

SOCIAL INCLUSION IN ROMANIA

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For the period of the 1989-1990 the people of Romania experienced economic hardship and poverty due to the many effects of economic transition. The level of medium poverty in 2004 was 18.8%, whereas the severe poverty rate was 5.9 percent. The drastic reductions in the number of jobs, the deterioration of the real level of salaries, the high taxation have been important motivation for the reduction in incomes. Amplify in the living cost in the period 1997- 2000 was not accompanied by a necessary increase in incomes, implicitly leading to severe poverty. The real value of the net average salary went down until 2000 when it reached a minimum level for the period analyzed, 87.8percent as compared to 1995. After this date the trend has been upwards, in the years to come, and in 2003 it reached a level very close to that of year 1995 with 99.8%.

Key words: poverty, employment, incomes.

The factors influencing the risk of poverty are: social position and career. self-employed persons in agriculture, education level, age groups, changes on the labour market, decreasing of productivity and reduction of the time at work.

The most vulnerable region, the North-East Region, is no longer detached from the other regions through poverty risk, like the previous period, due to the fact that this region was the most important beneficiary of the poverty reducing in 2003 and amongst the main beneficiaries of the poverty reducing in 2004[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:

- Joint Assessment Paper on Evaluation of Employment Policies (JAP 2006);
- National Action Plan for Employment 2004-2005;
- Joint Inclusion Memorandum on Social Inclusion (JIM 2006);
- 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 decentralisation of education 2005;

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In year 2004, the biggest part of the poverty reduction was due to the decrease of this phenomenon's incidence in the rural areas, the poverty rate being lower by 10.7 percentage points or a poverty reduction by 28.1% compared to the previous year [2]

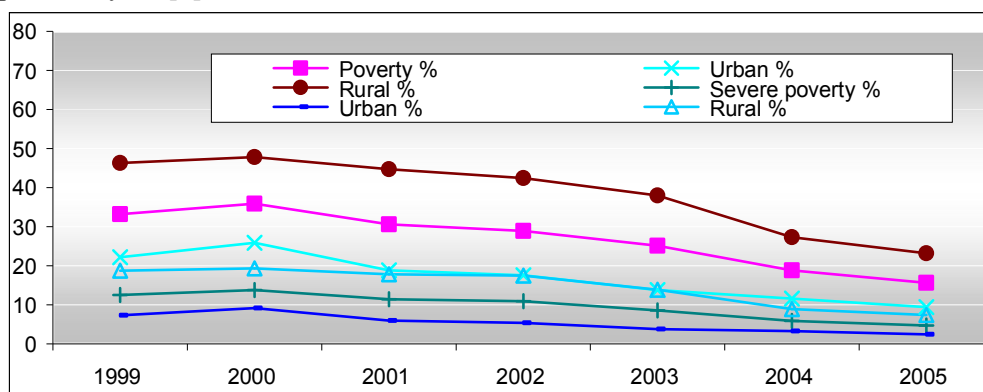


Figure 1 Dynamics of poverty and severe poverty by area

The reasons for this decrease stand the cumulative effects of some measures implemented in 2004, such as raising the pensions of people employed in agriculture and the agriculture subsidies changed into cash payments for the previous year. Nevertheless, the disparities between the two residence environments continue to exist and the rural area is considerably affected by poverty. The poorest people are from the rural areas and the poverty risk is much higher within this residence environment; yet, in the urban areas the poverty is deeper. The reducing tendency of the polarisation between the urban and the rural areas is revealed also by the severe poverty rates evolution(*fig. 1*).

Families with more than two children and single parent families represent another category of people confronted with a very high poverty risk. In 2003, poverty level has started to decrease visibly among families with more than 3 children (a 6.1 percentage points drop in poverty risk vs. 2002) [2] (*fig. 2*).

