

Joint Project of the European Union and the Council of Europe
INSCHOOL: Inclusive schools: making a difference for Roma children

– COUNTRY REPORT (ROMANIA) –

Implementation 2018-2021



Funded
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe



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making a difference for Roma children**

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Chapter 1: The INSCHOOL initiative

1.1. Context of the project at European level

Since 2010, the priority of Roma inclusion has been an increasingly prominent feature of the political agenda of the European Union and the Council of Europe. In this context, both the European Union and the Council of Europe have identified education as a key aspect in promoting social inclusion. The joint project run by the two institutions – INSCHOOL – supports the implementation of the “EU Paris Declaration of 17 March 2015 on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education” and the “Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching”.

With regard to the new strategic framework for Roma equality, inclusion and participation in EU countries and the preparations for the post-2020 initiative, INSCHOOL will specifically support the sector-wide objective of improving access to high-quality inclusive education. The project has also been added to the Council of Europe’s political agenda to support the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma 2016-2019 and the Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025, priority 5.3: Support access to inclusive quality education and training.

1.2. Objectives and main areas of intervention of the INSCHOOL model

The aim of the joint European Union and Council of Europe project “Inclusive schools: Making a difference for Roma children” (INSCHOOL) is to strengthen the social inclusion of Roma by promoting inclusive education and training in schools in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic.

The methodology used in schools is the “Index for Inclusion: A Guide to School Development Led by Inclusive Values” by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow (fourth edition). The Index serves as a basis for the intervention of INSCHOOL experts in schools and the development of Inclusive School Development Plans (ISDPs) – a vision of inclusion developed by schools using a tailor-made values-based approach.

The intended outcomes of the project are as follows:

- Support mechanisms and resources for schools are set up;
- Support is given to teachers so that they can promote and improve learning outcomes for Roma children;
- Concrete barriers faced by vulnerable groups are removed, including through stronger partnerships within a country;
- Awareness of the benefits of inclusive education is raised among the general public and decision-makers.

This report covers data and conclusions arising out of the project methodology, which was implemented in schools in two cycles – the pilot phase (2017-2019) and the second implementation cycle (2020-2021). In 2020, implementation was affected but not interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3. Methodology

This Country Report seeks to document the ongoing efforts made by schools within the INSCHOOL network to increase the level of inclusion/inclusiveness. Equally, **we aim to offer inspiration to other schools that are making similar efforts.**

Aims of the research:

1. To analyse the outcomes achieved through the INSCHOOL project in schools within the network in terms of inclusion;
2. To identify the perceptions and attitudes of school actors (pupils, parents and teaching staff) with regard to school inclusion at the six schools within the INSCHOOL project network;
3. To identify good practices in schools within the INSCHOOL network in relation to governance and strategic management;
4. To develop recommendations to improve practices and policies at school, local and national level.

In order to achieve these specific objectives, mixed research was carried out in the seven schools that made up the INSCHOOL network between January and April 2021. The study was carried out by means of a **sociological survey** based on a **questionnaire** and **focus group discussions** with the aim of identifying multiple perspectives on inclusion in the schools within the INSCHOOL network.

The main tools used were:

- **A questionnaire for schools which was used in every school year from the time when the project began to be implemented:** this questionnaire is filled in by every school management team on the basis of data in administrative documents; the quantitative questionnaire also served as reference research for the purpose of selecting schools, so it made it possible to analyse changing key aspects and indicators (school drop-out rate, school results, absences). These data were collected in disaggregated form (total pupils – girls and boys, total Roma pupils – girls and boys, and for other categories of children – children with disabilities, children with special educational needs).
- **Questionnaires for the different categories of school actors (tools provided by the *Index for Inclusion*) adapted to the education context in Romania:**
 - Questionnaire 1: Indicators of inclusion (aimed at members of the Board of Governors and school staff: teaching staff, auxiliary teaching staff, non-teaching staff);
 - Questionnaire 2: My child's school (aimed at parents/guardians);
 - Questionnaire 3: My school (aimed at lower secondary pupils);
 - Questionnaire 4: My school (aimed at primary pupils).

Table 1. Types of questionnaires used and numbers of respondents

Type of questionnaire	Number of questionnaires completed
Questionnaire for schools	6
Questionnaire for school staff (Indicators of inclusion)	189
Questionnaire for parents (My child's school)	1087
Questionnaire for lower secondary pupils	591
Questionnaire for primary pupils (My school)	583

The questionnaires for school actors (pupils, parents, teaching staff) were completed online and were distributed by representatives of schools. **The sample is made up of 2 450 respondents** and is non-random; the respondents completed the questionnaire if they were willing to do so and had access to technology and the Internet. Later, to enable pupils and parents with limited access to digital technology to participate, **focus group discussions** were held at two of the schools where the research was being conducted. Particular attention was paid to consulting pupils and parents who are of Roma ethnicity and/or who had difficulties with online learning during the pandemic. To this end, the schools were encouraged to find ways of consulting pupils and parents in these categories as widely as possible, and the focus group discussions¹ that were held at two schools collected opinions and verified the findings arising out of the online questionnaires (as set out in [Section 2.2.](#) below). Three focus group discussions took place in each of the two schools (**making a total of six focus group discussions**): one with pupils, one with parents and one with school representatives. The aim of the focus group discussions with teachers was to identify the mechanisms that had been created by the schools in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to involve and consult pupils and parents who lacked the means of participating online.

Table 2. Details of focus group methodology

	Conțești School		Pietroșani School	
	Number of focus group discussions	Number of participants	Number of focus group discussions	Number of participants
Pupils	1	9	1	10
Parents	1	7	1	10
Teaching staff	1	7	1	10

In addition, three [case studies](#) were carried out in the following schools: “Prof. Ion Vișoiu” in Chitila, Conțești, and “Nicolae Titulescu” in Buzău. These schools were selected because they were representative in terms of relevant criteria such as school size, type of area, qualifications and turnover of teaching staff, the extent to which all actors were involved in the project activities, and so on. The case studies supplement the data obtained by means of other methods and techniques and give an overview of the processes initiated in the three schools from 2018 onwards. The case studies were written by INSCHOOL facilitators with assistance and guidance from representatives of the schools.

The data collected through these tools have also been put together with other available quantitative and qualitative data: routinely collected data which are available in administrative documents at school level and various pieces of information collected during the process of assistance/internal and external monitoring. In this way, we wanted to ensure that the analysed data would be accurate, complete and relevant.

The methodological framework² appended to this report gives details of the aims and the methods and tools that were used.

Main sections of the report:

- [Section 1.4.](#) describes the activities pursued across the network of INSCHOOL schools in Romania during both the pilot phase and the second implementation cycle;
- [Section 2.1.](#) presents the current situation of schools (2020-2021) and the situation by comparison with previous school years, tracking their development in terms of school inclusion and the outcomes and quality

¹ Appendix 3 – Conțești and Pietroșani Focus Groups Study, April 2021

² Appendix 1 – Methodological framework for using the questionnaires in the *Index for Inclusion*

of education. This section was based primarily on the questionnaire completed by the schools, and these data were supplemented with the focus group discussion results;

- Section 2.2. captures the perceptions and attitudes of the three categories of school actors (pupils, parents and teaching staff) with regard to school inclusion – this section is based on the data collected through the online questionnaires answered by pupils, parents and teachers;
- Section 2.3. describes best practice mechanisms and outcomes achieved by the schools within the INSCHOOL network in relation to governance and strategic management – this section is based on the data obtained through the three case studies and six focus group discussions;
- Section 3.1. includes a summary of the main outcomes achieved through the processes and actions carried out through the INSCHOOL project;
- Section 3.2. contains a set of recommendations for developing future actions for schools in the INSCHOOL network which can also be implemented by other schools around the country;
- Section 3.3. gives recommendations for developing and improving education policies at national level, with a focus on high-quality inclusive education.

1.4. Activities pursued across the network of INSCHOOL schools in Romania

A. Pilot phase (May 2017 – July 2019)

During the pilot phase, the objectives were addressed at both project level and school level by implementing activities intended to promote a shift towards more inclusive schools for all children, including Roma children.

Over the 2018-2019 period, the INSCHOOL joint European Union and Council of Europe project **supported six schools** in Romania in three different counties (Buzău, Ilfov and Teleorman) and the city of Bucharest which had been selected by agreement with the European Commission.

Table 3. List of schools in the INSCHOOL project

County	School
Buzău	Cilibia Lower Secondary School
Buzău	“Nicolae Titulescu” Lower Secondary School, Buzău
Ilfov	“Prof. Ion Vișoiu” Lower Secondary School, Chitila
Bucharest	“Ferdinand I” Lower Secondary School, Bucharest, Sector 2
Teleorman	Pietroșani Lower Secondary School
Teleorman	Conțești Lower Secondary School

Throughout the process, the INSCHOOL team in Romania (made up of one education co-ordinator and three facilitators) provided the necessary support to schools and monitored their activities that were covered by INSCHOOL

grants, and also those that were included in their institutional development plans (IDPs) and broader operational plans (OPs).

The average implementation time in INSCHOOL Romania over the 2018-2019 period was 13.5 months, with grants being implemented over a period of 5.8 months on average in the cohort of schools that were selected for the project. Over the months of implementation, the schools were supported by the national INSCHOOL team.

The INSCHOOL project followed a number of steps tailored to the educational context in which Romanian schools operate:

- 1) **Reference research** carried out on the basis of the quantitative questionnaire and a letter of support from the Ministry of National Education which made it possible to collect data on each school, including information about the school environment, which were collected through observations carried out by INSCHOOL experts; schools were selected to a large extent on the basis of the data collected through the reference research.
- 2) **Analysing the institutional development plans (IDPs) and operational plans (OPs)** of each selected school which had been drawn up prior to the project as part of national legislation concerning education in Romania; the analysis grid³ was produced by the group of education advisors (EAs) selected in Romania on the basis of a specially-designed tool and clear indications were given with regard to areas where each school could improve.
- 3) **The IDPs and OPs were revised on the basis of the grid and through consultations with teaching and non-teaching staff, representatives of parents and pupils.** During the initial implementation of the Index for Inclusion methodology (May-October 2018), the funding plans were drawn up on the basis of the priorities and vision of the school as recorded in the final IDPs.
- 4) **Joint training on inclusive education** was conducted for the six schools on 12-13 May 2018 in order to ensure that they had a common view of the ultimate goal – **high-quality inclusive education**; this training was followed by two national workshops on the subjects of planning and developing INSCHOOL funding proposals (13 July 2018) and monitoring and evaluation (6 September 2018).
- 5) Three INSCHOOL facilitators began **interventions in schools** in May 2019, following the Index for Inclusion methodology.
- 6) From May to October 2018, the schools focused on **learning the methodology proposed** by the Index for Inclusion, implementing it at school level and creating co-ordination groups (overview of identifying priorities and developing funding proposals based on identified needs).
- 7) In October 2018, **the schools received grants of €12 270 on average per school** (total grant for Romanian INSCHOOL schools: €73 616), with an implementation period running to 31 May 2019. All of the activities proposed by the schools were implemented successfully.
- 8) **The activities implemented by schools** by means of INSCHOOL grants involved **the majority of the teaching staff and all pupils, including Roma children, children with disabilities, children belonging to other minorities,**

³ IDP/OP inclusion/inclusiveness analysis grid

children in extreme poverty and children whose parents had migrated abroad. All of the six schools participating in INSCHOOL reported that they had included Roma children and parents in significant proportions.

9) **Each school carried out a self-assessment (taking the form of reference research and the quantitative questionnaire mentioned above) on the basis of the key indicators** at the beginning and end of the school year.

10) **Continuing training programmes in which at least 20 members of teaching staff per school participated** were held as part of the funding proposals in co-operation with the **Institute of Education Sciences** in accordance with the **tripartite Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe, the Institute of Education Sciences and ARACIP [Romanian Pre-university Education Quality Assurance Agency]**. The training topics included matters relevant to the theme of inclusion.

11) **Sharing of experience between colleagues**, consisting of visits between schools in the country involving teaching staff in particular. These activities proved to be a valuable tool to help and motivate teachers to take an inclusive approach in their day-to-day activity.

The table below gives an overview of the activities requested by schools through the funding proposals that were drawn up throughout the spring and summer of 2018 and sent to the Council of Europe in September 2018. All of the activities were implemented and narrative reports on the achievements, impact and outcomes were sent to the Council of Europe by the end of the project implementation period.

Table 4. Activities requested by schools through INSCHOOL grants

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6	Total
Objective 1 – Support mechanisms and resources for schools are set up							
1.1.2 Adapting the multi-purpose classroom to give additional support to pupils and to support relevant learning activities, including remedial education. Acquiring or developing innovative teaching materials for active learning	2	3	1	1	1	0	8
1.2.1 Supporting non-formal educational activities that stimulate the involvement of Roma pupils as defined by schools in IDPs	8	4	18	6	2	3	41
1.3.1 Holding events to develop and consolidate relevant skills for inclusion (such as workshops for parents, teachers and pupils)	8	2	7	11	11	1	40
Objective 2 – Support is given to teachers so that they can promote and improve learning outcomes for Roma children							
2.1.2 Based on national needs identified at local and national level, introducing mechanisms to support pupils who fall behind in order to help them to improve their school results and boost their social mobility	1	4	2	0	0	0	7

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6	Total
2.1.3 Devising training modules/programmes for the professional development of teachers and training modules on community culture and problems faced by teachers – according to the context in which the project is implemented	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
2.1.4 Organising training and mentoring/coaching activities for teachers to promote a flexible school curriculum and use teaching strategies and learning resources that are diversified	1	0	3	3	6	3	16
2.1.6 Sharing of experience, including between the selected schools, in order to provide support	1	3	3	2	2	0	11
Other interventions	1	0	0	0	0	1	2

The above figures show that the six schools focused mainly on activities based on non-formal education, with increased involvement of Roma pupils, and events to consolidate skills for parents, pupils and teachers.

Teacher training was provided by either the INSCHOOL team (education advisors and facilitators) or experts from the Education Science Institute (ISE) **under a memorandum of understanding signed with the Council of Europe in January 2019**. All of the schools were represented at the aforementioned three national events.

In total, during the first INSCHOOL cycle, **19 local training sessions and four national training sessions** involving staff from the six schools were held, and the feedback from the teachers involved was largely positive. Twelve local training sessions were run by ISE experts, and they covered topics relating to multiculturalism, interactive teaching methods, special educational needs and parent education.

B. Second cycle of implementation of INSCHOOL (October 2019 – June 2021)

i. Operational context

After a period of negotiations between the European Union and the Council of Europe, the INSCHOOL project was approved for a second implementation cycle from 1 October 2019 to 31 January 2021 in five countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic), with an effective school launch date of January 2020 and a no-cost extension agreed by both parties until **June 2021**.

In Romania, the selection of the schools was officially and bilaterally approved by the European Commission and the Council of Europe in February 2020. Eight schools (one of which requires only methodological support) are involved in the second implementation cycle:

Table 5. List of schools involved in the second INSCHOOL implementation cycle

No.	Urban / Rural	County	School	INSCHOOL involvement
1	Rural	Buzău	Cilibia Lower Secondary School	INSCHOOL 1
2	Urban	Buzău	“Nicolae Titulescu” Lower Secondary School, Buzău	INSCHOOL 1
3	Urban	Ilfov	“Prof. Ion Vișoiu” Lower Secondary School, Chitila	INSCHOOL 1
4	Urban*	Bucharest	“Ferdinand I” Lower Secondary School, Bucharest, Sector 2	INSCHOOL 1
5	Rural	Teleorman	Pietroșani Lower Secondary School	INSCHOOL 1
6	Rural	Teleorman	Conțești Lower Secondary School	INSCHOOL 1
7	Rural	Ilfov	Lower Secondary School No. 3 Bălăceanca-Cernica	Newly selected 2020-2021
8	Rural	Suceava	“Luca Arbore” Lower Secondary School	Newly selected 2020-2021
9	Rural	Suceava	“Mitocu Dragomirnei” Lower Secondary School	Newly selected 2020-2021

For the schools in Suceava County, a new member was co-opted into the team of education facilitators because one of the facilitators had been appointed as a member of the general assembly of the CNCD [National Council for Combating Discrimination].

A national INSCHOOL workshop was scheduled to take place on 21-22 March 2020 with the main aim of promoting and officially launching the beginning of the second cycle of project activities in Romania. However, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshop was postponed and replaced with a live webinar that took place in June 2020.

From March 2020 onwards, to implement the project, a number of things needed to be adapted to the new context and the additional challenges that the schools faced. Following a brief analysis of needs carried out by facilitators in schools and by way of a joint decision of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, a small grant scheme (offering grants of up to EUR 2 000) was launched for the schools involved in the project. It was targeted at the following areas:

- Consolidating the ability of school and teaching staff to use ICT and online platforms for effective learning and involvement of pupils;
- Support and training for teaching staff and schools to improve contact and remote communication with parents and children;
- Emotional and psychological support for teachers, parents and pupils to help them overcome anxiety due to isolation and physical isolation;
- Effective post-lockdown support for children and teachers during their transition back to schools and classrooms.

The sum was disbursed as part of the average grant of EUR 8 500 per school. Four of the seven schools selected as possible beneficiaries requested micro-grants of up to EUR 2 000. Most of the funds were used to provide IT training to teachers and psychological and emotional support to teachers and pupils (webinars). **The feedback was positive because the support was provided in due time and helped teachers to organise their response to the emergency better**, and it helped teachers, pupils and parents alike.

By November 2020, the schools had resumed normal implementation (between May and November 2020) and they implemented the activities included in the micro-grants between May and July 2020. The allocation mechanism was similar to the one in the previous school year, and all seven of the schools included in the programme were contracted.

In November and December 2020, 120 teachers at INSCHOOL schools were trained in intercultural education. In addition, all of the schools used part of their own grants to develop their own teams' skills by holding classes on parental education, ICT and teaching methods for online/digital learning.

Every month, working meetings were held with all of the schools online so that the INSCHOOL team and the schools involved in the project could tell each other about what was being done in each school. In view of the context of the COVID pandemic, the activities were implemented in accordance with official recommendations, either online or face to face depending on what was feasible.

Thanks to a grant received by the "Împreună" Agency Foundation from one of the EEA Grants in Romania (ANCPFED) fund managers, the INSCHOOL working method was extended to five other schools in Ilfov County.

ii. Development of education policies

In terms of policies, the co-operation with the Ministry of Education was formalised by way of a Memorandum of Understanding on the priority of high-quality inclusive education that was signed by both parties on 9 October 2020. On this basis, a micro-grant initiative similar to the one offered by INSCHOOL in May-July 2020 was launched by the Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe to support 40 schools in Romania's most disadvantaged areas.

According to an official letter sent on 27 October 2020 by the Minister of Education, the Council of Europe and the INSCHOOL joint European Commission and Council of Europe project will actively contribute to the development of a map of disadvantaged schools in Romania.

As part of the project's contribution to the promotion of high-quality inclusive education, on 4 November 2020, a high-level conference entitled "***I want to go to school! About the need for high-quality inclusive education***" launched a series of four themed discussions about high-quality inclusive education in Romania which received media coverage through one of the country's main media outlets. The series of events set out to bring together representatives of the main political parties (PNL, PSD, USR/PLUS, PMP, PRO ROMÂNIA, UDMR) who put forward various solutions to four thematic issues: early childhood education, vocational education and training, upper secondary education and fairness in education. The event attempted to establish a common set of priorities and values for political parties to be reflected in immediate government actions. The INSCHOOL project was among the organisers, along with the "Împreună" Community Development Agency Foundation, the Representative Office of the European Commission in Romania, the University of Bucharest and the Presidential Office. Approximately 433 000 people watched the five debates online and the information was taken up by the national press, generating additional materials based on the debates. The outcomes of these debates are clear, and many of the ideas promoted by the organisers have been included in the

Government Plan of the Political Coalition⁴ in government, which was agreed between the PNL, USR-PLUS and the UDMR.

In May 2021, the make-up of the Desegregation Committee was updated (representative of the Ministry – Directorate-General for Pre-university Education within the Ministry of Education and the Department for Minorities, Pre-university Education Quality Assurance Agency (ARACIP), UNICEF, World Vision Romania, Coalition for Education, REF, Amare Rromentza, RENINCO Association, INSCHOOL), and it is expected that the Committee will begin operating at full capacity in the extremely near future. In addition, the Împreună Agency Foundation, as an organisation providing support to INSCHOOL, has proposed that a project intended to promote high-quality inclusive education, including through measures to combat segregation, be included in the PNRR.⁵

⁴ [Government Programme for 2020-2024](#) [Romanian only]

⁵ NATIONAL RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE PLAN (PNRR)

http://mipe.gov.ro/pnrr/?fbclid=IwAR2BVTek2OfPbxZ3KuuJaDi9GVYoyi6K9aZV3yBFQt_CZEbZ7dywfqmEfwk [Romanian only]

Chapter 2: Developing inclusive schools: outcomes achieved so far

2.1. Current situation: self-assessment based on key inclusion indicators. Context and analysis by comparison with the situation at the start of the project

INSCHOOL schools are **run by experienced head teachers** who have been doing this job for between four and 20 years. The only exception is the Mitocu Dragomirnei school, where the head teacher has only one year's experience of management.

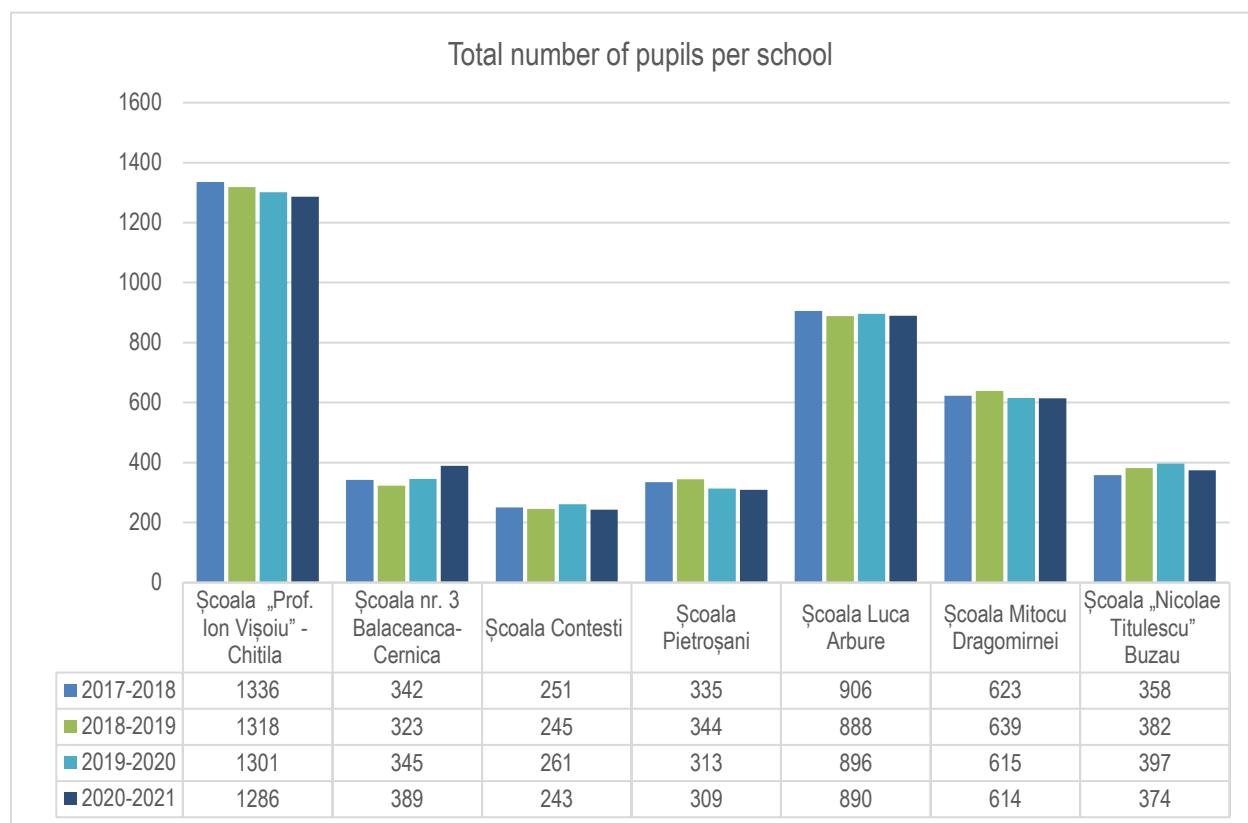
In the opinion of the management teams, the schools are benefiting from the involvement of the local authorities, which is also a very important aspect while face-to-face classes are suspended (Conțești, Pietroșani, Luca Arbure and Mitocu Dragomirnei). However, local actors (NGOs, businesses) are less involved, with only three schools indicating that they are receiving support from them.

Table 6. Management experience and support given to schools in the INSCHOOL network

	Number of years spent working as head by current head	Level of involvement of local authorities	Level of support given by NGOs or private-sector organisations
Chitila	12	Medium	Medium
Bălăceanca-Cernica	20	Medium	Low
Conțești	9	High	Medium
Pietroșani	9	High	Low
Luca Arbure	4	High	Low
Mitocu Dragomirnei	1	High	Medium
Buzău	15	Medium	Medium

By comparison with the number of pupils enrolled at INSCHOOL schools four years ago, there has been a small decrease. Five of the schools (Chitila, Conțești, Pietroșani, Luca Arbure and Mitocu Dragomirnei) have smaller numbers of pupils, while the schools in Buzău and Bălăceanca-Cernica have seen small increases.

Fig. 1. Total number of pupils in schools in the INSCHOOL network



The **gender breakdown** is relatively balanced overall at the Bălăceanca-Cernica and Mitocu Dragomirnei schools, whereas at the Luca Arbure and Buzău schools, the proportion of boys is significantly higher than the proportion of girls. Chitila is the only school where the proportion of girls is higher than that of boys, as may be seen in the table below:

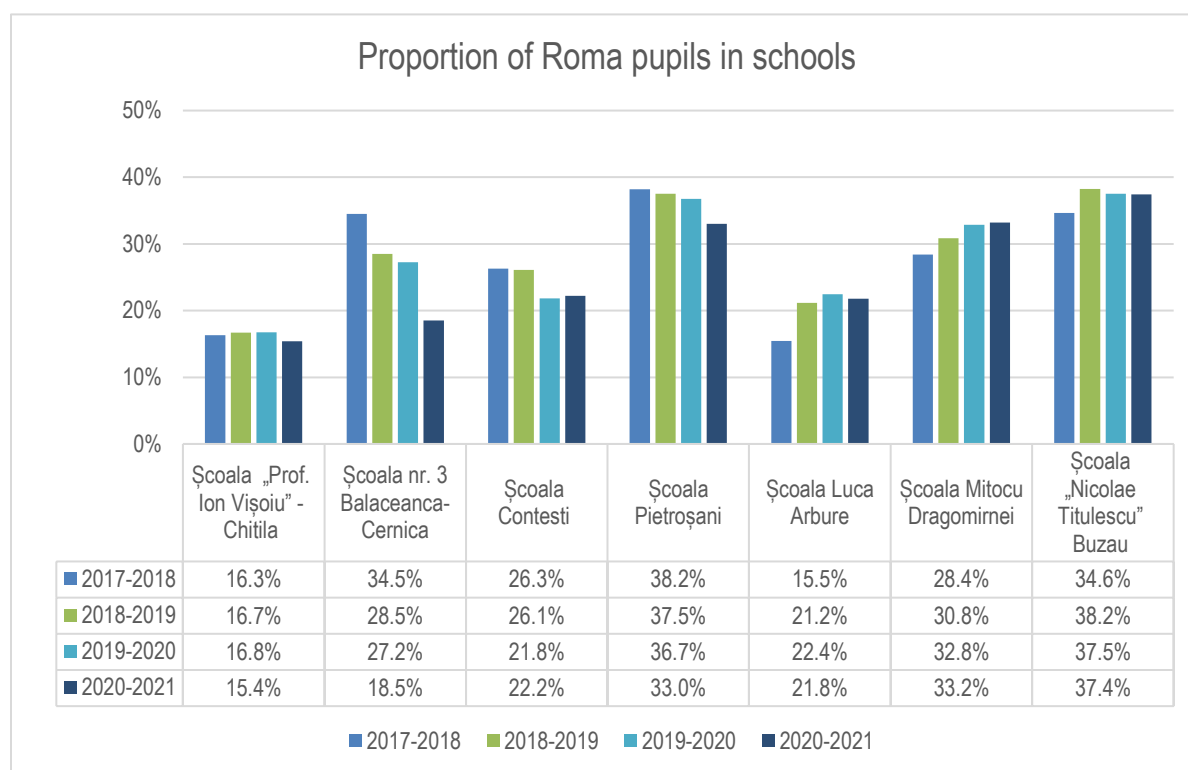
Table 7. Gender breakdown of pupils in INSCHOOL schools

	Chitila		Bălăceanca-Cernica		Conțești		Pietroșani		Luca Arbure		Mitocu Dragomirnei		Nicolae Titulescu – Buzău	
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
2017-2018	637	699	163	179	115	136	180	155	437	316	307	316	307	197
2018-2019	643	675	170	153	114	131	186	158	425	328	311	328	311	203
2019-2020	602	699	168	177	109	152	177	136	432	316	299	316	299	210

2020-2021	613	673	192	197	127	116	171	138	433	308	306	308	306	194
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According to the data provided by the schools' management teams, **the proportion of Roma pupils** ranges from 15% (Chitila) to 37% (Buzău). There are small changes by comparison with previous years, with the proportion falling slightly at four schools: Chitila, Conțești, Pietroșani and Bălăceanca-Cernica. At the first three, this change is mainly due to the decrease in the entire school population, as indicated above. At the Bălăceanca-Cernica school, the decrease is mainly due to the low number of Roma pupils enrolled by comparison with previous years.

