a school population of 994183 students, a number decreasing compared to 2017, respectively 2016, in which a total of 1022507 and 1118304 for 2014 activated. In the urban environment, the situation is better, meaning that there are 2553118 students, this total increasing compared to 2016 when there were a total of 2545797 students and decreasing compared to 2017 when there were 2556054 students. The existing school units (Table no.2), in the rural areas, they are down from 2014 when there were 3210 school units. In the urban area, the existing schools is again better, meaning that their number increased compared to 2016 when there were 3870 functional school units and then decreased in 2018 when there were 3894 school units in the urban area.

**Table no.1 School population by education levels, residence areas, Romania, 2014-2018**

Areas of residence	School population (number of persons)				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	3735552	3642632	3597280	3578561	3547301
<b>Urban</b>	2617248	2561196	2545797	2556054	2553118
<b>Rural</b>	1118304	1081436	1051483	1022507	994183

Source: <http://www.insse.ro>

**Table no.2 School units by areas of residence, Romania, 2014-2018**

Areas of residence	School units (number)				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Total</b>	7127	7108	7010	7047	7020
<b>Urban</b>	3917	3903	3870	3907	3894
<b>Rural</b>	3210	3205	3140	3140	3126

Source: <http://www.insse.ro>

If we talk about the graduate students, their number is increasing compared to 2016 (Table no.3), when a number of 497632 students graduated, reaching in 2017 a total of 501802 graduates. The number of graduates from the rural area decreased from 96292 graduates in 2015, to 93455 in 2016, decreasing to 91345 in 2017, compared to the urban area where the number the graduates are increasing from 402597 in 2015 to 404177 graduates in 2016, reaching a value of 410457 graduates in 2017. In the pre-

university education, a total of 375531 graduates were registered in 2017, decreasing compared to 2016 when there were 376382 graduates. The share of graduate students in cities increased to 284225 in 2017, but in the rural area the number of graduates is decreasing to 91306 graduates in 2017.

**Table no.3 Graduates by areas of residence and residence levels, Romania, 2014-2017**

Training levels	Areas of residence	Graduates (number of persons)			
		2014	2015	2016	2017
	<b>Total</b>	557418	498889	497632	501802
	<b>Urban</b>	452976	402597	404177	410457
	<b>Rural</b>	104442	96292	93455	91345
<b>Pre-university education</b>	<b>Total</b>	423840	377101	376382	375531
	<b>Urban</b>	319520	280844	282982	284225
	<b>Rural</b>	104420	96257	93400	91306

Source: <http://www.insse.ro>

The main difficulty faced by the rural environment from the point of view of education is the school dropout. According to the data and analyses made by the European Commission, Romania in 2014-2017 remained constant in relation to early school leaving in persons aged 18-24, with a share of 18.1%, a very high percentage, given the situation in the European Union between these years, which was 11.2% in 2014 and decreased to 10.6% in 2017. In Romania, the share of school dropout is higher by 20% in schools in the area rural, compared to urban areas. Romania is a country that has deep gaps, which lead to a series of painful discriminations, which lead to long-term consequences on the lives of children and even society as a whole. In this respect, at national level, the share of early school leaving is 26.6% in rural areas, 17.4% in small cities and suburbs and decreases to 6.2% in municipalities. (The institute of education sciences, 2014-2015).

In Romania, the interest acquired for the young people who did not continue with the education, did not commit themselves and do not benefit from a qualified training is recent and has emerged as a response to the European policies that supported this category of people. According to Eurostat data, between 2003 and 2014, the rate of young people between the ages of 15-24 who do not benefit from education nor are they in the labor field, had quite small variations, that is between 10.8% and 13, 1%. In the case of Romania, this value reached 11.6% in 2008 and 17% in 2014, and in 2018 reached a rate of 18%. Among the group of unemployed young people, those who left school early or dropped out are those who have the least chance to identify on the labor market (The institute of education sciences, 2014-2015).

#### **4. STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

Access and participation in a quality education of people are essential for the smooth functioning of a sustainable society. Education is a process that encouraging innovation, constructive critical thinking, curiosity, meritocracy, emancipation and conduct of young people. In this regard, for a better development of Romania through education, several development strategies have been adopted aimed at bringing the society to an optimal level of development. Objective no. 4, Quality education, present

in the "National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania 2030", is focused on ensuring a high quality level, inclusive and fair education for all and promoting lifelong learning opportunities. This objective aims to ensure that all people, regardless of ethnicity, age, race, religion, people with disabilities, children, young people, migrants, people in difficult situations can have access to education, so that in the future they can use all the knowledge and skills acquired in the good development of the company. Objective 4 sets out the idea that education is the basis from which to start to solve the social, economic, political problems present within the society. Obtaining a higher quality education for each individual, regardless of gender, is essential for gender equality, for delayed marriages, for reducing infant mortality, but also for increasing the female presence in management positions ("National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania. Horizons 2013-2020-2030", Bucharest, 2008).

