Exploring School Inclusion Barriers in Cluj-Napoca Vocational Schools

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Abstract: *The paper presents the results of a qualitative research investigating the barriers in the school inclusion of disadvantaged students (low socio-economic status, Roma ethnicity, migrated parents) from seven vocational schools in Cluj-Napoca. We conducted four focus groups with 32 disadvantaged vocational school students (aged 15–19) and 82 interviews with 34 vocational school teachers, seven vocational school principals, six vocational school psychologists, five school inspectors from Cluj County School Inspectorate and 30 professionals from eight educational NGOs from Cluj-Napoca. Data have shown that students' lack of interest in school is not only related to lesson content, but mainly to: (a) the difficulties of establishing a close connection with the teachers, of feeling teachers want to help them, rather than just punish them; (b) the high levels of violence in school and the lack of a firm reaction from adults; (c) the lack of a sense of belonging to their class, due to their low income – which impedes them from participating in more group activities that would allow them to know their classmates and develop a group identity. However, the teachers and school inspectors believe that the inclusion problems of the disadvantaged students are due to their families' lack of involvement in the educational process, and to the lack of training programmes focused on the specific needs of disadvantaged students. The results helped us understand what are the mechanisms behind (un)successful school inclusion in vocational schools and the educational practices in schools with a high rate of low SES students.*

Keywords: disadvantaged students; exclusion; inequality; educational policies.
Cuvinte-cheie: elevi dezavantajaţi; excluziune; inegalitate; politici educaţionale.

Introduction

The purpose of the current research[1] was to explore the school inclusion barriers that disadvantaged students encounter in vocational schools from a large urban area (Cluj-Napoca). When identifying the causes behind these barriers, the perspectives of multiple actors involved were considered: disadvantaged students, teachers, school inspectors, and professionals from educational NGOs who work with disadvantaged students.

This topic was selected in order to assess how the existing strategies for the inclusion of disadvantaged students are

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implemented in the vocational schools from Cluj-Napoca. Identifying the factors that impede school inclusion can be of considerable interest to school policy-makers, as many of these factors are related to schools and teachers, and thus can be acted upon more easily than the factors pertaining to students' disadvantaged background.

In order to explore various dimensions of school inclusion, a qualitative approach was preferred, as it can provide nuanced interpretations of students' and school representatives' view on inclusion problems, that could not be grasped by a survey. Focus-groups and semi-structured interviews were used to assess the efforts of school representatives' to ensure an inclusive environment for disadvantaged students, from three different perspectives: (1) that of the disadvantaged students', focusing on their perceptions of school and teachers; (2) that of teachers' and school inspectors', focusing on their perceptions of the disadvantaged students and their specific problems; (3) that of the professionals from educational NGOs who work with disadvantaged students, focusing on their perceptions of the problems specific to disadvantaged students, and of the attitudes teachers display toward these students.

The article is structured in five parts: the theoretical framework – explaining the key-concepts employed, the method – describing the methodology used, the results – detailing the findings of the research, the discussion – summarizing the main outcomes of the study, and the conclusions – providing further recommendations based on the empirical evidence.

Theoretical background

Integration, as a psychological process of assimilation, can be achieved only in conjunction with social integration, and is a process of incorporation of the individual into social systems: family, groups, classes, schools, community, society (OECD, 2007). Inclusion differs from integration. Integrating a disadvantaged group of children refers to the ability of a group, class, school to assimilate new members who need support for adaptation, integration, socialization (OECD, 2007). Inclusive education refers to the elimination of all learning barriers, and ensures participation of all those vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization (UNESCO, 2000). First of all, it is a strategic approach designated to facilitate successful learning for all children. The first requirement of inclusive education is to decrease all forms of educational exclusion, until elimination. It proposes the provision of access, participation and successful learning for all children. The open and friendly schools with a flexible curriculum and quality teaching practices, that promote continuous assessment and educational partnerships are inclusive schools (OECD, 2007). Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners, through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies (UNESCO, 2005).

