

REDUCING THE RISK OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS

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

Abstract: The level of education is an important factor in analysing the process of social exclusion. The lack of education among the rural youth, the lack of a professional qualification, have the effect of removing them from the economic and social life and reducing the chances of obtaining a job. The objective of this paper is to identify the ways in which the young population from the Romanian rural area is no longer predisposed to economic and social exclusion, by developing through education and training the human capital existing in these areas. To solve this problem, I will analyse the main indicators that reveal the dimension of rural education in Romania and I will propose solutions to reduce their economic and social exclusion.

JEL classifications: O15

Keywords: Romania; social exclusion; rural environment; young people; education

1. INTRODUCTION

Romania is very often faced with poverty and social exclusion deficiency. Over time there have been attempts to diminish or stop this social phenomenon, but only a small part of these attempts have had success. In this sense, I structured this article into 3 sections, in which I presented in the first section a description of this situation, poverty and social exclusion of young people, especially those from rural areas. The second section analyzes the statistical data regarding this discrepancy present in Romania and in the third section we brought into discussion the solutions regarding reducing this phenomenon, by "Europe 2020 Strategy".

2. POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN ROMANIA

"Poverty in Europe is a fact, and it is worth acknowledging that fact because those living in poverty are suffering from several hardships" (Bradshaw et. al, 2019, p. 35). Romania is often faced with the poverty of young citizens and their social exclusion, especially those living in rural areas. Due to poverty, children are left with only 8 classes, and a large proportion of them are exposed to this problem, having limited ability to enter the labor market. Moreover, a decreasing of poverty "leads to a major reduction of the immigration flows" (Cristea and Noja, 2019, p. 120).

The presence of a large number of children within a family can lead to that family facing poverty. In addition to this important factor in activating poverty, I can list

others, for example “ the region of residence; the level of education: persons with a low level of education, who have at most graduated the lower secondary education and do not have a qualification; the employment situation” (National study on poverty, social exclusion and labour market opportunities among young people (16-35 years) from the rural area, 2012). To these major changes, we add the unbalanced distribution of budgetary and administrative resources, which increase poverty in rural areas. Overall, ”the high share of agriculture in the economy produces vulnerabilities for the economic growth” (Cristea et. al., 2015, p. 71), due to high risks associated with this sector (Cristea et al., 2007).

”Learning to read efficiently is one of the main skills that children has to learn in school and is important in order to functioning well in modern society.” (Michálek & Výboštok, 2019, p. 625). One effect of the lack of education among young people is the social exclusion of individuals. Because of the fact that many undergraduates and postgraduates are unemployed and living with benefits, Dowling says that by reconnecting the theory and practice of social work, people can reach the threshold of poverty (Dowling, 2019). In conclusion, ”that poverty is an obstacle to progress” (Shen, 2019, p. 187).

3. ANALYSIS OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION DATA

In Romania, there is an increasing number of citizens predisposed to poverty and social and economic exclusion. In Table no.1, in 2014, 40.3% of the citizens of Romania is predisposed to poverty and social exclusion, and 51% are children suffering from this situation. In recent years, the percentage has decreased so that in 2018, 32.5% of citizens was on the edge of poverty and social exclusion, and 38.1% for children. Considering these things, in the rural environment the situation is alarming because the poverty risk for children is especially higher than for urban children, 34.1% of the 51% are deprived of the necessary material things. According to the values given in Table no.2, in Romania in 2014, a rate of 25.1% of the romanian citizens were considered to be in poor, and in the case of children a percentage of 39.3% was subject to this difficulty. Over the years these percentages decreased, and in 2018 23,5% of the population was poor, down 1.6 percent, and in the case of children, their rate reached 32%, down 7,3 percent.

Table no.1 The rate of risk of poverty or social exclusion, by age groups, Romania, 2014-2018

Age group	Number of persons (rate per 1000 inhabitants)				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total persons	40,3	37,4	38,8	35,7	32,5
0-17 years	50,7	46,8	49,2	41,7	38,1
18-64 years	38,7	35,7	37	34,6	30,7

Source: *statistici.insse.ro*

Tabel no.2 Relative poverty rate, by age groups, Romania, 2014-2018

Age group	Number of persons (rate per 1000 inhabitants)				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total persons	25,1	25,4	25,3	23,6	23,5
0-17 years	39,3	38,1	37,2	32,2	32
18-64 years	23,4	23,3	23,3	21,9	21,2

Source: statistici.insse.ro

In the Monitoring of education and training 2018, Romania, several key indicators of the situation existing in our country are presented, namely: “the early school leaving rate is high, having repercussions on the labour market and the economy” (Monitoring of education and training 2018 Romania, p.3). In the rural environment, education has a low quality and poverty reaches a high stage, ”one in four people aged between 18 and 24 left school too early. Instead, the rate is 15% in cities and only 4.2% in municipalities”(Monitoring of education and training 2018 Romania, p. 4). The authorities currently have an early warning mechanism that could help increase data collection and improve coordination between educational units, inspectorates, as well as other relevant institutions (NGOs, social assistance, church police).

4. SOLUTIONS FOR THE RECOVERY OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Given the fact that ”22.4% of the population of the European Union are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, this includes 24.9% of children in Europe, 23.3% of women, 18.2% of those over 65” ([https:// ec.europa.eu](https://ec.europa.eu)), ”The Europe 2020 strategy” must present an improvement in the situation, leading to a sustainable, inclusive and intelligent growth, for all the states in the European Union, gaining employment and general economic well-being (Noja and Cristea, 2018, p. 742). One of the solutions found by Romania to address this shortcoming is the National Reform Program, which represents a framework platform for defining development priorities that follow Romania's evolution. According to the ideas presented in the ”National Reform Program, 2019”, in 2017, “the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion registered a notable decrease to 7,040 thousand people compared to 9,115 thousand people in 2008, that is a reduction with 2,074 thousand people” (Government of Romania, ”National Reform Program, 2019”, Bucharest, 2019). The directions of action targeted by it are: increasing the quality of life and socio-economic adaptation of the population from marginalized communities within the urban environment; increasing the balance of citizens from villages; restoration social services; lowering the poverty level for disadvantaged people.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Poverty and social and economic exclusion are a phenomenon discussed by a growing number of people, to identify as many solutions and strategies to stop it. Through this article I considered this deficiency of our country, represented by poverty

and social and economic exclusion as a social phenomenon affecting young people in Romania, of the causes that led to its effects, to establish a vulnerable group in front of this problem, namely that we brought young people to the forefront present in Romania who are struggling with poverty and social exclusion. In this sense, through this article, I described this phenomenon so widespread in our country, I identified the lack of education among young people as the main reason for poverty and social and economic exclusion, I analysed the percentages of this phenomenon, at the level of Romania and presented solutions to diminish or stop it.

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