

SOURCES OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN ROMANIA

Elena Zamfir – University of Bucharest

Marian Preda – University of Bucharest

Adrian Dan – University of Bucharest

This article represents the second part of a complex article of which first part was published in RJS No1-2/ 2004. The whole article is the result of a study undertaken by Faculty of Sociology and Social Work of University of Bucharest (Nov. 2003- Feb. 2004) and it was commissioned by Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family as a result of the agreement between MoLSSF and European Commission within the common action "Programul Comunitar de Acțiune pentru Combaterea Excluziunii Sociale" approved by European Parliament and European Commission (decision no.50/2002/EG).

In the first part of article, published in RJS No.1-2/ 2004, we reviewed a) the relevant literature, theories and explanations in the field of social exclusion, b) identified and analyzed major sources of social exclusion in Romania and c) analyzed the main types/ forms of social exclusion (from education, health, labor market, social services, housing etc.).

The second part of the article has also three sections analyzing in depth a) the main social groups excluded (children, elderly, homeless, unemployed, delinquents etc.), b) social policies on social inclusion, and finally we have an important section of c) conclusions and recommendations for action.

Since the study was done in the early 2004, Romania has made significant progress in fighting against social exclusion and promoting social inclusion. Such progress was recorded especially in the field of child protection (new legislation and institutional capacity building), but also regarding financial benefits and development of social services for vulnerable groups (elderly, domestic violence, children in institution at age of 18 etc.; child allowance, maternity leave etc.) social and economic measures for unemployed people and so on. The authors intend in the near future to update this study, putting more accents this time on the policies for social inclusion in the light of Romania's accession to EU structures.

Excluded Groups/ Social Segments

Currently, there exist in Romania a series of specific social groups that are at an accentuated risk from becoming excluded from various spheres of social, economic and political life, such as: children, the elderly, the unemployed, single parent families, the homeless, youngsters leaving institutions at the age of 18, children's institutions, the victims of delinquency, persons with disabilities etc. Such groups benefit from no comprehensive programmes that could protect them adequately against social exclusion. If in developed Western nations, unemployment – because of its consequences – is considered to be the gravest form of social exclusion – that pre-disposes, by association, to other types of

exclusion – in Romania, there are even more specific forms of exclusion that presuppose concrete answers given by specialised services. The absence of ID papers for a significant number of citizens (especially from the Roma ethnic group) constitutes a severe form of social exclusion in as it excluded these people from the formal statute of citizenship and its associated rights and benefits they cannot therefore exercise, such as: Child Benefit, the Guaranteed Minimum Wage, free education, free health services for children and other disadvantaged groups, voting rights etc.

Children in foster families and institutions

Children represent one of the population segments most affected by poverty and social exclusion during the transition period. According to statistical data (CASPIIS, 2002), by 2001, the percentage of impoverished children whose ages vary between 0-15 was 34,4%, whereas of the total number of poverty stricken people, they represented 22,6%. Hence, children are but one of the categories most affected by poverty. Moreover, approximately 8,3% (362.000) of the total number of children whose age varies between 0-15 live in absolute poverty.

Despite the significant successes registered lately, during these past years, *abandoned children had continued to represent the transition's problem that simply will not go away as support procedures were found wanting.*

After 1989, the large number of abandoned children who ended up in institutions followed a high birth rate pattern characteristic of extreme poverty-stricken families despite the overall trend of falling numbers of newly born babies.

- in public placement centres
- in private placement centres

Table 19. The situation of children who were outside their natural families, in placement or foster care

		30.11.2003		31.12.2001	
The total number of children in foster families or institutions		83.811	100,0%	87.518	100,0%
of which,	children protected in foster families	45,965	54,8%	37.553	57,1%
	- with maternal assistants hired by specialised public services	12,657	15,1%		
	- -with maternal assistants hired by authorised private organisations	544	0,7%		
	- with up to and including 4th degree relatives	25,817	30,8%		
	- with other families/persons	5,669	6,8%		
	- entrusted with a view to adoption*)	1,278	1,5%		

Children protected in institutions	37,84 6	45,2%	49.965	42,9%
- in public placement centres	32,17 1	38,4%		
- in private placement centres	5,675	6,8%		

Source: ANPCA

Despite efforts made via various programmes to prevent children being abandoned in maternity or, subsequent to mothers' leaving the maternity, in the family, the number of children abandoned by their parents and entrusted to the social protection system presented until not so long ago a slight tendency to rise – both in absolute terms (i.e. as a total number of abandoned children) as well as in relative terms (i.e. as a percentage of newly born babies).

The reformation of the child protection system, initiated in 2001, led to a promising decrease in the number of children entrusted to foster families and/or institutions and, most importantly, to a significant drop (of over 12.000) in the number of children being protected in institutions (Table 19).

Social support for socially disorganised, impoverished families – the greatest producers of social abandonment – must be continuously and significantly improved especially as regards the unwanted pregnancy component.

An important social inclusion and integration component concerns the increase in the population's capacity – in particular, those disadvantaged sections of the population – vis-à-vis family planning so to avoid unwanted pregnancies as much as create a specific support system that would increase the degree of responsibility when deciding to have children. One of the factors leading to the abandonment of children is the absence of family planning and the failure to use contraceptives – not simply because of a lack of information but also due to the faulty distribution of free contraceptives.

The high-risk (of unwanted pregnancy) segments are still relatively small though the lack of policies designed to prevent unwanted pregnancies does nothing but feed the institutional/alternative services system with abandoned children. Moreover, increasing access to family planning is vital for the development of family planning counselling services so that there is a higher degree of parents' responsibility towards the act of procreation.

During the last year, financial social protection measures that will have positive effects for easing the plight of impoverished families with children have been assumed. For instance, the introduction of special allowances for single parent families and families with many children are but two of a number of telling examples. There are already situations when consensual couples with children – from the Roma community – requested the issuing of birth certificates for their children in order that their children could benefit from the latest legal provisions.

In the past, as much as during the initial phase of the transition, until about 1997-8, the vast majority of abandoned children were placed in institutions. The principal causes for institutionalisation¹ relate to:

- the family's precarious material situation: living conditions (precarious if not absent), insufficient earnings to cover the family needs;
- parent's reduced level of education (that limits their access on the labour market, well paid job positions as much as the perception of the future) constitute factors that have led to children being institutionalised;
- a numerous family;
- a disorganised family;
- the parents' state of health;
- the child's state of health;
- a combination of the above i.e. disorganised family, lack of resources etc.

A relative lack of qualified professionals in the child protection area added to this situation. Though the number of public institutions' employees that deal with children's problems is significant, *the vast majority of them have no proper qualifications for this type of job*. In 2003, in the National Authority for the Child Protection and its Regional Centres, the human resource component was as follows:

Table 20. The personnel hired in child protection services (SPSPC)

		31 March 2002		30 Sept 2003	
Total		35.138	100,0%	36,843.25	100,0%
of which,	SPSPC's own staff	3.372	9,6%	4.944	13,4%
	placement centres	22.954	65,3%	17.870	48,5%
	Professional maternal assistants	7.436	21,2%	10.311	28,0%
	other services	1.378	3,9%	3.7120	10,1%

Source: ANPCA

In 2002, of these numbers, only a small proportion were *professional social assistants* (2%), sociologists (0,2%), psychologists and/or pedagogues (1,4%) yet, there were *40% high school graduates and 33% general school – primary and secondary cycle – graduates*.

The entire social assistance system is confronted by a severe shortage of qualified personnel. In rural areas, of the 1355 communes that have staff dealing exclusively with social assistance duties, 124 communes (4,61%) have social assistants with specialist higher education background of which, more than half are in just two counties: Valcea (25) and Vrancea (39). In 882 communes (32,83%) the local council's secretary general fulfils social assistance duties

¹ Identified as a result of research undertaken by UNICEF and the Social Assistance Faculty, in the autumn of 2002.

whereas in another 444 communes (16,53%) it is the marriage ceremony official, the librarian, the agronomist engineer or, the cashier that plays the role of social assistant.