In what concerns the choice of terms, "school inclusion" was preferred to "school integration" because the term "integration" is usually used to describe the process of the assimilation of students with learning difficulties, while the key aspect of inclusion is that students who are at a disadvantage for **any** reason are not excluded from the mainstream education (Thomas *et al*., 1998, 14). The term "disadvantaged", as it is used in the present paper, extends beyond special needs (*disabilities*) and includes other sources of

marginalization, such as ethnicity and poverty (Bădescu, 2010, 5).

The theoretical framework of the study is provided by the theory of cultural capital and social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977), according to which schools represent and reproduce middle- or upper-class values and forms of communication, as school teachers come from predominantly middle- or upper-class backgrounds. Students coming from similar social backgrounds can easily relate to teachers and feel included in school, while students who belong to working-class find it difficult to do so. Bourdieu (1986) argues that the cultural capital of the dominant group is embodied in schools, leading to social reproduction, as it is assumed by the school to be the natural and only proper type of cultural capital, thus being legitimated. The school demands uniformly of all its students to have what it does not give (Swartz, 2000). This legitimate cultural capital allows students who possess it to gain educational capital in the form of qualifications, while the lower-class students are disadvantaged. To gain qualifications, they must acquire the legitimated cultural capital, by exchanging their working-class cultural capital. The subjective expectations influenced by the objective structures found in the school, perpetuate social reproduction, by encouraging less-privileged students to eliminate themselves from the system. Bourdieu (1986) showed that social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds through cultural products (including systems of education, language, judgements, values and activities of everyday life), which lead to an unconscious acceptance of social differences and hierarchies, to "a sense of one's place", as well as to behaviours of self-exclusion. A concept that may help explain the persisting inequalities in education is that of "habitus" (Bourdieu, 1977), defined as the form of lasting dispositions or trained

capacities and structured propensities to think, feel, and act in determinate ways (Wacquant, 2005). In other words, the habitus represents a set of socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking, specific to a social class. Habitus is created through a social, rather than individual process (Navarro, 2006).

Schools and teachers tend to preserve class hierarchies and maintain a middle-class stance when dealing with working-class students. Students' low levels of school inclusion are often blamed solely on the family background: teachers often tend to view low-income parents in a negative light, and hold stereotypical beliefs, such as "low-income parents do not care about their children's schooling, are not competent to help with homework, and do not encourage achievement" (Lott, 2001). Moreover, many teachers assume that students will have particular middle-class experiences at home, while for some children this assumption isn't necessarily true, as they are expected to help their parents after school and perform domestic work. This means they have less time for doing homework, therefore their academic performance is affected. On the other hand, Fitzgerald states that irrespective of their academic ability or desire to learn, students from poor families have relatively little chance of securing success (Sargent, 1994). In addition, Meighan and Harber (2007) state that large numbers of capable students from working-class backgrounds fail to achieve satisfactory standards in school, and therefore fail to obtain the status they deserve.

Social reproduction continues to occur because the entire education system is overlain with the dominant ideology which perpetuates the myth that education is available to all and is a mean of achieving wealth and status (Sargent, 1994). According to this myth, those who fail to achieve it are the only ones to blame, and

cannot see that their personal troubles are part of major social issues.

Method

The main research question of the study was: what are the factors that influence the school inclusion of disadvantaged students in Cluj-Napoca vocational schools? A qualitative approach was used, in order to investigate this topic from the perspectives of several actors involved: the disadvantaged students from vocational schools, the teachers from vocational schools, the school inspectors, and the NGO professionals who provide educational support to disadvantaged children.

The instruments for qualitative data collection were the semi-structured interview guides and focus-group guides, created after reviewing the outcome of previous studies tackling the educational inclusion of disadvantaged students (Bădescu, 2010; Moore *et al.*, 2008; Ainscow, 2007; Booth and Ainscow, 2007; OECD, 2007; UNESCO, 2005; Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006; Graves Smith, 2006; Lott, 2001; UNESCO, 2000). The focus-group and interview guides comprised of questions on truancy, students' attitude toward school, inclusion barriers, strategies for eliminating the inclusion barriers, discrimination, and violence in school. Although the core questions were kept the same throughout all the interview guides, they were adapted for each category of respondents, focusing on their particular experience with school inclusion.

