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The role played by the social environment within the future's plans of youth¹

Ana MUNTEAN², Maria ROTH³, Mihai Bogdan IOVU⁴

Abstract

The attention given by the social environment to the teenager is essential within his/her life project and expectations. The theory of social capital is bringing arguments for the importance of the family, school, peer group and community in building-up the adolescent's trust for his/her future. Feeling the continuities and discontinuities between his/hers own expectations and the atmosphere within the family environment, the school, the community and the peers, the teenager becomes more or less confident in his/hers capacities, more or less responsible and optimistic about the future. We are exploring our assumptions through an investigation constructed on self-report by adolescents. The data was collected using a complex questionnaire: School Success Profile (SSP), on a sample of 2465 teenagers, aged between 13-18 years old. The respondents were students of the second level and high school level. They are living with their families, within eleven counties of Romania. The investigation was done during November 2008 and January 2009. The results of the investigation are clearly emphasizing the relevance of the family, school and peers for the teenager's expectations concerning the future. Some conclusions of our investigation are underlining the impact of Romanian cultural specificities concerning child – adult relationship.

¹ The research is part of a national project: *The Social Diagnosis of School Performance using the School Success Profile (SSP-Ro) and the Design of Research-based Intervention Methods*, PN 91063, conducted by Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, and funded by CNMP in Romania.

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Keywords: adolescent; social capital; family; school; peers; community; life project; resilience.

Introduction

Adolescence has the potential for changing the pathway of the individual's development. The adolescents have the capacity to build-up their identity, often against the existing models of childhood and youth (Erikson, 1997). Their identity is including the individual life project built-up by the teenager. The life project is an anchor for the adolescent's behavior and wellbeing. To which degree the life project, linking the "who am I" with the future expectations about the self, is under the influence of the family, school, peers, and the community where the teenager is living? We are trying to answer this question based on the results of an extensive research done with teenagers in a national sample of 13-18 years olds, living with their families, at the end of the year 2008.

Due to multiple social and historical causes, in Romania, the adolescence's potential for development is still underestimated. Public opinion is often surprised by the rise of violence in schools shown in the media. In such circumstances the youngsters are mostly criticized and seen like adults from whom one expects responsibility for their acts. In general, their problems are perceived too late, the moment they start generate social difficulties. A large number of children⁵ have been raised separated from their parents who work abroad. The common perception is that the delinquency, the school drop out and the suicide haven grown among young people. This image is sustained by the literature which demonstrates the fact that these "children with mono-parental or divorced families are likely to have poor results in school, to drop out very young, to become parents while still children and to suffer from a series of psycho-social factors, including depressions, anxiety, stress and violence (Sheridan, Eagle, Dowd, 2004).

In our research we are looking to the socio-emotional environment encountered by the adolescents in the family, friends milieu, school and community and the impact of that on the structure of the teenager's optimism concerning his/her future. The specific quality of the socio-emotional support experienced by the adolescents can play a supportive or an endangering influence on their life-projects. The quality of the social interactions is an important aspect of adolescents' resilience (Letourneau, 1997), which can facilitate their cognitive and socio-emotional development.

⁵ The official number of Romanian children raised and still growing up without parents working abroad is of 91502, out of which for 19615 both parents are abroad and for 35681 just one parent (ANPDC, 2008).

Theoretic background

The theoretic framework of the research is combining the eco-interactional, the developmental and the resilience perspective. The ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) helps us understand the interface of different systems which are the context of child development. Development is not influenced just by factors of the child's immediate environment, but also by experiences which appear in a larger context: politic, social, economic, cultural, in which the family itself is integrated. The developmental perspective sees a person's resilience as a process in which the interaction between protective and risk factors mediates the specific results. A positive approach emphasizes the cumulative effects of the positive outcomes on building-up the resilience. The family resilience, framework of the individual resilience, resides in the family's ability to face adversities and adapt. This is a multi-determined process which appears in time and forms itself as a response to the complexity of changing conditions (Walsh, 1996). From the ecological point of view, family resilience is a continued process, in development, at different levels, determined by the cohesion and capacity to adapt of each family (Patterson, 2002). In a chronologic perspective, the understanding of a student's school behavior is based on previous experiences, present realities and future anticipations (Bowen, Rose, Bowen, 2005).

