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Attending parenting education programmes in Romania. The case of the Holt Romania Iași programme

Daniela COJOCARU¹

Abstract

The article presents the partial results of a study concerning the factors that influence the participation of rural-environment parents in parenting education programmes. The research aims to explore the mechanisms that lead to a higher number of participants joining parenting education programmes, as well as to an increase of the beneficial effects these classes have on parents, starting from the perspectives and opinions of parents who had taken parenting classes. Aside from the factors that pertain to the organisation of courses by the providers of such programmes, we see as equally important the personal motivational factors such as: investing in personal growth, the need for socialisation and learning, the clinical (therapeutic) effect of participation and the opportunity of escaping domestic routine. All these factors may become analysis frameworks for the providers of parenting education, supplying information that may be used for refining the contents and the form of organising parenting education classes.

Keywords: parenting; parent education; grounded theory; participation; personal development; clinical (therapeutic) effect; domestic routine.

Background

In the past ten years, a number of models for parenting education programmes have reached Romania; these models had been developed, implemented and tested abroad, and in time they underwent modifications and adaptations to the specificities of the Romanian cultural environment. There have also been local initiatives of educating parents, as a form of supporting parenting and as a complement to other types of intervention such as counselling, support groups

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etc. (Cojocaru, 2009a). In the absence of a methodological model devised and validated through prior experience, the local initiatives focussing on parenting education have developed chiefly the information dimension, applied in a group setting; these practices were called by their providers “parenting education programmes” or “parenting classes”. Both observations of the ground and data from literature (Hamner & Turner, 2001) point to the fact that when parenting education is articulated on wide social networks it may provide a number of solutions to parenting issues (parenting stress, child-directed violence, poor communication, poor ability of defending the children’s rights in relation to institutions), as well as to children’s issues (aggressive behaviour, school failure, dropping out of school, lack of adaptation in society etc.); It seems, therefore, that parenting education may be the answer to some issues, but its effectiveness and its ability to provide support to parents and, indirectly, to children, or to larger social networks depends on a number of factors whose influence is only partially known and clarified. Despite the lack of a consensus concerning the definition of parenting education, this sphere includes those programmes, services and resources provided to parents and carers that aim to support them or to increase their ability of raising their children (Carter, 1996). Parenting education is one of the key strategies that form the inventory of techniques aimed at supporting families, together with counselling, crisis intervention, family therapy etc. (Cojocaru, 2009). According to some authors, the characteristic trait of parenting education programmes is their participative approach, which „helps the parents gain control over their own lives, become better defenders of their own interests and of their children’s, in their interaction with social agencies and institutions, to engage more actively in their children’s education through direct involvement or through the acquisition of resources” (Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez and Bloom, 1993: 93-94). The universe of parenting education includes a large variety of programmes, approaches and target groups: poor parents, teenage parents, parents from different ethnic groups, parents of disabled children, parents of chronically ill children, grandparents etc. (Fine and Lee, 2000; Sandu, 2010).

The idea of this research started from the intention of developing throughout the country a parenting education strategy, championed by Holt Romania, one of the national providers of such programmes, and intention shared by the Romanian Unicef Country Office, which over the past ten years has consistently supported and promoted pilot programmes in this domain, as well as by the Romanian authorities, directly or through intermediate structures. Romanian authorities have often stated their interest in developing a national strategy for implementing parenting education, as a way of supporting and strengthening the services that prevent, among others, abuse, neglect, exploitation through labour, child abandonment and school failure, as well as a way of promoting children’s rights. Parenting education is also seen as a valuable tool for recovering deficient parenting, within interventions in the domain of child protection/child welfare

(Cojocaru, 2008). The aim of this research is to identify the factors that mobilise the parents towards attending parenting classes in the rural environment, in order to produce a body of useful data for the national strategy concerning parenting education in Romania, in terms of the number of parents' adherence to these programmes.

Methodology

The aim of this type of research, using the research technique called Grounded Theory, is not to test assumptions that have been pre-developed by the researcher, but rather to allow the researcher to acknowledge the fact that he/she does not know enough in order to formulate meaningful assumptions for the researched topic (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). In these circumstances, our research set out to explore the mechanisms that would lead to a higher number of parents joining parenting education programmes, as well as to an increase in the beneficial impact of these classes on the parents, starting from the parents' perspectives and opinions as beneficiaries of parenting education programmes. We add that the individuals taking part in the research are parents from the county of Iași who attended the course *How to become better parents*, provided by Holt Romania – Iași Branch in the interval 2007-2009.