Despite the fact that social assistance specialist education has been made available to students after 1989 and, since 1995, the first generations of professional social assistance have graduated from University, these graduates remain insufficiently absorbed by the labour market (because of the institutional system's inertia that is still employing the kind of people mentioned above). Few of them work in specialist public institutions as some eventually found jobs in the non-governmental sector whereas others remain unable to practice their profession because of a lack of job opportunities which makes them abandon their chosen profession shortly after graduation.

Supporting the normal development of children has been neglected for long period of time. In this area, social support is efficient only in certain components whereas in others it is found wanting. Children's inclusion in pre-school education remains far from being satisfactory. Though official statistics show that the school incorporates the quasi-majority of children, there are yet an unacceptably high number of non-enrolments in education, primary cycle abandonment occasionally as well as secondary school abandonment more often than just occasionally.

In the social support for children there is still a degree of imbalance. If children from institutions or family placements were offered an important degree of care and resources, the same thing cannot be said about children in high risk situations i.e. families who are in extreme poverty and going through an acute state of disintegration despite an increase in the current financial support offered. There are still high-risk segments of the children's population for which there are not enough developed mechanisms of support and protection:

- Children affected by the extreme poverty of their families; this is the case, for example, of families that are without any shelter or of those who, despite having a shelter, their living conditions are particularly harsh; for families such as these, the financial help offered is insufficient.
- Children gravely and systematically neglected by their parents (including street children, of whom some do have a family).
- Children exploited economically – especially via their being made to beg or perform physically exhausting work; though the number of cases such as these remains limited, the category becomes important due to the gravity of their plight and the likelihood of their being excluded from a normal life in the future.

The financial support for families with children has had an uneven, contradictory and incoherent course during the transition period. During the first ten years of transition, with few exceptions, there was very little focus on

families with many children. It was only after the year 2000 that a series of laws were drafted and a number of programmes focusing on offering children complex support were developed though this was not enough either. Although, at this particular moment in time, single parent family support and support for families with many children witness a different type of approach, what is needed is a continuous evaluation of these families and a massive development of services that are targeting these social segments in order that one of the most important exclusion sources is eradicated.

Kindergartens have short programme and fail to meet the parent's current needs. The problem of a child with “the house keys round his neck” is inherited from the time of the socialist regime and has yet to be resolved. What is most needed concerns the development and the implementation of a programme that is accessible to the vast majority of families and meets their needs. Such a programme that could include homework preparation at school, outside the normal class hours, could be extended to the primary cycle (especially in rural areas, where parent's involvement in their children's education is marginal).

The protection, care and the education of the child from birth until the age of seven. The National Strategy for the Development of Human Resources

The Strategy was outlined in 2002, following co-operation from a number of relevant ministries, international organisation's representatives in Romania, higher education institutions and research institutes. A diagnosis of the resource system involved in caring and educating a child from birth until the age of seven and stating its objectives is done by components: psycho-pedagogical, social, sanitary and community components. The objectives are projected in different frames of time some being considered to have permanent relevance while others being conceived for a ten-year duration period – mostly pertaining to the perceivable horizon of governance for the current Government.

The vocational education segment had its severest downturn as most youths fail to obtain a viable profession upon completing their school studies. In order that social inclusion is aptly promoted there is a need to embark on a programme: “*A profession/qualification upon completing schooling*”. As regards the professional formation process' content, it is essential to prevail over Ceausescu's megalomaniac vision of industrial schooling, much as we ought to learn from the mistakes of the first post-Revolutionary years, and turn it into a school for economic prosperity and social cohesion, according to the current economic and social changes undergone.

Community activities for children/adolescents/youngsters have been chronically neglected. There is an urgent need for activities/programmes that include active life skills, the formation of youth for normal integration in the community as well as given an option to opt for fundamental values relating to the issue of social inclusion thus, preventing noxious forms of association for youngsters that may lead to their social exclusion.

Stimulating initiatives such as rehabilitating community centres in rural areas or, building sports halls in urban ones represents but a promising start.

Demographic processes and social inclusion

Romania is confronted with a sharp decline in its population's birth rate that is having negative effects on its current and its long-term development. Two major aspects though must be taken into consideration:

- a) Though fertility has decreased, because of an inadequately developed children and family support system, an irrecoverably high loss of children through insufficient schooling and personal development – that draws them into social exclusion mechanisms such as delinquency, drug abuse etc. – is taking place.
- b) It is becoming clearer by the day that Romania needs to accentuate its policies on socially supporting families with children while being demographically friendly also.

The “Street Children”

The “Street Children” group, though restricted in terms of actual numbers is at the highest risk of social exclusion on manifold aspects. For many of these children who have, for years, been living on streets, total social recovery chances are slight. In fact, we could go as far as to say that for the vast majority of them there is not a glimmer of hope of their recovery for society despite programmes destined to their removal from the streets on which they live.

The factors that have generated this situation have been pointed out in numerous reports and various strategies. The main sources generating this occurrence remain poverty, the weak protection of families with (many) children and social disorder. As it is mentioned in the PNAinc, *despite various programmes undertaken by various non-governmental organisations, on the basis of an inhibited reaction of response on the part of the public authorities, the numbers of “Street Children” shows no sign of abating.* This fact can lead us to the conclusion that the approach on the matter is incorrect and that a series of programmes are mostly conceived rather haphazardly, they consume plenty of resources (especially external financing) and fail to produce the efficiency that was hoped for. In 1998, in a catalogue of the Romanian NGOs, approximately

1000 NGOs declared that their sphere/object of activity/assistance includes the Street Children. Yet, according to various estimates, the number of such children in Romania does not exceed 3500 whereas the number of those effectively living on the street is approximately 1000.

The sustained efforts made to absorb the “Street Children” phenomenon proved to have little efficiency due to the fractional approach to the problem: each one of these programmes addressed only one of the many problems children were facing much as the limited number of individual cases was. Thus, it is *an urgent task to promote a global and decisive approach to the matter that will eradicate once and for all the “Street Children” phenomenon* rather than alleviate the situation of children living on streets by solving a limited number of individual cases only to be replaced by others, shortly afterwards.

The current data available leads us to the conclusion that the “*Street Children*” phenomenon has not reached proportions that have spun out of control. The problems that have led to its perpetuation refer to:

- The lack of a coherent and efficient strategy (not that there was a lack of them yet, they were mostly unrealistic, utopian, naïve and demagogical.
- The lack of an identification and monitoring system for all the “street children” cases.
- The lack of infrastructure, of friendly institutions and of specialised services that are adequate to different situations (picking “street children” up from the street, putting a diagnostic to the case and “transiting” it to a family or institutional environment).
- The lack of a specialised institution and that of accrediting NGOs and the rest of the institutions involved in the protection of “street children” as well as co-ordinating projects and resources in the area. Thus, the multiplicity of interventions could be avoided, overlaying programmes for the same case (usually, the “easiest” ones) and a complete absence of intervention in others (the most “difficult” ones)

What is the Street Children’s Profile?

In a research done in 2000 on a sample of 84 Bucharest Street Children the following features were noticed:

1. They have problems concerning their natural family:
 - Unknown mother –6%, unknown father –19%
 - They have no mother (unknown to them or deceased) –23%
 - Parents are not legally married (parents unknown, divorced or live in a consensual relationship) - 49%
2. Their ethnic background:
 - Romanians - 79,8%
 - Roma 20,2% (compared to a percentage of 4% -6% of the entire population)
3. They have problems concerning their ID papers:
 - No birth certificate – 15,5%

- No ID papers– 41% from those over the age of 14
- 4. They have behavioural problems:
 - They smoke – 60%
 - Take drugs –19%
 - Consume alcohol– 17%
 - Have a (judicial) record – 15,5%
- 5. They are in care of 2 or more foundations – 49%

Data from the UNICEF report (2000) mentioned earlier reveals that 32% of Street Children have no ID papers, almost 80% of them beg, 16% wash cars and 14% steal.