Fig. 2. Proportion of Roma pupils over the 2017-2021 period



Three schools (Chitila, Buzău and Mitocu Dragomirnei) have **more than 10 children with disabilities and/or special educational needs**. We note that in the case of the school in Chitila, which has the largest school population, the proportion of these pupils has remained constant at around 30. At the other two schools (Buzău and Mitocu Dragomirnei), the proportion has risen in the last few years. It is important to note that the other schools in the INSCHOOL network have smaller numbers of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, even though the schools have also reported pupils who do not hold certificates (for example, official recognition by CJRAE/CMBRAE).

Table 8. Number of children with disabilities over the 2017-2020 period

	Chitila	Bălăceanca-Cernica	Conțești	Pietroșani	“Luca Arbure”	Mitocu Dragomirnei	Nicolae Titulescu Buzău
2017-2018	30	9	8	1	4	7	9

2018-2019	32	14	6	1	4	9	13
2019-2020	30	15	6	2	6	17	15
2020-2021	29	6	6	2	9	19	12

The **proportion of Roma children who attend nursery school** is similar to the proportion of the majority school population. The only exception is Luca Arbure School, where there is still a difference of 20 percentage points in the 2020-2021 school year, even though the gap has halved by comparison with the previous school year. This school also has the lowest attendance rate (86%).

Table 9. Number of children with disabilities over the 2017-2020 period (Roma pupils and total)

	2017-2018		2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021	
	Roma	Total	Roma	Roma	Total	Total	Roma	Total
Chitila	75%	82%	78%	80%	83%	82.00%	90%	90%
Bălăceanca-Cernica	43%	83%	41%	46%	77%	70%	100%	100%
Conțești	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Pietroșani	N/A	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Luca Arbure	52%	84%	57%	44%	84%	82%	68%	86%
Mitocu Dragomirnei	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Nicolae Titulescu – Buzău	81%	92%	81%	86%	94%	92%	100%	100%

The schools currently offer a **relatively limited number of opportunities for extracurricular activities, as is also highlighted in the responses from school actors to the questionnaires inspired by the Index for Inclusion**. Equally, within the represented communities, there is a relatively low number of actors who offer such learning contexts. According to the data provided by the schools, no more than one in five pupils participates in such activities, the average being below 10%. **At three schools (Luca Arbure, Conțești and Pietroșani), it is indicated that less than 1% of the school population benefits from non-formal learning experiences**. The participation of Roma pupils is lower at six of the seven schools within the network, Chitila being the only school where the proportion of Roma pupils involved in extracurricular activities is higher by comparison with the majority school population. *We must point out that the results are heavily influenced by the pandemic, which led to the interruption of many extracurricular classes or activities (arts, sports, scientific, free time pursuits, etc.), as was mentioned by pupils, parents and teachers during the focus group discussions in Conțești and Pietroșani.*

The **number of children/pupils per class** varies according to the level of education. It ranges from four children (Bălăceanca-Cernica) to 18 (Buzău) at pre-school level, with the school in Mitocu Dragomirnei having as many as 30

children in one group. **The average at primary and lower secondary level is approximately 18-24 pupils/class.** Two schools (Bălăceanca-Cernica and Mitocu Dragomirnei) have the largest number of pupils at lower secondary level: **34 pupils per class.** The Chitila and Luca Arbure schools have smaller classes (11-12 pupils) at primary and lower secondary level. According to school actors, **there is no class segregation based on ethnic criteria.** The distribution of Roma pupils across all classes within the INSCHOOL network is normal.

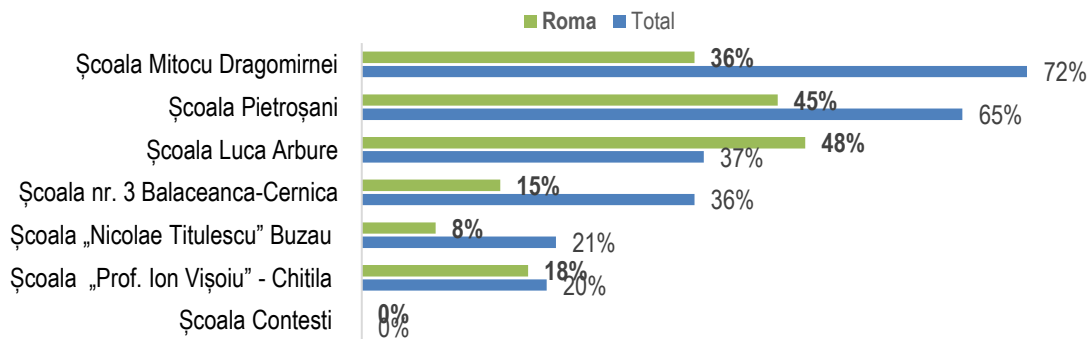
Table 10. Number of children/pupils per class

	Nursery		Primary		Lower secondary	
	Minimum	Average	Minimum	Average	Minimum	Average
Chitila	6	14	11	22	12	24
Bălăceanca-Cernica	4	16	16	31	19	34
Conțești	14	20	16	20	17	21
Pietroșani	N/A	17	N/A	22	N/A	18
Luca Arbure	12	27	12	23	12	22
Mitocu Dragomirnei	18	30	19	22	20	25
Nicolae Titulescu – Buzău	18	20	15	23	17	21

Nearly 75% of pupils at the school in Mitocu Dragomirnei and nearly two thirds of pupils at the school in Pietroșani have to **walk over 1 km every day** to attend classes. The pupils at the Bălăceanca-Cernica and Luca Arbure schools who are in this situation make up a third of the total school population, while the rates are lowest at the schools in Buzău and Chitila.

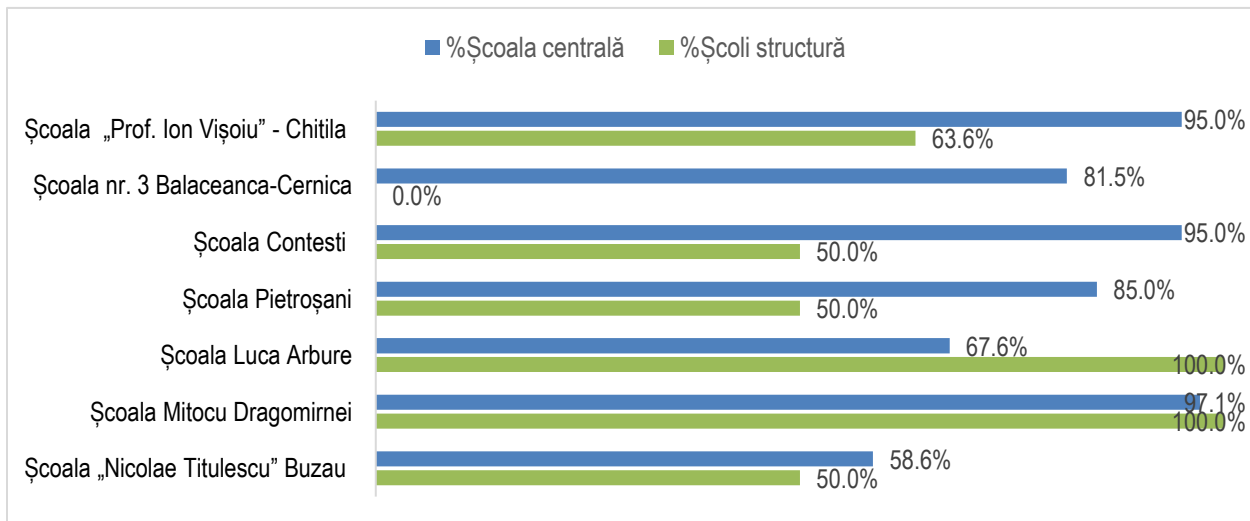
Except at Luca Arbure School, the rate is lower (15-30 percentage points) among Roma pupils. Conțești School is the only school where pupils are not in this situation. Nearly half of the Roma pupils at Luca Arbure School have to travel at least 1 kilometre to attend classes, a proportion that is significantly higher by comparison with the school population as a whole. Only at the school in Chitila are the proportions of Roma and non-Roma pupils similar, and at the other schools, the proportion of Roma pupils is smaller by comparison with their fellow pupils. For example, at Mitocu Dragomirnei School, one in three Roma pupils has to travel a long way to reach school every day, whereas among the school population as a whole, three in four pupils are in this situation, as may be seen in the figure below.

Fig. 3. Proportion of pupils who walk more than 1 km to school (2020-2021)



In terms of **human resources**, the situation across the schools in the INSCHOOL network is very variable. While nearly all members of teaching staff at the schools in Mitocu Dragomirnei, Chitila and Conțești are permanent, we note that approximately 15-20% of the teachers at the schools in Bălăceanca-Cernica and Pietroșani are non-permanent, as they are substitutes. The situation is more difficult at Luca Arbure School, where only two thirds of the teachers are permanent, and at the school in Buzău, where the percentage is below 60%. The proportion of unqualified teachers is even higher at subordinate schools having the status of legal entities, where the percentage is 50-64%. The exceptions are the Luca Arbure and Mitocu Dragomirnei schools, which state that they do not have any substitute teachers in the schools subordinate to them.

Fig. 4. Proportion of teaching staff who are permanent



Currently, the schools within the network have **relatively little experience of running school-level projects**, the exception being the school in Chitila. This situation is due to the fact that **opportunities to participate in projects are more limited at schools in rural areas**, where an average of one to four projects were run. Looking at the change over time, we also note that by comparison with the 2017-2018 school year, **the number of projects implemented by schools is increasing** at all of the schools within the network.

Table 11. Number of projects implemented by schools

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Chitila	9	14	12	15
Bălăceanca-Cernica	0	2	1	1
Conțești	N/A	1	1	3
Pietroșani	1	1	N/A	1
Luca Arbure	0	0	4	4
Mitocu Dragomirnei	0	2	2	2
Nicolae Titulescu – Buzău	0	2	2	1

There are **also big differences between the schools in terms of support staff**: the number ranges from four (Chitila, Buzău) to zero (Bălăceanca-Cernica, Pietroșani and Mitocu Dragomirnei). In addition, by contrast with the school in Buzău, where there is a **mediator** with over 13 years' experience, the other schools have no one to perform this role. The experience of **teacher participation in inclusive education training courses** reported by the schools within the INSCHOOL network is likewise very varied. While the proportion of teachers with such experience of continuous training is 5-15% at schools such as Mitocu Dragomirnei, Bălăceanca-Cernica or Chitila, the proportion of staff trained in this field at schools such as Conțești, Pietroșani and Buzău is between 80% and 100%. The situation at these schools is a consequence of the approach taken by the INSCHOOL project, which made it easier for as many school actors as possible to participate in continuous training programmes in relevant fields.

It is to be expected that schools such as Mitocu Dragomirnei and Bălăceanca-Cernica, which joined the project later, will have higher participation rates in the near future. In addition, Chitila School is the school with the largest number of members of teaching staff, so extra time is needed to reach high proportions of trained staff.

Table 12. Support staff, school mediator and proportion of staff trained on inclusive education

	Number of support staff	School mediator	Staff trained on inclusive education
Chitila	4	No	15%
Bălăceanca-Cernica	0	No	10%
Conțești	2	No	80%
Pietroșani	0	No	83%

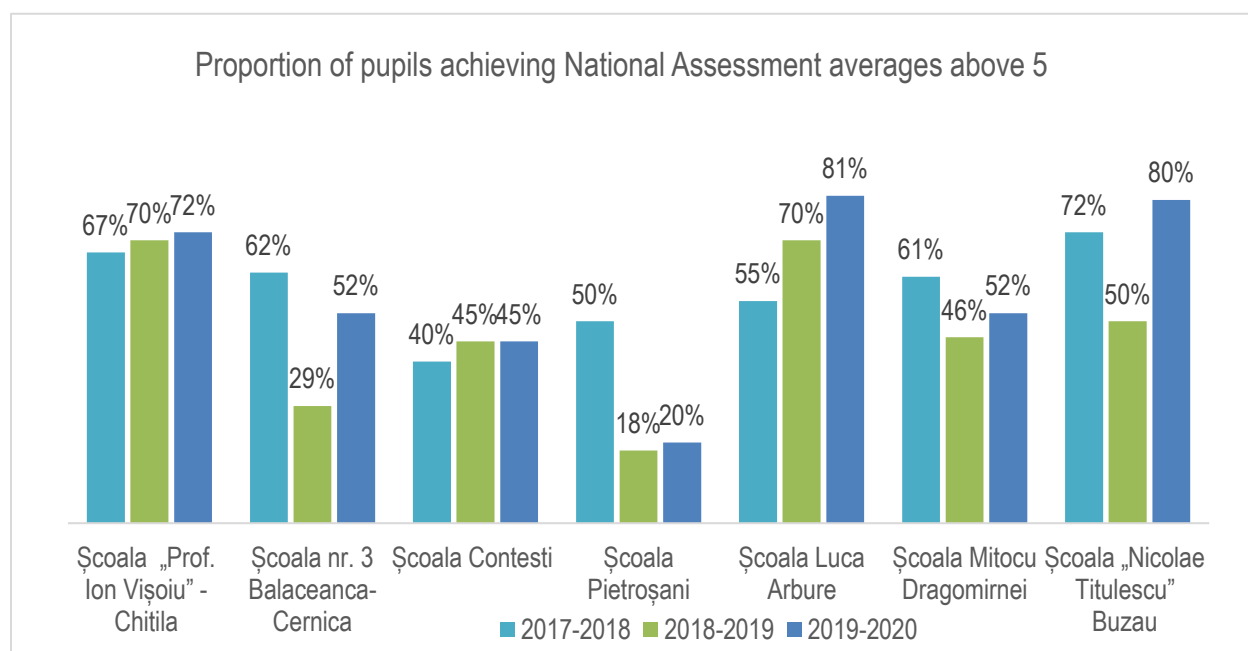
Luca Arbure	1	No	38%
Mitocu Dragomirnei	0	No	5%
Buzău	4	Yes	100%

Figure 5 shows the **change in learning outcomes achieved by pupils in the National Assessment**. The indicator is the proportion of pupils who achieve a mark above 5, even though there is currently no minimum threshold for enrolment in lower secondary school (including upper secondary schools). The figures gives an overview of the National Assessment results for all seven schools included in the analysis.

We note that **four schools achieved better outcomes** in terms of the proportion of pupils who passed the National Assessment by comparison with previous years. Luca Arbure School saw the biggest increase, from 55% to 81%, while the increases at the schools in Conțești, Buzău and Chitila are around 10 percentage points. A significant fall in the proportion of pupils passing national examinations occurred at the school in Pietroșani, with 50% of pupils achieving a mark above 5 in the 2017-2018 school year and only 20% in the 2019-2020 school year. The decrease at the other two schools, Bălăceanca-Cernica and Mitocu Dragomirnei, is smaller, averaging 10%.

These outcomes must be interpreted in context, as they were directly affected by the pandemic. Although the National Assessment took place on the date that was originally planned and the results at national level were better than expected, there were schools where the difficulties in organising distance/online learning had a highly negative impact. Pupils who had problems in accessing the Internet or lacked the appropriate equipment fell behind in gaining new skills in the 2019-2020 school year. Furthermore, they were unable to prepare adequately to resit examinations first taken in previous years, as the revision and final exam preparation period coincided with a major wave of the epidemic in April-June 2020.

Fig. 5. Proportion of pupils achieving National Assessment averages above 5, 2017-2020



The proportion of Roma pupils failing to achieve a mark above 5 in the National Assessment is higher by comparison with the majority population in all schools across the network. Poorer learning outcomes can also be seen when the repetition indicator values are analysed. As may be seen from the table below, although the proportion of the Roma school population does not exceed 40% at any school, the proportion of Roma pupils who failed a year over the 2017-2020 period was 59% in Chitila (the smallest proportion) and 100% at the Pietroșani and Luca Arbure schools (the largest proportion).

The change in this indicator highlights the fact that at present, the total number of years being repeated is lower (as the Pietroșani, Luca Arbure and Mitocu Dragomirnei schools declared no such cases in the 2019-2020 school year), and this situation was directly affected by the special context in which the previous school year ended. Even national-level policies recommended careful analysis of the problem of falling behind, with the alternative of initiating a national remedial education programme focused on these pupils' support needs being preferred (see Order 3.300/February 2021 on the methodological standards for implementing remedial education measures through School After School programmes).

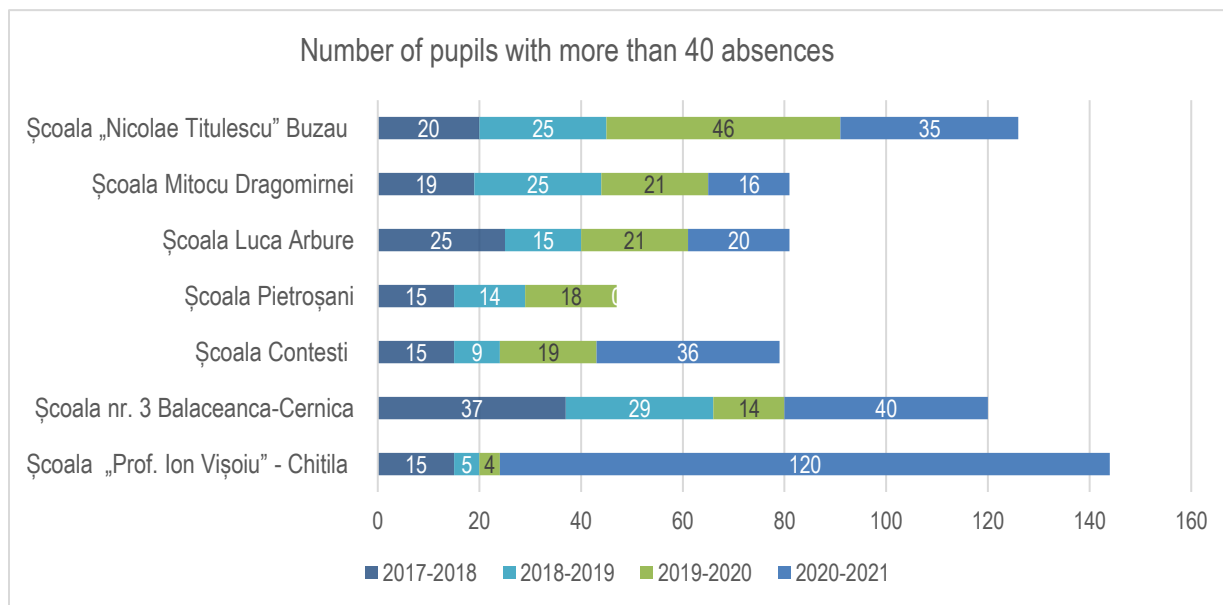
Table 13. Number of pupils repeating a year, broken down by ethnic group, 2017-2020

Number of pupils repeating a year		Chitila	Bălăceanca-Cernica	Coțești	Pietroșani	Luca Arbure	Mitocu Dragomirnei	Buzău
2017-2018	Roma	31	13	5	17	15	18	11
	Total	61	16	13	22	15	18	12
2018-2019	Roma	27	12	3	14	10	23	18
	Total	55	19	9	19	10	23	21
2019-2020	Roma	28	5	2	0	0	0	9
	Total	31	9	6	0	0	0	10
Total		147	44	28	41	25	41	43
Roma		86	30	10	31	25	41	38
% Roma		59%	68%	36%	76%	100%	100%	88%

Aside from the overall trend in the repetition rate, it must be emphasised that the proportion of Roma pupils within the total number of pupils repeating a school year has not changed significantly, and it will certainly take longer for the interventions in this area to have the desired impact.

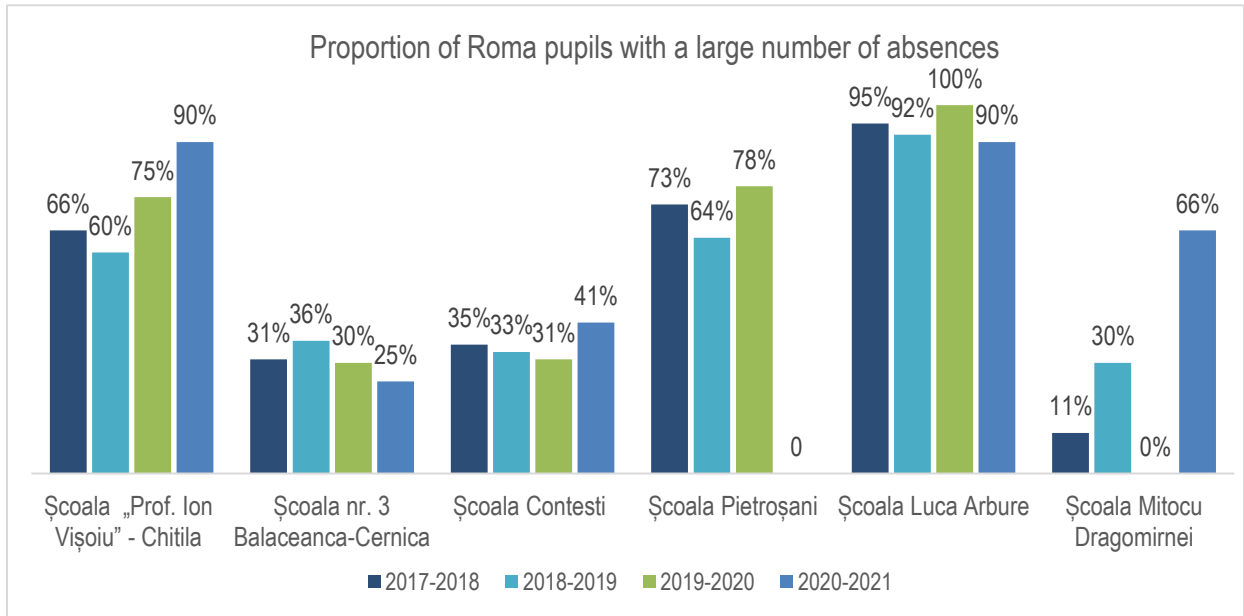
A factor that had a negative influence on efforts to improve learning outcomes significantly, according to the data provided by the schools, was absenteeism. With a few exceptions (Luca Arbure, Mitocu Dragomirnei, Buzău), the number of pupils who were absent from the schools more than 40 times during the 2019-2020 year was higher by comparison with previous school years. The largest increase was at the school in Chitila, where the number of pupils in this situation rose exponentially.

Fig. 6. Number of pupils with more than 40 absences



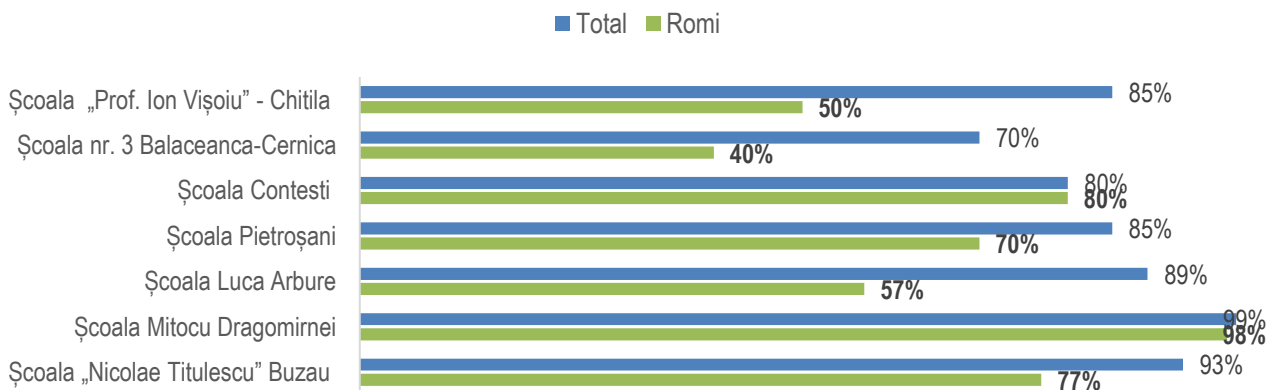
Absenteeism is an issue that affects the Roma school population significantly. As can be seen in the figure below, **at three schools** (Chitila, Luca Arbure and Pietroșani), **three in four pupils with more than 40 absences are Roma pupils**. In addition, even at schools where the proportion is smaller (Conțești, Bălăceanca), we observe a mismatch between the value of this indicator and the proportion of Roma pupils within the total school population of these schools. The main challenges in terms of school attendance in 2019-2020 were definitely caused by the pandemic and the long period for which the schools did not run face-to-face classes. However, **analysis of absenteeism over the last three years shows that even before the pandemic, the level was worryingly high** across the entire school population.

Fig. 7. Proportion of Roma pupils with a large number of absences



Improving the value of this indicator is a challenge and an important priority for this school year and future years, for multiple reasons. Unless he/she participates in the normal school programme, a pupil is at serious risk of lagging significantly behind in developing skills. If we consider skills that form the basis of new ones, it is clear that a lack of acquisition puts schooling as a whole in jeopardy. Analysis of the proportion of pupils who continued to attend school online shows both the overall number of pupils who remained outside the education system and the extent to which the Roma school population lags behind in this regard.

Fig. 8. Proportion of pupils who continued with their education online during the Covid-19 pandemic

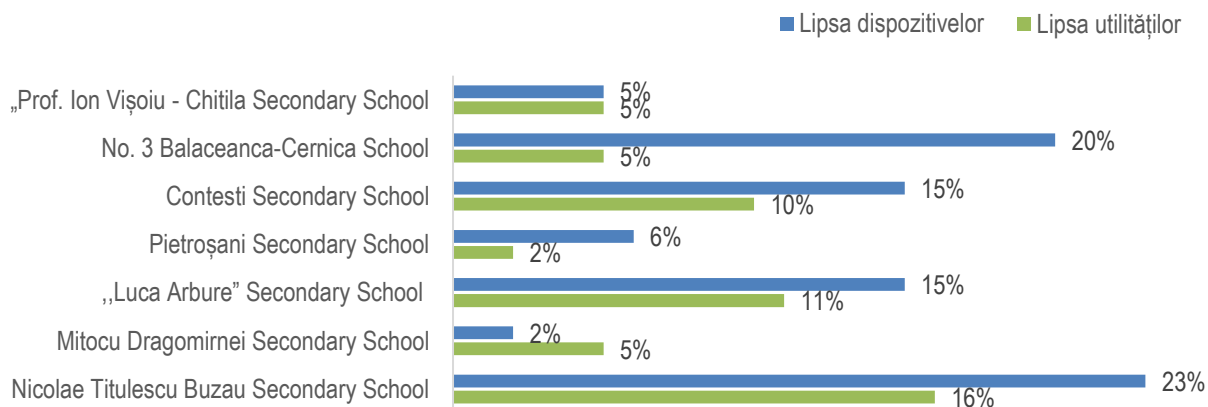


According to the data provided by the schools, the proportion of Roma pupils who did not attend school online is, with just one exception (Mitocu Dragomirnei School), very high, ranging from one in five (Conțești) to one in four (Buzău, Pietroșani). At schools such as Luca Arbure (57%) or Bălăceanca-Cernica (40%), the proportion of Roma

pupils in this situation is extremely large when one considers the overall rates of online school attendance at these schools (89% and 70%).