Research strategy

The strategy of our research follows a tradition called *grounded theory*, which aims to generate theories on processes, actions or interactions that are supported by, or grounded in the subjective perspectives of the research participants (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2008, p.11). The research design is qualitative, appropriate for our objectives, which were to find out which are the factors that facilitate the parents' participation in parenting education classes.

One of the most important assumptions of qualitative research is that the social world is neither stable, nor uniform, and as a consequence there is no sole truth in research, a truth that could be captured in data. Qualitative data is analysed inductively, within flexible methodological frameworks, and very often the data analysis stage – searching for shared themes and patterns – takes place at the same time with the data collection stage.

Our choice of design is supported by a number of arguments:

- the *exploratory character* of the research, due mainly to the complete lack of data in the area of parenting education in Romania; as of the date our research started, in Romania there were no studies, systematic or not, of parenting education programmes, of their providers, of the contents and target groups, of their impact on families and children etc.

- *the questions in our research*, aimed at identifying the factors that facilitate the parents' participation in parenting education programmes, using as a starting point the reports generated by the parents' subjective experiences, instead of standard operationalisation schemes described in the current literature. In the complete absence of any studies of parenting education based on Romanian realities, the use of such methodological tools was considered inappropriate. Exploring the parents' subjective representations concerning their participation in education programmes aimed at their role as parents is the more necessary as, from the preliminary factual documentation of our research shows that none of the providers of parenting education programmes in Romania has grounded the implementation of their respective programmes on a preliminary research of the local culture or cultures of child rearing and childcare, that is of the values that constitute the foundation of the local parenting practices.

Data collection

The methodological procedure aimed for data collection in three stages*: discussions with parenting educators in order to clarify the research strategy, focus groups discussions (five) in four rural locations in the county of Iași, and 20 in-depth interviews with subjects selected from amongst those who had taken part in the focus groups.

The sample and the selection of participants

The focus groups were organised in the villages of Scobinți, Andrieșeni, Popricani and Holboca, four rural communities in the county of Iași; the criterion for choosing the locations was the quality of the relationships the Holt organisation has with the community social workers in those villages and their capacity to mobilise the parents for the meetings we requested. The focus groups were organised in the interval April - June 2010 and had an average of nine participants each (one group per village), with the exception of the village of Scobinți, where two focus groups were organised, one with eight participants and one with only four. For the organisation of the focus groups the researcher asked for assistance from the community social workers and from the former parenting educators trained by the Holt organisation during previous social assistance programmes held in the rural environment, programmes that also included elements of parenting education: *Community Based Services in Iasi, Vaslui and Suceava Counties* (October 2008 – September 2009, with the support of the Romanian Unicef

* The interviews were held and transcribed by Alina Iovu and Cătălina Panainte, research assistants in the Childhood and Parenting Research Center project, implemented by Holt Romania – Iași Branch, a project supported by the Romanian Unicef Country Office.

Country Office) and *Area centres specialised in counselling and support for parents and children in difficulty*, funded through PHARE in the interval 2007-2008 and implemented by the General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection/Child Welfare, in partnership with the Holt organisation.

The selection of parents for the focus groups was based on the following criteria: previous *participation* in a parenting education programme, *diversity* in terms of gender, age, level of education, number of children, marital status, and distance *in time* from the parenting classes attended – only parents who had attended courses in the past three years were accepted.

This last criterion was inspired by the data in literature, which question the remanence of parenting education classes in time, as well as by the piloting of the focus group, implemented before the data collection stage itself in the villages of Andrieșeni and Popricani; this exercise showed that the parents who had attended parenting classes more than three years before had a hard time remembering this experience and were no longer capable of discussing concrete details concerning them, the information they provided being quite imprecise and fragmented. Through trial and error we arrived at the distance of three years as the optimal one for the respondents to have clear, integral representations that could be developed in a narrative context, facilitated by the presence of other parents who had lived the experience of these classes.