The focus-group guide was piloted on a group of 10 disadvantaged vocational school students. The interview guide for teachers was piloted on five teachers, the interview guide for school inspectors was piloted on one school inspector and the interview guide for NGO professionals was piloted on three psychologists and two

social workers. After analyzing the pilot interview and focus-group results, the instruments were amended where necessary.

The qualitative sample was composed of 32 disadvantaged students attending vocational schools, 34 teachers from the seven vocational schools in Cluj-Napoca, seven school inspectors from the Cluj County School Inspectorate, and 30 professionals from educational NGOs.

The four focus groups were organized at the *Clujul Are Suflet* centre. four focus-groups were conducted with 32 disadvantaged students (17 boys and 15 girls, aged 15–19) from vocational schools (first group: 10 students, second group: six students, third group: seven students and fourth group: nine students). All students who participated in these focus groups are beneficiaries of the *Clujul Are Suflet* day-care centre, meaning that they are disadvantaged students (low-income, Roma ethnicity, migrated or divorced parents, etc.) and are in risk of school drop-out. Each focus-group lasted under 1 hour, as students were impatient and could hardly concentrate to answer.

The 34 teachers we interviewed work in all the seven vocational schools from Cluj-Napoca (in which we conducted the quantitative research): *Alexandru Borza*, *Ana Aslan*, *AurelVlaicu*, *Edmond Nicolau*, *Protecţia Mediului*, *Tehnofrig* and *Unirea*. Most teachers (29) were also form-teachers. The gender composition of the sample is seven men and 27 women. The specializations are: technical profile (8), Psychology (6), Mathematics (3), Romanian Literature (3), English (3), Physics (2), Chemistry (2), Geography (2), Sports (2), French (1), History (1), and Orthodox Religion (1). The interviews lasted between 40 and 70 minutes.

Also, we conducted seven interviews with school inspectors from the Cluj County School Inspectorate, two men and five women. The specializations of school

inspectors covered the following domains: History, Physics, Geography, special education, mainstream education, primary school, and Roma education. The interviews took around 60 minutes to complete.

Next, we interviewed 30 professionals from eight NGOs that implement educational projects, as it follows: 14 social workers, 6 psychologists, four special educators, five teachers, and one project/centre coordinator. The interviews took between 30 and 50 minutes each.

All participants in the study were invited to voluntarily participate, after they had been explained the purpose of our research. They gave their permission to record discussions on a tape-recorder, ensuring the anonymity and information confidentiality. The qualitative data were collected during May–September 2011[2].

The recorded interviews were transcribed as *Word* documents. All stages of qualitative data analysis were followed: open coding, axial coding, selective coding, drawing conceptual diagrams, writing the narrative report.

Results

The results of the qualitative analysis are detailed according to each key-concept identified. The main concepts that emerged from the data and the relationships between them are displayed in Figure 1.

School attendance and truancy

According to the disadvantaged students' reports, they mainly skip the classes of teachers who allow them to. They claim some teachers don't come to class themselves and "they let us do anything we want". There is a tendency among students to skip the first and the last class of the day. The students' preferred locations for hanging out when cutting classes are the bars around school, the city centre or the home of one of the colleagues

whose parents are not at home. The main causes of truancy are students' lack of interest in their line of study (because it does not suit their abilities) and the unattractive teaching methods ("most teachers dictate the lesson"; "the classes are boring").

Teachers claim that truancy is an extended phenomenon, almost generalized. According to their estimations, 30–80% of the students cut classes (depending on the school). Some of the respondents considered that it is a hidden phenomenon (not all the absences are recorded; the absences are easily excused) covered by the school policy (if the real number of absences were recorded, it would lead to lower grades in the students' behaviour evaluation, to second examinations, and to school drop-out; the consequence would be a reduced number of students, a lower school budget, the loss of teaching jobs and even closing the school) and the desire to "help students" ("Why should I ruin the student's future for a few absences?").