Youngsters leaving institutions by the age of 18

One the severest problems encountered is that of *18 year olds who must leave such institutions designed for protection*. Their number is estimated to be approximately 5000 per year. For the vast majority of them, there is no institutional alternative as many of them any family or relatives to speak of that could give them shelter. Many institutions are therefore reluctant to enforce this legal provision and continue to give them shelter even after they turn 18, as they cannot throw them in the street once that happens. Often, they cannot practice any profession as they have never had one and, worse still, they have a severe socialisation deficit in that they do not know how to relate to people, take decisions and lead a normal, independent life as they never had a chance to learn that in the encampment style institutions where they spent their childhood. Consequently, vis-à-vis social inclusion, this sector needs special efforts in that there is the simultaneous problem of finding accommodation, a work place as well as learning to build various social and inter-personal relationships that are oh so different from their earlier experience.

The National Authority for the Protection of the Child considered the only solution for youngsters leaving such institutions to be one that decentralises the problem hence, responsibilities. The involvement of the local community, however positive it may be, cannot resolve this whole issue. An institutional framework is needed to enhance the local solution's success rate and encourage more local initiatives in this area. Young Persons community placement centres are also needed for temporary shelter for those who turned 18 and do not yet have an independent solution as regards the way their life is going to go.

Starting from the number of youngsters that have no immediate housing solutions i.e. survive after coming of age and having to exit the institution that was the only home they have ever known, and after another average period of 3-5 years of a "stay of execution" – in which they are granted support (mainly in the shape of housing) – the end result is a need for approximately 10.000 housing places in support centres, nation-wide i.e. between one hundred and

four hundred places in each county according to the population number and the severity of this phenomenon.

It is essential that an adequate legal framework is created so that it prepares the social and economic mechanisms background enabling – in a ‘natural’ way, and via specific labour market mechanism – institution-exiting 18-year old youngsters to integrate socially. The process of preparing youngsters to enter the labour market must be started well before the cut off date for their departure is nearing i.e. from about their reaching an age of 14-16 and not upon their coming of age when turning 18.

It is recommendable that legislative initiatives easing such a category’s employment (after turning 16) in jobs with a reduced number of hours based on an obligation to go to school, too (as employers could benefit from tax allowances or even have their wages partly paid by the state). Research data demonstrated how beneficial such pilot projects were – as employment from the tender age of 14 helps not only to learn the tricks of a trade but also, to create a bond of trust between employer and employee before he comes of age, when turning 18.

The elderly

Though the transition managed to ensure a high degree of pensioner inclusion through the system of pensions, it is nonetheless a fact that pensions degraded faster than wages, notwithstanding the fact that the social services for the elderly were severely neglected (please refer to Tables 5 and 6). Poverty and the isolation of many, notwithstanding the lengthy absence of community services, led to the diffuse process of social exclusion and segregation becoming considerably more focused as time went on.

As regards support for the elderly who face difficulties (i.e. beyond natural ones), there are an extremely limited number of institutions attempting to ensure a decent standard of living for them. Moreover, the system of domiciled support services is in its infancy.

Despite the Law number 17/2000 concerning the development of community services for the elderly being promoted, the services for this category of people are yet under-developed. For instance, in the Sibiu County, in the year 2000, only 1443 persons (2% of a total number of 73198 persons) benefited from community care services. By the year 2002, the number of beneficiaries rose very little bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 1927 persons (2,7% of the elderly population) against a background of a reduction in the elderly population total, to 70933 persons.

Data at 2001 level (CASPIIS, 2002) show that 25,4% (approximately 244.000) of the total number of persons over the age of 65 that live alone, live in poverty. Many of the poor from this category are, in fact, the state’s social

insurance system pensioners. The poverty of some of them owes to some extent to the inequities inherent in the pensions' system in establishing the pension's quantum (in the same conditions of contributions paid and respective length of service) and the exact time when they retired into pension. Thus, the generations of pensioners that retired before 1998 have been grossly disadvantaged by comparison to those that have retired after.

There is a vicious effect in that, too. Pensioners' earnings erosion led to an increase in their inability to cover basic food and medical care expenses, which, in turn, led to their health deteriorating and, to close the loop, a situation which led to their increasing dependency on the medical care services. There have yet to be developed programmes that prepare people for retirement as well as identify the option available for maintaining an active life-style that would enable the elderly to have a significant degree of social participation.

A large proportion of the elderly population does not have at its disposal sufficient means to lead to decent life, to participate actively in the society's cultural and social life, to benefit from the social services care available to them and, ultimately, to afford the freedom to decide on matters concerning their very own life. Yet, housing, health and food expenditures is what governs the life of the urban, elderly population while other types of expenses, such as cultural expenses for instance, are nothing but residual.

Persons with disabilities

In spite of the recent measures promoted nation-wide to inspire social inclusion, handicapped persons continue to be a group that is liable to be socially excluded. The types of services developed for this category of people – both residential and community ones – are yet in a phase of developmental as well as financial infancy. Partly, the problems confronting this group of people – also identified by PNAinc – still persist:

- Systematic community services that could come to the aid of non-institutionalised, handicapped persons are limited both in number and type. In every county, the number of day-care centres offering handicapped persons therapy and social integration programmes is very small and they are in most cases located in the County Capital cities unlike residential institutions that are placed mostly in rural areas.
- The services concerning pay and contracting of nurses/personal assistants for handicapped persons are inadequate.
- The lack of generalist social services' capacity concurs to an inability to adapt to handicapped person's specific needs.
- The lack of job opportunities for handicapped persons makes them, irrespective of their degree of handicap, dependant on passive support and encouragement strategies the result of which is but rapid impoverishment.

- The inequity of access to essential social services compared to the rest of individuals impoverishes handicapped persons hence it makes them disadvantaged financially too, which does nothing but increase the poverty risk they face.
- The inequity of accessing services/social protection benefits due to the physical distance separating their residence from the County Capital City.

The problems facing residential institutions for handicapped persons concern, primarily, their recuperating capacity, at least partially i.e. increase the capacity of those assisted to integrate naturally in a social and family environment via assuring professional services that are at least of an acceptable quality.

Table 21. The number of persons with handicap that are institutionalised in terms of population percentage, 1996-2000

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2003
Children	3955	3909	3493	3186	1204	--
Adults	16622	17178	17608	18478	18343	--
Total	20577	21087	21101	21664	19547	19965
% of the total population	0,09	0,09	0,09	0,10	0,09	0,09
% of the total handicapped persons	4,44	5,16	5,12	5,28	4,86	4,81

Source: SSPH

Note: Since 2000, children with handicap are included in the child protection

La sfârșitul anului 2003 se înregistra un număr de 414.620 persoane cu dizabilități (1,91% din totalul populației), din care 19.965 (4,81%) trăiau în mediu rezidențial.

At the end of 2003 the total number of people with various disabilities was 414620 (1,91% in total population), from which 19.965 (4,81%) were in residential care.

One of the positive measures relating to stimulating the social inclusion of handicapped persons' is addressed by the Law number 76/2002 concerning the unemployment insurance system, which motivates workforce occupation. The provision stipulated at paragraph 2 of articles 80 and 85 is in fact an incentive for employers to hire handicapped persons in that it:

- Offers to employers hiring handicapped persons a monthly sum representing 1,5 times the national gross minimum monthly wage, for a period of 12 months;
- Offers employers with fewer than 100 employees that hire a handicapped person for an unlimited period of time, a monthly sum representing a yearly

national gross minimum wage on condition that the contract with the handicapped person is not terminated earlier than a period of two years.

This last measure adds to a regulation stipulated at article 42 of the Emergency Ordinance number 102/1999 which sets the economic agents' (with fewer than 100 employees) obligation to hire a percentage of at least 4% of its workforce from among people with handicap. In case this obligation is not met by the employer, he/she has to pay towards the Social Solidarity Fund a sum equal to a gross minimum wage for each position that ought to have been filled by a handicapped person (article 43).

