Country Context Report for Romania

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Legislative overview

School management and administration is well defined by the existing Romanian legislation which describes in detail the various structures that should exists at school level and their responsibilities. In addition, the law lets each school to design its own internal regulations for specific activities but without the possibility to overcome the general administrative model.

The general model includes the following school bodies: Council of Administration, Principal, Teachers' Council, Parents Committee, and Students' Council. In addition, at school level there may be established various committees that make recommendations on various issues. For example, there may be parents' committees that can assist the Principal with his or her administrative duties or professors' committees responsible with the development of certain curricular areas.

The Council of Administration

The Council of Administration (CA) has the decision power in everything that concerns school administration. It has between 5 and 11 members, including: the Principal, the Vice-Principal, the Chief Account, representatives of Local Council, representatives of parents, representatives of teachers, and, in secondary education, representatives of students. The Principal is the President of the Council of Administration. The Council also elaborates the management long term and short plans and supervises their implementation.

The Principal (School Director)

The Principal has the executive powers in the school. He is responsible for the implementation of the school management plans and all other decisions of the CA, as well as for all national regulations and decisions made by the Ministry. The Principal is appointed by the central authorities for a period of four years. The appointment is made by the County Inspectorate for primary education and by the Ministry at the recommendation of the County Inspectorate. In all cases, the appointment is made only after a professional contest which is fair and open for all qualified candidates. The Principal also represents the schools in relation with other organizations and public institutions. The Principal is the central figure in school administration.

The Teachers' Council (TC)

The Teachers' Council includes all teachers of the school and it has ruling powers in everything that concerns the content of education and it is not already established by national legislation. Also, TC is nominating teachers' representatives in CA. Usually, TC is assembled at the beginning of each semester and occasionally when specific decisions are required.

Class Parents' Council (CPC), Parents' Representatives Assembly (PRA), and Parents' Representatives Council (PRC)

For each class of students there is Class Parents' Council. CPC is formed by the parents of all students in the class and its role is to assist the class supervisor and teachers. Each CPC elects a president and all the CPC presidents are members of Parents' Representatives Assembly. PRA is summoned by the principal and it elects the Parents' Representatives Council (PRC). PRC

represents the parents in the decision making process. PRC is elected every two or three years (the exact term is left at school choice) and it elects one or two members in the CA.

Students' Council (SC)

The presence of the Students Council is compulsory in secondary schools and optional in primary schools. SC is formed by representatives of each class (one per class) and has an executive bureau composed from one representative per year of study. In high-schools the president of the SC is a member of CA. The same thing may happen in elementary schools but the decision is left at school level.

Upcoming changes

At the end of 2007, the Ministry of Education proposed a block of new education laws to be subject to public consultations: Undergraduate Education Law, Higher Education Law, and Teacher's Statutes. After the winter holidays, in January 2008, the legislative drafts were subject to public consultations which took place in schools. Each county inspectorate or the Bucharest inspectorate was in charge of organizing these consultations with the school principle and of inviting teachers, parents, students and other local community members to take part. The participants' remarks and comments were brought together and sent to the ministerial department responsible for bill drafting.

One of the main changes that the new law wants to make is to continue the decentralization process of the education system by granting more decision-making autonomy to schools. This means that school principles would be appointed by the Local Council based on the proposals made by the school's Council of Administration, that the Trustees would be elected based on a new rule, the school principle would be separated from the Council of Administration (the principle will no longer be a member in the CA), that schools would be granted more human resources decision-making autonomy and some financial autonomy (but not full financial autonomy).

Literature review/mapping

Extent of stakeholder participation in schools in your country

- A comprehensive analysis of the education sector (Vlăsceanu 2002a and Vlăsceanu 2002b) is taking into consideration various factors that determine school performance and other education indicators, including participation. The study includes theoretical analysis, case studies, legislative analysis, and quantitative data.
- A survey (Voicu, 2004) measures citizens' perceptions on education on a national representative sample. The questionnaire has included several questions on governance and involvement.
- One study (Horga, 2004) discusses the gender perspective in education, and, in this context, refers to participation of various stakeholders.
- A study (Crişan, 2005a) is dedicated to improving partnership between school and community. The study analyses educational theories, existing environment, legislative context, and several case studies, and it formulates recommendations for school administration, local council, and central authorities.
- A series of policy studies (Crişan 2005b, Crişan 2006a, and Crişan 2006b) is analyzing various aspects of the education policies in Romania. Although participation is not a theme by itself, it is often taken into consideration as key factor in school development.
- A chapter in (Negreanu, 2006) is dedicated to the analyses of family participation in school life. The study is based on qualitative analyses and it makes interesting remarks on the influence of family structure on parents' involvement in school life.
- Two consecutive studies (Măntăluță 2005 and Măntăluță 2006) analyses parents' and children's opinions and expectations about school development and education system problems. Participation and involvement are among the dimensions taken into consideration. The studies use both qualitative and quantitative data.
- A recent qualitative research on school life (Voicu, 2006) includes a chapter on participation of various stakeholders. The study is based on 24 focus groups with students, parents and teachers made in 8 schools from 4 counties.