There are teachers who prefer not to record the absences of the students who have a violent behaviour or who disturb classes, because in their absence it is easier to teach and the other students feel more "protected". The "problem" students know this and take advantage of it.

In teachers' opinion, truancy and school performance are not as strongly connected to the family's financial situation, as they are to its structure (single-parent families, divorced parents, deceased parents) and to the lifestyle and values promoted by the parents. Moreover, teachers feel that families are shifting all the responsibility for educating students to the school, while the school cannot substitute the parents' control.

In other words, the teachers tend to shift the responsibility for truancy to the parents, and do not consider they can have a significant impact on students' school behaviour. Truancy is quasi-accepted by

teachers, who, to the highest degree, recognize that it is a general phenomenon. At the same time, they see themselves helpless and cannot improve the situation, their motivationbeing justified by the family's lack of interest, pupils' lack of motivation and fear from getting low grades, fatigue or laziness, alongside with too permissive school regulations. All these are perceived as external factors, which are not under teachers' control. Some teachers recognize their interest of not recording the real number of absences, so as not to "complicate" themselves with violent pupils, the school management team or the parents who make complaints.

Most school inspectors think that truancy is an increasing phenomenon that cannot be correctly assessed ("the accuracy of the figures reported by schools cannot be verified"). Some of them believe that it is present only in rural areas, or for the case of Roma students. They also mention teachers' truancy. In school inspectors' opinion, truancy is due to the teachers and to the lack of consistency in school management when implementing the legal procedures, to unmotivated teachers, to boring subjects and teaching style, to unfriendly environment, to family poverty, to parents working abroad, to parents' low level of education, to students' fear of being evaluated, to the peer pressure and entourage, to students inability to understand the purpose of education.

According to school inspectors, "teachers exclusively blame the family when it comes to this problem". They do not record absences, in order to protect their job. Moreover, some teachers are happy that students who disturb classes are absent. Many teachers show carelessness,

lack of motivation, and do not take any action. The school management lacks restrictive control methods to impede truancy. The teachers from vocational schools are less trained and less motivated.

NGO professionals identified a series of causes why pupils are constantly skipping classes and have low school performance. Some of these causes are family related: parents do not consider education to be important and neglect their children; poverty and financial problems; some parents condone absence and encourage their pupils to get a job or help with household work; parents' low level of education; family environment (alcoholism, domestic violence, disorganized lifestyles and inadequate parenting).

Other causes are student related: lack of motivation (students are bored at school, do not like school, experience difficulties doing homework, they skip school because are tired or very often ill); they have low self-esteem, they have fear of being evaluated and fear of school failure. Other causes are teacher and school related: students are skipping the classes of those teachers who humiliate them in front of their colleagues or who evaluate them incorrectly; students have huge gaps in knowledge accumulated during secondary school; the curriculum is over-academic, students do not understand lesson content, the teachers use outdated and unattractive teaching methods, the teachers are ignorant and unmotivated. Additional factors identified by the NGO professionals are the negative attitude toward education specific to Roma ethnicity, peer pressure, and lack of positive role-models regarding education.
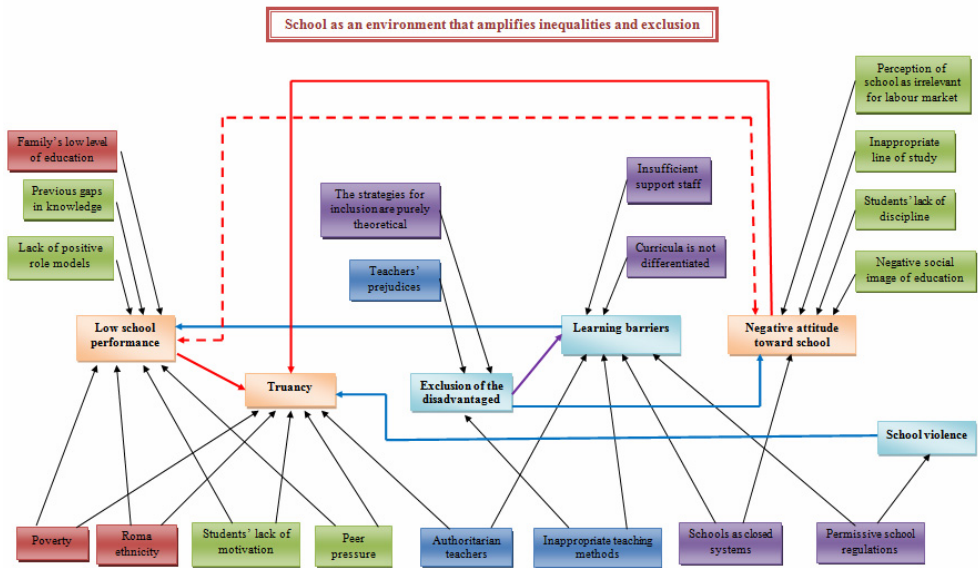
Figure 1: *Explanatory diagram for the qualitative research*