The eco-interactional-developmental perspective is present in the assessment instrument: the School Success Profile questionnaire (SSP) (Bowen, Rose, Bowen, 2005). The main idea of SSP is that the "balance between the protective and risk factors experienced by the students in their social environments influence the level of success they experience at school and in life" (Bowen, Rose, Bowen, 2005).

Another perspective taken into account when interpreting the data is that of social capital, defined as "the totality of positive relationships within family and neighborhood which serve as buffer factors for the negative influences present in the immediate environment of the individual" (Stevenson, 1997: 48). Made of the horizontal emotional connections and the distant connections - horizontal, vertical and across - (Putman, Leonardi, Nanetti, 1993), the social capital is a determining factor in the child's development and resilience, a significant protective factor of mental health (Almedon, Glandon, 2006). The family assures a double birth of the child in the world: biological and psychological (Aubertel, 2000). In the child's psychological construction, the social and linguistic capital provided by the family (Clark, 1988) represents the fundamental elements of the child's connection to the world. From the family perspective, Coleman (1993) defines the social capital as given by the "...physical presence of adults in the family as well as the quality of relationships between them" (p. 259). Regarding the importance of neighborhood, the informal control received by the youngsters from the community, there are

researches supporting the idea that such community based connections can protect an individual even in situation of economic scarcity (Almedon, Glandon, 2006).

The research instrument

The present research is based on the results of a national survey conducted within the project The Social Diagnosis of School Performance using the School Success Profile-Ro and the Design of Research-based Intervention Methods⁶. SSP is a self-reported questionnaire to students of second level and high-school (11-18 years) and consists of 220 multiple choice items, covering 22 dimensions divided in: Social Environment Profile and Individual Adaptation Profile. The School Success Profile, is an instrument developed by researchers in the North Carolina University of Chapel Hill, USA, and was adapted in Romania. Results with SSP-Ro indicate a good internal consistency for the dimensions of the instrument (Hărăguș, Dămean, Roth, 2009). The dimensions of individual adaptation are explored with 220 items, with a positive approach.

The collected data were analyzed through SPSS software. Chi-square association coefficients were calculated in order to test for significant relationships.

Our research examines the continuity between adolescents' expectations and their perception of the attention they are given in their environments. Our hypotheses test the positive relationship between the degrees of attention given to adolescents by their friends, families, schools, and communities and their confident life projects, as well as their optimism for the future.

Target population

The School Success Profile research instrument was applied on a nationally representative sample, in 11 counties (Argeș, Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj, Galați, Iași, Mureș, Neamț, Sibiu, Timiș, Vâlcea and Bucharest). The questionnaire was completed by 2608 second level and high-school students, of different ethnic backgrounds, from urban and rural areas, out of which 2465 valid questionnaires were used in the analysis. The characteristics of the sample are in the table below:

⁶ Project financed by CNMP, contract no 91063 coordinated by Babes-Bolyai University. Partners: UVT, ULBS, UPIT, CEMO, CRCR Details about the project can be found at the adress <http://www.successcolar.ro>

Variable	% (N)
Gender	
Female	55.5 (1362)
Male	45.5 (1092)
Ethnic background	
Romanian	89.3 (2167)
Hungarian	9.7 (234)
Roma	1.0 (25)
School level	
Secondary school	44.1 (1071)
Post-secondary school	55.9 (1367)
Scholarship aid	
Social scholarship	7.4 (182)
No social scholarship	92.6 (2283)
Residence	
Urban	74.4 (1834)
Rural	25.6 (631)

Table 1 Sample description (N=2465)

