

## CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

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*The structure of education and initial training system aims at ensuring flexibility and openness of individual educational routes. The gross enrolment rate in university education increased from 27.7% in 2000-2001 up to 44.8% in 2005-2006. The increasing participation in university education is determinate by the development of private university education, development of the universities' networks, by setting up new universities or by developing subsidiary universities in non traditional locations, increasing enrolments, increasing interest for university education due to larger labor market absorption of highly educated people and lower unemployment risk for university graduates. For rural population and vulnerable groups, the access and participation to university education remains low due to the relatively high costs of university education and the incidence of early school leaving affecting them.*

**Key words:** education system, analysis, life long learning.

The current educational model provides for students the opportunity to either attend higher levels of education or to enter in the labor market (after 10th grade). Within the education system, the initial VET provides both academic and professional opportunities.

The recognition and validation of prior learning are not operational at the system level. Validation of prior learning operates in initial VET. Also, according to the existing methodology, validation of prior learning is taken into account in the development of the second chance education, contributing thus to higher flexibility and increased access to such programs [1].

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

These paper its elaboration on the basis of the analysis of the human resources development in Romania and were defined in concordance with the following documents:

- Strategy for Continuous Vocational Training on short and medium term 2005 – 2010;
- National Strategy for developing social services 2005;
- National Strategy on social inclusion of young over 18 leaving the State Child Protection System 2006-2008;

- National Strategy for developing the social assistance system for elderly persons 2005– 2008;
- Government Strategy for improving Roma situation 2001;
- National Strategy for protection, integration and social inclusion of disabled persons in 2006-2013 period “Equal opportunities for disabled persons – towards a society without discrimination”;
- National Strategy for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men;
- Strategy for Pre-university Education Development 2001-2010;
- Strategy for decentralization of education 2005;
- Strategic Guidelines for Education and Research 2006-2008.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the school year 2005/2006 indicates a decrease of enrolments by 4.46% as compared to the school year 2000/2001 [2] (*fig. 1*).

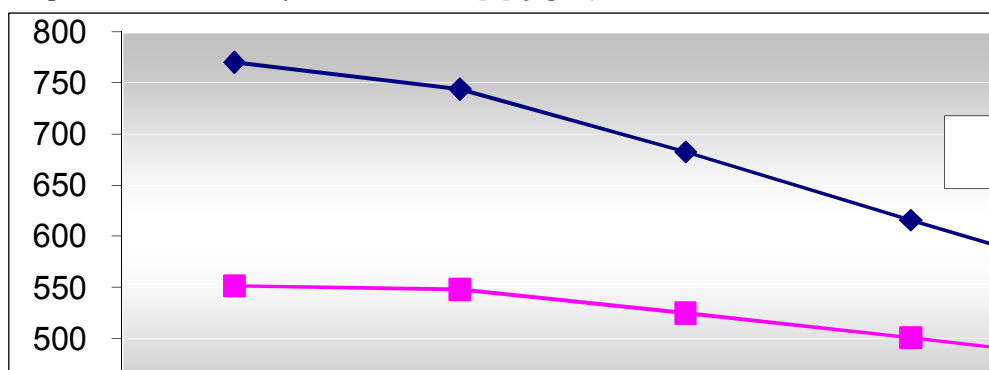


Figure 1 Enrolments in gymnasium education(x1000 persons)

The most severe decrease is recorded in primary schools and gymnasium enrolments, respectively by 13.88% and 27.28% in the reference period (2000/2001 – 2005/2006); by residence, in both cases the decrease is higher in urban areas (*fig. 2*).