The main barriers that these pupils faced were **difficulty in accessing, or lack of access to, a suitable electronic device (telephone, tablet, PC) and difficulties in connecting to the Internet.**

Fig. 9. Reasons why pupils could not attend online classes

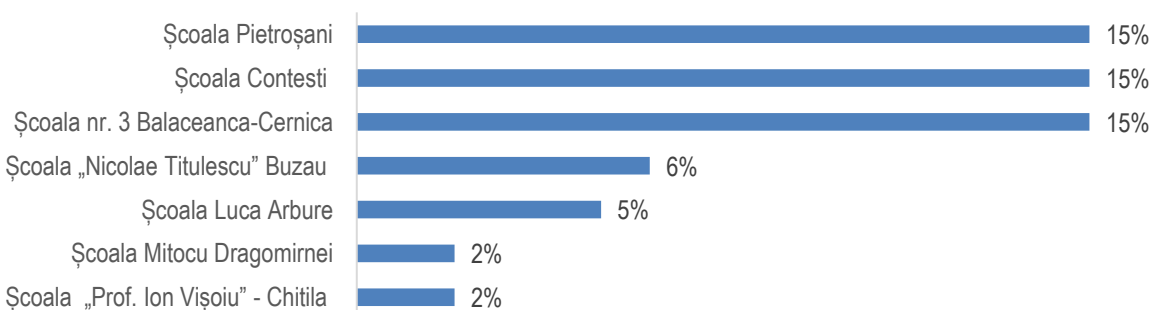


According to the teachers who participated in the focus group discussions, starting online activities was difficult as the teachers were not experienced in teaching online and using platforms such as Google Meet, and parents did not know how to help their children to log in. **When pupils were unable to watch classes online, parents were called to public places (shop, school) so that they could be given worksheets for pupils.** Teachers kept in constant contact with parents of pupils who were unable to get online at neighbours' houses, by telephone or by other means.

During the focus group discussions held at the schools in Pietroșani and Conțești, pupils stated that **during the period when online classes took place, it was much more difficult to learn than it would be during face-to-face activities.** They had problems because of the lack of a signal, which prevented them from having a constant and high-quality connection. In addition, some pupils felt anxious and tired after spending a lot of hours in front of screens. **Pupils feel that teachers “did everything possible”** to enable them to catch up with material that they had not understood during online classes, through both revision during classes and also special remedial classes.

In developing intervention strategies, **schools will need to consider the fact that the challenges relate to both supply and demand at the same time (demand- and supply-driven policies).** This is demonstrated by the **high proportion of pupils who were not motivated/did not express interest or even refused to participate in online activities.** For example, three schools (Pietroșani, Conțești and Bălăceanca-Cernica) state that the proportion of pupils who decided of their own accord not to attend school online is 15%. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Mitocu Dragomirnei and Chitila schools report that the proportion of pupils in this category does not exceed 2%.

Fig. 10. Proportion of pupils who refused to attend online classes



Attendance problems increase the **risk of dropping out of school** proportionately. The declared number of drop-outs ranges from 0-1 (Bălăceanca-Cernica, Conțești, Pietroșani) to 13 (Luca Arbure) and 31 (Chitila). These values must be analysed from the perspective of the circumstances of the previous school year and also the size of the total school population. Chitila and Buzău, which have similar school populations, are in different situations in this respect. In addition, we point out that **although the total number of pupils who dropped out fell by 40% over the 2017-2020 period, the proportion of Roma pupils in this situation rose from 60% to 100%**. Luca Arbure School is in a similar situation, as the drop-out rate there fell by nearly 70% over this period, although the proportion of Roma pupils in this situation did not change (100%).

Table 14. Number of pupils who dropped out of school, 2017-2020

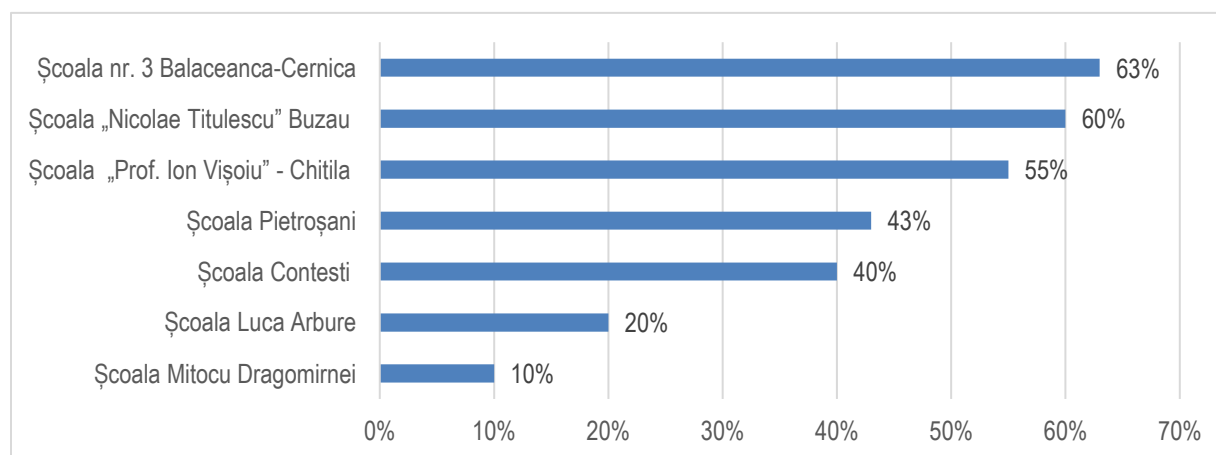
		Chitila	Bălăceanca-Cernica	Conțești	Pietroșani	“Luca Arbure”	Mitocu Dragomirnei	Buzău
2017-2018	Roma	31	12	1	0	13	2	4
	Total	52	12	4	0	13	2	4
2018-2019	Roma	27	1	1	2	19	0	3
	Total	45	1	3	3	19	8	4
2019-2020	Roma	31	0	1	1	13	5	4
	Total	31	0	2	2	13	8	4
Total		128	13	9	5	45	18	12
Roma		89	13	3	3	45	7	11
% Roma		70%	100%	33%	60%	100%	39%	92%

One strong point for future support measures is the digital skills that were developed by teachers at the INSCHOOL schools during the pandemic. The majority of the management teams feel that teachers made use of varied learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) and gained new skills in working with digital resources, applications and platforms (Moodle, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom/Meet etc.) during the previous school year and that they are continuing to do so now. In addition, access for teachers to suitable equipment improved significantly by comparison with the period at the beginning of the pandemic (March 2020). According to the focus group discussions held at the schools in Pietroșani and Conțești, online classes provided an opportunity to use interactive methods that they did not have the chance to use on every occasion during face-to-face activities. Furthermore, on returning to school, teachers continued to use digital tools and pupils sometimes asked if they could use digital textbooks and other audio/video materials.

In addition to the resources made available to all teachers, at national level, through dedicated platforms (educatiac continua.edu.ro or digital.educared.ro), **teachers at INSCHOOL schools were also able to benefit from the national support programme for remedial education.** According to the data provided by the management teams, two in three Roma children need this type of support at the Bălăceanca-Cernica and Buzău schools and so do over 50% at the school in Chitila. At the opposite end of the spectrum, only 10% of pupils at the school in Mitocu Dragomirnei and 20% of Roma pupils at Luca Arbure School are in this situation. There are multiple reasons for these differences, the main one being the different level of online school attendance across the entire school population and the Roma school population at each school.

At the schools in Conțești and Pietroșani, **remedial education activities supported by the Ministry of National Education** were organised, **and pupils and parents appreciate this.** Pupils with poorer results and a higher level of absenteeism were involved in face-to-face revision and remedial activities in groups of approximately 15 pupils. Because there are fewer pupils and they have a similar level of knowledge, they can understand things more easily and answer constantly in class without being afraid of being judged and labelled by others.

Fig. 11. Proportion of Roma pupils needing remedial education, 2019-2020



Along with the new skills developed by teachers, ameliorative intervention measures can also be supported by parents. **All of the management teams highlighted the fact that during the pandemic, parents provided real support to both pupils and schools.** They made a direct contribution to providing the necessary learning conditions and equipment, and provided extremely important help to teaching staff, especially at pre-school and primary level, where younger children/pupils are less independent in learning and have weaker digital skills. The schools also demonstrated

that they had managed to provide the necessary hygiene and health conditions during the periods when some or all pupils returned to classes. Although we can see from the table below that the schools were unable to provide a sufficient supply of masks and disinfectant, there were no special epidemiological situations. The schools that were hardest hit by the shortages of masks and disinfectant were Mitocu Dragomirnei, Conțești and Bălăceanca-Cernica (no data from Buzău School were available).

Table 15. Number of weeks with adequate supplies of masks and disinfectant in schools

	Number of weeks with sufficient supplies of:	
	Masks	Disinfectant
Chitila	16	8
Bălăceanca-Cernica	6	5
Conțești	4	8
Pietroșani	10	12
Luca Arbure	11	11
Mitocu Dragomirnei	2	4

The next section of the report gives a detailed picture of the perceptions and attitudes of school actors (pupils, parents and teaching staff) towards the key aspects of a school culture that promotes inclusion. The processes and interventions presented in Section 2.1. show the changing picture of the outcomes achieved by the seven schools making up the INSCHOOL network, and are supplemented by the vision of the school actors directly involved as detailed in Section 2.2.

2.2. Creating a new school culture inspired by the Index for Inclusion

According to the methodological framework mentioned in [Chapter 1.3.](#), each of the seven schools used four different questionnaires inspired by the *Index for Inclusion* with four groups: (1) school staff – Indicators for Inclusion, (2) parents – My Child’s School, (3) pupils in lower secondary education – My School, and (4) pupils in primary education – My School. **The number of respondents was proportionate to the size of the school**, as per the *Methodological framework for using the questionnaires*,⁶ which was developed especially for the INSCHOOL project. A total of 189 teachers and other representatives of school staff, 1 087 parents and 1 174 pupils participated in the research, as per *Table 16*.

Table 16. Breakdown of responses by school and category of respondents

Name of school	Number of respondents				
	Staff	Parents	Lower secondary pupils	Primary pupils	Total
“Prof. Ion Vişoiu” Lower Secondary School, Chitila	46	411	239	217	913
“Luca Arbure” Lower Secondary School	44	144	94	49	331
“Nicolae Titulescu” Lower Secondary School, Buzău	31	112	55	110	308
Conțești Lower Secondary School	18	134	54	53	259
Mitocu Dragomirnei Lower Secondary School	10	13	29	27	79
Lower Secondary School No. 3, Bălăceanca-Cernica	19	137	67	66	289
Pietroșani Lower Secondary School	21	136	53	61	271
Total	189	1 087	591	583	2 450

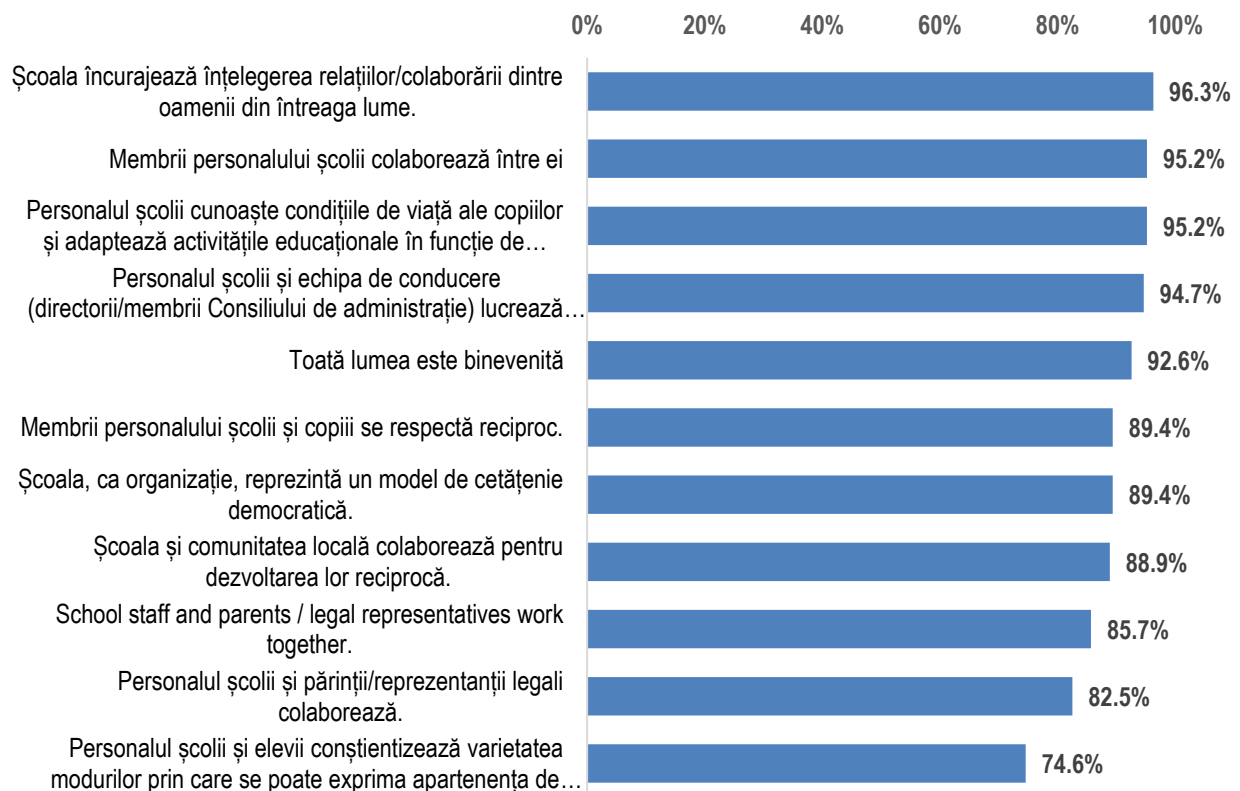
Below, we will set out the **perceptions of the four categories of respondents** (school staff, parents, primary pupils and lower secondary pupils) with regard to the inclusiveness of the schools of origin. Charts showing these perceptions are set out below.

⁶ Appendix 1. Methodological framework for using the questionnaires

2.2.1. School staff's perception of school inclusion

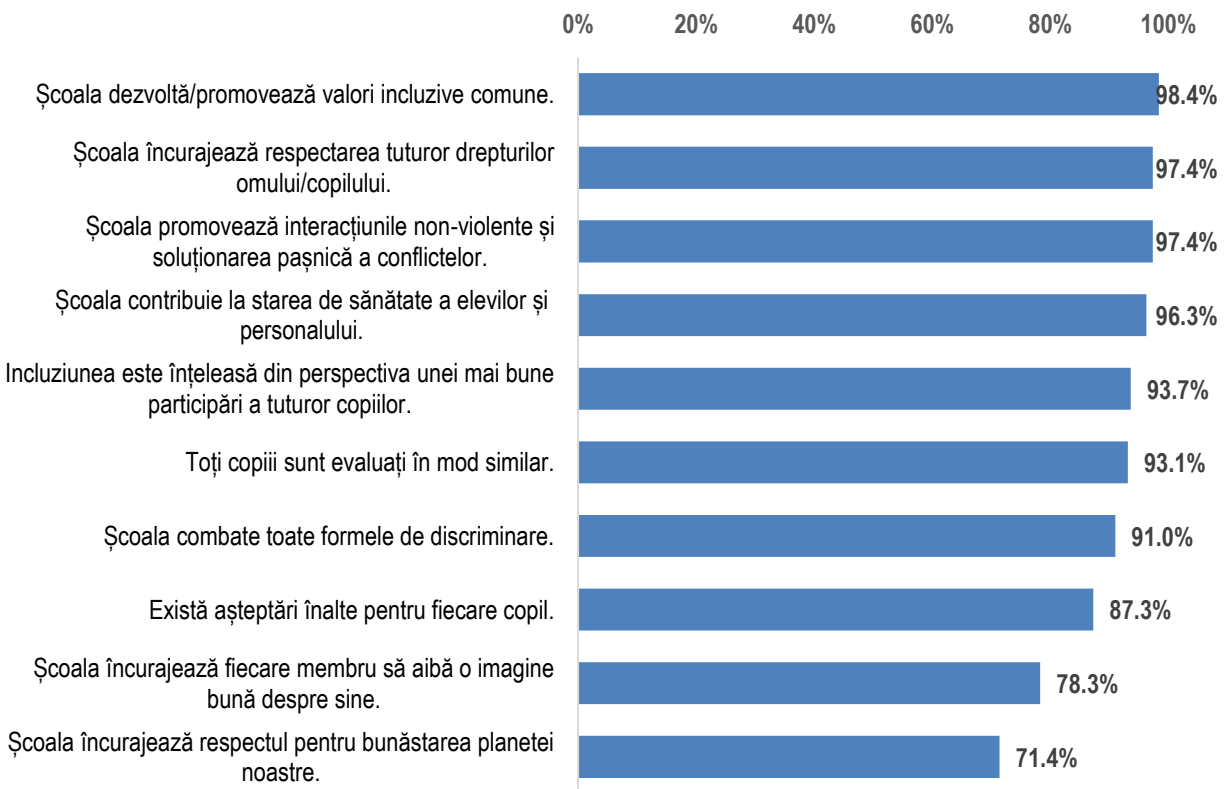
The majority of the respondents consider that **their schools contribute a great deal to community development** and encourage understanding between people (96%), with teachers themselves working together (95%) or with the management team (95%). Furthermore, **staff view school as a model of democratic citizenship** (89%) which, working together with representatives of the local community, contributes to the development of the community as a whole (89%). There was less agreement with the statement concerning receptiveness to a variety of ways in which gender can be expressed (75%). (Figure 12. Teachers' perspective on community building).

Fig. 12. School staff perspective on community building



The seven schools **develop and promote inclusive values** in the opinion of school staff (97%) by promoting non-violent interaction (96%) and encouraging respect for all human rights (98%). Teachers say that **inclusion is understood in school** to mean participation of all children (97%), the “fight” against all forms of discrimination (91%) and encouraging every pupil to have a good self-image. Although almost all members of schools understand and promote the values of inclusive education, **only 78% of the respondents agreed that all pupils are assessed in a similar way, while 71% of teachers consider that expectations of every child are high**. The two statements for which the scores were lower indicate that **schools still need support in establishing inclusive values**, with a focus on perceptions of pupils' ability to achieve success and the objectiveness of their assessment (Figure 13. Teachers' perspective on establishing inclusive values).

Fig. 13. School staff perspective on establishing inclusive values



Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that **school staff have a positive perception of “inclusive culture”**. It is considered that the seven schools are safe, open, co-operative and welcoming communities where everyone is appreciated. Common inclusive values are developed and imparted to all members of staff, children and their families, officials and communities as a whole. According to the data, the school that achieved the highest scores with regard to inclusive culture in the eyes of staff is Conțești School (95%), which achieved 13 maximum scores (of 100%) out of a possible 21. However, despite this perception, there is a low score (72%) in terms of high expectations of all children, and this perception is common to staff at all of the schools (71%). This conclusion calls for particular attention as it underlines the fact that **some children are perceived as not having the ability to develop certain specific skills**; as a result, they are disadvantaged because high expectations are not set for them. Therefore, inclusive school culture does not target the group of pupils perceived as “having low potential”.

With regard to “developing the school for all” (Figure 14. Teachers’ perspective on developing the school for all), it is concluded that **both new pupils and newly-employed staff are helped to integrate in school** (95%). Furthermore, the school appreciates the experience of staff (94%) and it is ensured that staff recruitment and promotion are fair processes for everyone (92%). In addition, 87% of teachers believe that **the management of the school has**

promoted and is developing inclusive education. According to the respondents (78.3%), the seven schools included in the research **do not make a sufficient contribution to reducing waste and environmental pollution.**

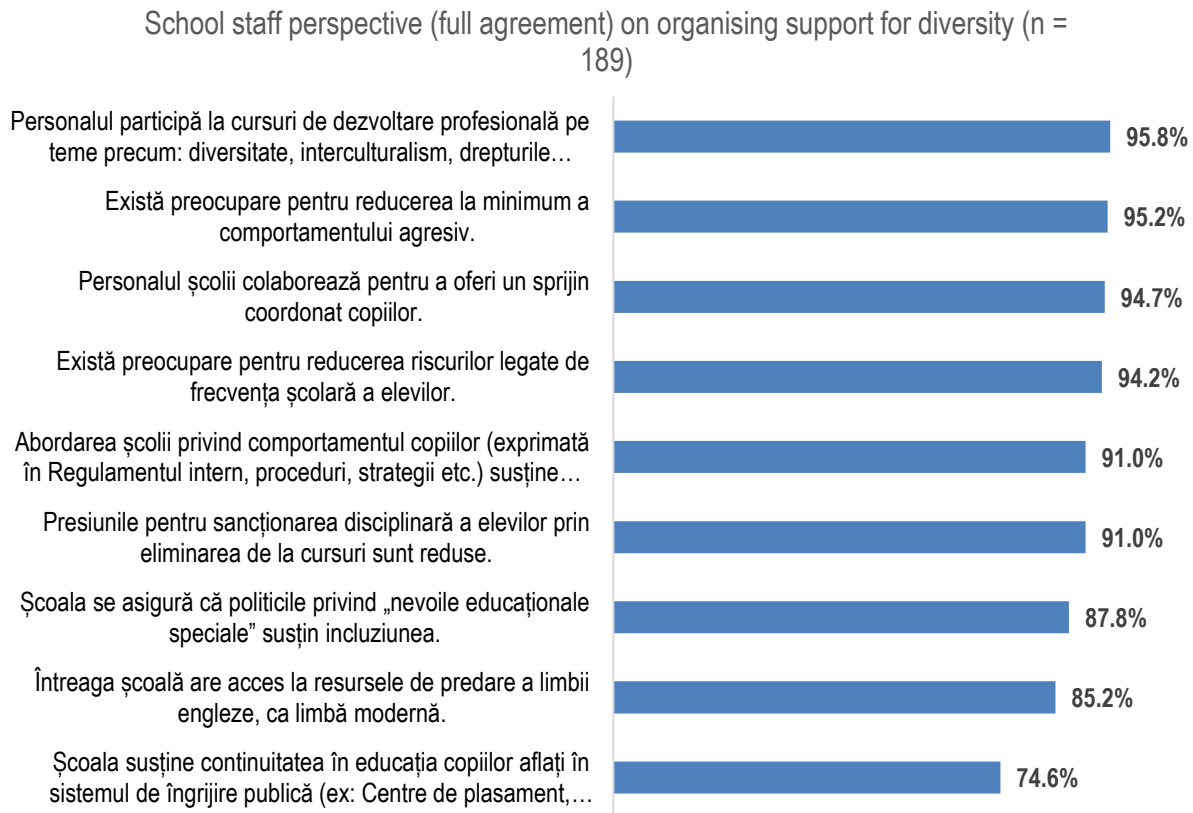
Fig. 14. School staff perspective on developing the school for all

Staff perspective (full agreement) on developing the school for all (n = 189)



The schools support and promote diversity in order to provide high-quality inclusive education (Figure 15. Teachers' perspective on organising support for diversity). **Teachers attend training courses on diversity, human and children's rights and inclusion (96%) and adapt learning mechanisms and tools to children's needs (91%).** The schools are also concerned about reducing the school drop-out rate and increasing attendance (94%), as well as minimising aggressive behaviour between pupils (95%). Not all pupils have access to English language teaching resources, as only 85% of the respondents agree with this statement.

Fig. 15. School staff perspective on organising support for diversity



It is important to note that **teachers (88%) believe that their school has policies for pupils with special educational needs that are in line with the values and practices of inclusion**. The percentage may be high because teachers do not undertake initial or continuous training in relation to adapting the curriculum and teaching methods to the specific needs of children with disabilities. **The percentage could be due to the training programmes facilitated by the INSCHOOL project**. Staff perceptions may therefore be influenced by better understanding and concern for the promotion of inclusive education, which constitutes the added value of the project.

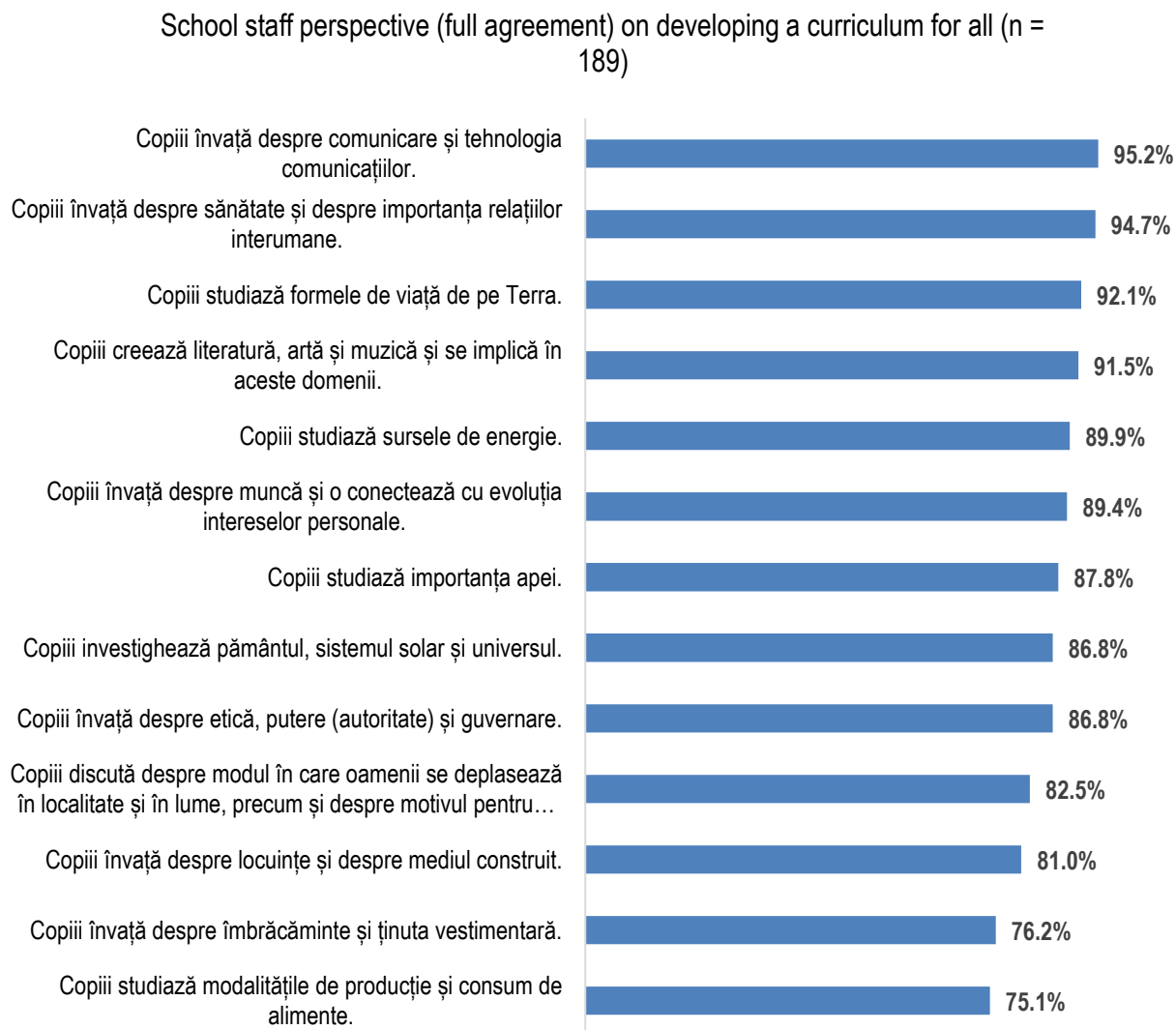
With regard to “developing inclusive policies”, it is noted that **inclusion is an important part of the plans of all schools and involves everyone**. The policies of these seven schools encourage the participation of children and staff members from the very beginning. These policies encourage schools to reach out to all children and include activities tailored to the diversity of their members, in ways that guarantee equal appreciation of everyone. However, **it is not clear that all forms of support are brought together in a common framework designed to achieve universal participation**, because only **74% of the respondents consider that the school supports the continuity of children’s education in the public care system**.

The third dimension considered in analysing school staff’s perceptions is “changing inclusive practices”.