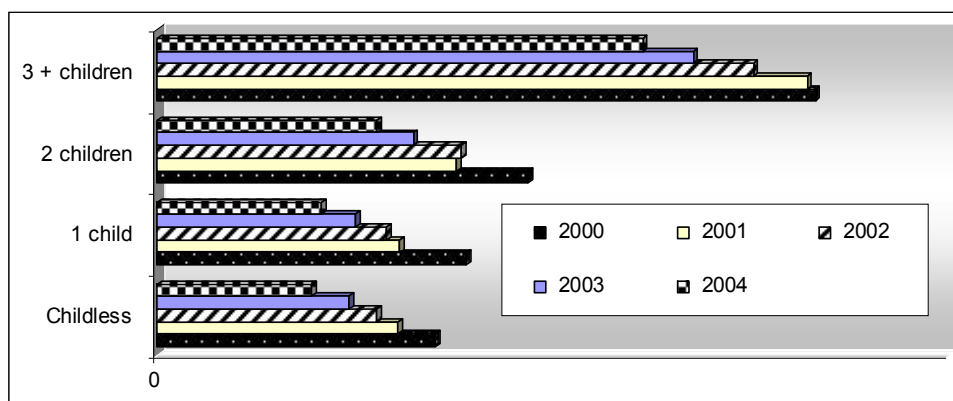


Figure 2 Poverty rate by number of children in poor households (%)

Young over 18 leaving the State Child Protection System, social and professional integration of young people who leave the child protection system is a very important undertaking. For a long time there was no solution for these teenagers, who had to leave the institutions without having the perspective of a home, a place to work and without the adequate skills needed to obtain and to integrate themselves within society.

At the end of March 2005, 12,148 persons were aged between 14 and 17 years old, and 6,329 were over 18 years old of the total number of 32,456 protected children within the public and private childcare institutions.

Roma population is the second largest ethnic minority after Hungarians. The 2002 Census recorded 535,140 Roma, respectively persons that voluntarily assumed the Roma identity and 60.1% live in rural areas. Roma population of 1-2.5 million persons. The 2004 Progress report prepared by the European Commission estimates the Roma population between 1.8-2.5 million persons[2].

Roma has the weakest self conscience and awareness as compared to all other large ethnic minorities in Romania. Roma population identify themselves as Romanian, 37% as Roma, while the remaining population assumed with the local/regional identity.

Only 122,573 persons representing 22.9% of the declared 535,140 Roma people are part of the active population. Out of these, only 71.5% represent employed people, the rest of almost 28.5% being unemployed, seeking for a job. About 41% of employed were working in agriculture (of which one third are women) and 31% are unskilled workers.

Persons with disabilities of the total population has maintained around 1.8%-1.9% between 1999 and 2005. A review of the data for 1999–2005 reveals an increase in the number of persons with disabilities to a peak of 23,572 in 2001 vs. 2000, followed by a constant decline during 2001 – 2003. The last years of the reference period registered an increasing number of persons with disabilities [2] (fig. 3).

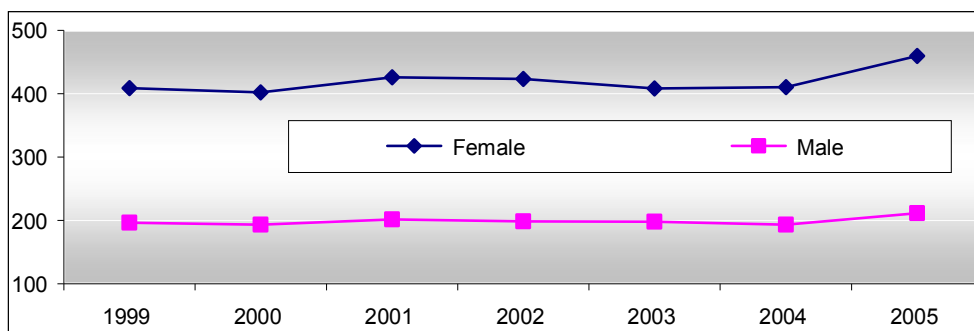


Figure 3 **Distribution of persons with disabilities by gender**

The tendency to apply a much too broad definition of what disability and disability levels were led to a situation where any older person suffering from age-related illness could easily be classified as disabled. The disabled persons in Romania started to soar uncontrollably.