School performance and attitudes toward school

Students show a mainly negative attitude toward school, because they do not feel respected and valued by their teachers. They claim that teachers, as well as their classmates, marginalize them on grounds of poverty. They also claim that performances are not evaluated correctly and that "teachers' pets" get better grades. Because of this, they feel discouraged and are not motivated to study harder. Moreover, students do not like their specialization and do not see themselves getting a job in the respective field, therefore they do not study.

Teachers' believe that the parentsare the cause of students' low school performance because they neglect their children and do not motivate them to learn. Other causes identified by teachers are the fact that students have to work at home; the parents' low level of education and the family problems (poverty, divorce, alcohol, violence, migration, etc.). Other causes are

related to the lack of motivation in students, lack of adequate social models, the influence of peer groups and Roma ethnicity. The teachers have identified both negative and positive attitudes of students toward school. However, the number of negative attitudes considerably surpasses that of positive attitudes. Most teachers believe that students are lacking motivation, get bored, have no patience to stay in class or are indifferent to school, considering that to students "school is a necessary evil" or "school is boring".

All school inspectors agree that the students have a negative attitude toward school. In their opinion, the main cause of this attitude is truancy, with an emphasis on the role of family. Other factors identified as causing students' negative attitude toward school are: the family does not emphasize and value the importance of education; specific mentality of Roma families; the students do not like to be at school, their line of study does not suit their needs, expectations or aptitudes; they

fail to see the connection between education and getting a job in the future; they are used to do no efforts on their own; the lack of collaboration between school and family, the influence of the negative image of school in the media.

Learning barriers

Teachers consider that the main learning barriers are related to a school curriculum that is over-academic, inadequate for the high school students in these schools, and leads to rejection and frustration attitudes in students. Other important barriers are related to the school system: they reach the ninth grade after graduating from middle school, without basic Math knowledge and without being able towrite and read fluently; the system treats students without distinction, in a rigid manner, while they are very different; unmotivated, careless, indolent, and unqualified teachers who are not perceived as a support, but rather as very rigidand authoritarian; too permissive rules. And finally, the marginalization and discrimination toward the poor students or those who have learning difficulties are mentioned as barriers in students' school inclusion.

In order to decrease the internal barriers, teachers should adjust their teaching methods to the needs of students who are not included or who have learning difficulties. They also need to adjust the curriculum to students' needs, acquire and use new working methods suitable for students with behavioural problems or inclusion issues.

In school inspectors' opinion, the main learning barriers are related to the teachers, who are unmotivated, careless, indolent or unqualified, use outdated teaching and evaluation methods, are inflexible or authoritarian, who do not know how to communicate with students, and who focus solely on performance. Other barriers are the lack of support-teachers, working

groups, or interactive methods. Also, school inspectors believe that the system treats students rigidly, and that the teachers do not focus on students' needs.