The participants in the focus groups were mainly women (only two men were present in all the groups) aged between 25 and 55, most of them without permanent employment, most of them married, Christian Orthodox, with children of various ages, the best represented ages for the children being 0-3 years and 3-6 years. In the last stage of the research (July-September 2010), twenty individual interviews were held with subjects from the rural environment who had attended parenting education classes through the programmes *Area centres specialised in counselling and support for parents and children in difficulty*, funded through PHARE in the interval 2007-2008 and implemented by the Holt organisation, and by CBS (*Community Based Services in Iasi, Vaslui and Suceava Counties*) Programme, funded by Unicef in the interval 2008- 2009.

The subjects were contacted by telephone by the Holt operators, based on the data collected during the focus groups in the previous stage of the research; the subjects were invited to take part in individual interviews and a time was agreed for meeting them at their homes for the interviews.

The selection criterion before the interview had been diversity, according to three variables: location, level of education and children's age; later on, as the data collection progressed, several significant variables were discovered: number of children, marital status, occupation, participation in support groups established as a result of parenting education classes (see also the annex with the matrix of social and demographical data of the analytical sample) etc.

The subjects who took part in this stage were 18 women and 2 men, aged between 26 and 50 (average age 32.4), having between one and five children (average number of children 2.65), most of them married (85%), with one subject not married, one divorced and one living in a common-law marriage.

The level of education varied from primary school (5%), secondary school (25%), vocational school (45%), high school (20%), post-high-school training (5%).

The time elapsed since the end of the classes varied between one and three years, and the economic status of the cases had a low variation, in most of the cases the most important contributor being the father, earning a salary (50%), while in 40% of the cases the only income was the children's monthly allowance; two isolated cases were found, one in which both spouses were income earners, and one in which the mother's salary was the only income.

All the participants in focus groups and in individual interviews were asked for consent for taking part in the discussions with the operators and were given assurances that the collected data would be used only for scientific purposes. The focus groups lasted an average of 90 minutes and were recorded on audio and video with specialised equipment; subsequently, the conversations were transcribed faithfully and a database was structured using the empirical material collected during the research. At the end of the focus group sessions the participants were given questionnaires in order to collect their social and demographical data and they were asked about their availability for individual interviews at a later stage, being reassured that the information they provided would remain confidential and the data would be used exclusively for scientific purposes.

The parents' eagerness to attend parenting education programmes. Personal motivation factors

The behaviours related to the parents' participation in the classes have an *individual determination*, a personal one, pertaining to the way the parent defines subjectively his or her new situation created by these classes, a *situational determination* (the place or time context) according to which the parent defines his or her context, a *cultural determination* pertaining to the cultural model and the manner in which it resonates with the idea of educating grown-ups for the role of parent; also important in this equation is the manner in which the provider of such services takes all these elements into account in order to adapt their contents, themes, form of organisation and teaching methods to the participants' interests and cultural and socio-demographic profiles.

Investing in personal growth

An important characteristic of a learning society is the provision of opportunities for adults to take part in training programmes throughout their lives. Also, it is necessary that the adults understand that it is important to take advantage of any opportunities provided in order to further their education (Johnson et al., 2003). Parenting education programmes are particular forms of adult education; the fact that many subjects associate them with schooling gives them a sense of pride and improves their self-esteem. The beneficial effect in terms of education is accompanied by a beneficial effect in terms of social life, as the individual is brought into a social network of peers, similar to school environments, which the subjects seem to relate more easily to. Their excitement and their eagerness for participation are enhanced by the non-routine character of these parenting education programmes and by the fact that the participants view these classes as a way of improving their knowledge, similar to schooling.

“I was excited... it was like going to school again, it was very nice. We were going to classes and we were all very proud.” (S19)

“Well, at the time the classes were held I was painting this dado and I’d wash up and run to get there. I liked going [to the parenting education classes, author’s note]... it reminded me of when I was a pupil. I’d hear about how other parents behaved. Each his own way... as they did at home. I’d be more peaceful when I came home. I wasn’t stressed anymore.” (S6)

The need for socialisation and learning

The confrontation of ideas and of personal opinions about the exercise of parenting becomes a form of education, as during the interactions among peers certain assumptions related to parenting are challenged and the definitions that are generated are negotiated by the entire group. Discussions about problems with children are brought by the parents during these meetings to the level of discussions about the ways parenting is exercised, about the ways parents meet these challenges. Questioning one’s own parenting practices provides the parents the reflection context for the identification of alternative practices, already experimented by other participants and validated during group interactions. Thus, the influence of the group on the context of providing a socialisation environment is stronger and more relaxing than the influence of a professional during the counselling process; within a group, the usual power and inequality relations between client and specialist are diluted, and an environment for interaction is created, providing support and understanding at the participants’ own level.

