

**COMMUNITY, STRATEGIC PARTNER OF THE EDUCATIONAL
ORGANIZATION IN THE 21st CENTURY****Nicoleta STĂNICĂ, Liliana PETER****„Valahia” University of Târgoviște, Romania
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Abstract: *This paper tries to emphasize the importance of the strategic partnership between the community and the school in the 21st century. The school-family-community partnership is an important issue, highlighted by various educational policy documents at the national and international level and by the research in the field of education. The concept of partnership has wide semantic coverage. From the legal point of view, partnership is defined as a legal understanding where partners define together the overall purposes of the partnership. From the benefits point of view, partnership can be defined as an effective way to achieve management reform either by changing managerial practices or by changing the way public issues are addressed so that their resolution becomes feasible through partnership. The partnership could be a better solution for the allocation and use of local resources at the Community level and also to attract external resources to solve community issues. The idea of a partnership between school and community should be based on the principle of complementarity of social services offered by various organizations working in the community. Building partnership is a deliberate process that involves specific skills, strategies, and knowledge that stakeholders need to know and use.*

Keywords: school organization, community, strategic partnership

Specialized Publications/Literature

Several publications of some well-known publishers have been used for writing this paper. The success of the school-community partnership is based on the long-standing and constant connection between the community agents and the school representatives.

A balance can thus be reached between change and continuity, specific and global, individual fulfillment and social requirements [1].

The school, as an organization, in order to reach its objectives, needs a proper management system that can be defined through some specific functions: planning, decision, organization, coordination and evaluation.

The school management must ensure the school functioning and development as an open system which is permanently connected to its exterior environment, with the community where it operates but not limited to that. In order to reach its objectives, the school has to attract, finance and use a wide variety of resources: material, financial, human, and informational and of time.

The idea of a partnership between school and community should be based on the complementarity of the social services that are offered by various organizations activating within the community [2].

The partnership constitution is a deliberate process involving specific skills, strategies and knowledge that the active parties

should be aware of and also able to implement.

The partnership involves adopting a management committee based on collaboration and change, communication and diversity awareness.

In any relation of partnership each partner must define his expectations, the purpose and the limits.

In the partnership between school and the community agents, all those involved must define and be aware of the following [3]:

- Who are the community agents involved in the partnership?
- What are the partnership grounds?
- What are the targeted changes?
- What major problems can be solved?
- What are the specific roles that each partner has?

The partnership is based on trust, creates responsibility for the partners and mutual involvement. The partnership must be an efficient way for getting better results, a change for the better.

The idea of using school at the community's benefit appeared in the United States in 1935.

Then it was accepted that schools can be at the disposal of the community's inhabitants over the regular schedule, even for an entire day and can provide services in different areas: cultural, health, social care, labor force training, relaxation etc.

In Europe, especially after the 90s, schools have diversified their activity performing different activities and programs: computer courses, local traditions, sports, concerts, seniors clubs/, medical examinations, conferences, festivals, contests, sewing courses etc. all addressed to the inhabitants of that specific community but not necessarily.

In the 80s a new trend appeared in schools based on the idea of involving the local community in making decisions concerning teaching and learning, financing and staff hiring in those schools activating within ("community-based management") [4].

The school and the community are two aspects that have equally preoccupied

educators, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers, anthropologists etc. each of them trying to seize those aspects that contribute to their operating mechanisms, the involved agents and their degree of involvement in promoting education.

We witness today the development of a true trend that has focuses on the community and its development.

Usually the terms and expressions used by practitioners, specialists and even common people are confused because we come across such a diverse semantics in this field. School is one of the central institutions of the community, has specific roles but it can't work and develop without taking into account the specific of the community where it is activating.

The community is the depositary of the common good, it is an element of moral reference for individuals and it promotes basic values (through its laws and traditions) of reference for the individual.

The community represents a global social entity where the connections between its members are very tight and where the group awareness is very strong with deep roots in profound traditions.

The idea of partnership between school and community has to rely on the principle of the social services complementarity that is offered by various organizations activating within the community.

The success of the school-community partnership is based on the long-standing and constant connection between the community agents and the school representatives.

A balance can thus be reached between change and continuity, specific and global, individual fulfillment and social requirements.

The analysis of the legislation in place provides directions of action of the collaboration amongst the central, county and local authorities with attributions in the field of education as it follows [5]:

- Taking the necessary steps for primary and preprimary pupils to attend mandatory education;

- Developing educational program for young parents;
- Designing Training programs for those pupils who can't comply with the requirements of the national school curricula and for those who have dropped out school;
- Designing and developing adequate possibilities for spending free time and relaxation;
- Achieving or taking the necessary steps for preventing dropout because of the financial difficulties.