In order to decrease the learning barriers, school inspectors think that teachers have to use a playful and practical aspect of teaching, as well as interactive team work. They need to learn and to use appropriate methods for working with disadvantaged students. Also, there is a need for a greater number of social workers, psychologists, and school mediators in schools where there are many disadvantaged pupils, a better school management and development of human resources. It is equally important to motivate teachers through salaries, rewards, trainings, and more grants for disadvantaged students.

The NGO professionals identified the following barriers in the school inclusion of disadvantaged students: teachers lack motivation, are careless, indolent, unqualified, they use inappropriate methods of teaching and discriminatory evaluation; teachers discriminate (poor students are excluded ormarginalized; students who have gaps in knowledge are not given supplementary attention; labelling and stigmatization from teachers' part, especially regarding Roma students); the school curriculum is inadequate to the students from vocational schools; lack of support-teachers; unfriendly school environment, lack of teacher support, lack of rules or rules incorrectly applied; the school does not collaborate with families or NGO staff, the school is seen as a closed system.

In order to eliminate these barriers, the NGO professionals envisioned a series of strategies: the need to work with specialists (support-teachers, psychologists, social workers), and the need to develop new support systems; the need to reduce discrimination (more extracurricular activities, which might gather more pupils and shape new moral values); the curriculum

should be adapted to pupils' needs and capacities; better motivation for teachers, more and consistent school regulations; a better collaboration between school, disadvantaged families and NGOs.

Discrimination

The disadvantaged students feel isolated and marginalized at school because of their status (low-income or Roma ethnicity). They claim that teachers only show interest in students with money and that grades are given according to teachers' preferences and not according to students' performance.

School inspectors believe that teachers do not have adequate methods to work with disadvantaged students. Many teachers lack the skills and empathy to work with disadvantaged pupils. Training programs for teachers are entirely theoretical; most of the teachers attend them just to earn extra credits, and do not implement what they learned. School inspectors state that the inclusion strategy is not put into practice, mainly because of teacher's mentality and prejudices, or the school tradition.

The professionals from educational NGOs, who work with disadvantaged students, claim that teachers do not evaluate them correctly. Even though the students receive tutoring at the centres and their performance improves considerably (as shown by the tests they take at the centres), their grades do not reflect their progress. According to NGO professionals, teachers continue to give low grades to disadvantaged students because initially their performance was low and they do not expect them to improve over time. Due to their preconceived ideas regarding students with a disadvantaged background, teachers do not evaluate them objectively.

Violence in schools

Violence is one of the main reasons students do not like school. Verbal violence is considered to be something "normal". Smoking is also "permitted", meaning that it is tolerated in school, as well as physical violence. Students also mention drug use and that in every school there are drug dealers. One of the reasons school is perceived as an unsafe environment is that adults do not sanction certain behaviours that should be forbidden in school.

Verbal and physical violence are widespread phenomena, and teachers consider them to be "normal". For various reasons, some teachers do not take action against these phenomena or are inconsistent in applying the rules and sanctions. Many of them pretend they do not see or hear a conflict and think it is useless to get involved. Some of them intervene successfully and manage to stop the fight. Others punish violent students by giving them low grades. Teachers think violence is specific not only to the students from vocational schools, but also to the "elite high schools".

School inspectors believe that, although there are training sessions for dealing with students' violent behaviour, teachers do not know how to react and how to deal with these situations. Teachers also use violence: "we observed that the practice of hitting students is common among teachers, as well".

Discussion

The qualitative approach allowed us to create the profile of the disadvantaged students with low levels of school inclusion from vocational schools in Cluj-Napoca. They are, usually, students with low-income and/or of Roma ethnicity, whose parents have low levels of education. Besides these demographic characteristics, the students in risk of exclusion are also unmotivated, undisciplined, have gaps in knowledge (dating from the previous school cycle), are prone to peer pressure,

lack positive role-models, perceive education as something negative, think school is irrelevant in finding a job and are following a line of study that does not suit them. These students are bound to leave school with the least qualifications, therefore they are likely to get the least desirable jobs and to remain working-class.