“I was more relaxed and it was for me an opportunity to go out, because I don't get to go out very much and see people” (S13)

“We didn't have jobs, and thus we could go to these classes and change a little, and it was really a pleasant outing. When I knew the day came to go to class, I dropped everything. I'd cook the evening before, so that I could go the next day. It was better than going to a psychologist.” (S16)

“I had a great time, especially that I got to meet with a lot of people, there were even persons I didn't know, I met them at the course. We felt great, it was like being in a family, it was very nice, we got to get out of the house, to meet new people, because there were girls there participants, author's note whom I hadn't met before.” (S1)

“It would be great if they asked to go to these classes again. It was quite relaxing for us... you'd leave everything at home... you forgot about no money, no this, no that and the other... it was a time for parents to relax... because you don't always get to meet with one, three or 15 people in one place... This course was really an excellent idea.” (S9).

“I had a good time, a great time. I relaxed and I also learned something new. You always make new friends, although here in the village there aren't many to choose from, really. But at least while I went to these classes I made friends with most of the people there and it was very nice. Well, afterwards we also worked in a clothing factory, which opened in the village.. one of these clothing things... and well... I worked with the girls there who went to the same classes. What can I say, it was nice. That's why I say there should be more classes like that. Well, also for the women who just gave birth, who have a baby. There are many women who have nobody who could teach them, and they have babies and they get married young.” (S15)

“Going to these classes I met several girls. We still meet, to this day, and we chat.” (S5)

In order to promote a positive change in behaviour several stages are necessary, one of them referring to the opportunities and the encouragements offered to parents during the meetings to reflect both on their own perspectives and on the others (Thomas, 1996). The confrontation between one's own opinions and definitions of certain situations with the others' is a source of motivation for taking part in parenting education programmes. The parents' socialisation process is accompanied by clinical effects (sharing joy, fears, feelings etc.), effects that result in enhanced trust and eagerness to participate. The relaxed environment, mentioned by all the interviewed subjects, is enhanced by the freedom to take

these classes without any constraint from the authorities or from the providers of parenting education services.

“And because I had the opportunity to go out... I got to see people I hadn't seen in a long time. I was relaxed going there. so relaxed because I saw these people and I got to see other people's mentalities. I see others who judge better than I do, or worse than I do... I can see their attitudes. And their behaviour, which you know, because you're from the same village, you're neighbors; you're bound to know it. And then you educate yourself as well. Maybe I was wrong about something, look, this woman did it another way; and thus you control yourself and you repair yourself. I erase the wrong part and I try to go the right way.” (S13)

For some of the parents, a mobilising factor was the fact that the representatives of the local authorities were invited to take part in parenting education activities, the parents perceiving this as a sign of the special attention given to them by the community leaders.

“How shall I put it, [I felt, author's note] not necessarily like I was given special attention, but I felt... more important. I met someone on the road one day and he asked me where I was going and I said I was coming here, that here was a class in parenting education, something to do with raising children, and he was surprised, and I told him I'd been here before...” (S20)

The classes' clinical effect

Some studies show that parenting education programmes improve parenting practices and optimise the participants' mental health (including by solving problems such as depression) and have a clinical effect on parents (Tonge et al, 2006; DeGarmo, Patterson, Forgatch, 2004; Patterson, Chamberlain, Reid, 1982; Barth, 2009). This clinical effect, of reducing the mother's stress and depression decrease the frequency and the seriousness of domestic violence episodes and, sometimes, solve part of the children's behaviour problems, having a similar effect to psychotherapy (Barth, 2009). The transformations suffered by the Romanian family in the past two decades, both in terms of structure and in terms of function and values, have induced a significant increase in stress levels, which reflects negatively on the family climate and on the parents' performance within the family (Cojocaru, 2009b). Parenting education classes have the potential – mentioned in literature (Breuer and Moskovic, 1994) – of reducing this stress significantly and consequently of optimising the general family climate, influencing both the relationship between parents and children, but also the relationship within the couple. This stress reduction effect is supported by the empirical data we collected; most of the parents we interviewed mentioned the state of relaxation felt both

during the meetings and in the interval immediately following the course. The relaxed atmosphere of the meetings is a motivating factor for the parents' attendance of classes.

