Abstract

The purpose of this study is to highlight the need for educational partnerships in primary education in order to develop optimal educational process.

The paper presents the results of a study conducted at two schools in Alexandria, who developed partnerships with educational authorities, institutions (medical units, police, church), local economic agents.

The results show that the school grow with the evolution of the local community, and life is influenced by what happens in the community. Therefore the forms of partnership are developed mainly on those components whose main beneficiary is the student, and access to various community resources leads to the existence of well-developed and recognized schools locally and not only (beyond).

1. Introduction

In the current environment, education undergoes a comprehensive restructuring of the educational process, aiming not only on teaching pupils, but also on its transformation into an actor of his own school training through collaboration with family and community.

Educational partnership, as a form of communication, cooperation and collaboration in child support in the educational process implies a unit of requirements, options, decisions and educational activities among educational factors. Educational partnership unfolds with educational act itself and refers to the design, decision, action and
cooperation among educational institutions (family, school and community), educational agents/agencies (children, parents, teachers, psychologists, therapists, etc.) and community members with influence on growth, education and child development (doctors, church, policemen of local community, etc.).

Collaboration of educational agents in a education partnership is the top priority of educational policies aimed at increasing the quality of education.

According to researcher E. Vrasmas[1], educational partnership is a form of unification, support and assistance for formal education influences to ensure quality education. Collaboration between school, family and community requires effective communication, a unit of requirements and actions in the child's interest, but each one of those institutions shall retain their identity, bringing only the contribution in a specific and concrete way by cultural, social and economic doings. [1],

School is the institution that involves, directs and guides, from educational point of view, the relationship with the social partners, and the community provides material support and involvement of pupils and their families in community projects for the formation of a personality in terms of civic and social responsibility.

According to S. Cristea, pedagogical partnership meets two functions that are in complementary relationship: opening function of schools to institutions located outside the education system, which tent to integrate in this system, and exerted synergistic function both within the educational system and outside it. From this point of view, the specific objectives of educational partnership, would cover cooperation activity between all education stakeholders to form the primary school student's personality. [2],

Away the idea that educational partnership requires actions make between school institutions and local associations, social workers, schools, companies, etc., which means that the student's education becomes everyone's problem and require the mobilization of all energies around school. [3],

Also, J. Epstein states that partnership activities that includes teachers, parents, stakeholders and pupils, guides, energizes and motivates children so that they get success alone. [4],

Specialists in this field: E. Vrasmas [1], S. Cristea [2], argue that educational partnership is an important activation and valorisation factor of school-family-community relations in order to train pupils personality in primary education, making it a priority to strategies aimed at developing quality educational process.

Educational partnership manifests itself as a social phenomenon and pedagogical approach involving curricular approach to education, focused on respecting and valuing diversity, multiculturalism and uniqueness of each human being. [1],

Enchanting the quality of relationships between educational agents involved in the partnership, assumes choosing the best way of achieving school-family-community collaboration. The concept of optimization, means, in this case, the educational system to correspond to increased demands.

Optimizing partnership between teachers and parents is based on: the attitude, perceptions of each partner, the quality of cooperation in child support, characteristics of the educational institution and family. [1],

In the centre of the educational partnership is the child, who is offered a model of how adults engage and cooperate to create a stimulating learning environment.

Parents are child's first educators, but children education is the responsibility of the entire community.

In the understanding of Joyce Epstein, among forms of parental involvement in educational activities we may include: assistance given to parents by the school (helping families to create a positive learning environment with programs for parents initiation); volunteering (recruiting parents from school activity support groups, teachers, pupils and other parents); decisions (include parents in decision making groups at the school); learning at home (transmitting information to parents on how to help pupils perform school tasks with the help of the school book that help sending messages between parents and teachers), etc. [4],

In formation of student's personality, communication, collaboration and cooperation of all educational factors is a priority of any society.

School represents an institution that functions in a community build up from many educational items like: family, authorities, governmental or non-governmental institutions, and church, police and health units. For the partnership school-local community to work in a proper manner, decentralization is absolutely necessary. [5],

The decentralization of the pre-university level represents the movement of authority, responsibility and resources regarding decisions about general and financial management towards schools and local community. In this way it is created a solid bond between school and community. [6].
In completing this research I have started from the point that, at the local level, communities develop differently and have different characteristics and school, as central institution of local community may develop according to local guidance.