The selected items for the current discussions

From the large data-set collected with the SSP questionnaire, we selected for the current discussions the information referring to the following variables:

- the expectations of adolescents concerning their future
- adolescent's trust in their friends
- the teachers supportive attitudes as perceived by the youth
- the loving attitude of the adults in the family as perceived by the teenagers
- the interest of the community for children as perceived by the teenagers

According to the theoretic aspects presented above, it is expected that if the adolescent has the feeling of support from the part of the family, community, friends and school teachers, he/she will develop a positive and confident vision of the future and successful life project. The connection between the construction fields of the social capital (first and foremost family and school) will provide a solid basis for a life project. Collected by self-reports, the data regarding the quality of the youth's relationships represent the responding subject's perception and evaluation.

As the indicator of the confidence in future projects, we selected the statement: *"I know I will have success in the future"* (B23b).

The quality of the relationship with friends is revealed by the answers to the statement: *"I can count on my friends for support"* (C1d).

To look to teenagers' perceptions about their families' emotional involvement, we considered relevant the question: "During the past 30 days, how often did the adults in your home let you know you were loved?" (D2a). The data refers here to the perception of the frequency of emotional expressions of adults in the family, during the previous month.

The attention the adolescent gets from teachers in the school is in the statement: "My teachers care about me." (B12a). We also looked at the results of the statements: "there is a strong connection between the success at school and in life" (B23g).

The attention from the part of the community is revealed by the statement: "Adults in my neighborhood are interested in what young people in the neighborhood are doing" (F2a).

The answers to all these selected statements, with the exception of the one regarding the interactions within the family of the youth, are graded on a scale from "not at all", "a little", "a lot" and "very much".

One dimension of our investigation is based on the quality of friendship of the respondents connected with their confidence in the future. In order to test this relation the Pearson correlation was used. This indicates a positive significant relationship ($\chi^2=81.34$, $p=10^{-14}$). There are some interesting observations when analyzing data in more details (table 2).

		I can count on my friends for support			
		Not at all (%)	A little (%)	A lot (%)	Total (%)
I know I will be successful in the future	Not at all (%)	13.6	4.8	2.9	3.8
	A little (%)	30.1	39.1	27.3	30.7
	A lot (%)	26.2	40.3	45.5	43.3
	Very much (%)	30.1	15.9	24.3	22.2

Table 2 Crosstabulation I know I will be successful in the future * I can count on my friends for support (N=2453)

There are no choices of the maximum intensity for friends' support (very much), and this is quite surprising. The explanation can be found either in a certain disappointment of the youth concerning their social environment or in their lack of trust in the people around, including friends. The pattern of trust, lack of trust or distrust towards others, 'significant' persons like friends, is built-up within the relationship with the attachment figure in early childhood. This initial pattern is confirmed or rejected later on, across the different stages of the life. Any moment of the life, the child's psychological functioning is highly influenced by the individual and family background (Compas, 2003).

There is no full trust, but there is a medium to superior level of trust (the column: “a lot”) on friend’s availability in almost two thirds of respondents (69.8%). Do our adolescents have a limited trust due to their personal history or rather a more realistic one? In other words did they have not enough good parents for building-up the confidence in their “significant persons” or are they living in not enough good social environments as perceived by them?

Regarding the expectations about the future, again most of the choices are placed on the moderate superior rank (43.3%). When the young have a moderated trust in their future, their trust in the help of their friends is just as high. The general picture of the future within the sample of 2453 respondents is not excessive good but “moderate superior”. While 3.8% of young people don’t trust their success in the future, and 30.7% believe in it “a little”, the moderate superior evaluations (“a lot”) reach 43.3%. 24.3% dare to fully believe in their success in the future, while trusting the help of friends “a lot”.