“Good, I was relaxed, it felt good. I couldn't wait to get there. The classes were on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We'd meet there... and we'd relax in a different way” (S11)

“I felt that I acquired new knowledge, I learned something good for the children, for example about discipline, stress; in general I felt good after I took this class, it was beneficial for me and I discovered many new things, very many... new information about raising and educating children; it was a nice experience and a relaxation, we'd get away from home where we had our chores, and there I was more relaxed, there were several of us, girls, we'd learn new things, it was good” (S2)

An impressive number of subjects invoked the effect of improvement of their mental and emotional state brought on by the course, as well as the resources of calm, of good mood that the parents would use later on in their families. We have called this complex emotional effect *clinical effect*, also due to the fact that in their reports a number of subjects made a parallel between the state of mental wellbeing experienced within the group with the therapeutic effects of psychological or theological counselling.

“I was sorry it ended, honestly. I knew I had to go home. I told you it was... I never went to see a psychologist or a sociologist. I'd like to, very much, but I have no money. Well, when I went there, it was like going to church. I'd come home relieved from problems, from trouble, it didn't matter anymore whether I had what to cook that day or not. I just knew I came back from there delighted. The advice, first of all, they were very good, and also we met people, because there we wouldn't just talk about our stuff, just about the classes, but there you go, both, the classes that is, the advice, and the people that went there, because everyone asked questions, and if you didn't know the answer, you'd listen to the others, there were people who were curious to know, can you do this that way or the other; I can tell you, that's why we went there. I'm sorry, as I was telling you, if there were classes like this held again, could they do it so that it's not the same course, so that we can come and no-one can say they should go instead of us, who went twice to the same course.” (S16)

“... it's really relaxing, there's something that really calms me down s... † I was really happy, when I walked through the door I felt this thrill go through me. I had a good time and that means something. Communication helps with your memory and it helps you morally. Even if you're angry with your child,

you take him by the hand and you leave the house, and doing so you clear out all the anger, and then you come home and you're fine. It's something very nice, I like it" (S20)

The therapeutic effect of the parenting education classes is conditioned by the degree of nondisclosure and confidentiality of the group discussions and seems to be facilitated by the group composition, that is the fact that it consisted of unknown individuals (especially avoiding next-door neighbours), an element that encourages free self-disclosure.

"Very good, I was very open, even to the other girls who were there; then you talk about problems... and I was fine. I went, I didn't hold back, thinking so-and-so will hear my problems, or... The ladies told us to be open, because all we say stays there. It was good for me, because I had someone I could confess to, because if you go to your next-door neighbours, they laugh at you and they gloat. I had some problems three years ago with my husband, big problems. He was drinking and not coming home at night, and then right after that I gave birth to my son and I had no-one I could talk to, the girls in the neighbourhood were laughing at me, seeing me pregnant and going with my children to the police station three or four times a week. He settled down eventually, he's not drinking anymore. Now I'm fine, I'm really fine." (S17)

„I remembered the class, after we did our homework at the end of the course we'd sit together around a little table, have a cup of coffee and shared our problems from home. It was refreshing after the course, it was like being in a big family" (S1)

Escape from the domestic routine

The meetings within the parenting education classes are also viewed by the participants as an activity that breaks the domestic routine, fact mentioned as a mobilising factor especially by the women who are not employed and who only work in the household; the activity was viewed as an opportunity to enjoy personal time, spent in relaxing and at the same time useful activities, away from their daily routine involving children and chores.

"I didn't know what it was all about; it was Mrs. Vasilica [the parenting educator, author's note] that asked us whether we wanted to attend. For me it was an opportunity to get out of the house, to escape in a way; otherwise, I didn't have other places to go to, only to this thing [the parenting classes, author's note]. I wasn't sorry. I wasn't, because I knew that once a week I had to get out of the house, I had to go, I'd make time and watch the clock. Even if I was in the middle of cleaning, I had to." (S18)

“It was good... I’d go again. I’d escape a little... otherwise, all the time at home... I’m also thinking about the information and about the actual meeting, really, everything there is interesting.” (S17)

For the women who were involved exclusively in household activities and in childcare, the parenting education course was a recreational activity, it meant relaxation and disconnect from the worries and the demands usually associated to care-giving roles.