2. The objectives of the research
   - The identification of community agents regarding the partnership school-community;
   - The identification of specific agents that enlarge the partnership school – local community.
   - Finding and solving the problems that interfere in this relation school-local community;

3. Methodology

3.1. The hypothesis of the research
If school has many responsibilities regarding its own management, there will be many positive aspects for the development of both agents.

3.2. The area of the research.
The study has been applied in different domains: schools, medical units, police and church, as well as economic agents. The schools we have analysed are from Alexandria, Teleorman County.

3.3. The reason for choosing the two institutions
These schools were selected in an objective manner, because the students from the Faculty of Educational Sciences attend to classes during the pedagogical guidance.

3.4. Research Methods.
During this research we have used different methods: questionnaire, observation, analysing social papers, the case study, the split interview.

3.5. Tools used during the research
A: The evaluation standards of the school followed the following directions: The historic background of school and community; The human resources; The management; The electronic resources; Culture; Financial resources; Availability for partnerships and programmes.

   The applying of the criteria from this grid can help the schools managers and other local factors to realize a development strategy regarding school, but also to apply this strategy.

B: The questionnaire has been applied to many local categories: pupils, parents, teachers, local counsellors, doctors, policemen, priests and economic agents.

   For each category we elaborated a questionnaire in order to discover the values that enriched the idea of education and of its roles inside local community, as well as opportunities of partnerships at local level.

   - **The questionnaire** for the pupils was formed from ten questions that aim for: the identification of characteristics related to school and family (pupils have to write down two to four words when they heard: school and family); the children’s perception of their parents’ interference in school activities; the identification of extra-school activities in which the pupils have an important part.

   - **The questionnaire** addressed to parents was formed from twenty questions that referred to: the identification of school and family characteristics – parents are asked to write two to four words that came into their minds when they heard: school, family; the presence of parents’ appreciation towards school; the frequency of parents’ visits to school; the identification of the people contacted by the parents when they come to school; involving parents in school activities; discussing with parents – involving them in school structures, in choosing the books or facultative; the parents’ perception regarding the cooperation between school and local community.

   - **The questionnaire** addressed to teachers was made of 16 questions that referred to: the organizational climate of the school; the identification of the school management; the continual courses that teachers graduated; the partnerships that were developed between school and local communities in order to enhance different collaborations.

   - **The questionnaire** addressed to local community- city hall and local counsellors consisted in 18 questions that had the following features: the perception of the authorities regarding the role of school in the community; the perception of the authorities regarding their own role toward school; the benefits of the
partnership between school and local authority; problems – solutions in developing the partnership.

- **The questionnaire** addressed to economical agents: it had 16 questions, which had the following features: the economical agents’ perception regarding the purposes of school in the community; the benefits of the partnership between school and economical agents; the role of the economical agents in the partnership between school and community; problems – solutions in the developing the partnership.

- The questionnaire implemented to the church representatives (priests) contained 16 questions and referred to: the way the church understands the roles that schools have in the community; the benefits of the partnership between school and community; the importance of church in the partnership between school and community; the identification of different types of partnerships between school and community; problems – solutions during the partnership.

- **The questionnaire** implemented to medical services contained 16 questions and outlined the following aspects: the perception of medical services towards different roles that school has in the community; the benefits of the partnership between school and medical services; the importance of medical services regarding the partnership between school and community; the identification of partnerships between school and medical services; problems – solutions during the partnership.

- The questionnaire addressed to the police contained 16 questions and underlined the following aspects: the way the police representatives understand the roles that school has in the community; the benefits of the partnership between school and police; the role of the police in the partnership between school and community; the identification of the types of partnership between school and police; problems – solutions during the partnership.

4. Results of the research

The data we have reached during our research confirmed the hypothesis of the research through the perspective of the partnership.

School has developed and evolved in the same time as the local community, because its evolution has been influenced by the local factors. The types of partnerships we have identified were developed with the help of the tools that involve the pupils.

The schools we have analysed are well known at local level because their access to the resources of local community transformed them into famous and well trained entities. The connection between schools and the local community made possible the fact that they have a well equipped material background.

The representatives of the city hall understood that, investing in local schools was one of the symbols of progress and development, the inhabitants of the city being motivated to make long period investments. Because of all these, schools have water systems, gymnasiums, consulting rooms and even a police officer for the safety of pupils. The community agents understand their role in the partnership with school and became aware about the benefits of this

Schools have some material needs:

- the endowment of the school with modern teaching tools;
- the increasing number of computers connected to the internet, this fact giving the children the opportunity to learn, to reach the information easier. A solution for this problem would be a sponsorship from a cable company, this request coming from the school representatives or community agents.