Figure 16 (*Teachers’ perspective on developing a curriculum for all*) shows that **teachers learn a variety of pieces of information and practices that help them to understand the world better and find out what they like and are good at**. Pupils learn most about: communication and technology (95%), health and relationships between people

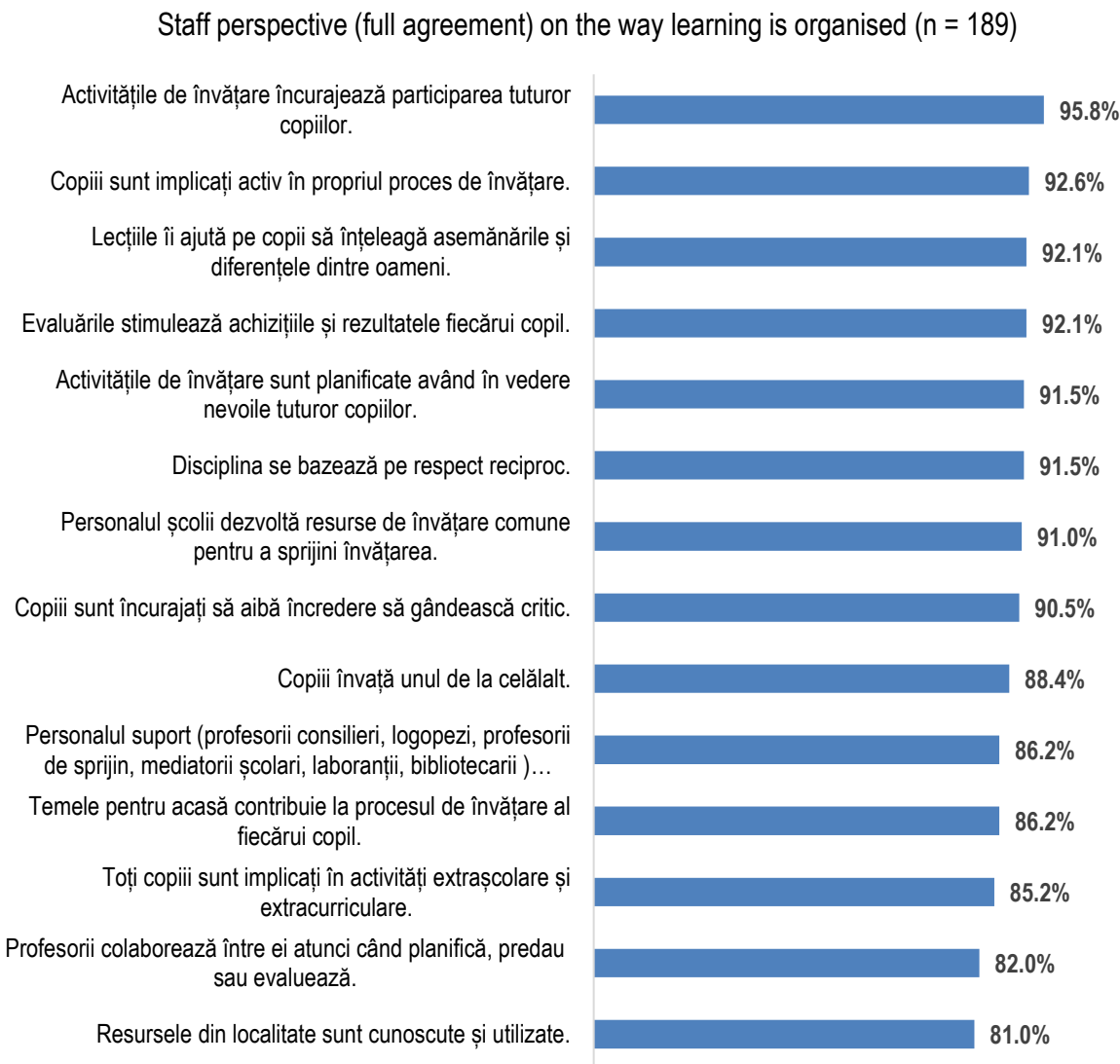
(95%), forms of life on Earth (92%), energy sources (90%), the importance of water (88%), the Earth and the Solar System (87%), ethics and governance (87%) and homes and the built environment (81%). In addition, 92% of school staff respondents said that pupils create literature, music and art but learn less about clothes (76%) and how to produce and eat food (75%).

Fig. 16. School staff perspective on developing a curriculum for all



According to school staff, **learning activities encourage the participation of all children** (96%) and they are actively involved in the process of their own learning (92%). Lessons are designed to help children to gain a better understanding of the similarities and differences between people (92%) and take everyone's needs into account (92%). Children are stimulated to think critically (91%) and learn by working together (88%). (Figure 17. Teachers' perspective on the way learning is conducted)

Fig. 17. Staff perspective on the way learning is organised



The level of children’s involvement in extracurricular activities varies between pupils and schools, from 65% at Chitila School to 100% at Buzău School; in total, 85% of teachers who responded agreed that all children are involved in these kinds of activities. Co-operation between teachers in planning and creating education resources remains limited, as only 82% of teachers state that they work together with other teachers to this end. The responses vary between schools, from 78% at Chitila School to 100% at Buzău School and Conțești School. **There is a lack of common recognition of local resources and limited use of them,** with only 81% of teachers considering that local resources are well known and used by the school community and the wider community.

Teachers appreciate the co-operation and communication between themselves and also between them and pupils. They also consider that respect and conscientiousness are values that are promoted in school. At the opposite end of the spectrum, there is teachers’ desire to improve the infrastructure of their schools (laboratories, digital

equipment, smart boards) and have better co-operation with parents. A large number of school staff members who responded said that nothing needed to be changed in their school (*Table 17. Teachers' perspective on school*).

Table 17. Teachers' perspective on school

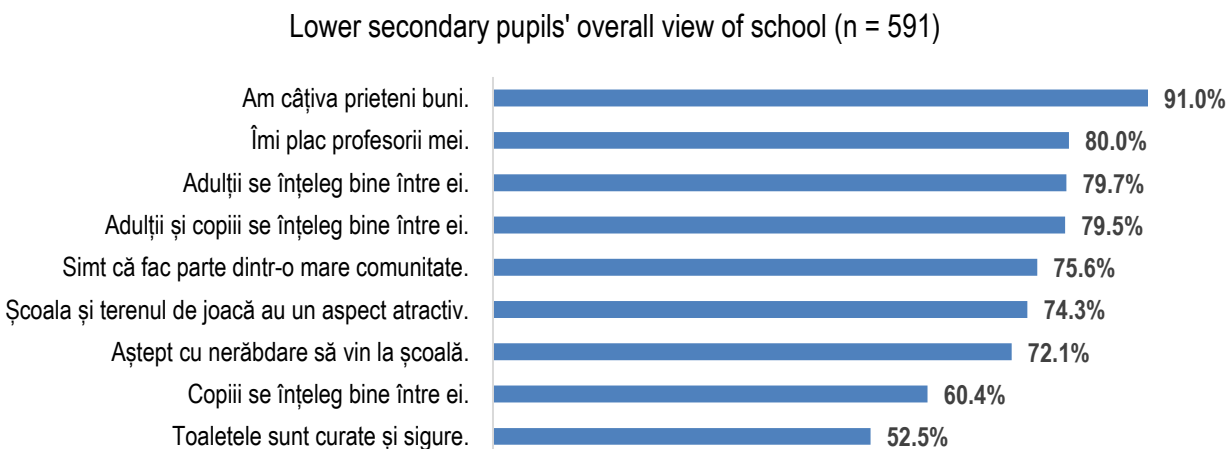
What do teachers like most at their school?	What would teachers like to change?
Co-operation and communication with pupils and colleagues	Improvement of school infrastructure (laboratories, digital equipment, smart boards)
Respect	Better co-operation with parents
Conscientiousness shown in school	Nothing needs to be changed

In conclusion, it can be stated that teaching and learning reflect inclusive values and policies that address the diversity of people in schools. Children are encouraged to be active, reflective and critical. Adults work together and so all of them take responsibility for the learning of all children. It is possible that the high scores for many of the statements are the result of the positive influence of the INSCHOOL project, the activities implemented and the training sessions in which teachers participated.

2.2.2. Pupils' perception of school inclusion

a. 91% of pupils in lower secondary education said that they have good friends among their classmates. Not all children agree that “they like their class teachers”, and only 80% of those who responded fully agreed with this statement. Furthermore, 80% believe that adults in their school get on well with both each other and pupils. **The majority of pupils (72%) cannot wait to come to school, while 76% of respondents in lower secondary education feel that their school is a big community that belongs to them.** Only 60% of the respondents believe that pupils get on well with each other and only 53% are satisfied with the toilets and believe that they are clean and safe. It is clear that the responses concerning toilets are influenced by children's expectations and points of reference, which in turn stem from the level of the comfort they have at home. (*Figure 18. Pupils' overall view of school*)

Fig. 18. Pupils' overall view of school

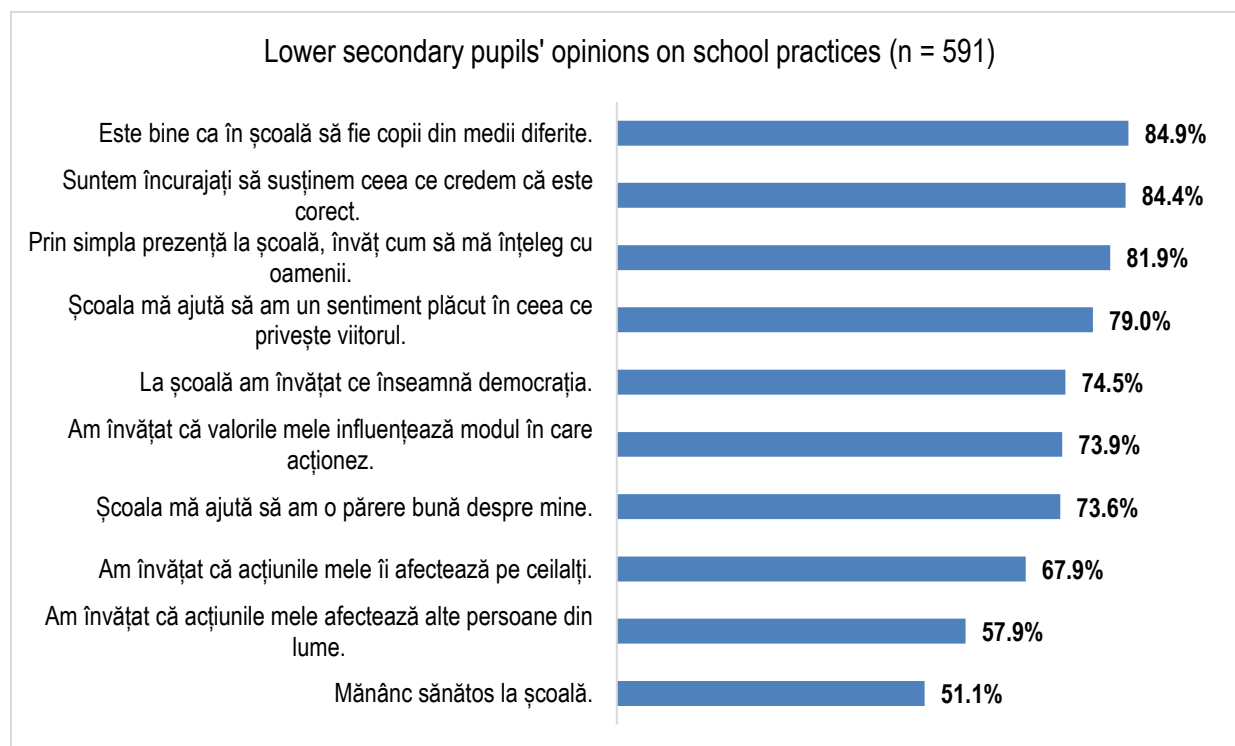


85% of children state that they believe it is good to interact at school with pupils from different environments. This encouraging percentage is definitely increasing because of the positive effects of the INSCHOOL activities.

School is very useful for pupils in that it helps them to feel good about the future (79%) and learn about democracy (75%) and how to get on with other people (82%). Pupils (74%) also believe that school helps them to have a good image of themselves. **Only 58% of pupils said that school had taught them that their actions will affect other people in the world.** Half of the children believe they eat healthily at school. This response must be viewed in the light of the national context, bearing in mind that most children do not have lunch at school or eat food brought from home. However, there are two national programmes through which children receive milk, bread and/or apples at school every day.

According to *Figure 19 (Pupils' opinion on inclusion values and policies)*, 83% of the responding pupils in lower secondary education believe that children with disabilities are respected and accepted in their schools. Discrimination based on religion is not a problem in schools according to 80% of pupils. **As for skin colour, the proportion of respondents who believe that this is not a problem in their school is seven percentage points lower at 73%.** One of the **statements that received the least support is the one relating to membership of a sexual minority as a source of discrimination**; just 40% of pupils who responded believe that this is not a source of discrimination in their school.

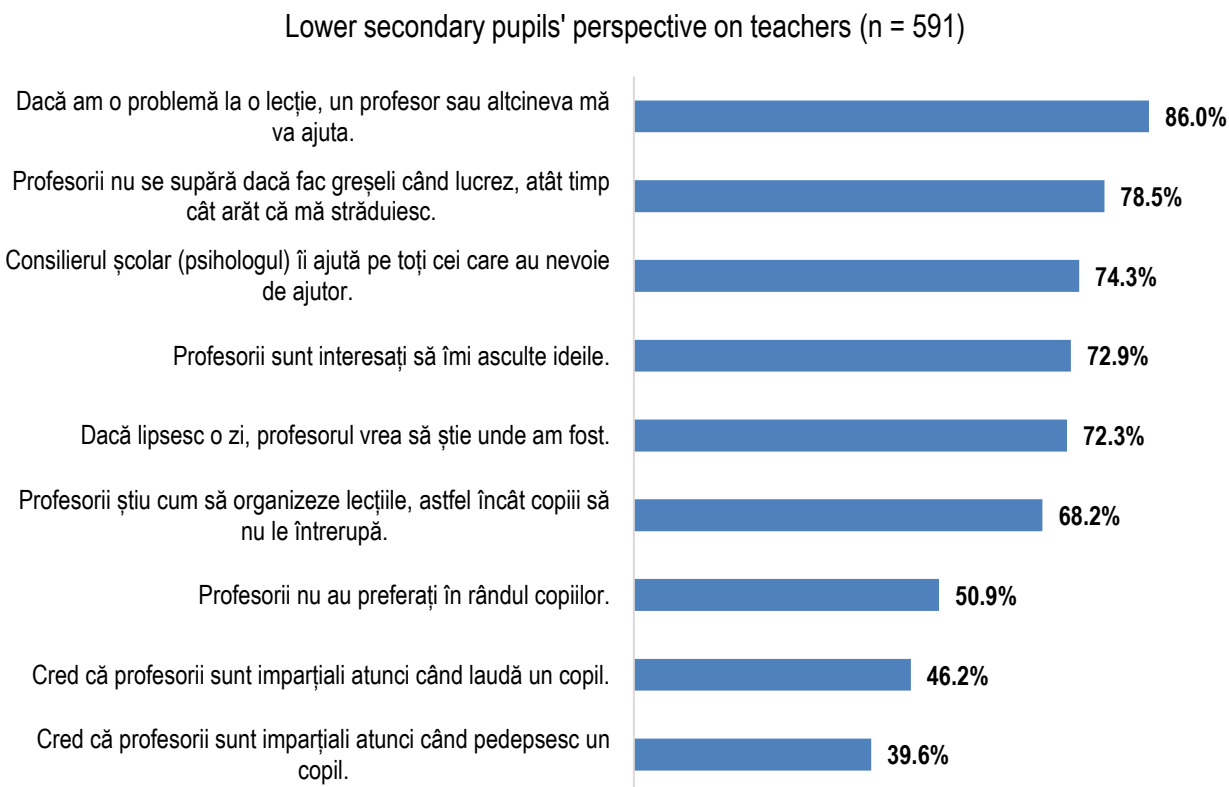
Fig. 19. Pupils' opinions on inclusion values and policies



Another problem faced by schools is that of aggressive and hostile behaviour between children. Only 42% of pupils said that children avoid insulting each other, while 69% believe that boys and girls get on well. However, the majority of pupils said that they would approach a teacher if someone in their class or school behaved aggressively.

In general, **pupils' perceptions of their teachers are good** (Figure 20. *Pupils' perspective on teachers*). 86% of pupils say that teachers would help them if they have a problem in class and feel that their teachers listen to them. In addition, according to 72% of pupils, teachers are interested to know why a pupil is absent. However, 72% is a low percentage because **all teachers must contribute to motivating and optimising pupils' attendance**.

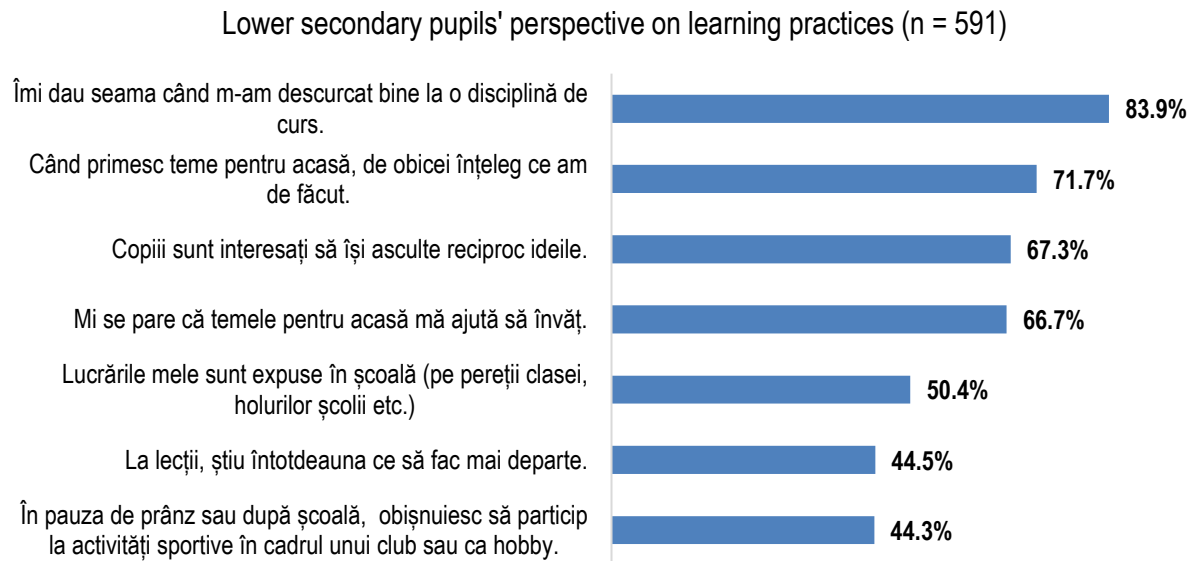
Fig. 20. *Pupils' perspective on teachers*



Based on the responses from lower secondary pupils, **a problem in terms of teachers' objectiveness when praising or punishing a child may be noted**. Only 46% of pupils believe that teachers are impartial when praising a child and 40% of respondents agree with the statement that teachers are impartial when punishing a child. In addition, 51% of pupils believe that teachers do not have any favourite children. Therefore, **teachers' objectiveness in the way they treat pupils is a priority that needs to be taken into account**.

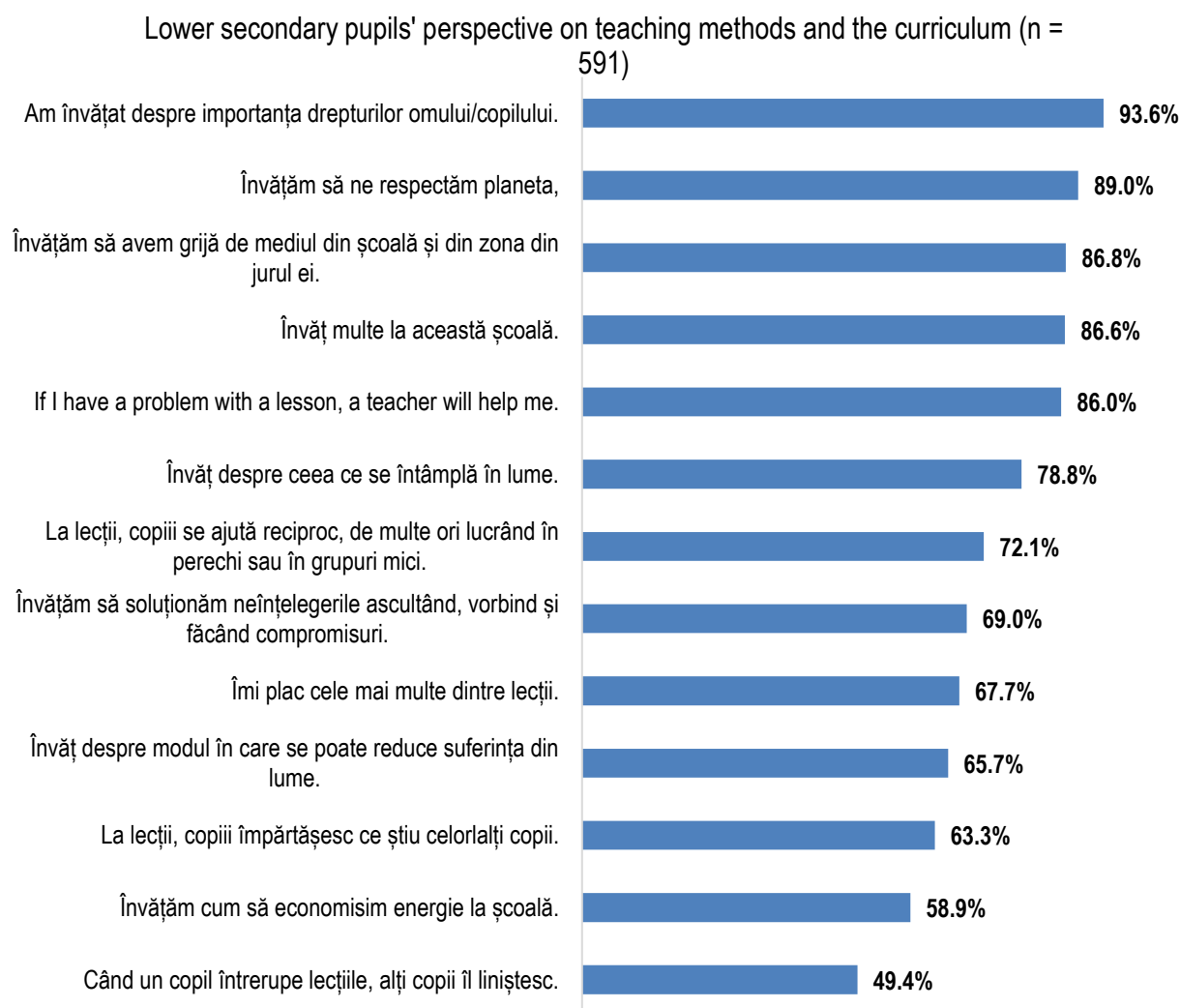
84% of pupils know whether or not they have made progress in studying a subject. 72% of pupils said they understand what they need to do in their homework and 67% feel that homework is useful for the learning process. At school, only 45% of respondents said they know what to do next, during lessons. Despite the widespread debate in the public arena about the difficult homework that is set for children every day and during the holidays, a significant number of pupils regard it as important for the development of their abilities. (Figure 21. *Pupils' perspective on learning practices*). Pupils' work and results are displayed in school for only 50% of pupils. The majority of pupils do not participate in extracurricular activities after classes.

Fig. 21. Pupils' perspective on learning practices



Children learn a variety of things that will help them to develop as citizens. **94% of pupils in lower secondary education said that they learn about the importance of human and children's rights at school.** The proportion is similar to the responses from the school staff members who responded (98%) that school promotes human and children's rights. Over 80% of pupils said that they learn to respect the planet and look after the environment. Energy saving is not a subject that is recognised by pupils, as only 59% of respondents say that they learn about it at school. A smaller proportion of pupils (68%) said that they like most of their classes, which should set an alarm bell ringing for teachers; it is important that all children like classes and the way their teacher works. **The fact that 32% of pupils do not like some classes is a difficult situation for their schools** in terms of guaranteeing a "school for all" and also in terms of school results. (Figure 22. Pupils' perspective on teaching methods and the curriculum)

Fig. 22. Pupils' perspective on teaching methods and the curriculum



Conclusion: It is clear that pupils in lower secondary education are much more open and critical in relation to school and the opportunities it offers. The percentages in this category are smaller than those for teachers. A detailed comparison of the responses broken down into categories will be provided at the end of the analysis (2.2.4).

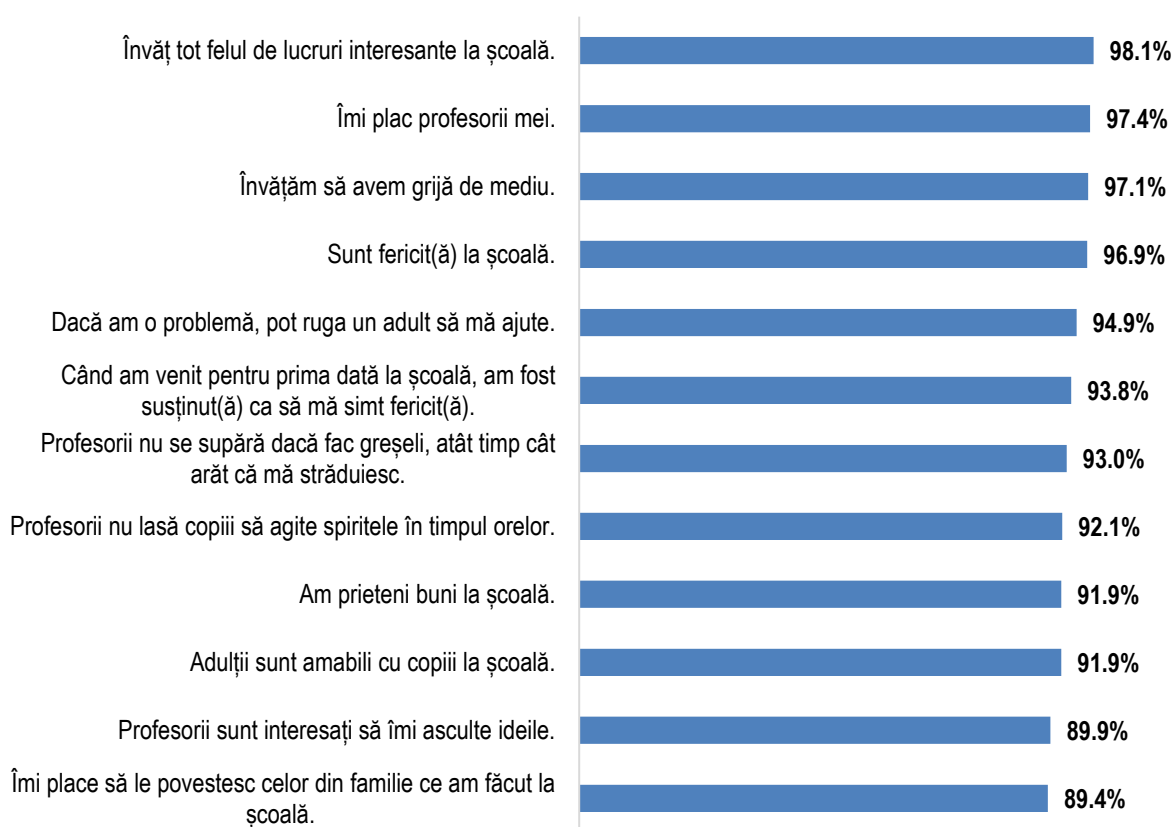
The highest scores in the perception of lower secondary pupils were for friendships within their group of pupils, coverage of the topic of human rights at school and the support they receive from teachers when they have a problem in class or with another person.

In general, lower secondary pupils report **skin colour and gender** as possible sources of discrimination; **aggressive and hostile behaviour between pupils is a reality in schools, teachers do not develop an objective attitude towards all pupils, and classes are not appealing**. In addition, pupils say that environmental protection and reduction of energy consumption are missing from the curriculum. These are the areas where scores were lowest.

b. Primary pupils are more enthusiastic about their schools than lower secondary pupils. **Over 95% of the primary pupils who responded said that they are happy at school and like their teachers.** In addition, over 98% of them acknowledge that they learn lots of interesting things at school, including how to look after the environment. On the whole, primary pupils are satisfied with the way they are treated: they communicate with their teachers if they have a problem and believe that teachers are kind to children and listen to their ideas. 92% of the respondents said that they have good friends at school. Although not all children like telling their parents or other family members how they have spent their time at school, 89% of pupils in primary education do. (Figure 23. Primary pupils' perspective on school issues – Part 1)

Fig. 23. Primary pupils' perspective on school issues – Part 1

Primary pupils' perspective on various aspects of school life (n = 583) – Part 1



More primary pupils (82%) than lower secondary pupils (59%) said that they learn about energy saving. Usually, children in primary education (74%) know what to do in class, while only 45% of pupils in lower secondary education agreed with this statement. The proportions of pupils in primary and lower secondary education who participate in sporting activities after school are similar at approximately 45%. Both categories of pupils (those in primary education and those in lower secondary education) help each other in class. (Figure 24. Primary pupils' perspective on school issues – Part 2)

Fig. 24. Primary pupils' perspective on various aspects of school life – Part 2

Primary pupils' perspective on various aspects of school life (n = 583) – Part 2



Children like the appearance of their school (89%) but do not feel completely safe at school or in playgrounds; only 74% of respondents in primary education agreed with this statement. The issue of unhealthy food at school is also raised by children in primary education, with only 62% of them believing that they eat healthily at school.