2003-2006". Acest plan vizează:

- reintegrarea în comunitate a persoanelor cu handicap care trăiesc acum în instituții rezidențiale coordonate de ANPH sau care trăiesc în familie fără un suport corespunzător;
- promovarea unei participări active a persoanelor cu handicap în societate la toate nivelurile și în toate sferele vieții cotidiene;
- crearea unui sistem de servicii comunitare care să permită persoanelor cu handicap să își trăiască propria viață cât mai independent posibil, asistate de o rețea de suport formată din oameni calificați și de o legislație adecvată.

Other positive measures adopted in this area:

- Facile access in public buildings, buses, public cabin-phones, side-walks and parkings (L. 519/ 2002) – measures already started (from 77% open access in public buildings, to 4,3% access in public parking places).
- Implementation of quality standards in the field of handicapped people according with the Order No. 22/2003 of State Secretary of National Agency for People with Handicap.

Another important step in improvement of situation of people with handicap is represented by the new "National Strategy regarding special protection and social integration of people with handicap" (GD 1215/2002) – as a start point for "National Action Plan for the 2003-2006 interval". This plan is concerned with:

- reintegration into community of people with disabilities which live in present in residential care centres or in their families but without adequate support
- encouragement of handicapped people to take part actively in the normal life of society at all levels and in all areas of daily life;
- set up a system of community social services which shall offer to handicapped people the opportunity of living as independent as possible, and assisted by a support network of professionals and adequate legislative framework.

Delinquents

The increase in delinquency after 1989 has yet to be countered by the existence of certain fundamental institutions, such as: juvenile tribunals, a framework for juvenile offenders' social recuperation and re-insertion, a framework for all delinquents that have served time to be re-inserted into society as well as offering social support to the victims of crime.

Juvenile delinquency is on the rise. For instance, the number of youths (18-29) that have committed crimes (and have been under investigation) rose between 1993 and 2000 by approximately 70% (from a total number of 55625 case in 1993 to 93634 in 2000).²

The classical solution of punishments that deprive people of their freedom is most often one that far from recuperating the individual for society it actually serves to lose him/her for good. The recent introduction of the probation system and of alternative types of punishment is an important step towards a quicker social re-integration of delinquents who have committed only minor offences in order that their social segregation and exclusion is avoided thus, helping to ease the normalisation of relationships between the ex-delinquent and the community.

The Roma minority

The social exclusion of the Roma population's specificity resides in the very existence of certain exclusion sources that do not exist as an underlying trend in the Romanian society. Whelan B.J. and Whelan C.T. (1995) argue that people's segregation occur in the labour market primarily, as a "causal, pre-disposing factor" for social exclusion as it triggers a chain reaction of exclusion.

What can be noted about the Roma population in Romania is that *there is no single factor generating exclusion but several of them*. If we analyse their nature we notice that, with the *exception of their presence on the labour market* – that could well be determined by certain conditions present in the local community or nation-wide – *the causal factors have a determination that is preponderantly individual* and, to a certain extent cultural ("communautaire" in the sense of a cultural "acqui") hence, self-exclusion to a certain degree. Here are some worrying statistics:

² The Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs, the General Police Inspectorate

Table 22. Causal/pre-disposing factors for social exclusion at the Roma population

Causal/pre-disposing factors		the proportion of people excluded
Do not have any ID papers		3,1% of the total Roma population
Have no ID though they are over 14 (and have Birth Certificate)		5,7% of the total number of 14 year olds
Have never gone to school		24,4% of those over the age of 10 (that never go to school)
Not legally married		39,4% of those married
Do not have a job	Have not worked (even occasionally in 1997 and 1998)	52% of over 14 yo, do not go to school any more and have answered the question (28% of those who have not given an answer to the question)
	Have not worked with worker's passport in 1997 or 1998	84% of over 14 yo, do not go to school any more and have answered the question (28% of those who have not given an answer to the question)

Source: the IRQL(ICCIV) database

Thus, it can be noticed what huge proportions such primary, fundamental exclusion forms take. In practical terms, to speak of poverty/reduced standard of living for people who, officially, do not even exist (because they have no ID papers as such) is pointless; they are completely excluded from the rights invested upon all individuals by the quality of being a citizen: social assistance, social insurance, the right to political participation, employment in a legally occupied job position etc.

The social exclusion of the Roma minority

Types of exclusion	Forms of exclusion	Sources/causes for exclusion	Exclusion consequences (derived exclusion/of a consequential type)
A. from the democratic and legal system	- excluded from the formal statute of citizens (do not have any ID papers)	- self-exclusion (disinterest as to the formal norms) - lack of specific measures dealing with this social problem.	- cannot vote, cannot profit from any of the social benefits available in the social protection system (please refer to type C)
	- have no property deeds for the house/land	- self-exclusion	- cannot sell or leave inheritance the house/land respectively
	- do not work legally (with contracts/workers' passport)	- is mainly a type of structural exclusion, a model encouraged by the system.	- do not benefit from social insurance: health, unemployment, pension work accidents etc.
B. from the labour market	- do not have a job	- is a type of exclusion pertaining to both the system as well as the individual and the local community	Practically, they follow from a series of other exclusions generated by a scarcity of earnings.

	- cannot practice/do not have a modern profession that is sought after on the labour market	- self-exclusion	Small chances of finding a job
C. from the welfare state (i.e. in terms of social protection)	- do not benefit from free education, child benefit, social insurance	- largely, a consequence of the first two types of social exclusion (A & B) yet, often a personal option too.	- strong material deprivation
	- do not benefit from social support though they fulfil the criteria)	- no resources in the community - discriminatory attitudes	- material deprivation
	- do not benefit from dinners at the social support canteen	- no such institution in the community - have not applied	- material deprivation
D. from the family and community system	- have no partner support: not married (even without Marriage Certificate) are divorced, widowed or, abandoned	- individual option for the unmarried / divorced; widowers/ abandoned not supported enough by the system	- interpersonal integration deficit - material deprivation
	-get no support/help from neighbours, relatives, friends when they need it	- is a consequence of relationships established by the individual (requires certain reciprocity) yet, the lack of community resources may also be the cause	- interpersonal integration deficit - material deprivation

The financial exclusion of the Roma population. The Roma are by far the most impoverished social category in Romania: three quarters live in poverty whereas more than half live in conditions of extreme poverty. The disproportion between the rate of extreme poverty registered by the Roma population vis-à-vis the rest of the population is more important than the rate of poverty itself.

Table 23. The rate of poverty based on ethnicity (2001)

	The rate of extreme poverty	The rate of poverty
Romanian	9,3	24,4
Hungarian	6,4	19,9
Roma	52,2	75,1
German	1,8	7,4
Other	11,3	31,7

Source: CASPIS's calculations (2003) based on the NSI's data referring to the year 2001

The population's principal earning sources are based on occasional activities and children's state allowance:

Table 24. The contribution made by different sources of income to the budget of the Roma population (1998) – decila 1 compared with decila 5 (1998)

	Decila 1	Decila 5
Children's allowance	63,1	26,4
Pensions	0,0	9,2
Unemployment Benefits	0,3	4,3
Salaries	0,0	6,2
Occasional and personal activities	31,8	46,6

Source: The IRQL (ICCV) database "Roma 1998".

Persons without any ID papers

For a number of reasons, in 1998, in Romania, there were approximately fifty thousand persons with no identity papers, the overwhelming majority of whom were Roma ethnic. This number remains significantly high, as programmes supporting people to obtain identity papers were limited to only a few counties/areas and included only a relatively small number of people (under 10.000 according to certain estimates).

An analysis based on categories of age reveals a *high percentage of people without identity papers among children* compared to similar adults. The detailed age-analysis reveals a relatively equal percentage among various under-14 age groups. The only plausible explanation appears to be a fall in the State's authority (and authoritarianism, as a method) after 1989 as much as the rise in costs for procuring identity papers for the Roma ethnic. The introduction of the allowance for families with many children was a factor that determined a rise in the number of requests for identity papers.

Table 25. The situation of persons that have no Birth Certificates in the Roma population

Age category	% without Birth Certificates
0-13 years	4,8
14-25	1,8
26-45	1,3
46-65	1,4
over 65	1,3
Total	3,1

Source: the IRQL (ICCV) database "Roma 1998".