Mapping existing initiatives seeking to improve stakeholder participation in schools in your country

- A guide (Ciolan, 2000) is offering educational solutions for multicultural schools. The author takes into consideration the relation between parents, as well as the one between parents and school.
- Another good guide (Chiru, 2003) for teachers that presents various ways to stimulate and manage parents' implication in school. The guide is focused on the teacher-parent relation at class level.
- In the context of analyzing students' motivation, one study (Popenici, 2004) brings into attention the importance of parents' involvement in the education process. The study, however, is focused on parents-children relationship.
- Following a two years long project, there was published a guide (Popescu, 2000) for parents and teachers. The guide is showing various models of community involvement in school life.
- A similar process – local project followed by publication of guides and other materials has lead to another three publications, one guide for teachers and students (Rădulescu & Târcă, 2004a), one good practices collection (Târcă, Rădulescu & Leu, 2004), and a project experiences collection (Rădulescu & Târcă, 2004b)

- A more recent guide (Velea, Toderaş & Ionescu, 2006) is presenting the perspective of students' participation in community life as a tool for bringing together the school and the local actors.

Legal, regulatory, policy, financial obstacles/incentives to improving stakeholder participation in your country

- A comprehensive analysis of the education sector (Vlăsceanu 2002a and Vlăsceanu 2002b) is taking into consideration various factors that determine school performance and other education indicators, including participation. The study includes theoretical analysis, case studies, legislative analysis, and quantitative data.
- A study (Crişan, 2005a) is dedicated to improving partnership between school and community. The study analyses educational theories, existing environment, legislative context, and several case studies, and it formulates recommendations for school administration, local council, and central authorities.
- A series of policy studies (Crişan 2005b, Crişan 2006a, and Crişan 2006b) is analyzing various aspects of the education policies in Romania. Although participation is not a theme by itself, it is often taken into consideration as key factor in school development.
- A recent study (Ionescu, 2007) makes an interesting analysis on the social relations, with a focus on relations between age groups, and their implication on school life. Participation comes often in analyses.
- Another comprehensive report on education (Miclea, 2005) includes several references to community involvement and its benefits.
- By analyzing the concept of "welcoming school" a research report (Zătreanu, 2004) is proposing a model for primary school teachers to attract both children and parents towards school.

Any key issues or factors which may affect level of stakeholder participation in your country, e.g. school type.

- A comprehensive analysis of the education sector (Vlăsceanu 2002a and Vlăsceanu 2002b) is taking into consideration various factors that determine school performance and other education indicators, including participation. The study includes theoretical analysis, case studies, legislative analysis, and quantitative data.
- A series of policy studies (Crişan 2005b, Crişan 2006a, and Crişan 2006b) is analyzing various aspects of the education policies in Romania. Although participation is not a theme by itself, it is often taken into consideration as key factor in school development.
- Analyzing various issues related to school management, one study (Iosifescu, 2000a) takes into consideration the stakeholders' participation.
- Also on the subject of class management, a guide for teachers (Ulrich, 2000) has been published several years ago but most of its conclusions and recommendations are still valid today.

Any information on the role of school principals in participation in your country

- A relatively recent qualitative research on school life (Voicu, 2006) includes a chapter on participation of various stakeholders. The study is based on 24 focus groups with students, parents and teachers made in 8 schools from 4 counties.
- A study (Iosifescu, 2000a) focused on roma education includes interesting information about decision making in schools and the role of principal in shaping the school-community relations. Another study from the same series (Iosifescu, 2000c) is focused on

school management and principal role, again in roma communities but with useful remarks about general context

- A study made in 2001 (Rădulescu & Târcă, 2001) is mapping several school-community models.
- By analyzing the model of social partnership at regional level for workforce occupation, a study (Şerban & Pataki, 2002) is taking into consideration the potential role of the school and the school principal in local development

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Survey logistics

Is it necessary/desirable to seek permission from relevant ministries to carry out interviews with school directors in your country?

It is necessary. Previous experience is showing that without a letter of support from the ministry the majority of principal may refuse to participate at the research.

If so, have you done that?

We have informed the Ministry about the project and in principal they have no objection to it. However, before issuing a letter of support the Ministry will require more information (see next answer).

Are any other formal procedures necessary? If so, have you completed them?

We have to send a formal request to the Ministry. The request must contain information about the project, about the methodology and about the partners. If a third party is involved (for example a survey agency) the request must contain this information. In response, the Ministry issues a letter of support that can be shown to the school principals.

So far we weren't able to start this procedure because we do not have complete information about methodology and we do not know the name of the survey agency.

Have you access to a national list of all those public schools in your country which cover at least 1st -8th grades? If so, what data does this list include (name of principal, address and phone, urban/rural, school type?)

We have the complete list of public school. Soros Foundation Romania has received it last year from the Ministry to be used in a research project. We have already sent the list to the central research team.