According to *Figure 25 (Perspective on work displayed in schools)*, **work done by children in primary education is displayed at school to a greater extent (72%) than work done by pupils in lower secondary education (50%).** The difference may be due to the fact that in primary education, pupils are given more encouragement to draw or undertake small projects, whereas in lower secondary education, the focus is on homework and understanding classes.

Fig. 25. Perspective on work displayed in schools

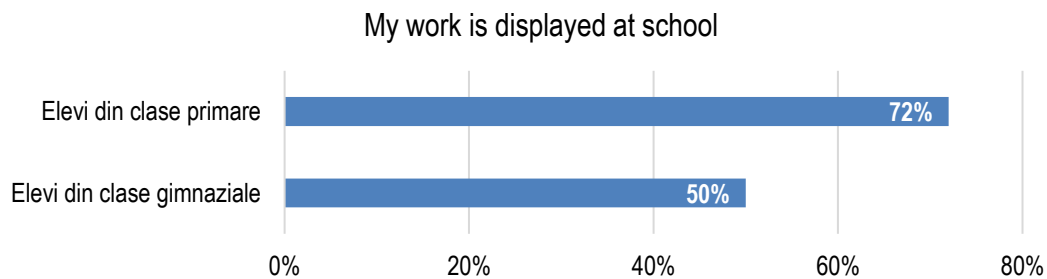


Table 18 shows the conclusions drawn from pupils' opinions on what they like and what they would like to change in their school. They enjoy interacting with their teachers and classmates.

Table 18. Pupils' opinions on what they like and what they would like to change at school

What do pupils like most at their school?	What would pupils like to change?
Teachers	Better facilities in the school (technology, sports areas, laboratory, teaching materials)
Playing with their classmates	Some children should behave better
What their classroom looks like	More extracurricular activities

Conclusions: These statements correlate positively with very high scores for the statements “I have good friends at school” (91.9%) and “I like my teachers” (97.4%). **The statements that received the highest scores by far (over 95%) from pupils in primary education are that they learn a lot of interesting things at school, including about environmental protection, that their teachers are nice and that they are happy at school. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the statements with low scores have to do with the quality of food and extracurricular activities.**

2.2.3. Parents' perception of school inclusion

Parents are quite satisfied with the schools in their communities; **83% of parent respondents believe that their child's school is the best one in the area and they also feel that they are a part of the school community.** 91% of parents feel that the school keeps them united and informed about everything that is going on. **It is felt that schools need to make some improvements in terms of cleanliness and attractiveness,** and only 62% of parents feel that toilets are clean and safe. Parents' involvement in their children's lessons and homework varies from school to school, or from class to class, and 61% of the respondents said that they had been asked to contribute to lessons. (*Figure 26. Parents' overall opinion of school*)

Fig. 26. Parents' overall opinion of school

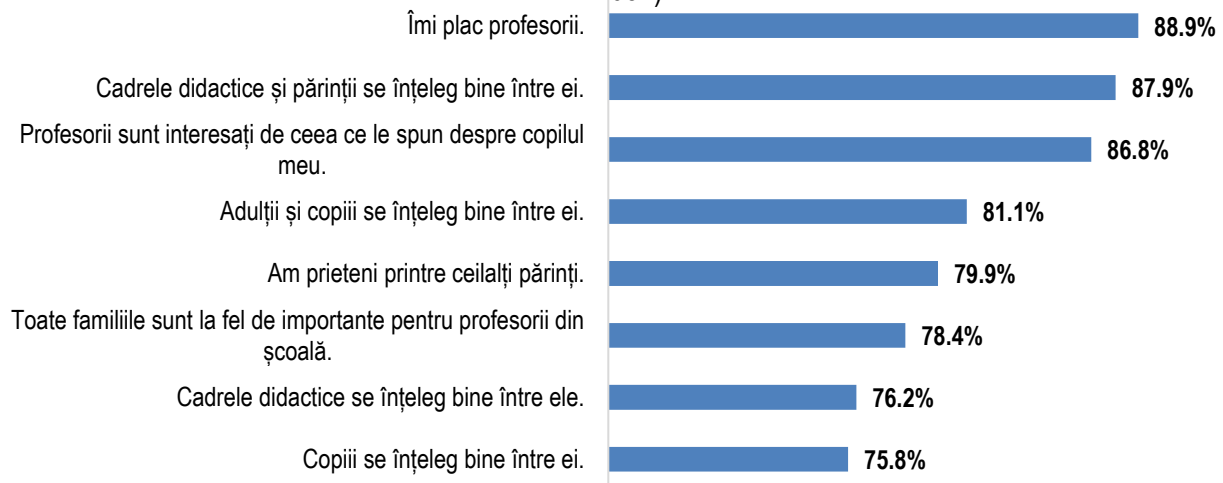
Parents' overall opinion of school (n = 1 087)



The majority of parents (89%) like their children's teachers at school. Furthermore, the relationships between parents and teachers appear to be good and effective in the opinion of 88% of parents. Some parents (80%) are friends with other parents and believe that all families are important for schoolteachers. In general, parents believe that teachers and children get on well with each other and their colleagues. (Figure 27. Interaction between parents, children and teachers from parents' point of view)

Fig. 27. Interaction between parents, children and teachers from parents' point of view

Interaction between parents, children and teachers (in the opinion of parents) (n = 1 087)

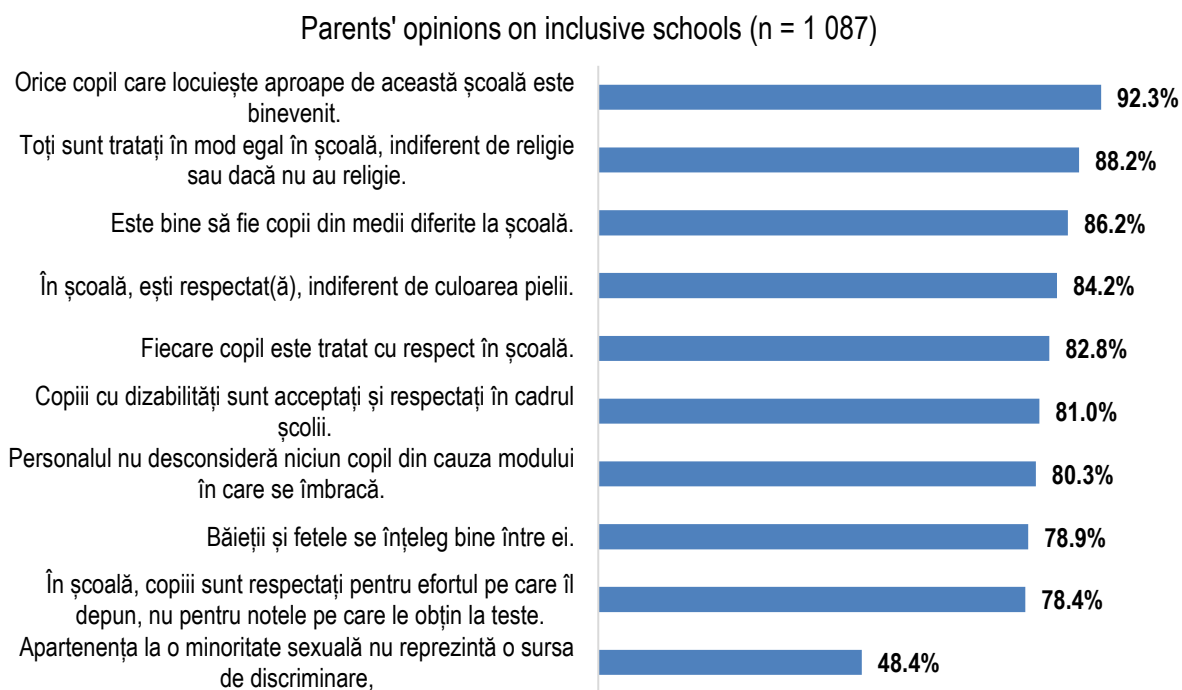


According to the data in Figure 28 (Opinion of parents on inclusive schools), parents consider that all children are welcome at school. **86% of the parents who responded feel that it is a good thing if a school is attended by children from different environments. Not all parents agree with the statement that all children are treated with respect; only 82% of them agreed with this statement. Most parents feel that there is no discrimination at school**

based on ethnic origin, religion, disability or clothing and appearance. An example of good practice that was identified through the focus group discussions is at Conțești School, where pupils say that there are no differences in the treatment of pupils based on ethnic origin, social status or disability. For pupils with disabilities, it is more difficult to “integrate”, but pupils and teachers are receptive and try to help them. With regard to bullying, pupils feel that this is not a major issue in their schools, although there are occasional situations that can be classed as bullying. Roma pupils are treated the same as other pupils at school and sometimes learn better than the majority of pupils, while non-Roma pupils try to help Roma pupils to “go beyond their limits”, and activities to promote Roma culture and identity have taken place in schools.

The opinion of parents with regard to discrimination based on sexual orientation is similar to that of pupils, as approximately 50% of the respondents agreed with the statement that membership of a sexual minority is not a source of discrimination, while the remainder disagreed with the statement or replied that they were unsure.

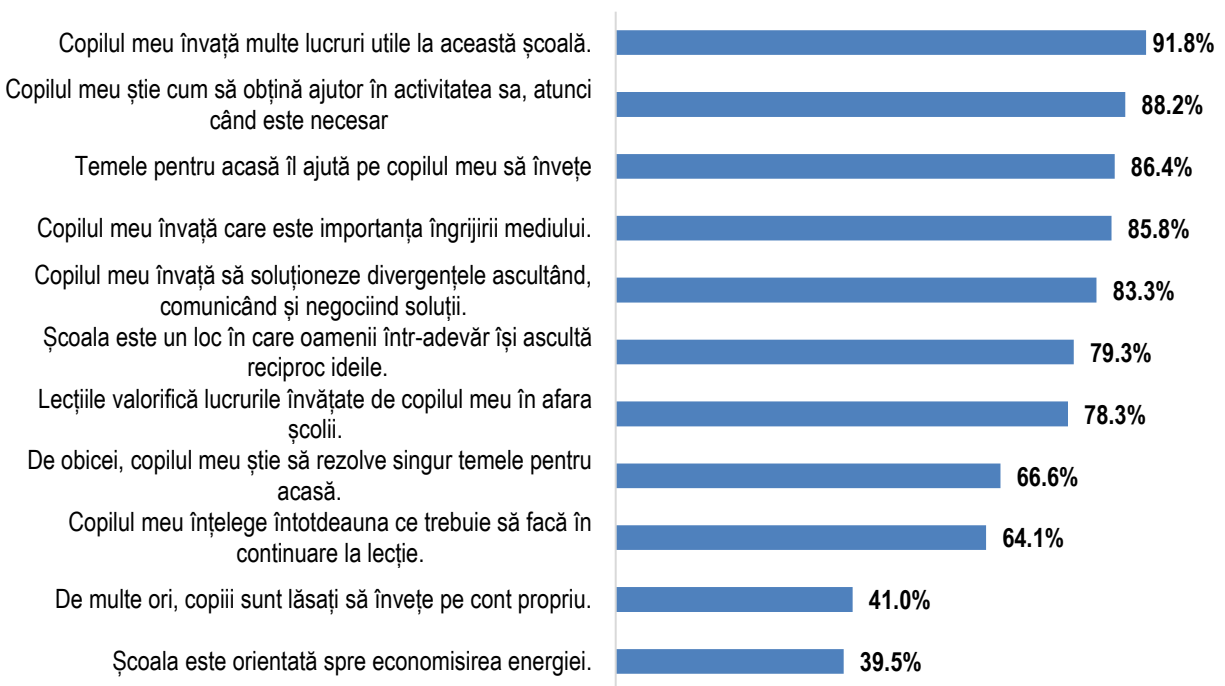
Fig. 28. Parents' opinions on inclusive schools



Parents are satisfied with what their children learn at school. In addition, 86% of them believe that homework is useful for the educational process and appreciate what their children learn outside school. Some parents (67%) feel that their children know how to do their homework without help. Only 40% of parents agree that schools are oriented towards saving energy. (Figure 29. Parents' opinion on teaching methods and the curriculum).

Fig. 29. Parents' opinions on teaching methods and the curriculum

Parents' opinions on teaching methods and the curriculum (n = 1 087)



School encourages non-violent behaviour and mutual understanding and listening. However, **aggressive behaviour continues to be a problem according to parents**; 57% of respondents disagree with or are undecided about the statement "Aggressive behaviour is not a problem at school". According to the focus group discussion results, conflicts do arise between pupils and sometimes become violent; the reasons for them are varied. Most often, they arise between pupils in lower years and those in higher years, with the latter trying to assert authority and create certain

hierarchies. Conflicts also occur between girls and boys. Whenever such conflicts occur, teachers intervene and try to find solutions. Pupils, parents and teachers believe it would be beneficial to have a school advisor or to have greater involvement of a school advisor where one is already present.

Some **parents believe that teachers have favourite children, leading to unequal assessment of children**. Only about 60% of parents agree with the statement that teachers are impartial when praising or punishing a pupil. **Parents confirm that the majority of children do not participate in extracurricular or sporting activities during lunch breaks or after school.**

According to the data in Table 19, the things that parents appreciate the most are teachers, discipline, respect within school and educational activities. At the same time, **parents would like toilets to be cleaner, teaching methods to be innovative and playgrounds, green spaces and sports fields to be set up.**

Table 19. Parents' opinions on what they like and what they would like to change at school

What do parents like most about school?	What would parents like to change?
Teachers	The toilets should be cleaner
Discipline and respect	Teaching methods should be more innovative
Educational activities	The playground, the sports field and more green spaces

In conclusion, over 90% of parents appreciate the efforts that are being made in the schools of origin in terms of teachers, relationships between pupils and teachers' skills. They are satisfied with the fact that the school informs them of many things and that all children in the community are welcome in a school where they learn many interesting and useful things.

The things that parents are dissatisfied with (agreement below 50%) are aggressive behaviour between children, the limited number of extracurricular activities, the fact that the school sends children home if they have behaved inappropriately and the fact that pupils do not always receive support so that they can learn or catch up.

2.2.4. Comparative analysis of school actors' perceptions of inclusion

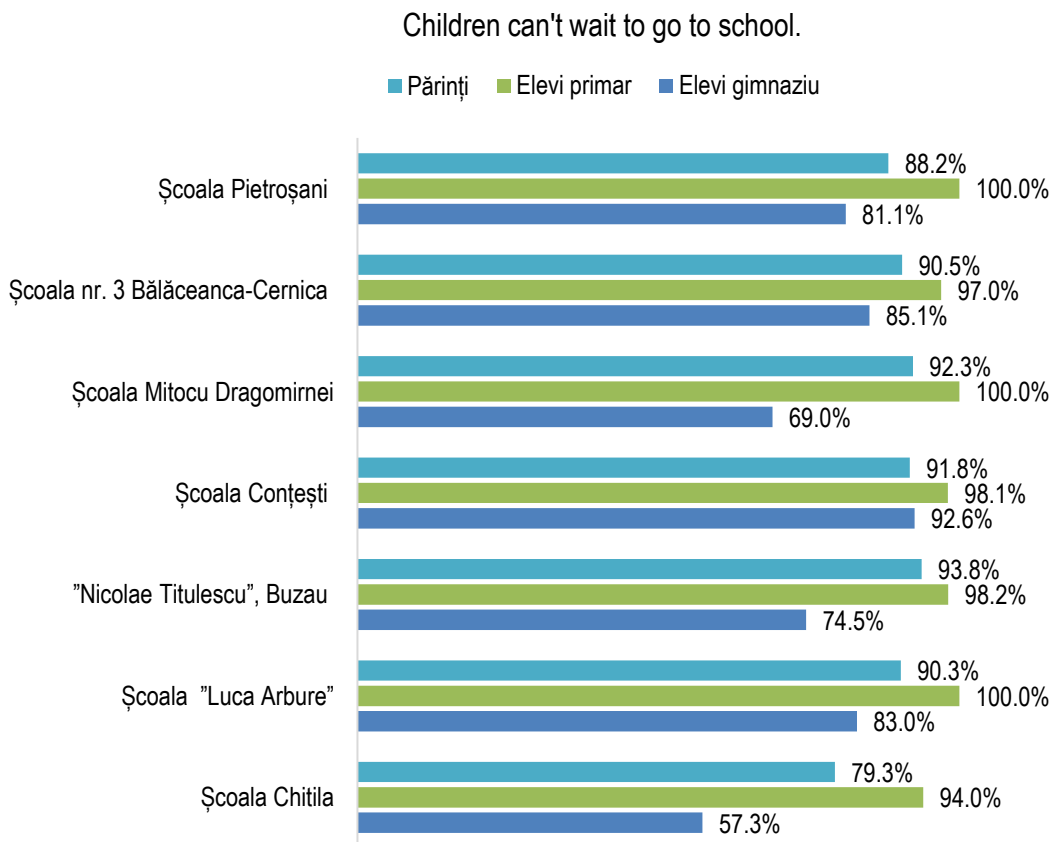
To compare the perceptions of the main school actors with regard to inclusion, a few indicators common to several questionnaires which cover matters of inclusive culture, policies and practices will be analysed.

- a. **Children cannot wait to go to school.** (*Figure 30. Perspectives on the statement "Children can't wait to go to school"*)

Pupils in primary education are more eager to go to school than those in lower secondary education. Primary pupils' agreement ranges between 94% and 100%, the maximum score, which was achieved by two schools: Pietroșani and

Luca Arbure. For pupils in lower secondary education, agreement with this statement (can't wait to go to school) ranges between 57% at Chitila School and 93% at Conțești School. Parents have a relatively similar perspective on children's desire to go to school, with the level of full agreement ranging from 79% at Chitila School to 94% at Buzău School.

Fig. 30. Perspectives on the statement "Children can't wait to go to school"



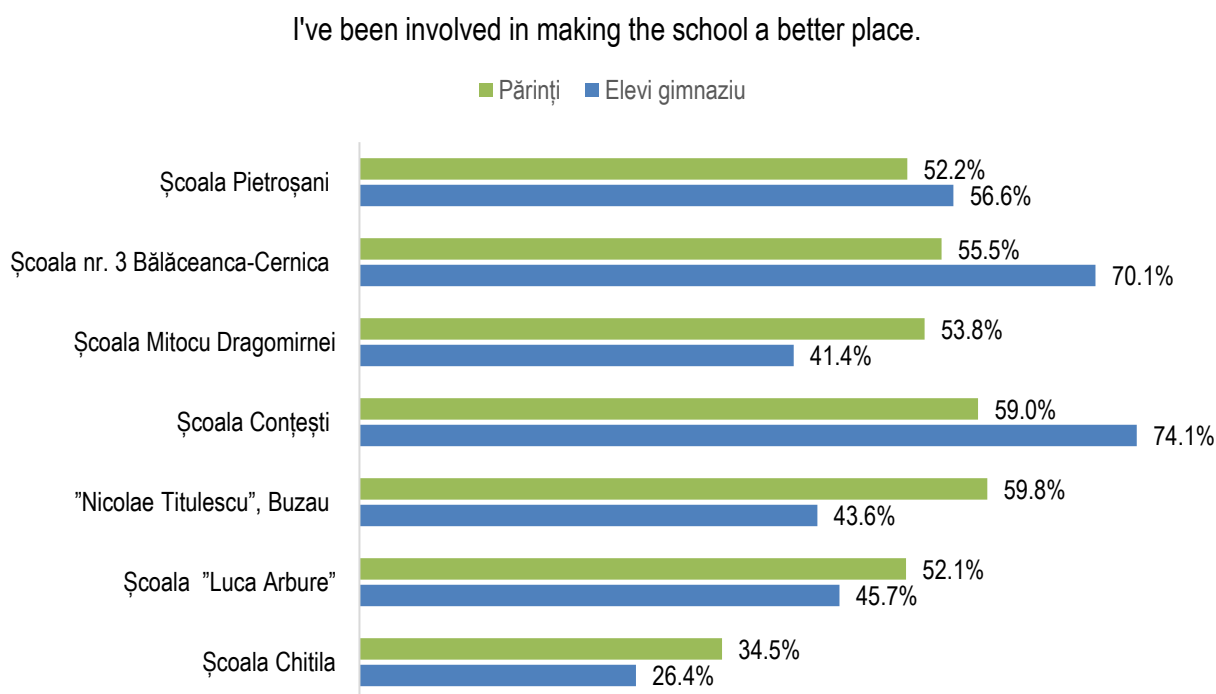
Young pupils' eagerness may also be due to the fact that the pandemic limited children's physical access to school and they were keen to familiarise themselves with their school in general.

The rankings in terms of agreement are the same at all of the schools, with the highest score coming from primary pupils, followed by parents and lower secondary pupils. The lowest scores originate from Chitila School; this may be due to the large size of this school (approximately 1 300 pupils), which consists of four buildings located several kilometres apart. In this situation, it is difficult to feel that one is part of a wider educational community. The proximity to Bucharest may be another explanation for the low scores, as children’s concerns and opportunities there are different from those of children in the countryside.

b. Involvement in making the school a better place. (Figure 31. Perspectives on the statement “I’ve been involved in making the school a better place”)

Pupils’ and parents’ involvement in making school a better place is limited according to their responses. The schools in Bălăceanca-Cernica and Conțești are perceived by over 70% of responding pupils as being keen to involve pupils in the process of improving them. However, only 26% of pupils at Chitila School felt that they were part of the process of changing their school for the better. Parents’ perceptions as to whether they are involved in transforming schools range from 35% at Chitila School to 60% at Buzău School. There is no general trend of greater involvement of primary or lower secondary pupils, but on average, lower secondary pupils appear to be less involved (51.1%) than the youngest pupils (52.3%).

Fig. 31. Perspectives on the statement “I’ve been involved in making the school a better place”

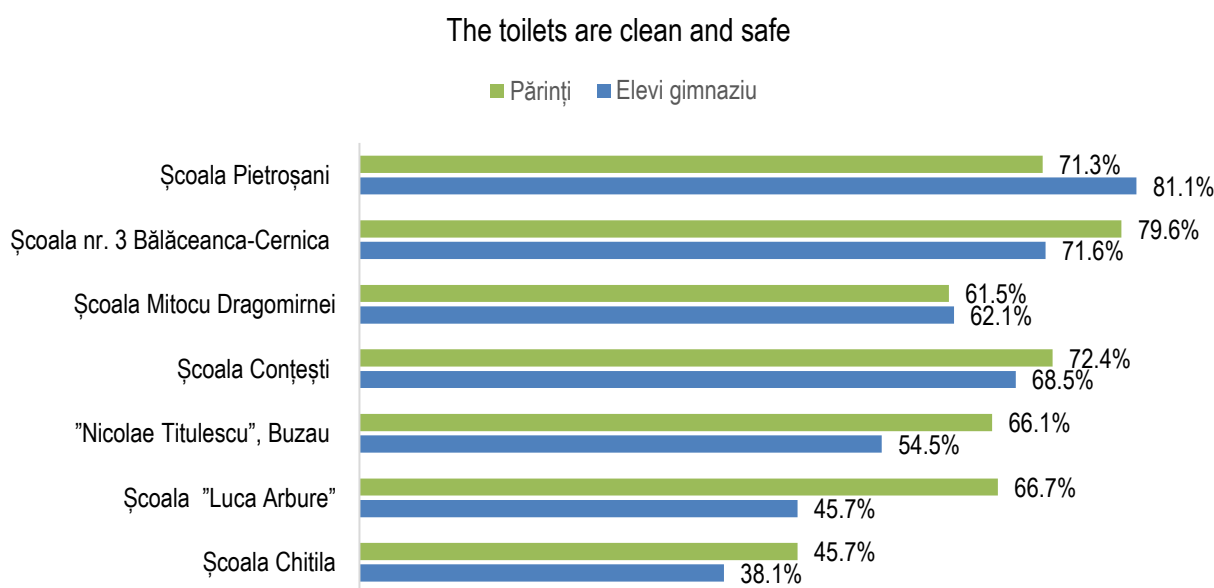


The low scores indicate that more attention needs to be paid to pupils and parents when important decisions affecting the whole school are taken. Consulting all actors and promoting their involvement in school life are useful ways of optimising the perception of pupils’ and parents’ roles in the process of transforming a school.

c. The toilets are clean and safe. (Figure 32. Perspectives on the statement “The toilets are clean and safe”)

Clean and safe toilets are not yet a reality for some pupils and parents. The pupils who are most satisfied with the toilets are those at Pietroșani School, where 80% are happy with them. The pupils who are least satisfied with the toilets are those in Chitila (where 38% agreed with this statement) and those at Luca Arbure School (46%). The satisfaction level of parents with regard to the safety and cleanliness of toilets ranges from 46% (agreements) in Chitila to 80% at Bălăceanca-Cernica School.

Fig. 32. Perspectives on the statement “The toilets are clean and safe”

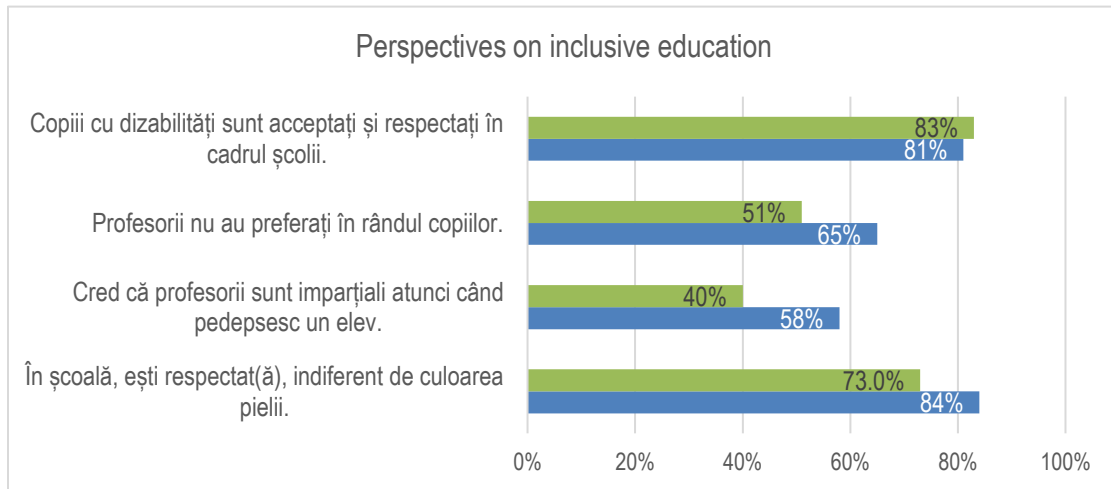


Parents appear to be the most satisfied. However, there is a very big difference between the perceptions of parents and those of lower secondary pupils at the same school. For example, at Luca Arbure School, the difference is nearly 20 percentage points, which indicates that **pupils have higher expectations than parents do**.

d. Inclusive education. (Figure 33. Perspectives on inclusive education)

Children with disabilities appear to be accepted and respected in schools in the opinion of primary pupils (83% agreed with the statement) and parents (81%). A smaller proportion of lower secondary pupils (73%) consider that people are respected in school regardless of their skin colour. Both parents and pupils consider that teachers have favourite children and are not objective when assessing or punishing a child.

Fig. 33. Perspectives on inclusive education

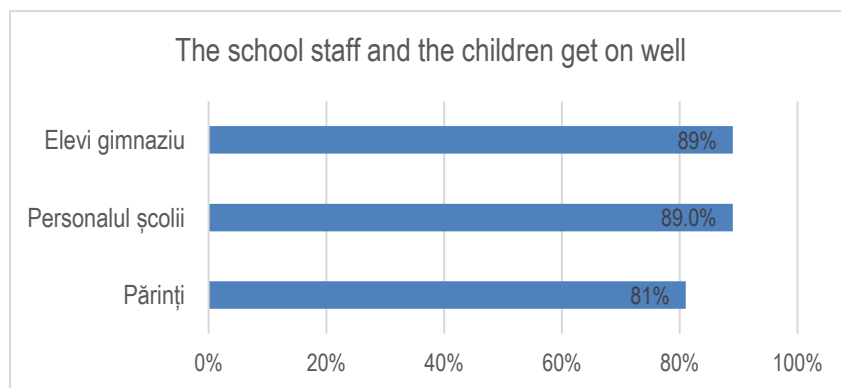


Here, too, parents give higher scores than lower secondary pupils, which indicates that older pupils have developed their ability to think critically, have revised their expectations and have the ability to analyse things and express their opinions.

e. School staff and children get on well with each other. (Figure 34. Perspectives on the statement “The school staff and the children get on well”)

89% of pupils and school staff consider that they get on well with each other. Parents are less optimistic about interaction between teachers and children, with only 81% of respondents agreeing with the statement that adults and children get on well with each other.