"The strategy of education and vocational training in Romania for the period 2016-2020", establishes an adequate approach of the initial vocational training, but also of the continuous vocational training, through which one can reach the evolution of a vocational training system that is accessible, competitive, attractive and relevant to all labour market requirements. This strategy directly addresses initial and continuing education and training. (Romanian Government, "Romania's vocational education and training strategy for 2016 -2020, 2016"). In addition, the strategic document is based on the national objective for the 2020 horizon of the "National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania 2013-2020-2030", regarding the achievement of an average level of performance of the European Union for this field of vocational education and training.

The European strategies that have in the foreground the training of professional competences, skills training and job quality are "Europe 2020" and "The New Skills Agenda for Europe". "According to Europe 2020 Strategy, the target set for the education are to reduce the early leavers from education and training at less than 10% of the population aged 18 – 24, and to increase the share of higher education graduates to 40% of the population aged 30 – 34" (Noja and Cristea, 2018, p. 722). Since June 2016, the European Commission adopted "The new Skills Agenda for Europe Strategy". It is based on several directions: "1. Improving the quality and relevance of skills formation; 2. Making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable; 3. Improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices" (European Commission, 2016, p. 3).

Other strategies adopted regarding "education and vocational training" are:

- "- Strategy for reducing early school leaving 2015-2020;
- National Strategy for Tertiary Education 2015-2020;
- National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2015 -2020;
- The Strategy of Education and Vocational Training in Romania for the period 2016-2020" ("National Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Romania Horizons 2013-2020-2030", Bucharest, 2008, p. 39).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The performance of the entire educational process, of adaptation and vocational training depends on many factors that can prove the success, from equal opportunities in favour of education, to the optimal quality and quantity of the educational act, and of its integration into the European system. In this article I presented ideas through which I highlighted the necessity of education for the sustainable development of Romania, I

observed and followed the factors that reduce the access of young people to the labor market and the sustainable development through education of the people and I presented more existing strategies for resolving these discrepancies encountered by education and training in Romania. In conclusion, education must create a framework through which to provide the necessary inspiration, stimulate creativity to the highest degree, leading people to reach critical thinking, to cooperation, to solve such complex and real problems. Therefore, for sustainable development education, innovation, exploitation and efficiency are needed.

## REFERENCES:

1. Leicht, A., Heiss, J., Won Jung, B., Issues and trends in Education for Sustainable Development. Vol. 5. UNESCO Publishing, 2018;
2. Marcu, N., Siminică, M., Noja, G.G., Cristea, M., Dobrotă, C.E., Migrants' Integration on the European Labor Market: A Spatial Bootstrap, SEM and Network Approach. *Sustainability*, 10(12), p. 4543, 2018;
3. McKeown, R., Hopkins, C. A., Rizi, R., Chrystalbridge, M., Education for sustainable development toolkit. Knoxville: Energy, Environment and Resources Center, University of Tennessee, 2002;
4. Noja, G., Cristea, S., Yüksel, A., Pânzaru, C., Drăcea, R., Migrants' role in enhancing the economic development of host countries: Empirical evidence from Europe. *Sustainability*, 10(3), p. 894, 2018;
5. Noja, G.G., Cristea, M., Working Conditions and Flexicurity Measures as Key Drivers of Economic Growth: Empirical for Europe. *Ekonomický časopis (Journal of Economics)*, 66(7), pp. 719-749, 2018;
6. Novo-Corti, I., Badea, L., Țircă, D. M., Aceleanu, M. I., A pilot study on sustainable development education in Romanian higher economic education, *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 19(4), pp. 817-838, 2018;
7. \*\*\*, Aspects regarding the social inclusion of young people outside education, training and employment systems (NEET), Bucharest, 2014-2015;
8. \*\*\*, National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania Horizons 2013-2020-2030, Bucharest, 2008;
9. \*\*\*, Strategy for vocational education and training in Romania for the period 2016-2020, Bucharest, 2016;
10. \*\*\*, <http://statistici.insse.ro>
11. \*\*\*, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>