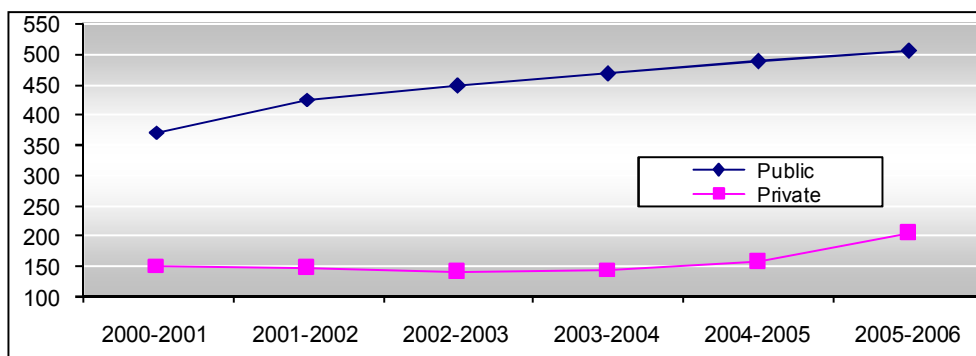


Figure 2 Enrolments in university education (x1000 persons)

Low enrolment is also recorded in post high-school education, due to the financing system based on the contribution of interested companies or individuals.

In case of university education, the enrolments increased, in the reference period, by 35.48% [2].

The school age population will record a severe decrease by about 20% during 2005-2013. This forecasted trend will raise the issue of restructuring the school network and redesigning the HR management in education and initial VET [2].

Participation at education recorded various trends during the reference period. These developments lead to the need for school networks restructuring and social support programs dedicated to the access and participation to education in rural areas, in particular at ISCED 3 level (fig. 3).

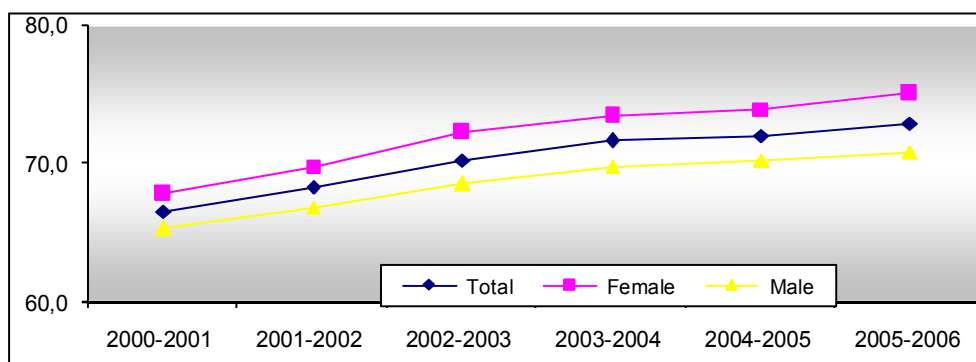


Figure 3 **Gross enrolment rate in education (%)**

In rural areas, problems of access to education are due to poor access possibilities and learning conditions, poverty, and the relatively high costs of education that this community cannot afford. The relatively lower share of qualified teaching personnel in rural areas as compared to urban areas remains among the factors with negative influence for ensuring *access to quality education* in rural areas (fig. 4).

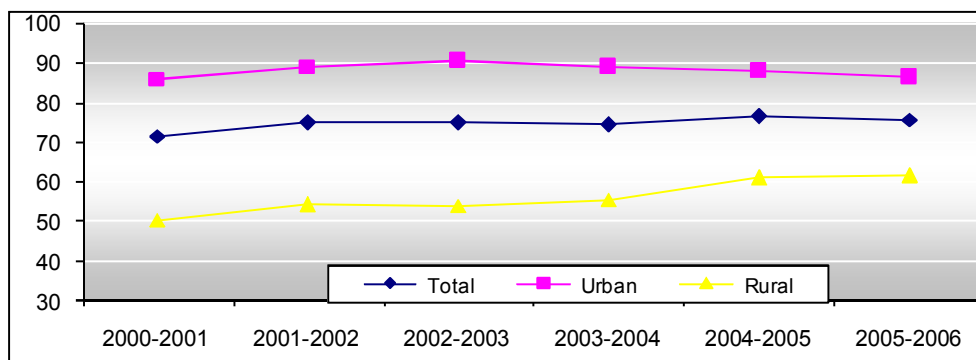


Figure 4 **Gross enrolment rate in ISCED 1-3 (%)**

Roma community, almost 12% of the population in the 7-16 year age group dropped out school before graduating compulsory education and about 18% are not

enrolled and are not attending any form of education. As a whole, about 80% of the persons not attending education are Roma population<sup>3</sup> and 38.6% of the Roma are functional illiterate [2].