The parents provide the social and linguistic capital of the child (Clark, 1988). As a family member, the adolescent contributes to the family resilience while building on it his/her own resilience. The item chosen for the description of the relationship within the family was a quantitative one: “How many times during the last month the adults in your family told you or showed you their love to you?” and the answers ranked between “never”, “once or 2 times”, “3 times or more”. On the age of 12-14 years old of the adolescents the global loving behavior of the mother to the child is most important: 50% of the mother’s behavior is expected by the child to express the loving feelings (Compas, 2003), when the father global loving behavior, on the same age, is much less expected (15%). Out of 2456 respondents, 70.4% (so more than two thirds), noticed the expression of the loving behavior of the adults in the family more than 3 times during the last month. There are 210 adolescents (8.6%) who did not have any loving signs in the family during the last month.

The quality of the relationships within the family is in association with the projection in the future of teenagers ($\chi^2=72.64$, $p=10^{-12}$). The pattern of relating and interactions within the family are essential for the development and promotion of the adaptation to the school environment, to society and to a functional behavior (Sheridan, Eagle, Dowd, 2004). The expectation is to find that those adolescents who are receiving more the expression of loving behavior of their parents to be most trustful concerning the successful future. The data shows there are a number of teenagers who are benefiting of high frequency of loving expressions from their parents and do not trust at all the future (2.6%) or they are trusting just a little (27.1%). In the same line, as on the whole researched sample the adolescents’ trust in the future is not superlative but predominantly moderate superior (“a lot” and not “very much”), most of the respondents (70.4%) who benefit of the frequent expression of the love of their parents have a moderate superior trust on the successful future.

		They told or showed you loving behavior to you:			
		Never (%)	Once or 2 times (%)	3 or more times (%)	Total (%)
I know I will be successful in the future	Not at all (%)	8.6	5.5	2.6	3.8
	A little (%)	37.6	38.3	27.1	30.7
	A lot (%)	35.2	41.4	45	43.3
	Very much (%)	18.6	14.8	25.4	22.3

Table 3 Crosstabulation I know I will be successful in the future. * They told or showed you loving behavior to you (N=2456)

The family is the place where most of the child’s learning is coming through observations. The lack of trust for successful future of the adolescents can be based on the same attitudes toward the future among the family’s members.

More high association coefficient ($\chi^2=182.79$, $p=10^{-33}$), comparing with the correlation between trusting the future and trusting friends and family is functioning between the adolescent’s expectations to be successful in the future (“I know I will be successful in the future”) and the feelings that teachers at school are paying attention to him (“My teachers care about me”). On the global level among the youth sample investigated the trust for successful future is superior (80%). Consequently most of them (48.2%) are on the cross of trusting “a lot” the future and feeling that teachers care “a lot” about them. Remarkably consistent the intensity of the perceived attention from the teachers is going increasingly with the trust on the future. It is the first time, comparing with friends and family, when the correlation between the highest degree of trusting the future and the highest degree of the feelings that teachers care about him/her, on the vertical and horizontal column, is progressively higher. Even the attitude towards teachers is very much depending on the level of school success, the teacher represents the projection of the ideal self of the adolescent as well as the projection of the parental image built-up within the family (Compas, 2003). Apparently the projection of the teenager on the future is highly connected with the school’s investment. The family investment, comparing to teachers investment, is less awarded by the adolescent. The school seems to play the role of a crib for the adolescent’s future.

If the family is playing the fundamental role by the first 3 years of the baby’s life the school is taking the main role in supporting the future success of the teenager. Probably this conclusion is also sustained by the age of our respondents. The adolescence is the time when the children are struggling for their identity and planning for their future, and sometimes this process is done against the models which they used to have within their own families (Erikson, 1997). The impact of the school in building up the social capital for the adolescent’s future is realized by the “interactions among the social factors, based on the contents and social

demands, and within contexts-social class, institution- which are functioning governed by the social norms” (Duru-Bellat, 2007).