Of the *causes* mentioned in various researches, the most frequent cause is related to the *certain maternity hospitals' refusal to provide mothers that have no identity papers with a Birth Certificate for their newly born baby*. Subsequently, it is most complicated to obtain a Birth Certificate without this maternity hospital receipt.

Another frequent cause is the (not legally married) mother's wish to give the child the name of its father who's absent (away for work or, imprisoned). Subsequently, due to the complicated undertaking in obtaining a Birth Certificate mentioned before, some mothers simply gives up and leaves the baby without identity papers.

A third cause refers to the compulsory requirement of *picking up the Certificate from the place where the child was born*. If the child was born at some distance from home, it may be too expensive for families to travel there to get the Certificate.

Another element that makes the procedure ever more cumbersome is the exaggerated bureaucracy that needs to be overcome to obtain a Birth Certificate, after the baby is one year old. Even if, during these last years, projects destined for identity paper-less Roma population – such as was the case in Galati, for instance, when thousands Roma ethnic individuals were supported to obtain a legal identity – we estimate that the number of persons that are still without a Birth Certificate or any other document vouching for their status as citizens continues to be relatively high (in the region of tens of thousands of such people).

Consequences: illegally built/occupied dwellings

The influence of identity papers gone missing on the social status of the Roma people is also important. The need for housing is a basic one for any human being. The status of any particular dwelling as concerns documentation proving its ownership is essential in any democracy governed by the state of law. For the majority of Romania's population, the housing problem is resolved (at least, quantitatively) via private property over a particular dwelling. There is, however, a significant proportion of the population that rents other people's property. At present, renting constitutes generally a disadvantage in that, letting prices are high, on the one hand and, on the other, the lack of medium and long-term security as regards the tenancy contracts – which can be voided by the property changing owners, either through selling or, in the case of nationalised properties, being repossessed by its pre-nationalisation owner. Hence, these are but two of the ways in which one can be deprived of his/hers housing/accommodation. 16,5% of the Roma population rent their accommodation hence, another high risk of exclusion.

Yet, a far more difficult situation is faced by some 21% of the Roma population who either live in a dwelling for which they have no ownership documentation as it was built illegally or, they simply squat. Notwithstanding the legal issues involved here (we are talking here of tens of thousands Roma households!) the social exclusion risk is ever so high as hundreds of thousands people stand to lose their abode if the letter of the law was to be applied rigorously.

Table 26. The Roma's housing situation

<i>Housing situation</i>	<i>Percentage</i>		
Rented home with courtyard	6,5%	<i>Rented</i>	
Rented apartment	10%	16,5%	<i>in block of flats:</i>
Owned flat	11%	<i>Legal property</i>	21%
Personal house (the family's) with property deeds	50%	61%	In house: 77,5%
House illegally built without any title deeds to the land	21%	<i>Illegal property 21%</i>	
Have not answered	1,5%		

Source: the IRQL(ICCIV) database "Roma 1998".

The possible causes for the current situation pertain, in our opinion, to the relatively recent political stabilisation and, to a large degree, to a certain degree of political pressure exerted by an important part of the Roma population. On the other hand, a high fertility rate coupled with the limited resources of young couples is what drove forward the abusive building of dwellings on communal or, state-owned farmland, for instance. Though complex, the ownership issue must be resolved (with flexibility in finding amiable solutions where the situation allows compromise while insisting on the Roma populations right to property). Otherwise, it will encourage this cowboy style means of acquiring property in perpetuity.

Problems relating to the children's education in Roma communities

In 1992, in their volume "Worrying or Ignoring the Gypsies", Zamfir C. and Zamfir E. noticed that only 51% of the ten-year old Roma children frequented school regularly. Another 14% had interrupted their studies, 16% were frequenting school once in a blue moon whereas 19% had never even bothered to enrol.

Such an alarming situation became slightly better after the state Allowance for children was conditioned on their attending classes and improved further after the introduction of the "Croissant and Milk" programme, in 2002.

The Romas attitude to education remains negative. When it is not compulsory, formal education is largely refused even if it is free as kindergartens, schools, high schools, vocational schools or Universities are. Thus, only 20% of the suitably aged Roma children go to kindergarten. The higher education courses frequenting are worse still: one quarter of the Roma people have never completed at least one class/academic year at primary school and almost half have completed a maximum of four classes, only 5% graduated high school and 0,2% graduated University.

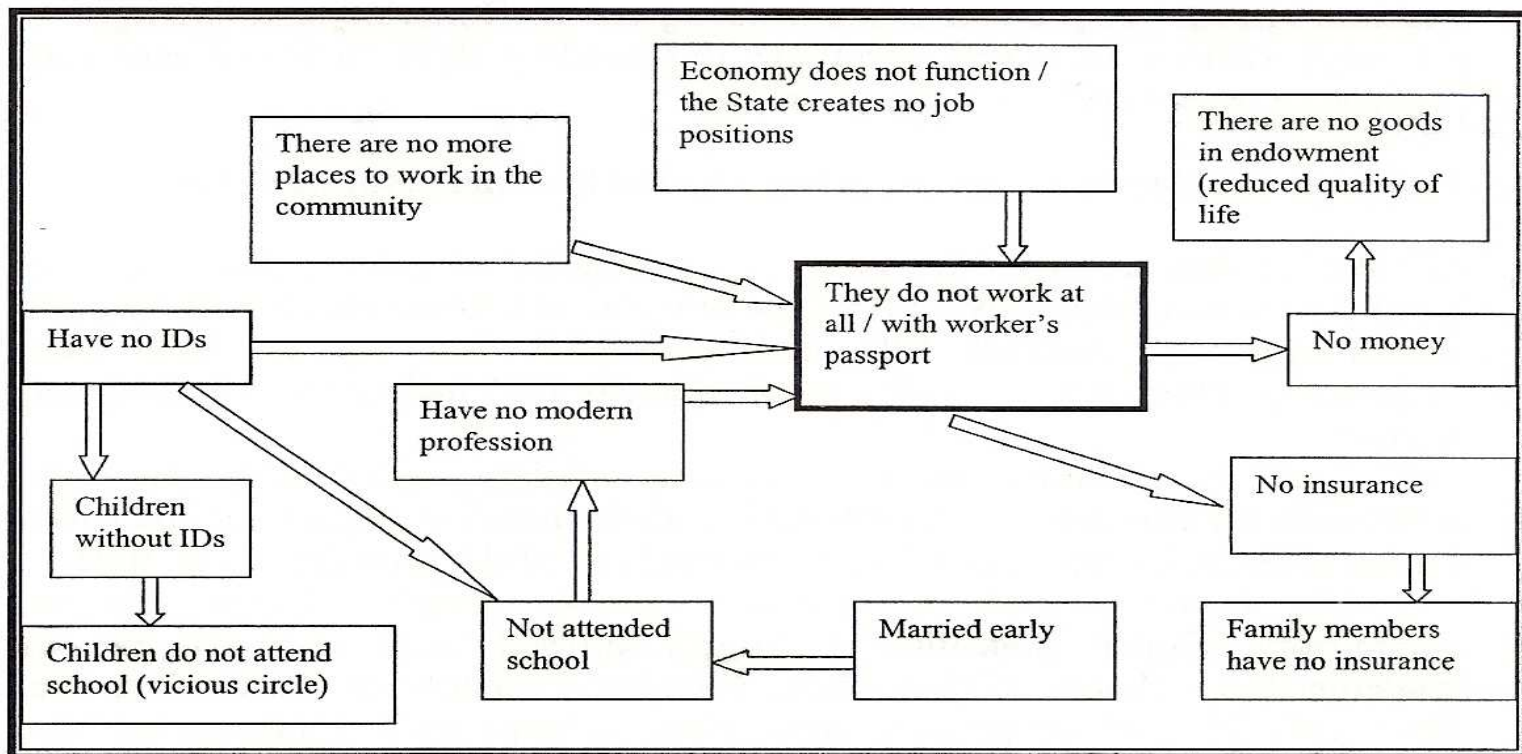
Illiteracy is a primary source of social exclusion. Practically, those 39% illiterate or partly literate Roma ethnic people have minimal chances of participating in the labour market.