Additionally to the economic situation of Roma community, the educational attainment/background of older Roma generations and traditions seriously influence the low participation in education of Roma children. Also, the absence of pre-school education and poor Romanian language speaking abilities of most Roma children negatively affect their performance in school. Discrimination and segregation are sensitive issues in case of equal access and participation in education of Roma. Generally, Roma population lives at outskirts, ill famed neighbourhoods. The schools located in these areas, in which Roma children are learning, provide poor learning conditions and education; the average rate of repeating is about 11.3%, far above the national average indicator (3.52% in 2005/2006).

A very low participation in education is recorded, also, in case of children with **special educational needs** (SEN).

The isolating children with slight disabilities into special schools has stopped beginning with 2001, following implementation of a program which, although successful in integrating a number of 18,158 children with disabilities into the mainstream education, has failed to simultaneously adapt school curricula, train teachers in acquiring special skills to work with children with disabilities and adopt a supportive attitude. In 2002, 4,400 children with special needs were enrolled in the mass education system [1].

In the period 2002-2006, most of the actions have been targeted to the curriculum development, expanding and increasing flexibility of second chance education, training of the teachers, training of school mediators and school mentors.

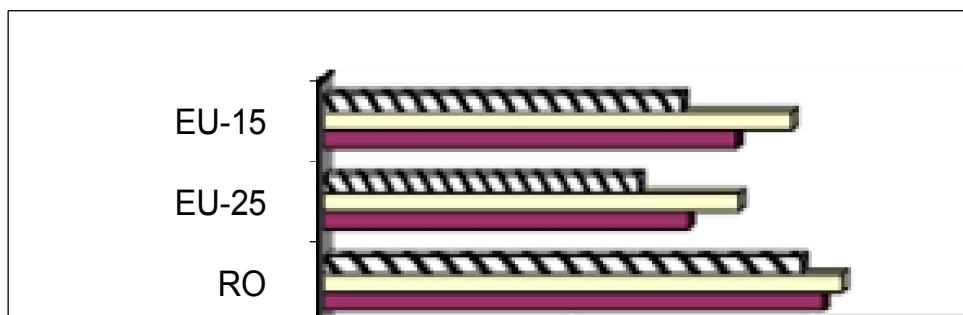


Figure 5 Early school leavers (18-24 year age group) (%)

The drop-out rate in primary school and gymnasium increased by 2.8 times in 2004/2005 as compared to 2000/2001. In case of gymnasium, the drop out increased by 3 times in the reference period. In case of children living in poor families, the chances of school drop-out is 3 times higher as compared to the children living in families which are not poor and 3.5 times higher in case of children living in families affected by severe poverty (*fig. 5*) [2].

Early school leaving affecting the quality and competitiveness of the human capital. The early school leaving rate increased from 22.4% in 1999 up to 23.4% in 2004 and slightly decreased in 2005 to 20.8%. A significant gap between Romanian and European indicators can be noticed; the early school leaving exceeds by far the 10% EU benchmark set for 2010.

If the disadvantage is tackled at the earliest age, through preschool education, there are long-lasting benefits in terms of better achievements during individuals' further school and work careers because it is essential for the development of individuals as learners, it contributes to the prevention of early school leaving and to the increase of educational attainment and facilitates later learning. The enrolment rate in pre-school education increased from 66.1% in 2000/2001 to 74.7% in 2005/2006, with differences by residence in favour of urban areas [2].