		My teachers care about me				
		Not at all (%)	A little (%)	A lot (%)	Very much (%)	Total (%)
I know I will be successful in the future	Not at all (%)	9.2	4.9	2.6	2.4	3.8
	A little (%)	34	38.8	28.9	17.5	30.6
	A lot (%)	39.9	41.3	48.2	37.7	40.3
	Very much (%)	17	15	20.4	42.3	22.3

Table 4 Crosstabulation I know I will be successful in the future. * My teachers care about me (N=2465)

The majority of the teenagers (40.3%) have a moderate superior trust in a successful future and only 22.3% is finding the future trustworthy. However in case of the teenagers who are benefiting of an intensive attention from their teachers, the number of those who are full confident concerning the future (42.3%) is higher comparing with those who are trusting the future on a moderate level (37.7%). Looking at the data within the column “very much” regarding the assertion: “My teachers care about me” it is obvious that the values are constantly increasing, from 2.4% to 42.3%.

Within the continuity between the school and the life success, the school plays the central role supporting the teenager’s social insertion. The social capital provided by the school has the strongest projection in the future of the teenager. This continuity is sustained by most of the respondents (74.1%) who are answering on the scale “a lot” (42.9%) and “very much” (31.2%) on the assertion: “There is a strong relationship between the school success and the success in the life”. The teachers playing the school role and representing the school in front of the society are the generators of the investment of the society in the future of the teenagers and of the society as a hall. This is an important argument for a careful selection and training of the teachers within the educational system because they have in their hands the future of the young people and the future of the entire society. If the school is so high in the adolescents’ perceptions, we continue to examine the importance of the school in the following, taking in account two assertions: “There is a strong relationship between the school success and the success in the life” and “My teachers are expecting me to be successful”.

83.8% consider “my teachers are expecting me to be successful” (31.2% in a moderate superior degree and 52.6% in a superior degree).

		My teachers are expecting me to be successful				
		Not at all (%)	A little (%)	A lot (%)	Very much (%)	Total (%)
There is a strong relationship between the school success and the success in the life.	Not at all (%)	18.3	7.8	3.9	3	5.2
	A little (%)	32.1	33.7	22.7	13.1	22.4
	A lot (%)	26	35.6	42.9	31.2	36.7
	Very much (%)	23.7	23	30.5	52.6	35.7

Table 5 Crosstabulation There is a strong relationship between the school success and the success in the life. * My teachers are expecting me to be successful (N=2455)

Most of the teenagers (52.6%) are expressing their confidence regarding the link between school and life success on the moderate level. The trust on the leading role of the school in preparing the future of the teenagers is expressed by the respondents on the higher level than the global answers overloaded by the anxiety which gives the “moderate” chosen for the majority of the items. The statistical outcomes are showing a remarkable congruence on the column expressing on the highest level the feelings of the adolescents concerning the good expectations of the teachers concerning their success.

The association coefficient is significant ($\chi^2=246.69$, $p=10^{-47}$). This draws an answer to the frequent question of nowadays Romania: “what for the school is training the children?” The school is training the children for the life and the adolescents have a clear idea about that. Consequently a new question appears: has the school the necessary potential for this important mission?

The construction of the teenager’s social capital is expanded on the community level. Even the feelings of the teenagers concerning the interest showed to them by the adults in the community is quite weak, the correlation between the positive expectations for the future of the teenagers and the perception of the general attention given to children in the community, for the 2454 respondents to the assertions: “I know I will be successful in the future” and “The adults in my neighborhood are showing interest for what we, the teenagers in the are, are doing” is positive ($\chi^2=77.40$, $p=10^{-12}$).