Fig. 34. Perspectives on the statement “The school staff and the children get on well”



2.2.5. Conclusions regarding the fostering of a culture of inclusion at the seven schools

There is an overall trend of agreeing that schools are organisations that make efforts to promote inclusion. The indicators with the highest rate of agreement expressed by each category of respondents relate to:

School staff: agreement over 95%

- Staff members work well together;
- School staff know children's living conditions and adapt education to them;
- ***The school encourages respect for human rights (highest score: 98.4%);***
- The school promotes common inclusive values;
- Inclusion is viewed from the perspective of better school participation;
- Non-violent interaction and conflict resolution are encouraged in the school;
- Every new arrival at the school is helped to integrate;
- Teaching staff attend professional development courses on diversity;
- Children study ICT (information and communications technology);
- Learning activities encourage the participation of all children.

Primary pupils: agreement over 95%

- ***I learn many interesting things at school (highest score: 98.1%);***
- I like my teachers;
- I learn about environmental protection;
- I am happy at school.

Lower secondary pupils: There were no scores over 95%. The highest score is 93.6%, so we will consider agreement levels of 85-93%:

- I have good friends at school;
- Pupils with disabilities are accepted and respected;
- If I have problems in class, the teacher or someone else helps me;
- ***I have learned about the importance of human rights (highest score: 93.6%);***
- We learn to respect the planet and protect the environment;
- I learn many things at school.

Parents: agreement between 88% and 97%

- The school informs me about everything that is going on;
- I like the teachers;
- All children in the community are welcome;
- All children are treated equally, regardless of their religion;
- My child learns many interesting things at school;
- ***Children should not insult each other (highest score: 97%);***
- Teachers pay attention to pupil absenteeism.

It is therefore clear that schools are places that encourage respect for human rights and our planet, positive relationships between pupils and between them and teachers, openness to diversity and school participation for all children. Interesting things are learned at school and children are treated equally.

In particular, respondents appreciate co-operation and communication between the main education actors, respect and conscientiousness in school, teachers' skills combined with the quality of teaching activities, and the appearance of classrooms in schools of origin.

However, in terms of inclusion, there are also things that are less well known or areas where school actors have limited experience. They relate to:

School staff: agreement less than 75%

- Staff and pupils are aware of the different ways in which gender can be expressed;
- Schools support continuity of education for children in the public care system;
- **High expectations are set for all pupils (lowest score: 71.4%).**

Primary pupils: agreement less than 72%

- **I sometimes participate in extracurricular activities before or after classes (lowest score: 48%);**
- Children treat each other nicely;
- My work is displayed at school.

Lower secondary pupils: agreement less than 50%

- Pupils avoid offending each other;
- Membership of a sexual minority is not a reason for discrimination;
- **Teachers are impartial when they reward (46.2%) or punish (lowest score: 39.6%) a child;**
- I always know what I have to do in classes;
- When a pupil interrupts a lesson, others try to calm him/her down;
- I participate in extracurricular activities during breaks, at lunchtime or after classes.

Parents: agreement less than 50%

- Membership of a sexual minority is not a reason for discrimination;
- The school is concerned with reducing its energy consumption;
- After classes or at lunchtime, during breaks, my child participates in extracurricular activities;
- Aggressive behaviour is not a problem in the school;
- **The school sends children home if they behave inappropriately (lowest score: 37.1%).**

In conclusion, schools' limitations in terms of inclusion relate to possible discrimination due to membership of a sexual minority, a low level of pupil involvement in extracurricular/out-of-school activities and aggressive behaviour by pupils.

Respondents are less satisfied with school facilities and would like to see an improvement in them (laboratories, digital equipment, smart boards, green spaces, sports fields, toilets) and the quality of teaching materials; they would also

like better co-operation with parents, better behaviour on the part of some children and a larger number of extracurricular/out-of-school activities.

Analysis of the responses given through the questionnaires leads to **a few general findings:**

- In schools with a larger number of pupils, there are a wide range of opinions and the percentage levels of agreement with the statements in the questionnaires tend to be lower;
- In small schools, there is a bigger tendency to agree with the indicators in the questionnaires because the main actors are more involved in school life;
- Lower secondary pupils tend to be the most critical and express dissatisfaction to a greater extent than parents or primary pupils;
- Primary pupils tend to be most satisfied with what school offers them because they are more attached to their classmates and class teacher, and their "school world" is limited;
- School staff members are the least critical of all categories of respondents, possibly because they are attached to their school and have an in-depth knowledge of the efforts that are being made in it.

2.3. School governance and development of strategic management

The INSCHOOL project supported the development of the schools' institutional capacity to promote strategic management and encourage effective leadership. Although the schools' management teams have significant experience of education management, with just one exception, a need for systematic support in this area was identified straight away. **In addition to other important requirements, the promotion of a truly inclusive school culture also requires a high level of management and leadership skills.**

The project activities thus sought to influence the governance of the schools within the INSCHOOL network directly and to increase their institutional capacity for effective management. The project as a whole sought to develop the management teams' skills through applied/practical activities and to create real learning contexts in which learning *through* and *for*, rather than learning *about*, is essential. **The schools were helped to analyse and review their institutional development plans (IDPs) and operational plans (OPs) through which their long-term development visions can be put into practice.**

Another principle promoted by the project is the promotion of **participatory management, whereby management is collective, comradely and transparent.** Each school involved a co-ordinating committee made up of members of teaching staff dedicated to school development projects and other relevant representatives. These efforts were supported by the education advisor and a facilitator. The strategic document review was based on the INSCHOOL tools with systematic consultation of teaching and non-teaching staff and representatives of parents and pupils.

Another real learning context for the school teams was the INSCHOOL grants, for which it was necessary to document support requirements for activities regarded as priorities at each school during the initial implementation of the Index for Inclusion methodology (March-October 2018) and to create a funding request and execute a budget. The applications⁷ for INSCHOOL grants were put together on the basis of the priorities and vision of the school promoted in the final IDPs adopted by each school.

The experience of learning gained by implementing activities funded by INSCHOOL grants and other activities and the experience of online learning gained in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a review of the IDPs in the summer of 2020.

2.3.1. Fostering an inclusive school culture

In order to document systematically the way in which the management teams developed their strategic management skills, **data collected with the aid of three case studies** carried out in March 2021 at the "Prof. Ion Vişoiu" School in Chitila, Conţeşti School and the "Nicolae Titulescu" School in Buzău **were analysed.** These schools were selected because they were representative in terms of **important criteria such as school size, type of area, qualifications and turnover of teaching staff, the extent to which all actors were involved in the project activities, and so on.**

The management teams at all three of these schools indicated that the INSCHOOL project offered a **real context for reflection and reappraisal for their organisations** in terms of both their vision and their mission. For example, at

⁷ INSCHOOL 1, INSCHOOL 2 and COVID Emergency Grant

Chitila School, the mission, promoted values, targets and strategic choices aim to create a school that is closely connected to the community and the world in which future alumni will live.

The management teams are very aware of the constant need to stimulate and promote co-operation and good communication between teachers and between teachers and pupils or parents. The focus group interviews highlighted the fact that a smaller school makes it easier for pupils to get to know each other and for pupils and teachers to get to know each other. In addition, the way in which Roma pupils interact with classmates and teachers and situations in which discrimination can occur are monitored more effectively.

At the “**Nicolae Titulescu**” School in Buzău, it is highlighted that the organisation fosters an open atmosphere characterised by dynamism and receptiveness to change, and the relationships between members of the teaching staff are cordial. Management **has been flexible, stimulating and based on values** such as belief in people, their creative abilities and their self-control. The head teacher works well together with staff members, takes their suggestions into account, takes decisions to mitigate failings reported in the activity of the school and tries to create an emotional climate that is based on harmony, balance, transparency, responsibility and fairness.

The activities implemented in the INSCHOOL project aroused the interest of all of the actors involved and led to the development of an inclusive school environment. Chitila School highlights the participation of a very large number of pupils (over 90% of the 1 300) in the project activities, including those in disadvantaged groups (Roma, with special educational needs, from troubled homes, on low incomes, etc.).

The teaching staff at the schools that participated in the focus group interviews feel involved in the educational process and have faith in the school organisation within which they work. They know how to work as part of a team and they show respect to each other, devotion to the children, devotion to their profession, enthusiasm and a desire to prove themselves. Through participatory management, communication between teaching staff, between teaching staff and pupils and between teaching staff, non-teaching staff and the management was stimulated so that every member of the community could be an active and responsible participant in school life.

The management teams highlighted the **role of training programmes in forming close relationships** between the main actors who contribute to school life, especially by cultivating teachers’ abilities in the area of inclusive/intercultural education. **Exchanges of experience with all of the schools involved in the first cycle of implementation of the INSCHOOL project**, which enabled good practices in relation to the values of social inclusion to be shared, also contributed to the development of inclusive school culture. These activities contribute to a deeper understanding of the differences between pupils as a resource for the learning process and stronger group cohesion between school staff in order to foster an inclusive culture within the school and value and make use of different life experiences. The fact that many teachers live in rural areas means that interaction between them and pupils or the latter’s parents extends beyond the school gates. On the other hand, turnover of teaching staff and teachers who commute pose challenges for management teams as they adversely affect the outcomes of activities intended to develop inclusive culture.

At **Chitila School**, the training courses (inclusive/intercultural education) and team building exercise for teaching staff (over 60 nursery school teachers, primary school teachers, teachers, teachers at the beginning of their career and substitute teachers, with or without teaching experience) contributed directly to the cultivation of teachers’ inclusive education abilities, both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities, creating a context for understanding the differences between pupils as a resource for the learning process. Equally, **these activities led to stronger group cohesion between school staff in order to develop an inclusive culture within the school** and value and make

use of different life experiences. The inclusive approach to teaching and learning led to a change in the entrenched beliefs of teaching staff, who adapted their educational approach to the different needs of pupils and used non-formal methods in their teaching and extracurricular activity. The relationship between teachers and pupils improved noticeably. Peer mentoring also took place between teachers, with young teachers helping their older colleagues to develop their IT skills, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another important aspect of the management teams' vision is activities that have a direct impact on communication and co-operation between pupils in the same class and other people. One of these activities is peer mentoring, whereby more able pupils help those whose results fall short of expectations with their homework. Another activity involved pupils in primary education going to nursery school and participating in activities by working with, relating to and helping pre-school children.

Another priority for the management teams was fostering a relationship of respect and mutual support with pupils' parents. **The participation of parents in activities initiated by the school led to acceptance of and respect for different traditions and life experiences and gave positive support to education in a spirit of respect for inclusive values.** Co-operation with parents was constantly monitored during all activities, and they provided support to their children. For example, at Conțești School, over 250 parents participated in the activities organised as part of the project, which means that 50% of the children's families sent at least one representative to these activities. Over the last few years, there was a 25% increase in parents' participation in school-organised events.

At both of the schools that participated in the focus group interviews, there is a high level of awareness of the importance of sharing a common framework of values in relation to inclusion across the whole school community. For example, **topics relating to children's rights are addressed during counselling classes and contexts that give pupils an opportunity to express their ideas are encouraged** (pupils at Conțești School created a 40-metre mural depicting children's rights in cartoon form). Another important item on schools' decision-making agenda is class-level and school-level strategies to maximise the potential of every pupil regardless of background. For example, various support activities were organised during the second cycle of implementation of INSCHOOL in order to reduce absenteeism and the number of pupils who dropped out, including by promoting extracurricular/out-of-school activities.

All representatives of the management teams highlight the fact that Roma pupils are actively involved in every action that is organised and conducted at class or school level. For example, at Conțești School, every pupil participated in at least one of the activities organised through the INSCHOOL project ("Pupil counselling activities", "Running a remedial education programme for pupils", "Pupil mentoring programme for pupils' lessons", "One trip to the theatre for every pupil", "Combating bullying in schools", "Celebrating diversity", "Meeting former pupils", "Interactive activities with parents", "Suggestion box", etc.).

Chitila School ran projects or activities in partnership with different NGOs, foundations and community representatives which focused on inclusion, prevention of bullying and non-discrimination and were aimed at pupils in all social categories. Pupils worked in teams, online or face to face and formed relationships of support and mutual understanding ("County anti-violence forum", "Let's go to the theatre", "Together for the community", "Education is your chance!", "It takes everyone", "Giving pupils responsibility through mentoring", "Attitudes", "Autumn fair", "International Roma Day", "Without hate, with tolerance"). During these activities, pupils adapted their role playing to hypothetical situations of bullying, violence or discrimination and took decisions in teams to solve problems. At school level, there is the Pupils' Council which is made up of representatives of all classes/primary pupils and lower secondary pupils and debates real-life situations at the school that relate to the proposed topics. Class councils, which are made up of

teaching staff, a class teacher/primary school teacher, a representative of parents and a representative of pupils, deal with the issues of bullying, violence, inappropriate behaviour and discrimination at school level. Their aim is not to punish or label, but rather to resolve and improve this behaviour.

With regard to the school environment, **all of the schools indicate that they have made significant progress with the aid of resources obtained through INSCHOOL grants.** Activities to protect and sustain a clean environment are organised during registration periods or extracurricular activities. For example, Conțești School has begun working with an IT company to run a project in which rubbish bins in the school are being fitted with sensors and speakers so that the words “thank you” can be heard when someone throws rubbish into them.

2.3.2. School-level policies that are favourable to inclusion

The three schools at which the case studies were carried out have pupils in all social categories: Roma pupils, pupils with special educational needs and pupils from very poor families, and the values of inclusive education are shared by all members of the school community. With the support of the INSCHOOL project, the management teams are paying particular attention to new arrivals at the schools. At Conțești School, there is a “reception committee” in each class that helps new pupils to fit in by giving them information and advice so that they can adjust as quickly as possible. At the school in Buzău, everyone (pupils, school staff) who is new is given advice by the management team, mentors for different cycles of education, class teachers, etc. At Chitila School, a personalised “Professional Development Plan” is put in place for every new teacher. Young teachers are guided and advised by experienced colleagues, assisted during classes and given plenty of support so that they do not feel like outsiders. Integration processes for non-teaching staff are also useful in supporting new hires. Children who enrol in a preparatory class or are transferred to a school are accepted without discrimination as long as they live within the locality. Parents are invited to visit the school and to talk to their children’s prospective primary teachers or class teachers before their children are enrolled or transferred. New pupils are taken and introduced to the classes to which they are assigned by the head teacher or the teacher on duty.

In all three organisations, the school and its values are promoted every year on a School Day and an Open Day when there are activities and workshops that are open to anyone who wants to observe or obtain information.

With regard to infrastructure, except during the crisis period, recreation areas (green spaces in front of schools, school grounds) are open to everyone at all times. Pupils have planted trees and looked after them in randomly created teams. There is free access to corridors, classrooms and toilets provided that safety measures are complied with.

Measures have been taken in the schools to make it easier for everyone to access learning environments by adjusting doorways so as to reduce the gaps between them and the floors of classrooms. Pupils with disabilities affecting their movement are put in groups whose classroom is on the ground floor so that they can move around safely. In addition, a toilet for people with disabilities has been provided at Conțești School through the INSCHOOL project.

Teaching staff were trained through the INSCHOOL project on parental education, and up until the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, as part of the same project, joint activities for pupils, parents and teachers took place in all of the schools. Parents are actively involved in the life of their children’s schools, and the methods by which schools inform all parents of matters of common interest in order to optimise the educational process or obtain the necessary support from parents include talks attended by parents and non-formal activities that are pursued with them.

During the coronavirus pandemic, schools established separate access procedures and routes for pupils studying on every level of the building. They also developed procedures for communicating with parents and giving them access to school grounds (especially for parents of pre-school children and pupils in primary education).

As part of the INSCHOOL project, Conțești School held a “Celebrating Diversity Week”, an event that will take place annually in future. During the activities that took place during it, representatives of different ethnic groups within the locality participated alongside pupils belonging to these minorities and pupils belonging to the majority group in cultural sessions during which they presented their histories, traditions and cultures. Also, representatives of different faiths within the locality attended meetings during which they talked about their faiths, sang songs and recited poems.

The involvement of local and national authorities is important in ensuring that the learning resources needed by every pupil are provided. For example, at Buzău School, IT equipment was provided through the INSCHOOL project with funding from Buzău Municipal Council and tablets were supplied by the Ministry of Education. The fact that teaching activities took place at this school (both curricular activities, including classes, and extracurricular activities) in a space set up especially for this purpose on the school grounds, outdoors (green space), in the spring, summer and autumn (when the weather permitted) must also be noted.

Inclusive school policies create a friendly environment for the school community. The diversity of pupils is respected at school and special support is given to children with different needs. All of the three participating schools conduct focus group interviews during which personalised intervention plans that take account of the individual circumstances and needs of each child are put in place for pupils with SEN (special educational needs). These personalised intervention plans have been useful during face-to-face classes, but it is difficult to gauge their usefulness online; this disadvantaged category has been hit hardest by the pandemic as pupils with special educational needs are unable to use technology independently.

These inclusive school policies are supported by projects, school and out-of-school activities and training courses. Teaching staff attended training courses/workshops to develop their cognitive abilities and skills in relation to inclusion so that they could gain a better understanding of the cultural and social differences of some of their pupils and their various educational or emotional needs. To this end, almost all of the teaching staff at the schools in Conțești and Buzău were involved in training courses as part of the INSCHOOL project in the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years.

2.3.3. Inclusive practices

The schools’ management teams highlight the need for support in developing a relevant CDS (curriculum decided by the school) offering that focuses on pupils’ interests and needs. As yet, pupils’ and parents’ wishes in relation to CDS are not being fully respected. At the same time, **the options offered are very often mono-disciplinary**, with no attempt being made to take a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach. There is also a **trend of offering optional courses out of inertia under arrangements that already exist** (which are perpetuated from one year to the next) without attempting to update them constantly and tailor them to the specific circumstances of each class.

However, in recent years, an attempt has been made to provide CDS in the form of activities organised during “A Different Kind of School” week or extracurricular activities pursued as part of projects run by the school which lead, as far as possible, to the development of an inclusive environment. For the schools in the project, extracurricular activities are catalysts for group cohesion, teamwork and mutual support. For example, Chitila School ran an “English Language

Programme for Youth” (ELPY) for Roma children, mainly from families on low incomes, who wanted to improve their English. “The joy of giving” was aimed at children in a children’s home, and pupils belonging to vulnerable groups at the school got involved in the project and enjoyed being able to give some of the little that they had to others who were less fortunate than themselves.

Conțești School ran an activity entitled “One trip to the theatre for every pupil in their lifetime” in which all pupils at the school (including those in nursery school education) attended theatre shows suitable for their age group and familiarised themselves with this art form; for most of them, it was the first such trip in their lives. For the management teams, extracurricular activities are the ones that contribute the most to developing an inclusive environment (in terms of relationships between pupils, relationships between pupils and teaching staff and relationships between parents and teaching staff), but it is extremely difficult to identify contexts in which they can take place, apart from “A Different Kind of School”.

At Chitila School, the most attractive workshop held as an INSCHOOL project activity was “Art for everyone”. Drama/personal development and dance classes captivated participants and increased their self-confidence, stimulated their creative potential, mobilised them and hence attracted children to the school, with many of those involved being members of disadvantaged groups (40 children, 10 parents). Subsequently, there was a fall in absenteeism and the number of those at risk of dropping out, and opportunities to make progress at school were created for some beneficiaries. Relationships between pupils, which were a little slow to develop at first, became flexible and tolerant, with many barriers to integration being broken down one by one. Children worked together harmoniously during the activities on School Days (presentation of traditional costumes, traditional dance, short pieces of theatre), on International Roma Day, during workshops when models were made for the non-formal space, during the sharing of experience with fellow pupils in advanced school years (“Let’s grow together”) and when the image of an inclusive school was promoted in the magazine “Everyone at school”. The involvement of the Pupils’ Council in decision-making consolidated its participation in school governance within a short time.

To improve pupils’ results in national assessments or assessments at the end of the school year, remedial activities were organised as part of the INSCHOOL project for pupils in primary and lower secondary education. To this end, primary teachers and teachers who teach subjects in which national examinations are sat ran weekly preparation classes for pupils who were weak at reading, writing and arithmetic. Teachers participated in them actively and class teachers and the management of the school enabled as many pupils as possible to attend them through advice meetings with their parents.

Importantly, these activities have gained recognition and support in national education policies. The “School After School” national programme began for pupils at INSCHOOL schools recently. This is a remedial schooling programme in which, according to the management teams, children “will be taught how to learn”.

As a result of the support strategies, **the results in the National Assessment in 2020 were better.** For example, at Conțești School, for the first time in the school’s history, more than half of pupils achieved marks above 5 in mathematics, so the school’s pass rate was higher than the county rate and close to the national rate. In addition, the results in this year’s national mock examinations are encouraging. However, there are still pupils who are at major risk of exclusion. For example, at Chitila School, as a result of the pandemic and the period when teaching took place solely online, 122 children did not pass Semester 1. **The main reasons are a lack of equipment, reduced independence in learning and less support from families.** Absenteeism and the risk that pupils will drop out thus continue to be challenges for many of these pupils.

It has been indicated that support staff (school mediator, school counsellor, speech therapist, etc.) are extremely important for the management teams at all three schools, in a context where pupils' support needs are very great. For example, the management team at the school in Buzău highlights the large number of pupils who come to see the school counsellor and the fall in the quality of the services provided to them as a result.

The school mediator improved communication with parents of Roma pupils and other people too, and the mediator's visits to the community increased the number of pupils who were present during the remedial activities that were arranged. At the same time, the activities involving parents (some of which were run as a result of the involvement in INSCHOOL, e.g. themed meetings, courses run with the involvement of parents) increased the amount of respect and co-operation between the school and families, with parents finding out the teachers' point of view (everything the school does is justified by pupils' best interests) and teaching staff finding out directly from parents the difficulties that the latter have in general or in relation to their children.

During the coronavirus pandemic period, pupils have been involved in the educational process online, with teaching staff using interactive and innovative methods that led to a higher average attendance level than the one seen at county level (approximately 80-85% of pupils). During the pandemic and the online teaching period, the teaching staff at Conțești School did not have any difficulties in organising and delivering lessons. Since 2015, Conțești School has benefited from a project that has received EUR 20 000 of financing from a multinational company. Through this project, a laptop, a video projector and speakers have been purchased for every classroom and the speed of the whole school's Internet connection has been improved considerably. Since 2015, therefore, the teaching staff have been able to use digital textbooks and other digital aids.

At the same time, the school's teaching staff have gone on courses enabling them to deliver a skills-based curriculum in class and courses that promoted intercultural education (advice sessions run for teaching staff as part of the INSCHOOL pandemic intervention, the course run by Agenția Împreună and courses offered by Teleorman CCD [Teacher Training Centre]) or courses that related to intervention methods for children with special educational needs (advice sessions run for teaching staff and the dedicated course run during the first cycle of implementation of the INSCHOOL project).

However, the management teams highlighted the fact that the impact of INSCHOOL was adversely affected by the pandemic, which influenced the points of reference for inclusive education. Cultural, family and social divides became more marked and current learning needs and new challenges caused the Romanian education system to malfunction for a time. In the summer of 2020, the focus was put on developing the IT skills of both pupils and teaching staff and on providing psychological and emotional counselling to children and parents from deprived environments. The current school year (September 2020 – June 2021) is once again in deadlock, with many pupils having to learn online and sometimes lacking devices or sufficient income for their day-to-day lives. As a result, it is not certain that their full potential will be tapped into or that they will be able to develop certain life skills given the uncertainty surrounding access to high-quality inclusive education.

Although opportunities to work together with other representatives of the community vary greatly between schools within the INSCHOOL network, all of the management teams indicate that these ties are important. For example, the school in Buzău continues to co-operate constantly with the local authorities that are involved in the administrative side of the educational process and initiates letter-based correspondence in relation to a wide range of specific issues: National Drugs Agency – Buzău Regional Office, Community Police, Neighbourhood Police, "Vasile Voiculescu"

County Library, Buzău Youth Foundation, County Sport Directorate, Directorate-General for Social Work and Child Protection, Town Hall, Local Municipal Council, etc.

Chapter 3: INSCHOOL: next steps – link with INSCHOOL 3

3.1. Main outcomes achieved as documented by research data

The main outcomes of the pilot phase of the joint European Union and Council of Europe project “Inclusive schools: Making a difference for Roma children” (INSCHOOL) can be summed up as follows:

- The schools’ **institutional development plans (IDPs) and operational plans (OPs)** were effectively improved and revised with support from INSCHOOL education advisors and by a participatory method based on the Index for Inclusion methodology. These two tools (IDP and OP) have become the *de facto* action plans at the schools for long periods and have a broader scope than that of the financial support offered by INSCHOOL. The priorities and activities included in IDPs and supported by OPs, including through small grants supported through the INSCHOOL project, were designed from an inclusive perspective and took into account the contribution from all categories of stakeholders at school level (teaching and non-teaching staff, children, parents, etc.).
- Committed involvement of teaching staff in the project methodology, financing activities, including attendance at national workshops, training for teaching staff, sharing of experience; **demanding though it was for schools, the intense implementation made a significant contribution to improving relationships between members of teaching staff.**
- The **training of teaching staff** offered through the INSCHOOL project was targeted at significant proportions of teaching staff at each school (20-25 participants per training session, making up nearly 100% of teaching staff at some schools), **ensuring cohesion between teaching staff in terms of their vision and understanding of inclusion**; the training offered by INSCHOOL was interactive and offered responses to the specific problems identified by the schools, which made this activity very much in demand, as indicated in the sections above. At least 44% of all teaching staff (contracted in the six schools) participated in at least one INSCHOOL activity.
- The sharing of experience between teachers contributed to the creation of a community of practice where **teachers not only learned from the experience of other schools in similar contexts, but also transferred the knowledge they gained to specific actions in their schools.** All of the schools’ heads underline that **the immediate outcomes of the project are an improvement in interpersonal relationships between teachers, between teachers and pupils, between pupils and between the school and parents.**
- School events, awareness-raising, school trips, talks and debates about Roma history and culture and activities involving parents were among the types of activities that were included by schools in their funding proposals and had a significant impact on the school environment, despite the short implementation period; **consequently, the ambitious programming put pressure on the co-ordinating groups and especially teachers, whose commitment to developing the project was admirable.**
- The schools approach activities in priority intervention areas in a more organised manner: **a fall in the number of pupils dropping out, an increase in pupils’ participation and an improvement in school results, especially for those pupils at major risk of exclusion.** Within this framework, all of the schools report that **mentoring between pupils** (peer mentoring) has been a success. This activity not only yields better results for both categories of children but also improves relationships between them, leading to the development of an educational environment that stimulates the active participation of pupils in classes and other types of activities. This outcome is supported by the fact that there has been a fall in the total number of pupils dropping out across the entire population of pupils, although it has increased the proportion of Roma pupils who drop

out; there has been an improvement in the proportion of children who attend nursery school among both Roma children and children belonging to the majority ethnic group; **at four of the seven schools, the proportion of pupils achieving marks above 5 in the National Assessment has risen.**

- **Teachers** appreciate the good co-operation between school staff members, **the support given to inclusion, respect for human rights and effective communication between the main education actors.** A large proportion of members of teaching staff at the schools within the INSCHOOL network have participated in inclusion-related training activities and now put the tools and methods they have learned about to use in their classes. **Learning activities thus encourage the participation of all children,** who are actively involved in the process of their own learning, and take the needs of each one of them into account.
- **The things most appreciated by pupils and parents** are friendships within a group of pupils, the approach to the topic of human rights in school, the reliability of the support they receive from teachers, the skills of teaching staff and the curriculum, which is tailored to inclusion.
- In general, at the schools within the INSCHOOL network, pupils and parents do not notice any differences in treatment due to ethnicity, socio-economic status, school results, religion, etc.; however, there are occasional situations where prejudices and labelling arise between pupils and between parents.
- Pupils like the appearance of their schools, their teachers and what they learn. The relationship between pupils, teachers and parents is very good, and it improved during the period of online activities, with each group gaining a clearer awareness of the involvement and responsibilities of the others.
- The schools developed mechanisms for strategic and participatory management in which management is collective, comradely and transparent.
- With regard to **governance at school level** and the involvement of all stakeholders, the schools have reported an increase in parents' involvement in school activities, especially among mothers.
- All of these factors give rise to a positive common perception of the school's contribution to community development; common inclusive values are being developed and transferred to all members of staff, children and their families, officials and communities as a whole.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

These outcomes must be interpreted in context, as they were directly affected by the pandemic. Pupils who had problems in accessing the Internet or lacked suitable equipment fell behind in acquiring new skills in the 2019-2020 school year. Teachers made efforts to send them materials through parents or their classmates, kept in touch with parents by telephone and went to see them at their homes when necessary. These pupils were unable to prepare adequately to resit examinations first taken in previous years, as the revision and final examination preparation period coincided with a major wave of the epidemic in April-June 2020.

