



Keeping Young People in Employment, Education and/or Training: Common Challenges - Shared Solutions

**Examples from Romania:
The Second Chance
School After School
Programs**

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Common challenges: Europe 2020 Strategy

Three interconnected priorities:

Intelligent growth – building a knowledge and innovation-based economy

Durable Growth – promoting a more ecologic and competitive economy, aimed at using resources more efficiently

Growth in favor of inclusion – promoting an economy with a high employment level, which can generate social and territorial cohesion



Common challenges: Key Targets for 2020

- 1) At least 75% of the people aged between 20 to 64 years old must be employed, compared to the current 69%;
- 2) 20 million people must be lifted out of the risk of poverty;
- 3) Reaching the “20-20-20” target (or “30-20-20”, under certain conditions) regarding climate change and energy;
- 4) Investment in research and development must reach 3% of the EU’s GDP;
- 5) **The level of early school leaving must be below 10% and at least 40% of the young population must complete tertiary education;**



Common challenge: Early School Leaving

The rate of early school leaving represents

the percentage of 18-24 year-olds who completed at most middle school (lower secondary) and is not registered in any form of education or professional training in the 4 weeks prior to the research.



Keeping Young People in
Employment, Education and
Training



ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT

Common challenge: Early School Leaving

	2000	2009	2010	2012
EU 27/28	17,6	14,4	14,1	12,7
Czech Republic	5,7	5,4	4,9	5,5
Slovakia	6,7	4,9	4,7	5,3
Finland	9,0	9,9	10,3	8,9
Germany	14,6	11,1	11,9	10,5
Malta	54,2	36,8	36,9	22,6
Romania	22,9	16,6	18,4	17,4



Impact of early school leaving

On the individuals:

- their chances to participate in the social, cultural and economic life are reduced;
- the individual risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion is increased;
- it reverberates on the earnings throughout their careers and on their welfare and health;
- it reduces their children's chances of school success;

On the economy and society in general:

- people who leave school early tend to participate less in the democratic process and are less active citizens;
- innovation and growth are based on skilled workforce, not only in the high-technology fields, but also in the economy as a whole;
- even when they work, these young people earn less, tend to be employed in precarious positions and are most often dependant on social security assistance;
- these young people participate less in lifelong learning and furthermore, do not benefit from retraining programs;



Common challenge: Early School Leaving

The target set by the Europe 2020 Strategy: 10%.

The target assumed by Romania until 2020: 11,3%.

How?

Through 3 types of measures:

- prevention**
- intervention**
- compensation**



Specific solutions aiming at:

Preventing school failure (prevention)

School after school program (SDS)

- The SAS program is mentioned for the first time in the Law of national education and the methodology was approved by a ministerial order No. 5.349 in 2011
- “School after School” addresses primary as well as secondary level students.
- “School after School” is complementary to the compulsory school program, offering formal and non-formal learning opportunities to
 - to reinforce competences,
 - to offer remedial learning and
 - to accelerate learning through educational, recreational and leisure activities.

Bringing the ones who have left the system back to education (compensation)

Second chance program (SC)

- The SC program is mentioned in the Law of national education and the last methodology was approved by a ministerial order No. 5.248 in 2011, but the first program was developed in 1999, reviewed in a PHARE program in 2003 and revised in 2009
- SC addresses both primary and lower secondary level of education, thus covering compulsory education
- SC program is part of the national system of education, designed for children and young (or not so young) people who have exceeded the legal schooling age for daytime education without graduating compulsory education.
- 2 minister’s orders approve the school syllabi for SC Program at primary and lower secondary level



Prevention measures

SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM



School after School Specific Objectives:

- to improve access to education, equity and quality ;
- to improve school success and reduce the risk of drop-out;
- to provide education that is adapted to the students' needs and ambitions;
- to increase self-esteem by organizing personal development programs;
- to increase motivation for learning and make the best of every student;
- to develop a relation between school and local community;



Structure of School after School (SAS) Program

SAS in primary schools

- specialized-support activities, workshop / thematic activities and other recreational activities.
- specialized-support activities can be:
 - a) supervising and guiding homework;
 - b) support for the students with cognitive, speech, emotional disorders through counseling and speech therapy and activities aimed at improving;
 - c) developing activities for gifted students;
 - d) activities meant to encourage independent reading;
 - e) self-awareness, awareness of the others through emotional and social development activities.

SAS in primary schools

- workshops/theme activities/other recreational activities offer:
 - a) practical activities- applied to various fields(Arts, Science, Technology, Sports, etc.);
 - b) thematic projects proposed by students, parents or teachers, etc.;
 - c) trips/ going to concerts, theatre performances, exhibitions.
- According to the target groups, each school can create modules of activities by combining activities mentioned previously.



Structure of School after School (SAS) Program

SAS in secondary schools

1. The set of activities aimed at accelerating learning and performance:
 - preparing for competitions and school Olympiads, sports and arts competitions etc.;
 - participating in/ organizing festivals, exhibitions, creating school magazines;
 - participating in European cooperation activities (Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci).
2. The set of support activities:
 - providing psycho-pedagogical assistance to catch up with learning gaps;
 - activities meant to support homework, remedial activities;
 - psychological counseling;
 - speech therapy services.

SAS in secondary schools

3. "Preparing for life" package:
 - organizing personal development activities (self-knowledge, learning to learn, communication skills);
 - activities meant to develop active attitude and student involvement (social inclusion, code of conduct, responsibility towards the environment, etc.);
 - healthy lifestyle (preventing risk behavior: alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, unhealthy food, durable development, etc.);
 - career-oriented education;
4. Workshops/ theme activities (micro projects on various topics: Arts, Science, Technology, Sports, etc.).