		The adults in my neighborhood are showing interest for what we, the teenagers in the are, are doing				
		Not at all (%)	A little (%)	A lot (%)	Very much (%)	Total (%)
I know I will be successful in the future	Not at all (%)	5	2.9	3.4	4.9	3.8
	A little (%)	34.1	33.5	27.2	22.3	30.7
	A lot (%)	39	46.6	46.5	35.4	43.2
	Very much (%)	21.8	16.9	22.9	37.5	22.3

Table 6 Crosstabulation I know I will be successful in the future * The adults in my neighborhood are showing interest for what we, the teenagers in the are, are doing (N=2454)

Most of the choices regarding the interest of the adults in the community for “what we, children and teenagers in the area, are doing” are on the level “a little” (46.6%). The number of teenagers who believe that the community does not have any interest for children and adolescents (5%) is higher comparing with those who have the perception of a “moderate” level (2.9%) or a moderate superior (3.4%) of interest for children and adolescents to the community. Here, the selection of the moderate superior level is not done by most of the respondents as used to be the answers for other items. The data are significant regarding the social tissue of the community. The resilience of the community is expressed in the cohesion on the community level, within which the attention paid to children and youth is a central point. The respondents are reporting the weakness or the lack of this dimension within the communities where they are living. Can we consider this aspect as being connected to the communist period when the human solidarity was deeply affected by the severe restrictions of the daily life (Tismăneanu, 2006)? The now day’s projects within communities are showing little interest for the aspect of the human solidarity and interest for children despite the fact that this are basic items for community empowerment and self-development.

Within the sample of respondents, between 5% and 13.6% adolescents do not trust their future at all, 0.6% do not rely on the help of their friends, 0.7% did not received a loving behavior during the last month from the adults in the family, 0.6% do not feel the positive expectations from teachers, 1.3% do not feel positive reactions from the community and 1% do not realize the connection between the school success and the success in the life. We do not know if they are the same individuals represented within these figures but if so they are placed on the shadow of marginalization.

Discussions

Limits of the results

The results are showing positive correlations and consequently the discussions are based on those correlations. Surprisingly enough, the figures expressing the correlations are not so high. This situation is connected with the extensive size of the sample (2465) as well as with the acknowledged variety. The ranges of ages of the respondents is not living place for lot of homogeneity as a child of 13 years old is supposed to be sensible in a different degree and on the different items within social environment comparing with a child of 18 years old. The different regions in Romania where the youth respondents are living are known as being very different about their social economical development. Probably the most important issue concerning the differences in answers of the respondents is coming from the differences of the school results of children. Children with better results in the school are expected to be more confident, more reflective and more prone to an optimistic future and more capable to coop with the evaluation situation.

Some conclusions

Exploring the positive correlations between different assertions concerning the future and the perception of the teenagers regarding the support of the friends, the loving behavior of the adults in the family towards them, the teachers expectations and the interest for children within their communities the conclusion clear defenses the idea of the fundamental connection between all these items. Even the coefficients were not very high the feeling of continuity between the expectations and attention toward them and the trust of youth regarding their future appears to be clear.

The dimension of our sample allows the extending of the conclusions to the entire Romanian populations of young students. However the differences concerning the age and the school success (the grades in the school) of our respondents give limits to the results of the investigation. A vulnerable point of the conclusions drown out from the investigation is also the fact that the items discussed here are selected from a much bigger data base.

1. The general experience with the use of SSP as an assessment tool was a difficult one. On one hand, a significant number of parents were reluctant and did not approve the participation of their children in the evaluation process. On the other hand, because this was the first experience, we faced a certain suspicion from the part of the adolescents regarding the evaluation. Consequently, a large number of the questionnaires remained uncompleted despite of the operators' readiness to support. This explains also the

difference in number of respondents from one item to the other. A possible explanation of this survey situation could be the lack of a culture of reflection and evaluation among youth. Reflection and evaluation are processes and benchmarks necessary in the construction of a future's projects as well as in the achieving of success. If the current Romanian family is less focused on the construction of skills like reflection, evaluation and self evaluation, the recognition of feelings and the honest expression, the evaluation of situations and planning the actions, we believe that it is the school's duty to aim through various curricula the training of these necessary skills to individual and social progress. The school should not come in the family's stead but in cooperation and complementarily to it.