Another factor that had a negative influence on efforts to improve learning outcomes significantly, according to the data provided by the schools, was absenteeism. With a few exceptions, **the number of pupils who were absent from the schools within the network more than 40 times during the 2019-2020 year was higher** by comparison with previous school years. The main challenges in terms of school attendance in 2019-2020 were definitely caused by the pandemic and the long period for which the schools did not run face-to-face classes.

The management teams highlighted the fact that the impact of INSCHOOL was adversely affected by the pandemic, which influenced the points of reference for inclusive education. Cultural, family and social divides became more marked and current learning needs and new challenges caused the Romanian education system to malfunction for a time.

The pandemic also offered a positive context for learning and forced adaptation where schools had to rethink their learning and co-operation processes and methods. The majority of the management teams feel that teachers made use of varied learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal) and gained new skills in working with digital resources, applications and platforms (Moodle, Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom/Meet etc.) during the previous school year and that they are continuing to do so now. In addition, access for teachers to suitable equipment improved significantly by comparison with the period at the beginning of the pandemic (March 2020). Online classes provided an opportunity to use interactive methods that they did not have the chance to use on every occasion during face-to-face activities. Furthermore, **on returning to school, teachers continued to use digital tools and pupils sometimes asked if they could use digital textbooks and other audio/video materials.** In addition, in the context of the pandemic, the relationship between the schools, parents and pupils improved as they had to co-operate intensively in order to adapt to online education.

The research data also made it possible to identify areas where there are still **major challenges**:

- The schools still need support in establishing inclusive values, with a focus on perceptions of pupils' ability to achieve success and the objectiveness of their assessment.
- There are few activities that draw attention to the fact that people's actions have a global effect (environment, energy, pollution).
- Although it is considered that schools have policies for pupils with special educational needs that are in line with the values and practices of inclusion, they do not have initial or continuing training on adapting the curriculum and teaching methods to the needs of children with disabilities.
- Although care is taken to promote non-violent interaction between pupils, they still feel the effects of verbal abuse and hostile or aggressive behaviour by those of the same age as them.
- The majority of children do not participate in out-of-school or sporting activities during lunch breaks or after school.
- Parents would like toilets to be cleaner, teaching methods to be innovative and playgrounds, green spaces and sports fields to be set up.
- The support needed from teachers to enable pupils to catch up in the learning process is also mentioned.
- There is a larger proportion of unqualified teachers in subordinate schools, which limits the quality of the educational process.
- Schools' experience of running projects with external funding or support is still limited, although when we look at the changing picture over time, we also see that by comparison with the 2017-2018 school year, the number of projects implemented is higher at all schools within the network.
- The number of support staff members is limited and ranges from one to four depending on the school. During the focus group discussions, both teachers and parents mentioned the need to involve people specialised in working with vulnerable or emotionally imbalanced children so that they can spend time on these pupils' development needs and support them.
- A reduction in absenteeism and continuing prevention of school abandonment among all pupils, with a focus on identifying specific mechanisms to reduce the number of Roma pupils who drop out.
- In the opinion of pupils, schools need more changes in terms of their appearance (renovation, change of furniture) to create as friendly an environment as possible by means of participatory decoration of hallways and classrooms. At the same time, some pupils consider that their school's facilities need to be improved so that classes can have a practical component to them more often. Although steps have been taken to adapt

teaching and learning methods for pupils, they feel that some classes are not interactive and teachers could use innovative learning methods.

The key words for the areas where improvement is needed are: extracurricular activities, green spaces, sports areas and toilets, activities focusing on the environment, hostile behaviour between pupils, attention paid to children with disabilities, catching up.

3.2. Intervention recommendations

The intervention recommendations made in this section draw on the main findings and the results of the research that are analysed in this report. We have tried to highlight the measures that have proved to be effective and efficient so far and areas where the results achieved to date fall short of expectations. We have also systematically monitored the pandemic's effects on the expected results and areas of impact. To make the recommendations easier to understand, they have been grouped into two major levels of intervention: **school level** and **system level**. The report will thus serve as a useful tool for school actors and decision-makers alike.

3.2.1. Recommendations for intervention at school level

The results of the assessment show that the strategy documents of the schools within the INSCHOOL network (development plans and operational plans) have been effectively improved and revised. In addition, in terms of the process, we can see an increase in transparency and the degree of school actors' involvement in drawing up these documents. This process needs to continue, bearing in mind that it is a dynamic process that is sensitive to changes in context (for example, in relation to the pandemic and online learning). The process of monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of activities included in IDPs and supported by OPs, including through small grants supported through the INSCHOOL project, also needs to continue, especially in relation to the inclusive culture that is currently being developed. **Developing the school's capacity/skills in this area could be a priority for the next stage**, bearing in mind that assessment is helpful both in identifying evidence for future operational plans and also in providing transparent justification for invested resources (human, material, financial).

The research data point to a significant improvement in the relationships between school actors and between teachers in particular. This is a significant result given that this is a prerequisite for developing an inclusive culture throughout a school, and it is important for strategies to cultivate/develop these ties within a functional learning community to continue. Even if they are currently being overused, **online tools can be used to keep exchanges between schools going** (in the form of virtual visits), and they make an important contribution to the development of these learning communities.

Activities whereby pupils mentor each other, which have an important role to play in terms of both learning outcomes and also the development of a culture of inclusion, have significant potential to develop inclusive values. They need to be a source of inspiration for teachers.

The training programmes were highly regarded by the participating teachers and it is important for the schools to ensure that all teachers (including those who will be newly employed in the next school year) will be able to gain significant

training experience with INSCHOOL's help. The link between trainers and the participating teachers needs to be maintained so that, with the support of the management teams, **the outcomes of the training can be put to good use at both class level and school level**. As with extracurricular learning activities, schools need to ensure that innovative elements do not remain isolated “episodes” but rather have a direct impact on the way in which learning activities are planned and delivered in the classroom.

The **priority training/information areas for the schools** include the subjects of a sustainable environment/future and peaceful resolution of conflicts/reduction of violence and bullying in schools. After awareness-raising activities, teachers need more support to **develop specific abilities to work with pupils who have disabilities and/or SEN** in order to develop and implement personalised learning plans, adapt curricula, develop contextualised learning activities and appropriately evaluate learning/progress.

Management teams also need to be made aware that the development and **implementation of remedial education measures** require teachers to possess a set of specific skills. Investing in continuing training in this area may increase the effectiveness of the programmes of this kind that are currently being run in the schools as part of the project. There is also a **need for a systematic approach to non-formal and informal learning contexts**, given that the research highlighted the fact that a very large number of pupils still do not participate in any extracurricular or sporting activities at or outside school. The gains made in terms of key skills for participants in extracurricular activities – especially those that were regular, continuing and diverse – have been clearly documented.

Turnover of teaching staff and the relatively high proportion of teaching staff who are unqualified (or who teach subjects for which they have received no specialised training) are affecting **subordinate schools** in particular. Over the coming period, these schools need to **intensify the intervention measures** facilitated by the INSCHOOL project, and the management teams must explicitly take responsibility for reducing the current differences in key areas: participation, attendance, school results, continuation of studies at a higher level of education, etc.

Channels of communication with parents must be maintained and even diversified in a situation where physical access to the INSCHOOL schools is heavily restricted. Parents can continue to give relevant information about priority measures to ensure good learning conditions (such as cleanliness/hygiene of toilets, setting-up of playgrounds/recreation areas on school grounds, green spaces, etc.). They can also involve themselves directly in resolving these issues on the basis of a close school-family relationship.

The schools need to continue with their efforts to understand the impact of the pandemic on pupils from multiple points of view (school attendance, learning outcomes/acquisition of skills, socio-emotional skills, etc.). For example, the absenteeism indicators show a worrying increase in this phenomenon among pupils, and a simple return to “physical” school will not automatically lead to an improvement in school attendance. These phenomena are often connected with other (pre-pandemic) risk factors and require tailored interventions in which teachers, support staff, families and other professionals within the community are involved, or to which schools have access with support from INSCHOOL.

Schools' experience of attracting and running **projects financed with external resources** must continue to be developed, including through peer learning activities. For example, the schools that are very active in this area (Chitila, Conțești) can share the experience they have gained and contribute to the development of schools' abilities to develop and implement externally-financed education projects. In addition, **the opportunities offered by the new generation**

of Erasmus+ programmes must be systematically seized upon with the aid of national or county-level support programmes co-ordinated by ANPCDEFP [National Agency for Community Education and Vocational Training Programmes].

3.2.2. Recommendations for intervention at education system level

The INSCHOOL project promotes a complex methodology for helping schools to foster a culture of inclusion. The positive outcomes achieved so far demonstrate the need for the current intervention programmes planned at system level to draw on this experience systematically. Ideally, these interventions should be integrated so that the cumulative effect can be achieved both by engaging/involving all actors within the school (whole school approach) and also through a set of interventions that touch on multiple levels (education management, didactics, focused support measures for pupils at risk, continuing training, non-formal and informal learning contexts, etc.).

Experience to date shows that schools can gain real benefit from getting to know and understanding the *Index for Inclusion*, an extremely useful tool to evaluate areas for improvement and develop specific ameliorative intervention measures for this area. There are various ways of **putting the Index to use**, including:

- Incorporating inclusion skills into the (professional) profiles of school managers and teachers;
- Encouraging (initial and continuing) training programmes that are directly targeted at these skills;
- Developing open educational resources so that practical aspects of the Guide can be implemented and promoted at national and county level (for pupils/teachers/heads);
- Incorporating items to assess inclusion into competitive recruitment processes for heads/deputy heads and in qualifying/promotion examinations for teachers;
- Including examples from the Guide in quality assurance activities.

The research results show that **small grants** offered to schools are an effective tool that can be used to take a tailored approach to a challenge that they face, if there is an effective organisational framework. Experience of INSCHOOL shows that when they are carefully supported, schools can identify and prioritise the problems they face, propose relevant intervention measures, allocate resources appropriately and successfully run and monitor the activities supported by such a grant. As well as attracting additional resources, this mechanism provides an effective learning context in which different school actors work together and develop skills relevant to inclusion.

Systematic research into the progress made in activities that have taken place in INSCHOOL schools **demonstrates the need for systematic methodological support for management teams** to improve their strategic management skills, particularly for schools with a large proportion of pupils who are at high risk of exclusion. This support needs to be tailored to and focused on the needs of the schools they co-ordinate and the challenges facing them. It can also be given in the form of facilitation/assistance programmes piloted in the INSCHOOL programme: taking existing strategic documents (development plans and operational plans) as a starting point, on the basis of a common process of analysis and mutual learning, and ending up with an improved and revised strategic framework. The new generation of quality standards, which is being implemented from the 2021-2022 school year onwards, also provides a context in which these specific skills can be developed.

Other areas of intervention that are relevant to the national level:

- promoting **exchange between schools** (including in the form of virtual visits), which make an important contribution to developing inclusion learning communities.

- supporting **activities whereby pupils mentor each other, which play an important role in terms of both learning outcomes and also fostering a culture of inclusion.**
- using non-formal and informal learning contexts that are relevant to inclusion for learning purposes (including through activities forming part of the “A Different Kind of School” programme).
- Encouraging the provision of CCD [Teacher Training Centre] training courses on relevant areas such as: a sustainable environment/future and peaceful resolution of conflicts/reducing violence and bullying in schools.
- Continuing with efforts to help teachers to **develop specific skills to work with pupils who have disabilities and/or SEN**, develop and implement personalised learning plans, adapt curricula, develop contextualised learning activities and appropriately assess learning/progress.
- Initiating specific measures to combat the adverse effects of **teaching staff turnover**, especially at disadvantaged schools.
- And at system level, **efforts to understand the impact of the pandemic on pupils** from multiple angles (school attendance, learning outcomes/acquisition of skills, socio-emotional skills, etc.) **need to continue.**

Last but not least, **high-quality inclusive education needs to be an aim from pre-school level upwards.** It is essential for programmes to build schools’ capacity (with particular focus on intervening to combat segregation and reduce drop-out rates) to include pre-school institutions that are affiliated with them/from which pupils come.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Methodological framework for using the questionnaires

This document gives details of the most important aspects of the self-assessment methodology for the schools within the INSCHOOL network. It is aimed at both the project teams at these schools and the INSCHOOL Romania team.

What is our aim?

Specifically, by using a set of tools outlined in this Appendix 1, we aim:

1. To collect **relevant data** to document the processes and outcomes of INSCHOOL at the schools within the network (including for the Council of Europe)
2. To analyse the collected data systematically so as to understand where **interventions/additional support** are needed in order to achieve the project's goals
3. To document the INSCHOOL intervention **model** and scale-up mechanisms (to scale it up to system level) for the next financing framework (2021-2027)
4. To provide input for **specific policy initiatives** (such as the national inclusion strategy/education equality law)

The effort made by the schools in the INSCHOOL network to assess themselves thus contributes directly to the efforts they are currently making to increase inclusion/inclusivity. Equally, it offers inspiration for other schools that are pursuing the same goal.

What tools were developed?

In order to achieve these specific aims, the INSCHOOL self-assessment methodology led to the development of two categories of tools:

- A questionnaire for schools (the self-assessment tool)
- Questionnaires for the different categories of school actors and the community
 - Questionnaire 1: Indicators of inclusion (aimed at members of the Board of Governors and school staff: teaching staff, auxiliary teaching staff, non-teaching staff)
 - Questionnaire 2: My child's school (aimed at parents/guardians)
 - Questionnaire 3: My school (aimed at lower secondary pupils)
 - Questionnaire 4: My school (aimed at primary pupils)

The data collected through these tools have been put together with other available quantitative and qualitative data: routinely collected data which are available in administrative documents at school level and various pieces of information collected during the process of assistance/internal and external monitoring. In this way, we want to ensure that the data to be analysed are accurate, complete and relevant.

What are the main steps in implementing the methodology?

The philosophy behind the implementation of the INSCHOOL self-assessment methodology is based on an approach where schools are real **partners** in the whole process and the main beneficiary of the relevant data collection activity. As such, all of the steps in implementing the methodology are **contexts for learning and building institutional capacity**. Schools have a "living" model of organising the entire improvement process that is characteristic of a functional (not formal) internal quality assurance mechanism: planning/activities/assessment/review.

- a) **Using tools.** Both the quantitative questionnaire aimed at the school as a whole and the set of questionnaires aimed at the different categories of actors are made available in digital format. The estimated completion time

is four weeks. The use of a specialised application (Google Forms) makes both the completion process and the process of monitoring responses in real time easier. The application also easily systematises all uploaded data. In situations where some of the targeted respondents (especially parents) do not have easy access to the online platform where the questionnaires are available or do not have the necessary digital skills to complete them, the methodology recommends the use of a printed version of the questionnaire (which will subsequently be uploaded to the online application).

To ensure that the data collected through the qualitative tools are representative, the self-assessment methodology has set minimum response thresholds: Questionnaire 1: Indicators for inclusion (minimum 55-60% of the members of the Board of Governors and school staff: teaching staff, auxiliary teaching staff, non-teaching staff); Questionnaire 2: My child's school (minimum 15% of parents/guardians); Questionnaire 3: My school (minimum 20-25% of pupils in lower secondary education); Questionnaire 4: My school (minimum 15-20% of pupils in primary education).

Schools will ensure that responses adequately capture the characteristics of the actors under investigation (e.g. gender breakdown).

The quantitative tool aimed at schools gives specific guidance for each item. In addition, for information that requires more complex data to be collected, specific examples of data reporting are given. For the quantitative questionnaire, schools provide data from administrative sources or data calculated with the aid of such sources, and data from other official sources available at locality level. The involvement of teaching staff (primary teachers, class teachers) is essential to calculate and report disaggregated data in situations where it is not currently being collected by the school.

The tools aimed at education actors were calibrated for a response time not exceeding 15 minutes. With this in mind, the possible responses are closed and only the preferred option needs to be highlighted/marked. Optionally, the questionnaires can offer the option of supplementing the selected response for each item with details/explanations, etc.

- b) **Checking collected data** (completeness, quality). There are two important stages in checking the data collected during the self-assessment process. By the agreed time limit for completion of the (quantitative/qualitative) questionnaires, the INSCHOOL project co-ordination team monitors the extent to which they have been uploaded at each school and offers assistance. In situations where there are difficulties in collecting data for some items, alternative collection methods are chosen together with schools. In exceptional circumstances, consideration is given to the possibility of extending the collection period so that all thresholds can be reached (as specified in the previous section).

The second important stage is completing and checking the database, identifying specific situations for each individual tool: partially completed questionnaires; data that are not consistent (in the quantitative questionnaire); possible upload errors (for questionnaires completed in printed form). After this stage, it will be possible to prepare the database for primary statistical processing (descriptive statistics).

In situations where errors are identified, the co-ordinating team will contact the schools within the network in order to rectify them. In addition, if there are any unusual values for some indicators in the quantitative questionnaire (outliers), the data will be brought to the attention of the school teams.

- c) **Analysing collected data at school/national level.** The quantitative questionnaire provides extremely important details of the situation at the schools within the INSCHOOL network. These data are put together with the data in the qualitative questionnaires in order to capture the change at these schools by comparison with the previous stages (pre-intervention; first year of intervention). The “snapshot” obtained is thus dynamic, not static, and makes it easier to identify areas where additional interventions are needed during the following period (for each individual school).

Outputs/Uses

Like the data collection process, analysis of the results obtained will be performed with support from schools. A team of experts at national level will be put together centrally and provide an initial interpretation of these data in the context of the *Index for Inclusion*. The findings in this first report will be discussed/validated with representatives of the schools within the INSCHOOL network during online meetings. At micro level, the schools thus have an important point of reference for the purposes of reviewing their planning documents (*Institutional Development Plan* and *Managerial Plan*) and understanding the effects of current interventions by comparison with previous stages. At macro level, it will be possible to analyse the changes at the schools within the INSCHOOL network by comparison with the initial stage (baseline), and this will yield evidence of areas where a change can be seen and where additional support is needed (measured against the yardstick of the previous *Country Report*).

On this basis, the self-assessment exercise offers us a good context in which to identify/come up with advocacy lines based on the results of the project and the contribution made by the INSCHOOL intervention model to the development of areas of the Index for Inclusion as defined in *A Guide to School Development Led By Inclusive Values* by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow.

Appendix 2 – Methodological framework for holding focus group discussions at INSCHOOL schools

April 2021

Purpose

The aim of the focus group survey is to supplement the quantitative information obtained through the online questionnaires aimed at pupils, parents and representatives of schools. Because there are groups that do not have the necessary environment in which to get online in order to answer the digitally mediated questionnaires/consultations, we decided to supplement the methodology by holding focus group discussions at the schools. This qualitative approach pursues two research avenues:

- 1) Identifying the perceptions and attitudes of pupils and parents with regard to inclusive school culture, values and practices;
- 2) Identifying mechanisms to involve and consult pupils and parents who do not have the resources to participate online that were created by the school in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methodological details

Focus group discussions will take place at two of the schools involved in the INSCHOOL project: Conțești Lower Secondary School and Pietroșani Lower Secondary School, during the week of 12-16 April 2021. Three focus group discussions will take place at each of the two schools. With regard to pupils and parents, people who **have not completed the questionnaires online** and **have limited access to technology** or who **have participated less in online classes** will be invited to the focus group discussions. The focus group discussions will last between one and one and a half hours and audio recordings will be made. The data will be used solely to research the impact and outcomes of the project and will be anonymised, and the names of the participants in the focus group discussions will not appear in any documents. The participants in the focus group discussions will not receive the questions in advance.

Target group for focus group discussion	Number of participants	Details of participants
Pupils	7-10	Both primary and lower secondary pupils. A balance in terms of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status will be sought. If possible, pupils with disabilities/SEN will also be invited. Only pupils will attend the focus group discussion, with no other adults being present.
Parents	7-10	Parents of pupils in primary and lower secondary education. A balance in terms of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status will be sought. If possible, pupils with disabilities/SEN will also be invited. Only parents will attend the focus group discussion, with no teaching staff being present.
Teaching staff	5-7	Teaching staff of both sexes who have different amounts of experience and teach different subjects will be invited. The head teacher or other members of the institution's management will not participate in the focus group discussion.

Guide to pupil focus group discussions

- What does school mean to you? How do you feel when you come to school or are there?
- What do you think about how the school looks? What do you like? What do you think should be improved?
- How well do you get on with your classmates? What kinds of conflicts occur between pupils? What are the causes?
- How well do you get on with the teaching staff? What do you think about the teaching methods? What are your expectations of teachers/primary teachers?
- What kinds of extracurricular activities are you involved in?
- Are people of different ethnic groups treated differently in the school? What about people with disabilities? What form does this different treatment take?
- How well do girls and boys get on?
- How do you cope with your homework? Who helps you with your homework?
- What do you think of your classes/lessons at school? What do you learn from them? What would you like to be done differently in classes?
- How are you appreciated/encouraged by teachers?
- How did you cope with attending classes online during the period when schools were closed? How much access do you have to the Internet, a telephone or a tablet? What were the difficulties during this period? How would you like to be supported?

Guide to focus group discussions

- What do you think about how the school looks? What do you like? What do you think should be improved?
- What is your relationship with the school like? And with other parents?
- How well do you feel pupils and the teaching staff get on?
- Are people of different ethnic groups treated differently in the school? What about people with disabilities? What form does this different treatment take?
- How do the teaching staff behave towards pupils? How do they encourage them? How is assessment/marking done by the teaching staff?
- How is aggressive behaviour between children limited/controlled? What kinds of conflicts occur between them?
- What do you think are the most useful/important things that your child(ren) learn(s) at school? What would you like to be done differently during classes or in the way that teaching staff teach?
- What kinds of extracurricular activities do(es) your child(ren) participate in?
- How did you (you and your children) cope with attending classes online during the period when schools were closed? How much access do children have to the Internet or a telephone or tablet? What were the difficulties during this period? How would you like to be supported?
- How did you keep in touch with the school during the period when it was closed? What support did the school give to children during the online education period? How do you think the interruption of physical access to schools affected your child(ren)'s school results?

Guide to focus group discussions for teaching staff/school representatives

- How did you interact with pupils and parents who do not have access to digital resources during the period when schools were closed? How did you contact parents? Were there any parents with whom you did not communicate at all?
- How did you support pupils who were unable to participate in online classes? What do you think are the most appropriate solutions to enable all pupils to participate when classes are held online?
- How do you assess the losses of pupils who were unable to connect to online classes?

- To what extent are pupils asked for feedback about classes or other decisions concerning the school? What mechanisms are used to collect and implement feedback?
- To what extent are parents asked for feedback about classes or other decisions concerning the school? What mechanisms are used to collect and implement feedback?

Appendix 3 – Summary of responses given during the Conțești and Pietroșani focus group discussions, April 2021

Arrangements

On 14 and 16 April 2021, three focus group discussions were held at each of two schools – Conțești and Pietroșani – to supplement the quantitative information obtained through the online questionnaires for pupils, parents and school representatives. Because there are groups who do not have the resources to get online and answer the digitally mediated questionnaires/consultations, we decided to supplement the methodology by holding focus group discussions in school. This qualitative approach pursued two research avenues:

- 3) Identifying the perceptions and attitudes of pupils and parents with regard to inclusive school culture, values and practices;
- 4) Identifying mechanisms to involve and consult pupils and parents who do not have the resources to participate online that were created by the school in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Structure of the group of focus group respondents

Focus group discussion	Conțești School		Pietroșani School	
	Number	Details	Number	Details
Pupils	9	Pupils in lower secondary education, balanced in terms of gender	10	Pupils in primary and lower secondary education, balanced in terms of gender, one pupil with disabilities
Parents	7	Mothers and fathers	10	Only mothers
Teaching staff	7	A range of subjects taught and amounts of experience	10	A range of subjects taught and amounts of experience

Details of responses given during the focus group discussions at Conțești School

1) Pupils

Pupils (years 5-8) like the school, the group of people and the fact that there is no discrimination. Pupils appreciate the fact that the school has a friendly appearance, with drawings on some of the walls portraying children's rights, and teachers can decorate classrooms together with pupils. However, the pupils would like certain aspects of the school's appearance to be improved, such as the radiators and the boards. In addition, some pupils appreciate the fact that there are toilets inside the school, which makes them easier to access and more comfortable, especially during the winter, while others feel that the toilets on the grounds of the school need to be renovated.

In general, teachers are felt to be like friends of the pupils, as they are “understanding and funny, sometimes”. The pupils feel that the teachers organise activities at the school that develop their interests and knowledge and involve themselves in the educational process. The school’s technological resources (video projector in every classroom) support teaching activity. The school does not have a chemistry laboratory, but a teacher showed various small films of chemical reactions. When they went to school in person, the pupils and teachers put on music during breaks and danced.

The online school period was difficult for pupils, who prefer face-to-face activities. Pupils had difficulties in getting online, were unable to see the board on the screen or even lacked the resources needed to connect to the Internet. Although not all teachers had the skills necessary to transfer the whole of the educational process online, most teachers were successful in continuing with teaching activity, in pupils’ opinion. However, one female pupil said it would have been good if teachers had adapted educational content to the online context by using more PowerPoint presentations or games. The majority of the pupils who participated in the focus group discussion said that they connected to online classes using their own phones. Teachers were understanding when some pupils lost their connection to classes due to signal instability. Pupils are aware that there are some gaps in their learning as a result of the online education period, and some of them are catching up through the programme of remedial classes that the school is organising. For pupils who completed Year 4 online, it was more difficult to complete primary education solely online, and they had no opportunity to say goodbye in person to their teacher and classmates.

Pupils felt that online assessment is easier than face-to-face assessment, and teachers found solutions even for pupils who were unable to get online at all times. Teachers did not put pressure on pupils to switch their cameras on.

Doing homework is not a chore for pupils. In some subjects, homework is discussed at school the next day so that pupils can understand more easily where they have gone wrong or what they have been unable to work out. Some pupils feel that during the online schooling period, the amount of homework was smaller than it had been during the pre-pandemic period. Pupils also learned how to use their phones to look up answers and solutions to exercises or problems that they could not work out on their own.

Tensions sometimes arise between pupils (sometimes leading to physical violence), especially between those in lower years (Years 5 and 6) and those in higher years (Years 7 and 8) because the latter want to assert authority over younger pupils. When such situations arise, teachers intervene in an attempt to resolve conflicts and pupils who continue to “behave badly” are threatened with reductions in their mark for conduct.

Pupils say that there are no differences in the way they are treated on the basis of ethnic origin, social status or disability. It is more difficult for pupils with disabilities to “integrate”, but pupils and teachers are receptive and try to help them. With regard to bullying, pupils feel that this is not a major issue in their school, although there are occasional situations that can be classed as bullying. Although pupils refer to pupils of Roma ethnic origin as Roma in the school, especially when addressing them directly, they also use the term “Gypsy” outside the school and say that there is a “big difference between those who go around in carts and other people” because those considered to be “Gypsies with carts” “don’t wash, sleep in tents and use bad language”. Roma pupils are treated the same as other pupils in the school and sometimes learn better than the majority of pupils, while non-Roma pupils try to help Roma pupils to “go beyond their limits”. Activities to promote Roma culture and identity have taken place in the school.

Pupils were more involved in extracurricular activities before the COVID-19 pandemic than they are now (drama, reading and dance clubs). Pupils have a knowledge of recycling and some collect glass, plastic or paper separately.

Teachers encourage pupils to develop themselves and harness their potential by various means such as games, competitions and rewards. Teachers adapt their expectations and teaching methods according to pupils' level; "if a child has got a mark of 4, the teacher helps him/her to reach 5 or 6".

Pupils express their wishes and teachers take account of the feedback they receive from pupils and make certain changes to the structure of classes or activities. Pupils are not afraid of expressing their points of view to teachers and are encouraged by teachers to do so.

The relationship between pupils and the head teacher is very good. They regard the head as open and funny, but very busy sometimes.

In general, pupils feel that assessment is fair, but there are situations where some pupils are favoured, particularly good pupils who do not cause problems and participate in educational activities constantly.