The Romas participation on the labour market

Living in relatively recently settled communities (during the 50s, 60s or even later than that) – in practical terms, for no more than one generation or two, at most – many of the Romas remained in a situation similar to that of Western immigrants vis-à-vis their relationship with the rest of the community in which they are the last to have arrived. Often, they are not only short of the most basic means of living but they have a deficit of education and qualifications which forces them to work only as unskilled labour, agricultural labourers, in poorly paid and vulnerable jobs where they are the last to come and the first to go in case of streamlining. Their length of service is often insufficient to entitle them to social insurance benefits, which makes their vulnerability ever more critical.

All the above can be synthesised in a graphic explanation of causal chains that lead to the exclusion of the Roma ethnic population from the labour market as well as explain its share of consequences and the “catch 22” circle of exclusion.

Sources of exclusion from the labour market of the Roma ethnic population



Colour code:

- Red – “external” sources (state/community)
- Green – self-exclusion
- Orange – consequences of the labour market exclusion
- Black – family consequences

Measures for promoting the social inclusion of the Roma ethnic population

The Strategy for improving the situation of the Roma ethnic population (adopted via the Government Decision number 430/2001).

The Romanian Government's 2001 Strategy represents a political undertaking with highly detailed objectives. The document concerns *10 major spheres of action*, beginning with public administration, social security, health, the economy, culture, communication and civic participation. The Strategy contains *ten-year action routes* and a *four-year detailed methods plan*, as well as an *institutional framework* capable of ensuring the Strategy's objectives are well implemented, at local and central level. Moreover, a Monitoring Group for the Implementation of the Strategy was set up of Government and Roma organisations' representatives. As a result of this:

- At central level function a Mixed Committee of Strategy Implementation and Monitoring and other ministerial Commissions for the Roma population;
- At local level, there have been established 41 county offices for the Roma ethnic population and 399 experts in Roma affairs at Town Hall level;
- For 2002, in order that Romas access to health services was improved, The Ministry of Health financed from its own budget the formation and the subsequent job placement of over 200 sanitary mediators, nation-wide;
- Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs personnel that has committed acts of discrimination against ethnic Romas have been monitored and sanctioned;
- 42 school inspectors for education in the Romani language were named of which, half belong to this ethnic group;
- The Ministry of Education initiated and implemented the programme "*The Disadvantaged Groups, in particular, the Roma ethnic children's Access to Education*" with a budget of 8,33 million Euro (7 million Euro financed by the European Union and 1,33 million Euro financed by the Romanian Government). The Programme will be finalised in 2004 and includes communities from 10 counties where there was support for improving the Roma children's access to education.

SOCIAL POLICIES IN THE SOCIAL INCLUSION AREA

At this particular moment in time, it is vital that *social inclusion* is internalised / included in the system of values/responsibilities/ and action plans of every social institution. This must become, in the shortest time possible, a priority course that is critical to any viable strategy/ comprehensive programmes for promoting social inclusion while preventing and absorbing all forms of social exclusion.

CASPIS and efforts to promote social inclusion via the PNAinc

The manifestation of negative economic and social processes during the transition period led to the apparition of certain social exclusion and segregation phenomena that particularly affect certain social groups. During these last years, a series of studies on poverty were carried out – IRQL (ICCV) 1995, The World Bank 1996, IRQL&NSI&UNDP 1998, IRQL&UNDP 2001, the Government of Romania & CASPIS 2002 – as well as a number of evaluations of certain programmes and social policies that address instances of a process of social exclusion and segregation. As poverty is more of a one-dimensional concept, it is imperatively necessary to have an assorted and manifold approach to the social exclusion phenomenon as an important factor of social disintegration. Beyond the current true magnitude of social exclusion – which needs not only to be gauged at but a reactive type of approach as to how to tackle best the issues relating to this phenomenon – it is most important to recognise the sources for this type of exclusion in order that a preventative approach in the sense of eliminating / diminishing the factors generating it is undertaken.

The most important and comprehensive document in this respect comes in the shape of the Anti-poverty National Plan for Promoting Social Inclusion (PNAinc) drafted by the Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Commission (CASPIS) and approved by the Romanian Government in July 2002. PNAinc is conceived as an instrument of the social development process with the following functions:

- It is an instrument of the Romanian society's collective conscience that is reflecting on the problems it is currently facing and the avenues for the social construction of an anti-poverty culture and the promotion of an inclusive society.
- To promote an articulated social policy concept that becomes crystallised in a number of fundamental principles.
- It is a global, many-sided action plan as regards the principal sectors of social life (at national, county and local level) for the prevention/absorption of poverty and social exclusion while promoting social inclusion.

- It offers a reference framework for implanting the objective of creating a prosperous and inclusive society throughout its entire public activity sphere.
- It is an instrument for monitoring governmental efforts to prevent/absorb poverty while promoting social inclusion.

Any attempt to diminish social exclusion and eliminate certain forms of it begins from identifying the exclusion sources first as much as it follows with drawing the moral and social objectives underpinning the type of society Romania wishes to become, in the years to come. In attempting to formulate an answer to this very issue, the PNAinc underlines the fact that Romania's central as well as long-term objective is that of

“creating a prosperous society that is economically, socially and politically active, underpinned by a high level of collective and individual responsibility, that is socially cohesive and has a high level of opportunities for all of its citizens”

The Romanian society will shortly have to become a society that is:

- **Active:** capable of economic and social development, making the best of opportunities coming its way while dealing efficiently and constructively with the associated risks; continuously developing its capacities to energise the excluded social segments that are at risk of involution and dependency.
- **Socially cohesive:** with a high degree of social solidarity that aims to reduce the numbers of those socially excluded and the gravity of the social deprivation afflicting them:
 - Eliminating the sources generating social exclusion and discrimination while promoting strong mechanisms for social inclusion;
 - Ensuring a decent minimum standard of living for everyone as well as guaranteeing access to fundamental social services;
 - Smoothing the economic and social polarities in order that differences remain equitable as well as stimulating rather than generating social conflicts and tensions.
- Offering **opportunities for everyone** – a society wherein each one of its members gets a real chance of active participation in all of its social spheres:
 - Financial – active and profitable participation to economic life;
 - Social and personal – access to the schooling system, medical services, cultural and professional opportunities;
 - Accessing fundamental goods and services – housing, the goods and services needed for a civilised standard of living, social and community environment that is safe and sound, a pollution-free environment.

In a resume of these three characteristics – i.e. *active*, *cohesive* and *offering opportunities for all* – it can be argued that the societal model Romania wants to

build for itself is an *inclusive* one, where those *groups that have been traditionally excluded may find opportunities for normal development*. Hence, the reason for the main objectives of the fight for social development through social inclusion being precisely and clearly defined:

- *Eradicating the extreme poverty created by the contingencies of life,*
- *Speeding up the absorption of the severe social exclusion and eradicating the extremely difficult social problems with devastating moral impact: institutionalised children, the Street Children, abandoned children, the economically and socially distressed elderly people;*
- *Initiating the process of gradual absorption of the state of poverty, which is but a diffuse characteristic of a large percentage of the population.*

The ideology advocating the withdrawal of the state from the challenge of social reconstruction is one of the factors responsible for worsening social exclusion. There is a need for re-building the public system of prevention and social support. Having eliminated centralised bureaucratic intervention, the local authorities' rapid reaction force offers new opportunities for developing local partnerships to prevent and combat social exclusion efficiently and decisively.

CASPIS is attempting to promote a new type of partnership approach to the grand social problems that need to be faced: the "*local initiative*" approach that is complementary to "*multiple-level financing*" i.e. community, county, national budget, international programmes. Local programme's multiple-level financing partnerships represents a fundamental option currently, at a time when the decentralisation process has only just started and community local financial resources are insufficient to develop and implement social development local projects. Hence, current options of increasing financing for projects that can guarantee an efficient return and a more considerate use of the resources available must be assumed urgently as there is ample scope for institutional as well as technical and methodological capacity development.