Regarding human resources, there may appear several conclusions:

- the birth rate is relatively balanced regarding the functioning of schools. As a solution for the assurance of the educational population in schools would be to educate the children of gypsy population- their birth rate being raised- but their families do not appreciate education and they left school for ever. School submits to realize some teaching courses through applying for non-refundable funds, or for making some community associations that give the money for the teaching of such categories. Parents must be informed and convinced to let their children to go to school.
- on the other side there are children that have parents who work abroad- it is necessary that these pupils to be followed in their development, to be helped and guided in their activities and their parents should be informed about their rights and obligations regarding children.
the number of substitute teachers (20% from the teachers) increased the risk of pupils’ migration.
the involvement of teachers in extra school activities: the recognition of those who had cultural virtues and giving prizes to those who worked really hard- may be considered reasons for teachers to enlarge their teaching horizons.
from the schools’ documents we can notice that all those who graduated the secondary school continue their learning process (high school and craftsmanship and arts schools). Although violence in schools is not very popular, there are promoted several solutions for stopping it: the consultation of children by a specialist, teachers inform pupils about risks and dangers they might take, the police might be implied in extra curriculum activities, as well as church representatives.
as organizational cultural form, school tries to enrich the cultural traditions through extracurricular activities and through the organization of manifestations as the days of the town working with the City Hall representatives.
school suggests a close relationship with pupils’ parents in order to soften their bonds and to enlarge the financial sources- and also the participation of 1 or 2 parents in the Administration Board.
some parents are not satisfied by this relationship with school because of the communication system; school should organize meetings more often and parents should be taken into consideration, especially regarding their children learning issues.
from pupils’ points of view, school should organize a lot of extra curriculum activities like sports, cultural manifestations- these being highly appreciated by them, but less known by their parents.
children perceive school as a sociable place, but also a frustrating factor and their relationship is regarded as a stressful one. This may be the result of the communication techniques with parents – these being informed when there are problems or bad results in the learning process, as well as the behavioural problems. The parents may also feel this kind of relation as a frustrating factor.
Community has an important, adequate role on the local level because it is vital feature for the learning process. Most of local counsellors think that their role is only at the financial level, but the school representatives should convince them to participate in extra curriculum activities.

5. Conclusions

The deep analyses of the data confirm the hypothesis of the research.
The school that took part in the research have strong relations with pupils families, authorities, police, medical units, church and economic agents, but the tightest bonds are with children’s families. Working with others – police, church, locl authorities and medical units- has a strong relevance between they represent the local community.
The partnership depends on the human resources that take part in the educational process, this connection being realised through activities that imply children : education, health, safety, teaching, leisure and the understanding of the learning duty.
As a result of the research we can conclude that there are a lot of starting points for parents and authorities regarding school, but also educational programmes inside schools, especially the ones belonging to the NonGuvernmental Agencies.
Schools, in general, initiate different partnerships. The many the people implied in the educational system, the more important and different results are obtained. The most important issue is that the people involved in these partnerships to become aware of their personal interests coming from their connections. Children and their families are supported by schools that convince community to take part in these partnerships.
This study underlines the fact that: schools educate children in a large social context; people that control the activity of schools have direct connections inside the system; many schools have other school as opponents in
attracting local authorities to support their activities and these acts are done by the school manager in general; schools from the city have better opportunities to attract authorities than schools from the villages: pupils can access information faster and better and teachers are motivated to work in town schools; schools are more developed in towns because they have internet connections, current water and proper bathrooms, as well as transportation; schools with a good name attract pupils from important families, possess modern equipment and electronically devices, offer new activities inside and outside the institutional environment, teachers are well trained and have great results; the relationships between schools, local community and parents are more formal in town schools, but in villages the relations are informal, people know each other better and some of them represent the authorities; schools from towns are more attractive for the local authorities to become partner with in contrast with schools from the country; teachers that work in schools from towns may take part in projects easier and faster that teachers from the country; relationships in towns are more formal and distant; each factor implied in this analysis – directly (pupils, teachers and parents) or indirectly (authorities, police, church) may perceive school differently from the point of view of importance on the educational background; schools have limited rights regarding human resources, they depend on the local community and city hall for material and financial support, they rely on the Inspector for the distribution of jobs.

The solution for this problem might be the decentralization of the educational system and the development of some financial resources at the local level. All these might be possible only with a serious and strong training for the human resources.

The development of partnerships between school and authorities may be considered a good opportunity for the entire local community.

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