The Police represent another benchmark for the community's inhabitants. The roles of the police in the educational field can be separated in two big categories:

- Prevention;
- Special interventions.

School, through its representatives, teachers, pupils, school staff must identify the behavior problems of the students, cooperate with the police in those situations of pupils with criminal records or suspected for criminal behavior.

Obviously, the school is not the only one getting involved in these situations but also the social care agencies and social assistants and the pupils' families.

Depending on each community, we can find different approaches of this partnership. Basically, the fields where this partnership between school and police can be found are the following:

- Ensure the personal identity of the students, teachers, and of the community's inhabitants, generally;
- Prevent juvenile offending and criminality;
- Prevent drugs abuse and trafficking
- Safety and road rules;
- Prevent prostitution, pedophilia;
- Prevent beggary, child labor;
- Promote respect for the law;
- Promote human rights and child rights;
- Promote a civilized behavior in the society;

- Promote a positive image of the Police in the community and a confidence growth in its institution;
- Collect information and data in special cases;
- Maintain public order and silence within the educational units and outside them (the school area, the road from home to school) and in the community;
- Implement and design partnership programs and projects;
- Establish the people's identity and educate children to use documents attesting their identity;
- Recruitment of the future employees of the institution.

The institution of church has a great role in the community's education.

School-church forms of partnership and the most common expressions of this partnership can be found in [6]:

- Organization of common cultural-artistic events (festivities, exhibits, performances, spectacles) on special Christian holidays: Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter, National Heroes Memorial Day etc.;
- Participation of the church's representatives to different events organized by the school: the beginning/end of the school year ceremony, blessings at the school premises, meetings with parents and pupils;
- Planning trips and pilgrimages to different monasteries and churches;
- Participation of the members of the church to campaigns aiming at eradicating violence and deviant behavior among pupils and child trafficking.

Another important mission both educative and philanthropic is undertaken by the priests.

Given the Christian values that they promote and their humanitarian vocation priests can contribute to:

- Apprehend abuse, neglect and child labor;

- Participation in solving problems with the help of the consulting agencies of the community;
- Community mobilization in order to support needy families and children;
- Participation in developing services addressed to children and families within the community;
- Organization and participation to the cultural events of both school and community.

From a formal point of view, according to the legislation in place, the economic entities can take part in managing an educational institution by appointing their representatives.

Based on a partnership, several activities can be developed within the educational system:

- For primary and secondary education: visits to the economic entities, class observation, and sponsorship granted by the economic entities for different events, class observation by the economic entities aiming at teaching economics lessons;
- For the secondary education, these activities can be diversified by involving students in practical activities where they can put into practice the information learnt in school, professional counseling, activities aiming at offering career and school guidance, presenting different jobs and occupations, etc.;
- For high school education, besides the above mentioned activities, students can attend a training and specialization probationary stage in accordance with the specialization provided by the school.

Under such circumstances, the partnership becomes a formal one between the school units, the boards of education and the economic entities by the means of clear collaboration agreements.

Basically, the school and the economic entities can collaborate through [7]:

- Providing premises and facilities necessary for the probationary stages within the economic units which can

lead to the students' acquisition of the necessary skills in the field;

- Graduates employment. There are economic entities who recruit graduates for hiring them, some of them even granting scholarships to students with good results on the condition that the students will take a job offered by the respective economic entity, organization of internships, meetings with different people from the company's management boards, models of people who have succeeded in their career;
- Providing and developing programs for the continuous professional development of the school staff or teachers within the economic units;
- Setting, in partnership, some development plans of the human resources; organizing career expos with the participation of different companies, guidance and counseling for student's career;
- Providing career information services, guidance and counseling for the students.

The school is an institution to function in the community, at the intersection of a multitude of other organizations. These influences can be direct or indirect over school.

The organizations that have and exert an active influence over schools are the nongovernmental organizations.

Debates

The relationship between school and the local community is influenced by a series of factors, out of which, can be mentioned:

- The social environment of the society (rural, urban, size of the community, the geographical extent etc.);
- The level of culture, the level of the studies of the community's inhabitants, who influence the school environment. The social model of the successful professions, models offered by those people close to children may influence their level of aspirations;

- The economic and technological development of the community;
- The value offered to studies and professions;
- The dominant professions in the community – can become both models for the children and can dictate a certain direction of the school for preparing students in the field of the professions required by the community, by active economic entities;
- The Social representations, mentalities and attitudes concerning children's education, the level of the families aspirations for the children's education;
- The general perception concerning the school mission in the community;
- The demographic component of the community, the demographic growth rhythm, the age structure of the population, family types, the occupational structure of the community etc.

References

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