Further to decentralisation, an increase in the national capacities for strategically designing the most efficient use for the resources available per programme as well as an increase in those capacities to diagnose and monitor social problems is vital.

As the Romanian structures begin to settle after a turbulent transition, new possibilities (that ought to be urgently seized upon) open up to promote programmes for diagnosing and monitoring social exclusion processes as well as evaluating social policies and programmes. Lately, the number of social programmes available has multiplied considerably. Yet, though some of these many programmes have proved their potential worth, the lack of control, evaluation procedures and clear performance criteria apparent have transformed many of them into a source of financial wastage.

Hence the overdue need for putting an end to all this pilot experimentation of programmes that will not lead to enlarged institutional frameworks, applicable nation-wide. The accent must be put on institutional development that is centred on public/community partnerships.

An important avenue in this respect constitutes the increase in the responsibility of the rest of community actors in sustaining and promoting socially inclusive and socially cohesive values that must enable the development of support mechanisms that may, in turn, multiply their social initiatives.

Romania, together with the European Community, must realise that, in the near future, the clouds of further types of exclusion gather on the European horizon. The countries that are in full flight of European integration are beginning to be confronted by the risks of social exclusion despite their efforts to align themselves to European standards. It is essential that Romania, in partnership with other European nations, develops pan-European mechanisms for social inclusion.

The Social Assistance System Reform – fundamental mechanism for the promotion of social inclusion in Romania

The fundamental legislative package that sets the framework for reforming the social assistance system, in Romania is presented in the following table.

Law	Target Groups	Rights/ benefits predicted
1. The Law no. 705/2001 concerning the Social Assistance National System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families with juvenile children in care - Persons with deficiencies/disabilities - Other vulnerable groups - Families on the cusp of poverty - The elderly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social labour conscription in cash or in kind - Family allowance for families with children, vis-à-vis the birth, education children maintenance - Social benefit (in cash or in kind) awarded to persons whose earnings are scarce - Special benefits for persons with deficiencies/disabilities - Social assistance services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) community, awarded at the beneficiary's place of residence/family/ community b) specialised, awarded at the beneficiary's abode and most often in specialised institutions - social and medical care services
2. The Law no. 116/2002 concerning the Prevention and Combating of Social Segregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youngsters 16-25 y.o. that will be supported by ANOFM with a view to their professional inclusion on the labour market (single youngsters and those with children in maintenance; young families with or without children in maintenance etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support for young people's integration on the labour market via compensating with up to 75% of a two-year wage package - access to housing: covering entirely

Law	Target Groups	Rights/ benefits predicted
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 35 (up to and including) y.o. persons who cannot acquire a home without help (youngsters from placement centres; married people – up to and including 35 y.o. –with/without children in maintenance etc.) - persons earning the GMW - children from families earning the GMW that maintain 2 or more school enrolled children – including those who continue their studies in higher education - adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the bond paid in advance of the commencement of the tenancy or the rent for a period of maximum 3 years from County Council funds - medical assistance access (emergency and curative) for persons earning the GMW - access to education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) schooling bursary (sum indexed to inflation awarded by BS-MEC/ BL) b) adult literacy programmes (literacy scholarship)
3. The Law no. 416/2001 concerning the Guaranteed Minimum Wage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Different types of families, defined in art. 2 and 3 of the Law who can prove (means tested) that their earnings are below the level stipulated by law - The wives of those doing their military duty that earn nothing or earn less than the GMW (art. 23) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring each family earns a GMW through the monthly awarding of sums representing the difference between the family's net earnings and the GMW for the respective type of family - The level of the GMW is monthly indexed via GD - Heating support between November-March - Newly-born babies' allowance awarded to the first four newly-born babies - Other emergency allowances
4. The Law concerning the single- parent families (about to be adopted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children from single-parent families and single parents raising their own children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial support for single-parent families

Through the framework law package adopted after 2000 (and followed by respective secondary legislation) in the social assistance area, a number of basic problems pertaining to socially excluded groups have been solved.

The first laws referring to the Guaranteed Minimum Wage, social exclusion, families with lots of children and single-parent families have solved to a large extent the problem of ensuring minimal financial resources for the most impoverished families. Other measures, such as the “Milk and Croissant” Programme, different ways of enticing school participation, measures for the social protection of the Roma ethnic population, strategies to promote workforce occupation had a substantial contribution to covering certain basic needs, augmenting school participation and the disadvantaged groups' labour market participation.

The next step – which is also the most difficult due to the inheritance of a sever social assistance deficit at community level – is crucial for promoting social inclusion in the area of social assistance and refers, in particular, to the implementation of community services for social assistance. Here are some co-ordinates for the reform in the social assistance area, in Romania:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) The first category of action aims refers to the complete *absorption of serious forms of social exclusion that have resulted from the process of transition*:

- Eradicating the situation of people without identity papers (the majority of whom are Roma ethnic) that have no access to any form of social protection, to any of their rights as citizens; though the percentage of people without identity papers remains insignificant – the number estimated revolves around the 50.000 mark – this remains nevertheless a worrying statistic;
- The drastic reduction of cases in which illiteracy and school abandonment occurs while assuring primary education for all; for those who abandoned school or have never even been enrolled, special literacy programmes must be financed to enable them to acquire the minimal skills needed to read, write and calculate – skills that could then be formalised in a literacy diploma / certificate;
- The drastic reduction and the attempt to eliminate the plight of homeless people of all ages – be they children, adults or, even families – who live in the street; hence, it is essential for the local authorities to facilitate the creation of shelters and emergency accommodation throughout the country;
- Monitoring cases of forced evacuation from dwellings repossessed by their previous owners, identifying and developing housing alternatives for the evacuated families.

2) Action aims for promoting social inclusion in the *educational sphere*:

Support for the excluded yet, gifted people (especially from the rural area).

Introducing a scholarship package, underwritings and other gratuities for outstanding pupils and students designed to reduce their exclusion from medium- and higher education;

- Clothing/school uniform, school stationery (that could be offered “in kind”);
- Free tickets (not just subsidised) / monthly passes between home and high school/University;
- Free meals at canteens/lunch tickets;
- Free housing (student accommodation or the equivalent monthly rent)

It remains to be seen to what degree such full bursaries ought to be awarded to every pupil/student who passed the entry examination and whose families have combined earnings of less than the Guaranteed Minimum Wage.

Support for the Roma ethnic children’s education:

- Continuing to form and use school mediators in (Roma) communities with high school abandonment;

- Continuing to underwrite places in High Schools and Universities as previous results have been encouraging;
- Roma ethnic children will continue to be granted poverty bursaries designed for people who study in High Schools or, Universities;
- Access to kindergartens must be assured through the establishment of such nursery schools in rural places where there is a majority Roma ethnic population and where there are no such schools – with high school abandonment and rife illiteracy;
- Enrolling in schools children with no identity papers must be accepted via a simple procedure (a declaration from the parents that they have no identity papers) which must be followed by the free issuing of identity papers as a result of the submissions made by the respective school.

Introducing in the School Curriculum of an integrated programme teaching life skills, knowledge about the way in which society functions and is organised including its political system and its forms of social participation: civic education, life education, sexual education, youth communication, the prevention of drug and alcohol consumption etc. Such themes must be included in school programmes at all levels as a result of thorough needs' evaluation.

Such themes as well as many others ought to be included in education programmes for youth and adults from impoverished communities, such as those whose earnings are the GMW or, those undergoing programmes of social re-insertion i.e. alternative punishments/probation where they undertake formation courses/programmes instead of doing the equivalent number of community hours work.

The promotion of inclusive education; the population must be educated to accept in schools children that are either HIV positive, handicapped or from other excluded groups, via the visual means of national campaigning.

3) Eliminating all forms of social exclusion from the *health services sphere*:

As social financial benefits do not allow certain social categories to pay for essential medical services, it is necessary to increase access to fundamental health services for people with insufficient earnings.