At the same time, the respondents identified the system-related factors that impede the school inclusion of the disadvantaged students. These limits are related both to teachers (authoritarianism, prejudices, inadequate teaching methods) and to schools as educational environments (undifferentiated curricula, insufficient support staff, permissive school regulations, the inclusion strategies are not put into practice, the school-system is a closed system). Teachers and schools reproduce the dominant social order, and make no considerable efforts to include the disadvantaged, working-class students.

All these characteristics – pertaining to students' demographic profile, their attitudes, teachers' behaviour and school organization – lead to school exclusion. The causes of exclusion are both internal (truancy, negative attitude toward school, low school performance) and external (discrimination, learning barriers, school violence) to the students. The objective structures found in schools perpetuate social reproduction, by encouraging less-privileged students to eliminate themselves from the system.

Although there is a strategy for the inclusion of the disadvantaged students that is known to teachers, it is not put into practice, for various personal reasons: lack of (financial) motivation, prejudices, lack of resources and lack of initiative. Although they complete trainings on inclusive education, the teachers complain that what they learn is too theoretical and not applicable in the situations they are confronted with (students' violence, students' lack of interest toward school,

students' family problems). The responsibility for the exclusion of the disadvantaged students is shifted from school inspectors to the teachers and from teachers to the students' families.

In these conditions, school rather becomes an environment that amplifies the existing inequalities between students and leads toward the exclusion of the disadvantaged. The problems within the system, although known to the decision-makers, remain unresolved, threatening the inclusion of the disadvantaged students who benefit from counselling and intervention programs.

Conclusions

As a final conclusion of the research, a series of evidence-based recommendations for teachers, schools and policy-makers can be formulated.

In what concerns teachers, they should adjust or learn working methods for students who face difficulties, who belong to disadvantaged families or who are not included in school. Teachers should encourage and respect all students, and adopt more supportive attitudes toward disadvantaged students. Moreover, teachers should be constrained, through stricter school regulations, to take measures in order to discourage truancy and violence. Teachers should also be forbidden to display discriminative behaviours toward disadvantaged students.

The teachers and the school should adapt the curricula to students' needs and capacities.

In what concerns schools, they should provide vocational guidance and counselling to all students at the end of middle-school, so that they do not choose a line of study they are not suited for and will later lose interest in. Also, schools should develop new supplementary support systems (after school, parents' school, etc.),

and organize more outdoor activities (that do not require money), which can help students know each other better and shape their moral values. Stakeholders should apply for more grants for the school inclusion of disadvantaged students; the school should be able to offer scholarships to help them financially. Moreover, schools should employ more school psychologists, social workers and special educators, to work with the disadvantaged students.

Educational policies should stimulate a better collaboration between school, disadvantaged families and educational NGOs (e.g., through projects). Last, but not least, a better motivation for teachers is needed, through higher salaries, recognition of good work, etc.

Although some of the above mentioned recommendations require intervention from the Ministry of Education, most of them can be put into practice by teachers themselves, as they are a valuable resource in the educational process. The responsibility for the existence of educational barriers is shared between families, schools, teachers and students themselves. While third parties can help some of the disadvantaged students, it is the responsibility of the school and of the teachers to ensure the appropriate environment for disadvantaged students (no violence, no discrimination) and the fair acknowledgement of the progress they made.

Some of the limitations of this study include external validity of the study, as the participants in the research were selected according to availability and willingness to participate. Many teachers and school inspectors refused to be interviewed due to busy schedules. The focus groups with disadvantaged students were difficult to conduct and had a duration of under one hour each, because the participants could not concentrate and did not have the patience to sit in one place for so long. Also, all the participants in the study were from Cluj-Napoca, which limits the degree of generalization of the findings to large urban areas.

In the course of this study, various areas where further research was needed were identified: the investigation of school inclusion barriers in other large urban areas, as well as in small urban or rural areas; the development of survey instruments for measuring school inclusion among disadvantaged students; the development of a methodology for evaluating how inclusive schools and teachers are; the development of a methodology for measuring the outcome of the teacher training programs, focused on working with disadvantaged students; employing other theoretical perspectives in the study of school inclusion; further development of recommendations.

Notes

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