In the 2003–2004 period, job fairs for disabled show that, in spite of an increase of about 43% in the number of job offers, there are no significant differences in the number of the disabled persons employed. While in 2003 there were 7,461 job offers resulting into 284 hires, in 2004 these figures stood at 10,696 and 294 respectively. What was obvious each time is that job offer was not adapted to the qualification and the abilities of the disabled person [2].

The accomplishment of a common framework for the organization and co-ordination of the national social assistance system, with the inclusion of the whole range of issues on this matter (protection of family, child, handicapped and any person in need) proved an absolute necessity. With joint assistance from international and local organizations, a set of NGOs active in the social assistance field were set up. Some of them have developed and reached a high performance and competence level that are very instrumental now for further development of the sectors, whereas others failed due to lack of resources. In spite of the recent positive evolution the system is still fragmented and the range of social services available at the moment is still very limited.

An attribute of the social wellbeing system in Romania is the increasing participation and contribution of non-governmental organizations and other social partners in social protection actions, in a situation where the Government cannot ensure but a limited financial support to cater for the social needs of the population and a small number of organizations. The European Commission has through Phare multi-annual programme 2004-2006 for social services established a clear objective to strengthen the capacity of public authorities in the provision of services. In 2006, 109 contracts have been concluded for social services delivery submitted by county and local authorities, most of them in partnership with NGOs.

The Programme Priority Action Plan for European Integration for 2003 and 2004 included a set of measures designed to tackling social exclusion and promoting social inclusion, also by elaborating a set of legislative regulations meant to ensure coherent system building, effective management, ongoing

improvement of the various measures meant to financially support families, children, persons at social exclusion risk and to consolidate and further develop the national social service network.

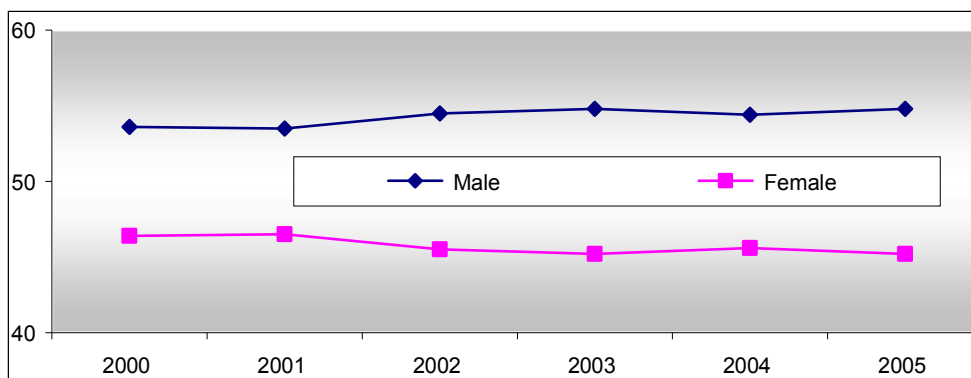


Figure 4 Share of women in total employment

In 2000-2005 periods, the share of women in total employment in Romania has registered a slight decrease from 46.4% in 1999 to 45.2% in 2005. Employment rate for women aged 15 to 24 is the lowest compared to other age groups and is comparable with the employment rate for men in the same age group (*fig. 4*).

Women part-time workers accounted for only 10.5% of the total female population employed in 2005 compared to 32.4% in EU-25. In 2005 the share of male population working part-time was above the EU-25 and EU-15 average (9.9% in Romania vs. 7.4% in EU-25 and 7.7% in EU-15).

CONCLUSIONS

The disparities between the two residence environments continue to exist and the rural area is considerably affected by poverty.

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