2. It is possible that the choice for answering to "moderate superior" rather than for "high" is reflecting the lack of the evaluation culture and skills. In this case, the suspicion is not directed towards "friends", "adults in the family", "success in the future", and "adults in the community", but rather towards the experience of evaluation. On the other hand, the "moderate superior" attitude of youth expressed by the choices of the respondents, at the age of enthusiasm and great projects can lead to the idea of a lower self-confidence. Given the fact that the self-confidence is an important aspect of resilience the situation revealed by the SSP could draw the attention of politician, administrators and professionals in the field of family protection and of the school system for the need of initiating projects to aim the increase of youth's self-confidence towards all relevant social factors in their lives. According to the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), the lack of self-confidence can start during the first years of a child's life, in his/hers interactions with significant persons from the family, especially with the attachment figure. The good family, the one capable of assuring the individual autonomy and the growth of the new generation is built on trustful relations. The extent to which the family is capable to support the resilient development of the child depends on the presence of protective and resilience factors in the family. Consequently, promoting the protective characteristics of the family is vital for supporting the family role in developing the child's abilities in order to make him/her more capable to face the challenges of life (Sheridan, Eagle, Dowd, 2004). Moreover, as a continuation of the relationships within the family, the quality of the interactions with the teachers in kindergartens, primary and secondary school can diminish or increase the child's self-confidence. Once more, the school is called to rethink its role as child focused in order to better prepare him/her for life.

3. A third of the young respondents don't believe in their future success. This lack of confidence can be explained either through the lack of

confidence determined by the social environment in Romania or by the lack of self-confidence. As the statistics shows, a large number of adolescents dream to emigrate from Romania. It is an alarming symptom that asks for urgent educational and support measures. Explaining shallowly this phenomenon only on behalf of Romania's poverty means to abandon building this country's future. Other European countries have considerably more services for young people (Muntean, Sagebiel, 2007) when compared to their almost complete absence in Romania. It is precisely this lack of infrastructure that should be held responsible for the lack of the adolescents' confidence in their future in Romania.

4. Romania still shows the burden of communist trauma (Muntean, 2006, Tismăneanu, 2006). The lack of human solidarity, the diminished importance of children and adolescents within the family and the society are proofs of this tragic heritage. These aspects reduce the construction of the individual social capital. This heritage generated new difficulties in our society, with consequences in Romania and all over the world. The great number of children left behind by parents working abroad is such a consequence and will perpetuate the communist trauma through generations. The lack of human solidarity leads to the adolescents' perception regarding the inconsistency of the community they live in, the lack of attention given to children and youth. Human solidarity and the importance given to children and youth in a society is not just a protective factor in the difficult social-historic moments of the community, but also a factor with a strong potential for overcoming the consequences of trauma, as shown by the European history after the Second World War. The healing of the social tissue of a community is a long term process and requires a special education, special projects meant to support the community' empowerment and self-development. The lack of trust in relationships, proven by the youth' lack of trust in friends is a factor that projected in the future doesn't leave to much hope. The adolescent's social capital, which is firstly built within family, then school, then community, does not appear very strong in our evaluation. Once more, there is a need to stress the priority of services and interventions to support the youth at the level of community.

5. When school has such an important impact on the life and the future of the young, the increase of school truancy/drop out, of school violence and all the other manifestations of school invalidation these past years are extremely worrying. We are aware that Romania's school system is in a profound restructuring process at all levels. In spite of this, the current effects are not always compatible with the final good goals. A better evaluation of the state of facts, as well as of the effects of measures taken, based on the putting into practice of a continuous process of reflection and

the collaboration of the school with the family and other important social factors present in the life of children, could lead to a healthy restructuring of the educational system. The restructuring built on foreign models are often invalidated by the local social context. We believe that the use of such an evaluation instrument as the SSP could help in these efforts to reorganize the Romanian schools. The evaluation by SSP revealed the school's mission to support children and youth in the construction of a future in connection with the requirements of contemporary society.

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