„I didn’t really have to fit the classes in my schedule, because my time is mostly free, I don’t have animals around the house to occupy my time. In the house I do as much as I can. I clean, I cook, I look after the children, and then I’d leave them with my mother whenever I came here, for example now I left them with my brother. It wasn’t a problem for me to organise my time, because I have the same... what do you call it, I do the same thing every day. I wake up in the morning, I clean, I cook and I do the laundry... but I only do the laundry once a week, because I use the washing machine. I don’t really have much... The rest of the time I sit at the computer sometimes, for the TV I don’t really have a lot of time, although sometimes I wish I had... (S15)

„I felt calmer. That is, how shall I put it... more free. In the class I was more free, I’d leave at home all the worries, all the troubles, and I’d go. I was more serene...” (S14)

The way the women reported the experience they had in relation to the parenting education programme reflects the need – sometimes unconscious or unrecognised – to alternate care-giving activities with other types of activities, which have recreation potential. For the parents who are *primary caregivers* (that is they are involved solely in domestic activities), and whose parenting role has chiefly a routine care dimension, oftentimes expanded by the presence of several children, who have to renounce or at least cut down drastically their social interaction, the parenting education classes also had the quality of a *respite*-type intervention, very much appreciated by the subjects.

“When I went to these classes I never said no... Even when I had worked to do, or... I felt the need to get out and talk to somebody once in a while. At home, things are a little dull... You stay there and you do the same thing every day...” (S9)

“It was something, and even a special thing in my life. I used to have a job, but this was different, maybe because I learned something, I don’t know... Otherwise, I got to relax, and on the other hand I learned some things.” (S17)

“It was very nice. It was relaxing, as well, like it is now... If you only sit at home with the children, you can't last long. We have to get out, to have our own time. I've been out around town, I've relaxed, I went for a walk, but I couldn't stay out long. I'd be out for two or three hours.” (S15)

An interesting nuance, suggested by one of the respondents, was that the organisation of the parenting education course in that particular community was an opportunity to escape both from the individual routine, as well as from the collective, community routine. The novelty of this event in the community was, in the beginning, an occasion for surprise, and arose a mobilising curiosity.

“I never thought there would be a parenting education course in our village. Never thought it. When they invited us for the first time, I didn't even know what it was all about, even the second time I didn't know very well, I was amazed. I had never thought such a thing could exist. It helped me very much; it helped me with the children. I have no words to tell you how much I enjoyed it.” (S20)

Conclusions

Parenting education is one of the strategies that contribute to the strengthening of the support provided to families. An important characteristic of parenting education programmes is the participative approach, which causes the parents to become more actively engaged in the education and the care of their own children, in activating and mobilising resources, be they personal, familial or institutional. Among the determining factors of parent participation, a crucial role is played by the personal ones. The parents' willingness to join parenting education programmes is influenced by personal motivation factors, such as: investing in personal development, the need for socialisation and learning, the clinical effect of participation and the escape from domestic routine. Parenting education programmes are viewed by the parents as particular forms of education, capable of supporting the participants in their personal development. Vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals have access to more restricted social networks, and in general their social networks overlap to a great extent with their family networks; therefore, taking part in parent meetings contributes to their opportunity of entering wider social networks. In the rural environment, the mother's role focuses on the household, on her domestic responsibilities, of caring for the children and managing the household; their personal motivation for joining social networks is stronger, especially that the promotion of parenting education programmes is carried out by the local authorities. Beyond the effects on expanding their social

networks, joining parenting classes contributes, in the parents' opinion, to the optimisation of mental health, the clinical effect of parenting education programmes being repeatedly invoked by the parents as one of the most important motivators. The clinical effect of taking part in the classes and the expansion of social networks are accompanied by the motivation related to the parents' escape from domestic routine. This is more obvious in the mothers who took the classes and who were involved exclusively in domestic activities and childcare; for the parents, joining the parenting education classes was also a recreational activity, a relaxing activity meant to break the routine. Beyond escape from domestic routine, the organisation of parenting education classes in the rural environment was an escape from the collective routine, the classes being viewed and defined as important events in the life of the community.

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