University education, the ascending trend of participation in education specific to early '90s continued also between 2000/2001 and 2005/2006. The gross enrolment rate in university education increased from 27.7% in 2000/2001 up to 44.8% in 2005/2006 (*fig. 6*).

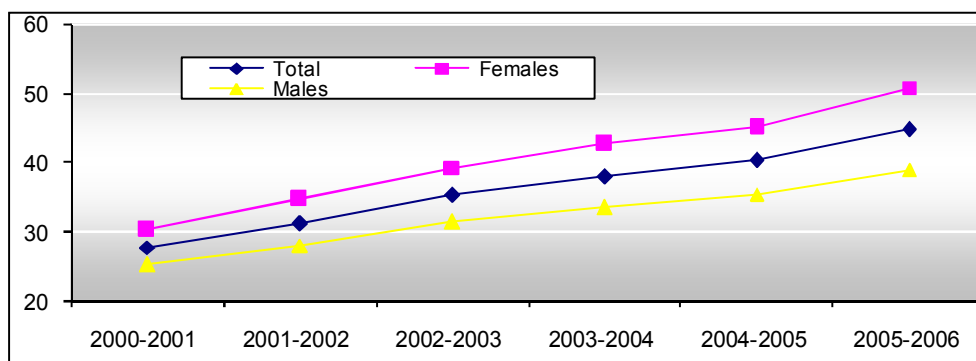


Figure 6 **Gross enrolment rate in university education (%)**

The increasing participation in university education is explained by the development of private university education, development of the universities' networks, by setting up new universities or by developing subsidiary universities in non traditional locations, increasing enrolments, increasing interest for university education due to a larger labour market absorption of highly educated people and lower unemployment risk for university graduates. In rural area, Roma community and other vulnerable groups, the access and participation to university education remains low due to the relatively high costs of university education and the incidence of early school leaving affecting them. By Bologna cycles, the enrolments in university education are dominated by undergraduate students [2].

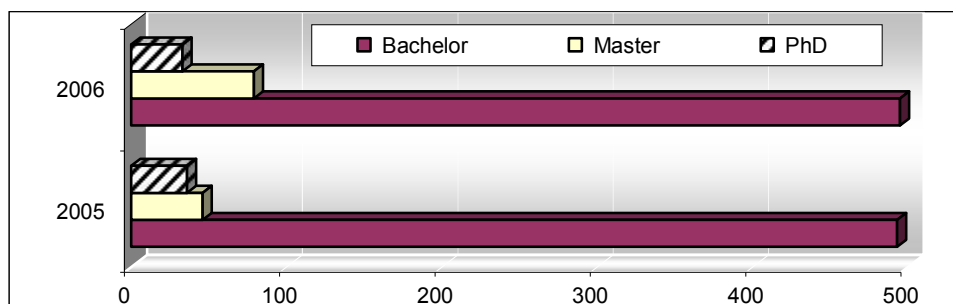


Figure 7 Enrolments in university education by Bologna cycles (x1000)

The number of students enrolments in master programs increased during the last two years due to higher chances of master graduates to insert in the labor market. The number of doctoral graduates decreased, due to the changed access condition to this level of education, with negative effects on the R&D human potential (fig. 7).

## CONCLUSIONS

The high early school leaving correlated with the low number of early school leavers who re-enter in formal education are factors with strong negative effects on the quality of human capital in Romania.

The gap is explained by the higher employment rate in urban areas higher poverty in rural areas availability of pre-school education infrastructure.

The increasing participation in university education is explained by the development of private university education, development of the universities' networks, by setting up new universities or by developing subsidiary universities in non traditional locations, increasing enrolments, increasing interest for university education due to a larger labour market absorption of highly educated people and lower unemployment risk for university graduates.

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2. \* \* \*, 2006 - *Social Statistics Series*, National Institute for Statistics, Bucharest.