Conclusions regarding School After School (SAS) Program

Strong points

- there was an increase in parents' demand to organize SAS in more schools;
- specific provisions in the methodology to ensure the human resources:
 - possibility to include at most 4 hours of SAS in the teaching load;
 - 2 hours included in the 40hours/week work load (not paid extra);
 - possibility for the teachers to be paid for SAS hours (other than the 2 hours)
- flexibility, at the level of the methodology in financing the SAS: national or public authorities budget, European projects, sponsoring, fees paid by the parents;
- provisions regarding partnership in the methodology

Weak points

- ✓ some schools do not have the necessary resources to organize the SAS program: they do not have available spaces/time to provide for the program;
- ✓ the national authorities do not provide financial support for the SAS and there is unequal ability of local authorities to ensure support in order to provide meals for the students who attend SAS;
- ✓ lack of availability of some teachers to provide the two hours of activity in the SAS program as activity included in the teaching quota;
- ✓ need for integrated approach to social and educational services;
- ✓ need for specific training for SAS teachers who use methods aimed at providing remedial school activities.



Compensation measures

SECOND CHANCE PROGRAM



Aim of the Second Chance Program:

- To provide support to young people who have abandoned compulsory education due to social reasons by helping them complete basic education
- Additionally, for **lower secondary second chance program**, to offer a vocational training program allowing students to obtain the same level of qualification as the students who completed compulsory education in the mainstream schools



Second Chance Program characteristics, common for primary and lower secondary levels:

- there is no upper-age limit for those who want to participate in the program;
- the program has flexible duration; the average schooling time can be reduced according to the competences proven and the individual learning progress regarding the basic field of education as well as the field of professional education;
- the students who complete the program are entitled to continue their studies;
- the program is divided into modules which allow a schedule designed according to the needs of the students (on weekdays in the afternoon or evening, on Saturdays or during school vacations, etc.);
- biannual registration: September and January;
- reduced number of students per class;
- the graduates of the Second Chance Program for lower-secondary education who sit and pass the exam which tests their professional competences receive a certificate of professional competence.



Structure of Second Chance (SC) Program

SC in primary schools

- Designed for students who have never been enrolled or have not graduated primary school and are 4 years older than the normal age of the grade they are enrolling
- Standard duration 2 years (covering 4 years of normal schooling), but flexibility allowing for adaptation to the student's capacities and school progression
- Number of students per class 12-20. School inspectorate may approve exceptions

SC in secondary schools

- Designed for students older than 14, who graduated primary school but have not finished compulsory education
- Standard duration 4 years (covering 6 years of normal schooling), but flexibility allowing for adaptation to the student's capacities and school progression
- Number of students per class 8-15. School inspectorate may approve exceptions
- Combines general and vocational education (VET component starts in the 2nd year of the program)



Structure of Second Chance (SC) Program

SC in primary schools

- Curriculum is organized in modules. At the end of each module, students receive credits and a attestation recognizing the graduation of the module
- Evaluation and recognition of prior learning, including in nonformal and informal settings allows students to skip modules
- The curricular framework includes a compulsory module of ICT (as compared to the mainstream schools, where it is optional)
- At the end of the primary SC program, students receive a certificate stating the graduation of primary school and have the right to continue their studies in lower secondary. They may choose to enroll in mainstream schools or in lower secondary SC program

SC in secondary schools

- Curriculum is organized in modules. At the end of each module, students receive credits and a attestation recognizing the graduation of the module
- Evaluation and recognition of prior learning, including in nonformal and informal settings allows students to skip modules
- If students have at least 75% of the yearly credits, they can be enrolled in the next year, with the obligation to be evaluated for the modules they did not graduate
- At the end of the lower secondary SC program, students are considered to have graduated compulsory education and have the right to continue their studies
- If graduates continue their vocational training for 6 months practical training sessions and succeed in their final exam, they receive the qualification certificate



Present situation of the SC program

- ✓ almost 10.000 students enrolled in both levels;
- ✓ almost 50% of the students in lower-secondary education are Romanians;
- ✓ 42% of the students are females;

Specific support measures in different projects:

- ✓ Creating and issuing educational material for students and teachers (33 titles for primary level and 43 titles for lower-secondary level);
- ✓ Creating and issuing a guide for school managers (*Second Chance Program - The ABC*);
- ✓ Training school managers and teacher trainers;
- ✓ Program information campaigns, designing and spreading promotional materials;
- ✓ Authorizing schools which implement the program;
- ✓ Monitoring and assessing with a view to improving the program.



Conclusions regarding Second Chance (SC) Program

Strong points

- The program clearly responds to a need:
- ✓ a considerable number of registrations;
 - ✓ prevalence of people aged between 16-30;
 - ✓ most participants are unemployed and trained in traditional jobs;
 - ✓ students consider the program relevant, useful and beneficial;
 - ✓ schools appreciate the learning model offered by the curriculum and educational materials;
 - ✓ teachers regard themselves as competent.

Weak points

- ✓ not all schools are ready (willing and prepared) to meet the need for the program of people in their catching area and to organize the program;
- ✓ in some cases, for financial reasons, the program is stopped or is not developed
- ✓ schools are not yet prepared to offer the personalized support students in SC need;
- ✓ in some cases, cooperation between general schools and vocational schools in organizing the program is not at its best;
- ✓ teachers regard themselves as still insufficiently trained.