Increasing the disadvantaged peoples' access to means of contraception; this could be achieved via the introduction of contraceptives on the free medicines' list – hence, their free distribution to such impoverished couples that are at a high risk of abandoned pregnancies and subsequent abandonment.

The result of the reform was a disparity of access to medical care as territorial medical services were replaced by family doctors – a system that was completely inadequate for the rural population. Hence the need to increase the access to medical services for people in rural areas via the introduction of more substantial financial (or, in kind) incentives that could determine doctors to work in areas that do not have sufficient numbers of doctors.

Increasing accent placed on prevention and treatment during the onset of the illness.

4) Promoting social inclusion in housing:

Massive creation of social dwellings in all counties and cities notwithstanding the provisions of the housing Law being observed vis-à-vis their distribution; continuing to support poor families with their heating bills during winter.

Identifying and monitoring maintenance indebted persons and stimulating local authorities to envisage ways of spreading out due payments.

Increasing the impoverished population's access to public utilities' consumption.

Improving the rural population's living conditions through investment in basic infrastructure.

5) Promoting labour market inclusion:

Developing integrated occupational services.

Introducing active measures designed to combat unemployment with the accent being placed on the creation of work places and the subsequent increase in the number of salaried workers. This is likely to lead to a rapid re-balancing act of the proportion between the number of people in work and the number of pensioners.

Special accent placed on the effective creation of job places especially in rural areas where job occupation remains low.

Supporting job places and other activities capable of producing earnings for the rural population as well as in disadvantaged areas in order that territorial exclusion is reduced.

Placing the accent on increasing job occupation in the Roma ethnic population and increasing job opportunities via literacy programmes followed by counselling and training.

Stimulating occupation in the formal economy concurrent to discouraging via the severe sanctioning of those working in the underground economy (in particular, of the employers)

6) Eliminating all forms of social exclusion in the area financial rights and benefits:

Eradicating discrepancies between pensions awarded for the same work conditions, length of service and occupational category which is but a result of retiring into pension at different moments in time.

Promoting more of a level playing field policy vis-à-vis the minimum wage criteria that ought to deter on the one hand a series of unscrupulous employers to pay lesser real wages while on the other, higher real wages that are

not registered accordingly. A fundamental measure would be to set differentiated minimum wages (either on territorial development criteria or, vis-à-vis the type of activity undertaken or, a combination of these and other criteria).

To reduce difficulties of co-financing the GMW by poor local communities, this (the co-financing) must be done by involving all local communities' participation yet, not with a fixed rate/percentage but with variable ones, proportional to the community's level of development.

7) Promoting social inclusion in the area of social assistance service:

Promoting an integrated social assistance system as the current system is still fragmented despite certain positive evolutions.

Diversifying the services offered as the range of social assistance services offered (i.e. counselling, social re-insertion, probation/alternative punishments, peer groups for youngsters and a lot of other services are yet unavailable in Romania).

Re-thinking the legislative and institutional framework for juvenile delinquency: separate tribunals for juveniles, punishments other than imprisonment etc.

The gradual passage from the types of services offered in institutions (however insufficient and sometimes of a reduced quality) to community social assistance services (day care centres, social centres) or, in house / family / at the beneficiary's place of residence.

For the disadvantaged categories (the elderly) for whom the institutionalisation waiting list is so big whereas the available places are so few an increase in the number of places available may be, temporarily, a positive measure concurrent though with an increase in community capacity to resolve such cases as well as an increase in the quality of services offered.

Increasing the capacity of the Ministry for Labour, Social Solidarity and the Family for drafting strategies and organising the social assistance services.

Increasing the social assistance services' human resource numbers as much as their quality.

References

Alan Murie. (2002). The dynamics of social exclusion and neighbourhood decline: housing, welfare regimes and the underclass, Eurex, European Online Seminar On Urban Transformations, Poverty, Spatial Segregation And Social Exclusion, the University of Urbino, the Sociology Institute, Lecture 12.

- Barbu G., Stroie S., Tambrea N., Zamfir C. (1996). The Size of Poverty: Romania 1994, in Social Policy towards Poverty. Comparative Approach, Golinowska S.(ed.), *Occasional Papers*, 8, Warsaw.
- Lang, Caroline & Wilkinson, Sue. (2000). Social Inclusion, Fact Sheet, Museums & Galleries Commission, MGC Education, Access & Audience Development.
- * * * *The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion*, website: www.cesi.org.uk
- Unteanu, Cristian. We Can Be Much More Efficient than We Could Ever Have Thought, an interview with Anna Diamantopoulou, the European Commissioner for Workforce Occupation and Social Affairs, Brussels.
- The Group for Reflection – Evaluating the State of the National Economy, the Romanian Academy, 1999 Report, An Open Project, Bucharest, 1999 (part of the “Project on Human Dignity and Social Exclusion – the Council of Europe”)
- * * * *The Government of Romania*. (2002).The National Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Promotion Plan.
- * * * *The Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, vol. 21, 4,5,6, 2001.
- * * * *The Joint Report on Social Inclusion – Part 1: The European Union*, including Executive Summary, website: europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/joint_rep_en.htm
- * * * *The Social Assistance Magazine* 2002 and 2003.
- Hantrais, Linda. (1995). *Social Policy in the European Union*.
- Castells, Manuel. *The End of the Millennium* – (2nd edition), Oxford University Press, (2000).
- Preda, Marian. (2002). *Romanian Social Politics: Between Poverty and Globalisation*, Iasi: Polirom Publishing House.
- Molnar M., Poenaru M. (1992). *The Minimum Standard of Living*, CIDE, Bucharest.
- Molnar, M. (1999). *Poverty and Social Assistance*, Tomorrow’s Romania, Foundation Publishing House, Bucharest.
- Raboaca, G., Bati, I., Parciog S. (1994). The Minimum Standard of Living –A Point of Reference for the Social Assistance’s Positioning and Funding, Academic paper presented at the Romanian-German Seminar on Social Assistance Problems, Poiana Brasov.
- Ruhl C., Daianu D. (coord.), (1999). The Economic Transition in Romania. Past, Present and Future – Works of “Romania 2000: 10 years of transition – Past, Present and Future”, Bucharest: “Graphic Art” Printing House.
- Sahn D., Simler K., A. (1994). Preliminary Report on Poverty in Romania, partial data semester II November, Cornell University, SUA.

- The Social Protection Committee. (2001). Report on indicators on the field of poverty and social exclusion.
- Tesliuc, C. M., Pop L., Tesliuc, E. D. (2001). *Poverty and the Social Protection System*, Iași: Polirom Printing House.
- Atkinson, Tony (coord.). (2002). *Social Indicators – The EU and Social Inclusion*, Oxford University Press.
- Valceanu G. (coord.) (1982). The Minimum Standard of Living in Romania, *Study notebook*, No 88, Institute for National Economy, Bucharest.
- Zamfir C., (coord.) (1994). *Poverty Dimensions*, Bucharest: Expert Printing Press, 1995.
- Zamfir C. (coord.) (1999). *Social Policies in Romania 1990-1998*, Bucharest: Expert Printing Press.
- Zamfir E. (coord.) (2000). *Community Development and Anti-Poverty Strategies*, Bucharest: Expert Printing Press.
- Zamfir E., Badescu I., Zamfir C. (co-ord.) (2000). *The State of the Romanian Society After 10 Years of Transition*, Bucharest: Expert Printing Press.
- Zamfir E., Preda M. (coord.) (2000). *Community Social Problems Diagnosis*, Bucharest: Expert Printing Press.
- Zamfir E., Zamfir C. (coord.) (1993). *Gypsies – Between Worrying and Ignoring*, Bucharest: Alternative Printing House.
- Zamfir, C. *Social. Exclusion and Poverty in Transition Romania*, National Report (unpublished).
- Zamfir C., Preda M. (coord.) (2002). *The Roma in Romania*, Bucharest: Expert Printing Press.
- Zamfir C. (coord.) (2001). *Poverty in Romania*, Bucharest: Creative ID.
- Zamfir C. (coord.) (2001). *The Informal Economy in Romania*, Bucharest: Creative ID.