Pupils feel that the following things should be improved:

- Teaching methods should be more interactive. Animations, **games** and digital technology should be used rather than merely teaching the subject, and pupils should not be obliged to do nothing but memorise information; instead, emphasis should be laid on understanding and applying concepts. In subjects regarded as less important (such as Technology Education), activity does not consist of teaching and interaction between pupils and teachers; pupils have to write reports, and they feel that proper classes would be helpful.
- Goal posts and turf should be added to the football pitch;
- Classrooms should be more comfortable and welcoming – office chairs, higher seats, cloakrooms and cupboards, light bulbs and sockets that no longer work should be replaced, and so should the boards and the floor;
- There should be more digitalisation in the school, with tablets for every pupil;
- Laboratories (physics, chemistry), a canteen and areas for clubs and extracurricular activities should be created;
- There should be more books for the library;
- The outside of the school should be renovated;
- There should be a wider range of subjects and pupils should be able to choose between more than just basic subjects. New subjects such as financial education and legal education should be introduced;
- Marks should be abolished up to Year 8 because some pupils learn by rote just in order to achieve certain marks.

2) Parents

Parents feel that the school has changed for the better when they compare the current situation with the situation when they were at school. For example, there were no toilets inside the school a few years ago or decades ago.

Parents appreciate the head teacher's involvement and feel that he is more involved than any head teacher the school has ever had, and had it not been for him, all of these changes for the better probably would not have happened. Parents feel that the teachers support pupils' development and use methods that are less strict or violent by comparison with the days when the parents were pupils themselves.

Although there have been many positive changes in terms of how the school looks, parents feel that it should be renovated on the outside too and that play areas that pupils can go to during breaks and after classes should be created. In addition, some parents would like the blackboards to be replaced with more modern boards so that pupils no longer have to wipe them and get “covered in dust”.

The relationship between parents and the school is very good. They get involved when they are asked for help by the school and one parent was involved in building the indoor toilets. According to the parents, pupils also appreciate and respect their teachers. Some of the teachers are younger and have a closer relationship with the pupils. The teachers do not discriminate between pupils and all children are treated in the same way regardless of socio-economic status or ethnic origin; Roma pupils are friends with non-Roma pupils. Pupils like coming to school and cannot wait for face-to-face classes to begin again. Classes are interactive, especially at primary level, and teachers use games, songs and other innovative methods.

In general, pupils get on well. Minor conflicts occur at times, but they are “nothing out of the ordinary” according to parents. However, some parents make more of these situations than they ought to.

Attending meetings online was a new experience for parents. In their opinion, online schooling caused many difficulties for pupils and parents: children were no longer able to learn and understand so well due to connection problems and distractions at home, pupils found it harder to concentrate, and parents had to stay near their children to make sure they attended online classes and paid attention. In the nursery school, the schedule of online classes was decided by agreement with parents and classes were scheduled in the afternoons so that parents could be at home with their children. Most pupils watched online classes on their phones, and parents did not wish to receive tablets from the Ministry of National Education as they were worried that pupils would break them and they would have to pay. Teachers held remedial or additional classes for pupils who did not understand certain things during online classes. Teachers telephoned parents when pupils did not log in to watch online classes.

Parents feel that the local council and the Ministry of Education should allocate more funding to renovate the school.

Pupils participated in more extracurricular activities before the pandemic, but there were a few activities after it began (such as a tooth brushing competition).

Pupils' homework is not a problem in parents' opinion. Children in primary education are helped by their parents from time to time, but this does not happen with those in higher years.

3) Teachers

The start of online activities was difficult. Teachers had no experience of teaching online and using platforms such as Google Meet and parents did not know how to help their children to log in. The school helped pupils to set up accounts and use Meet within about a week. Not all pupils were able to get online, but most managed to attend online classes. Those who were unable to log in could not do so because there was only one digital device between several siblings in their homes. Pupils helped each other to participate in classes, with some pupils going round to their neighbours' houses to watch them. During online classes, families/parents gained a better understanding of what school is like as they were constantly beside their children during online classes. When pupils were unable to watch classes online, parents were called to public places (shop, school) so that they could be given worksheets for pupils. Teachers kept in

constant contact with parents of pupils who were unable to get online at neighbours' houses, by telephone or by other means. If pupils or parents did not answer the phone, teachers and the head teacher or school mediator went to the pupil's home.

Attending online meetings was a new experience for parents, they were taught by children how to log in or how to turn on their microphones. This period was more difficult for parents, too, because they had to be with their children all the time.

During foreign language classes, online classes provided an opportunity to use interactive methods that they had not always had the opportunity to use during face-to-face activities. In general, teachers used digital technology and the Internet for teaching purposes more than they did during face-to-face activities.

Physical education classes were adapted to the online context and pupils were encouraged to do sporting activities using music and other things at home. They were encouraged to move around together with other family members (grandparents, parents, siblings) and send video clips to the teacher through WhatsApp. Pupils were also incentivised to come to school and participate in online classes by means of extracurricular activities such as sledging or fishing competitions, with sledges or fishing rods being given to them as prizes. One disadvantage of online classes is that group games and teams have disappeared.

It was difficult for pupils in their early years of school to learn the basics of writing through online activities, and when they returned to school, some did not know how to write. They were very happy about coming back to school but also felt disappointed that school was not the same any more and their interaction with classmates was limited by distancing rules. They were used to hugging their teachers, which has not been possible in the current situation.

Online assessment posed challenges. In some cases, parents stayed with their pupils and did things for them. For tests, they passed on sheets or documents, and pupils did the tests in their exercise books. One teacher said that "assessment was done by families", and only when children came back to school could marking be done objectively.

Pupils have gaps in their knowledge as a result of the online period. When they came back to school, teachers had to go over some material again. At the time when the focus group discussions took place, a face-to-face remedial education programme was being run in the school for groups of about 15 pupils who had achieved poor results or had been absent many times. Pupils like remedial activities and the number of them who wish to take part exceeds the number of places available in groups. They feel more confident about answering questions because very able pupils are not present and they do not feel scared of being judged.

There is no formal or clear mechanism for requesting feedback from pupils and parents, but they are free to express their opinions or dissatisfaction during classes or meetings. WhatsApp groups are a means of communication that is used by teachers in their communication with both pupils and parents.

When they came back to school, teachers continued to use digital tools and pupils sometimes asked to use digital textbooks and other audio/video materials.

Details of responses given during the focus group discussions at Pietroșani School

1) Pupils

Pupils like the teachers because they are calm and explain things well, they have an interesting style of teaching that makes things understandable for pupils and are sometimes funny. Pupils like the school's appearance since it was renovated, both on the outside where the football pitch, grass and breaktime socialising area are and also on the inside – the way the hallways look and the fact that the classrooms are spacious. Pupils also like the fact that there are enough classrooms for everyone to be able to learn during the mornings, so there is no need for two classes of pupils to share a single classroom.

Pupils say they get on well with each other and conflicts between them are rare and insignificant in their opinion. Conflicts arise between boys over football, but they are resolved quite quickly. In some cases, girls and boys have disagreements over minor things. Another cause of conflicts between pupils is nicknames. Conflicts or violence sometimes occur between pupils in lower secondary education and those in primary education. When conflicts occur between pupils, teachers intervene, and the latter usually get in touch with the parents of the pupils involved in the conflict.

Pupils feel that there are no differences in the way they are treated on the basis of socio-economic status, school results or ethnic origin. One of the older pupils said that there is no racism in the school and negative words such as “Gypsy” are not used.

Pupils have been involved in extracurricular activities (e.g. picking up rubbish), especially during the pre-pandemic period. Picking up rubbish in several areas within the locality has made them feel more responsible and useful.

All pupils said that it was much more difficult for them to learn during online classes than it is during face-to-face activities. They had problems because of a lack of a signal, which prevented them from having a constant and high-quality connection. In addition, pupils who needed tablets received them from the school to enable them to access online schooling, but they had problems as the tablets were not of a very high specification and the Internet cards were for a network other than the one that provides a good signal in the local area. The pupils who participated in the focus group discussions said that their tablets did not stop functioning or get broken, but they heard about such things happening from classmates. In addition, some pupils felt anxious and tired when they spent many hours in front of screens. Pupils appreciate the fact that teachers “did everything possible” to help them to catch up with material they had not understood during online classes, both during revision in class and also during special remedial classes. All of the pupils who participated in the focus group discussion are involved in the programme of remedial education arranged by the Ministry of Education, are satisfied with how they are going and regard them as very useful.

During the online period, communication also took place through WhatsApp groups in which pupils posted photos of their homework or other information and teachers announced homework and gave information about lessons.

After the online period, some teachers encouraged the use of digital devices (phones, tablets) at school or during classes for educational purposes more than they had previously. One female pupil said that when pupils do not know a word or figure, the teacher tells them to search the Internet, and this way, pupils remember the information more easily.

The task of assessing and marking pupils' work was more difficult in online activity because they looked up answers on the Internet, and for this reason, teachers preferred to give them marks for oral answers and set fewer written tests.

Marks were higher during the period of online classes and one pupil said that “no one got averages below 6”. Pupils do not feel that teachers discriminate between pupils when marking or that they treat some pupils unfairly.

On the whole, pupils manage to do their homework on their own and ask their parents for help when they do not understand something. Perceptions of homework vary from class to class and depend on the subject or pupils' own style of learning; some pupils say that they do not get much homework, while others say they that homework takes up too much of their time. Pupils feel encouraged by their teachers even when they do not know answers or get things wrong.

In pupils' opinion, parents and teachers get on very well with each other and keep in touch constantly. During online activities, they communicated with each other by telephone and meetings were held online, with children helping their parents to get online. If teachers noticed that a pupil was absent from several online classes, they informed the parents in order to find out what was happening.

Pupils are listened to by adults at the school. Pupils can make suggestions and they are sometimes implemented by adults (e.g. one pupil suggested the idea of watching a film, and the following week, the teacher put the film on for the class to watch).

Pupils would like the school to be improved in the following ways:

- Do everything necessary to make sure the school does not close again and always stays open for face-to-face activities;
- The outdoor toilets should be renovated too, they are still used by pupils when the toilets inside the school are out of order;
- There should be separate and specialised teachers for every subject;
- The walls should be decorated with different things in every classroom to create a friendlier atmosphere;
- The windows should have drapes because when the sun shines, pupils cannot see the blackboard;
- The football pitch should be improved, another separate socialising area should be set up and another sport (volleyball) should be available for those who do not play football;
- The school's resources should be improved, e.g. new maps for geography; there should be chemistry and physics laboratories and a computer room (computer science is currently taught with a blackboard and exercise books); the blackboards should be moved – they are too high up in some classrooms and pupils cannot write on them, while other classrooms have only one blackboard and there is not enough writing space;
- Seats should be replaced in some classrooms where they are old and uncomfortable;
- A sick bay should be created in the school so that situations where a child is injured or feels ill can be dealt with more easily.

2) Parents

Parents are happy with the school because they know their children are safe there and teachers take an interest in their education. Parents who are concerned about what their child is doing ask teachers how their child is getting on at their own initiative.

Mothers feel that there are certain “problem” children (who disrupt classes, upset other pupils and use bad language) for whom the school has no solutions, but the parents of these children are to blame. “It all comes down to how they are brought up at home”, said one mother. Some parents do not take enough interest in pupils’ education.

The bonds between parents of primary pupils are stronger, but as pupils move up to higher years, these bonds cease to exist. This is also noticed by pupils, and one mother who also works at the school says that when pupils grow older and begin lower secondary education, “respect and common sense disappear”. Teachers have no solutions for pupils who cause “problems” in classes and cannot punish them. Sometimes, pupils tell their parents their own versions of certain situations and parents come to the school and “tackle” the teachers. Parents notice big differences between the situation in schools when they were pupils and the current situation where teachers have lost some of their authority. The only solution in these situations is greater involvement of parents and a better attitude on the part of some of them. Parents communicate with teachers by telephone, on WhatsApp or directly at school.

One mother (of Roma ethnicity) mentioned that at times, she has felt rejected by a teacher or other parents and that Romanians and Roma people are treated differently, while the other mothers say that this is a one-off case in a particular class. These differences in treatment “come from parents” and their prejudices and stereotypes, which are later passed on to their children. Sometimes, children shout at each other using nicknames such as “Gypsy” or other pejorative words, but on the whole, the relationship between Roma and non-Roma pupils is good and “okay”. In general, it is not felt that there is any discrimination within the school based on the socio-economic status of families, but there can be situations where some pupils are better dressed or have more money than others. Children with disabilities are well integrated into the school community. One mother has a little girl who is “a bit chubby”, but she has not heard other pupils verbally abuse her for this reason.

The online period was difficult for pupils and parents, and some parents feel that respect for teachers was lost because pupils could “hide” more easily by finding reasons not to participate in online classes (their microphone or the Internet was not working, etc.). Parents had to spend more time monitoring pupils’ online activity and explaining what they had not understood during classes, but sometimes they lacked the knowledge and skills to do this. One mother said that “this school year has been chaos”.

Pupils who did not have the resources they needed to watch classes online received tablets from the school, which proved very useful for pupils. However, some pupils who received tablets did not participate in online classes. Many pupils were unable to associate home with school, and in the comfort of their own homes, they paid less attention and were distracted by whatever was happening around them. During face-to-face activities, pupils were shier around their teachers, but when they were sitting behind screens, their respect for them disappeared.

Parents experienced difficulties in relation to online classes; when they participated in online meetings, they could not hear properly, some talked over others, some did not know how to switch their microphones off, and some were distracted by children or housework.

Parents are unhappy about the fact that some pupils are allowed by their parents to have phones with them at school, and pupils use them during classes and do not pay attention to teachers. There is one pupil who disrupts classes and filmed other pupils and teachers during them, and later posted the video clip on Facebook. One mother requested that this pupil be expelled and was told that this could not be done as “we need to complete Year 8 with him”. Another pupil threw a stone at a child and hit his head, and was punished by being made to stay at home for two weeks. Not even making him repeat the year is a solution in parents’ opinion, because this will not solve the problem and “every

generation will run into him". There is no counsellor or psychologist at the school and parents are reluctant to go and see a psychologist about their child.

Parents feel that the school should address topics such as menstruation so that girls are prepared and know what to do when this happens.

In general, teaching and teachers' activity are satisfactory in the opinion of parents; there are situations where some teachers do not give additional explanations when a pupil has not understood something or they give work to pupils and the teacher is "on the phone". Sometimes, teachers "focus on a few children who are better and put their hands up".

Teachers should give pupils more homework so that they are busy at home and can expand their knowledge.

Sometimes, girls say at home that they have been pushed by boys. When conflicts occur, teachers call parents in to school. One mother said it would be good to "box the ears" of those children who cause conflicts (these children are not those of the parents who participated in the focus group discussion). Some parents feel that mild corporal punishment by teachers (hitting the palms with a stick) is an effective way of establishing authority and respect. Pupils are not afraid of teachers nowadays, by contrast with the days when the parents were children.

Parents like the appearance of the school, which was refurbished recently. The school is now big enough and there are rooms for all of the children; they do not need to learn in two "shifts" and all pupils learn in the morning only. The school is clean and the children have been taught to keep it so. By comparison with other schools they see on television, this school looks very good in the opinion of parents.

Some pupils buy snacks from the shop beside the school and do not eat healthily. Although parents give them sandwiches, they also give them money, and the children sometimes throw the sandwiches away.

Before the pandemic, pupils participated in a number of extracurricular activities. In one class, an activity about the traditions and cultures of minorities was going to take place, with every pupil and their parent choosing an ethnic minority (Roma, Greek, etc.).

How they would improve the school:

- Pupils who disrupt classes should be punished more severely/draastically;
- Competitions should be held for pupils, e.g. football or other group activities;
- Some teachers should be more patient with pupils.

3) Teachers

Early on during the period when schools were closed, teachers found it difficult to adapt to the changes, especially those whose digital skills were not sufficiently developed. During face-to-face activities, children are more confident because many practical activities can be done in the classroom. In some subjects, such as technology education, it was difficult to adapt practical activities to an online format.

The online period was also challenging in that some pupils did not have access to devices and the Internet, and later, when they received tablets or phones, they did not know how to use them. The school offered tablets to pupils who did not have their own devices with which to connect to online classes. At the same time, not all parents have the necessary knowledge to help their children when they do not understand something or cannot cope. Many pupils and parents would have preferred to come to school because at home, they do not have the space or conditions needed for online classes. Sometimes, teachers feel powerless because they would like to help children but do not know exactly what to do. However, they all adapted as they went along, and some challenges were overcome by pupils, teachers and parents together. At the same time, teachers were forced by the circumstances to learn how to use certain platforms and to improve their digital skills on their own or with help from those around them.

Teachers asked pupils and colleagues for help when they did not know how to do certain things online or were unable to do them. They learned at the same time as pupils, and sometimes pupils coped better than their teachers in working with online platforms.

Teachers like remedial activities because they help them to go back over information that was not understood well enough during the online period.

The school's digital resources are inadequate, and the school acquired a smart board only recently. The number of video projectors is also insufficient.

For foreign languages, the online period was an opportunity to do a lot of exercises involving listening to native speakers of English or French on approved platforms, and lessons were more interesting for pupils. Pupils who were active and involved in face-to-face activities continued to be so online.

Although there were difficulties and challenges in online education, pupils' results were the same as they had been in previous years. For example, pupils achieved good marks in their mock National Assessment examinations.

In general, pupils do not switch their cameras on during online classes; the older they are, the less they switch them on, and this makes the educational process more difficult because teachers do not receive real and immediate feedback from them.

Some pupils prefer online education because they do not have to wake up so early in the morning and do not waste time travelling, and also because they feel more comfortable and more confident when they are in their own homes.

One advantage of online classes is that pupils can find out answers and solutions on their own by going through materials they have at home or by searching online, and when they do this, they remember things more easily. One teacher said that when pupils do not know a word or a piece of information, they look up the answer on the Internet immediately, and this has taught pupils how to use the DEX Online dictionary, as pupils do not have DEX in their homes.

The bond between teachers and pupils became stronger during the online period as they communicated more in order to do and correct homework. When pupils did not understand something or parents had questions, the latter phoned teachers.

Teachers tried to involve all pupils through activities tailored to pupils' needs using resources such as worksheets, homework, games and practical activities. They also encouraged pupils to help each other (with homework or charging up each others' tablets if they had electricity, etc.).

There is no formal mechanism for feedback between teachers and pupils, but pupils sometimes give feedback to their teachers of their own accord.

Remedial activities are working very well and pupils like them because they are face to face and very able pupils are not present, so they no longer feel inferior.

Conclusions from the focus group discussions

- Pupils like the way their school looks and also their teachers and what they learn;
- The relationship between pupils, teachers and parents is very good and it improved during the period of online activities, with each group gaining a clearer understanding of the involvement and responsibilities of the others;
- In general, it is not felt that there are any differences in treatment at the two schools on the grounds of ethnic origin, socio-economic status or school results; however, there are occasional situations where prejudices and labelling arise between both pupils and parents;
- Conflicts sometimes occur between pupils for various reasons, and they can be violent. They most often happen between pupils in lower years and those in higher years, as the latter try to exert authority and establish hierarchies. Conflicts also occur between girls and boys. Whenever such conflicts occur, teachers intervene and try to find solutions. At Pietroşani School, teachers and parents consider that there are no solutions for "problem children" and the school has no school counsellor;
- Before the pandemic, pupils participated in far more extracurricular activities, but these were scaled down due to the restrictions and temporary closure of the schools;
- The online education period posed challenges for all three categories of actors (pupils, parents and teachers), but each of them adapted and learned from this experience. However, pupils, parents and teaching staff prefer face-to-face activities, in which communication and the educational process are easier;
- Some pupils were unable to participate in online classes all the time because of a limited signal, a lack of suitable devices or obligations that they had at home. Teachers made an effort to pass materials on to these pupils through their parents or classmates and kept in touch with parents by telephone, visiting them in their homes when necessary;
- Online education also brought a number of opportunities, such as: rapid development of basic digital skills among pupils and teaching staff, more frequent use of digital equipment to make classes interactive and continued use of them when the schools reopened;
- Because of the gaps in pupils' knowledge and the fact that some concepts were not understood well enough, remedial education activities supported by the Ministry of National Education were arranged in both schools, and pupils and parents appreciated this. Pupils with poorer results and higher absenteeism rates were thus involved in face-to-face revision and remedial activities in groups of about 15. Because there are fewer pupils and they have similar levels of knowledge, they can understand things more easily and answer in class constantly without being afraid of being judged and labelled by others;
- Neither of the two schools has a formal and constant mechanism for feedback from parents and pupils, but they can express their views when they feel the need to do so. Pupils feel that they are listened to by teachers and gave examples of situations where teachers took their suggestions into account.

Appendix 4 – Case studies

Conțești Lower Secondary School, March 2021

A. Inclusive school culture

A.1. Describe the characteristics of the school community, with reference to the relationships between the main actors who contribute to school life: pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff, managers, representatives of the Board of Governors, parents, local authorities and other representatives of the community. Consider the extent to which the school facilitates the development of close relationships within the school, at local level or at county/national level. Particular attention should be paid to describing relationships between pupils, including in terms of factors that help or hinder their relationships (such as living conditions, family situation, etc.).

Conțești Lower Secondary School has a relatively small number of pupils (180) who use a single row of classrooms and learn in one “shift”. A total of 23 members of teaching staff teach at the school; the majority are permanent. Half come from the local area and half come from other localities.

The small number of pupils and teachers makes it easier for pupils to get to know each other and for pupils and teachers to do likewise. There are a number of Roma pupils in each class and they are well integrated into their classes. The relationships between classmates are very good, and there are no cases of discrimination between pupils; the understanding and interaction between them are very good. The pupils in the classes come from all social backgrounds and there are no differences in treatment on the grounds of poverty, the fact that some pupils come from single-parent families or the fact that some pupils’ parents are abroad.

There is a friendly atmosphere and good co-operation between the teaching staff. In addition, the management team stimulates and promotes co-operation and good communication between members of teaching staff. To this end, the head teacher makes coffee every morning for an initial daily socialising and communication exercise.

One important thing that has helped to preserve the relationships between the main actors who contribute to school life is the training courses run as part of the INSCHOOL project for members of teaching staff who have contributed to cultivating teachers’ abilities in relation to inclusive/intercultural education, both in class and in extracurricular activities, creating a context for understanding the differences between pupils as a resource for the learning process and stronger group cohesion between school staff in order to foster an inclusive culture within the school and value and make use of different life experiences. The sharing of experience with all of the schools involved in the first cycle of implementation of the INSCHOOL project, which led to an exchange of good practices in relation to the values of social inclusion, has also contributed to the development of an inclusive culture at the school. Following on from this, during the second cycle of implementation of the INSCHOOL project, Conțești School will make visits to selected schools in Suceava County during the coming period.

Activities that improved communication and co-operation between pupils in the same class and other pupils also took place as part of the INSCHOOL project. One of these activities was “peer mentoring”, whereby more able pupils helped less able ones to get ready for the next day. Another activity involved primary pupils going to nursery school and taking part in activities in which they worked together with, related to and helped pre-school children.

The relationship between pupils and teachers is very good, and there have been no serious breaches of discipline in the last few years. The fact that many teachers live within the locality means that interaction between them and pupils or the latter's parents extends beyond the school gates.

Co-operation with parents was constantly monitored in all activities and parents supported their children. Activities for parents or joint activities for both pupils and parents clarified many of the issues that they had when moving from one level of school education to another. Parents' participation in meetings led to acceptance of and respect for different traditions and life experiences and gave positive support to education in a spirit of respect for inclusive values.

Conțești School has set itself a goal of making the relationships between pupils, teachers and parents as good as possible every year and regards this as a factor that has a major impact on the quality of education.

A.2. Describe how the school community shares a common framework of inclusive values, with emphasis on respect for children's rights, the involvement of all children in school/extracurricular activities, the absence/presence of situations where discrimination occurs and respect for a safe and clean environment. You may also make reference to how the school deals with conflicts and the efforts it makes to increase children's confidence and self-esteem.

The school community shares a common framework of inclusive values that are promoted among pupils through many activities. Issues concerning children's rights are addressed during counselling classes, and to this end, pupils at Conțești School created a 40-metre mural depicting children's rights in cartoon form.

The school organises annual extracurricular activities for all children to improve relationships between pupils and learning activities are designed to maximise the potential of all of them, regardless of the environment they come from. During the second cycle of implementation of INSCHOOL, several sporting competitions were held for pupils at risk of dropping out of school in order to reduce the number of their absences (e.g. sledging competition, fishing competition).

Over the last few years, **no** situations of discrimination due to the numerous activities organised in this regard have been reported at the school. There are also no instances of segregation. Roma pupils are well integrated into every action that is organised and takes place at class or school level. One example is the extraordinary attitude of the Class 1 pupils who joyfully and lovingly welcomed a little girl diagnosed with Down's syndrome into their group. Whenever face-to-face classes take place, they protect her, pay her a lot of attention, help her with her homework and encourage her whenever necessary.

With regard to the school environment, the school has made clear progress during the INSCHOOL project. It has developed the grounds by concreting over them and rebuilding the surrounding fence and the access gates. It is continuing to organise activities to protect and maintain a clean environment during registration periods or extracurricular activities. However, there are still pupils who do not use the rubbish bins and throw paper away anywhere on school grounds. The school has begun working with an IT company to run a project to improve some bins by adding sensors and speakers to them so that the words "thank you" are heard when someone throws rubbish into them.

Conflicts between pupils happen only sporadically and are dealt with by both classmates and class teachers or primary teachers. The school's policy is one of counselling and conflict mediation, not punishing pupils.

B. School policies favourable to inclusion

B.1. Analyse the school's openness to its main actors, pupils, teachers and parents. State to what extent the school has developed routines (such as procedures) to receive and support new arrivals. Also make reference to the school's infrastructure (including the area around it: sports grounds, playgrounds) and the extent to which it facilitates access for everyone.

The school pays particular attention to people who have recently joined the school. Every class has a "Reception Committee" which was created during the first cycle of implementation of the INSCHOOL project and helps new pupils to adjust to the existing school space. These committees guide new pupils, explain things to them and advise them so that they can adapt as quickly as possible.

The teaching staff were trained through the INSCHOOL project on parental education and until the coronavirus pandemic began, joint activities for pupils, parents and teachers were run as part of the project.

Measures were taken within the school to make it easier for everyone to access learning environments by adjusting doorways so as to reduce the gaps between them and the floors of classrooms. In addition, a toilet for people with disabilities has been provided inside the school through the INSCHOOL project.

During the coronavirus pandemic, separate access procedures and routes were established for pupils studying on every level of the school building. Procedures for communicating with parents and giving them access to school grounds (especially for parents of pre-school children and pupils in primary education) were also developed.

B.2. Analyse the attention that is paid to diversity in the school: the training for teachers, the support given to children with different needs, facilities for pupils with disabilities affecting their movement, etc. Mention the extent to which acceptance of others is a practice that is supported within the school.

The diversity of pupils is respected at Conțești School and there is special support for children with different needs. Those with disabilities affecting their movement can use an access ramp and a toilet that is adapted to their needs. Access to classrooms has been made easier by adjusting the doorways.

Ethnic and religious diversity is not a barrier to good relationships between pupils and teaching staff at the school. The school has a counsellor and a mediator who help all pupils to integrate into the school through the activities that take place.

The teaching staff have been trained on inclusive education and intercultural education through the INSCHOOL project.

An annual "Celebrating Diversity Week" has been established through the INSCHOOL project. During the activities that take place during this week, representatives of ethnic minorities in the locality participate, along with pupils who belong to them and pupils who belong to the ethnic majority, in cultural sessions in which they present their history, traditions and culture. Also, representatives of religious groups in the locality (Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses) attend meetings at which, along with pupils belonging to their communities and Orthodox pupils, they present aspects of their faith, songs and poetry in order to increase understanding among pupils who belong to the majority and improve the well-being and self-esteem of pupils who belong to minority faiths.

C. Inclusive practices

C.1. Mention the extent to which the curriculum decided by the school (CDS – optional courses) aids inclusion. State whether pupils benefit from CDS and other extracurricular activities that support inclusion, diversity, co-operation, mutual support, etc. outside the school's curricula.

With regard to the curriculum decided by the school, there are still things that can be improved, firstly in relation to the number of CDS classes, which is generally very small; attempts are made to adhere to the minimum total number of class hours, and this is based on the standard cost per pupil. Against this background, the choices made by pupils/parents in relation to CDS are not being fully respected. CDS is still viewed as a way of making up the number of teaching hours (sometimes, even when they are offered in this way, optional subjects are properly designed in terms of the syllabus and planning and are intended to develop key skills) and the optional subjects offered are mono-disciplinary subjects, with no attempt being made to take a multidisciplinary or cross-disciplinary approach.

However, in recent years, an attempt has been made to provide CDS in the form of activities organised during “A Different Kind of School” week or extracurricular activities pursued as part of projects run by the school which lead, as far as possible, to the development of an inclusive environment in relationships between pupils, between pupils and teaching staff and between parents and teaching staff.

An activity entitled “One trip to the theatre for every pupil in their lifetime” took place at the school to this end as part of the INSCHOOL project. All pupils at the school (including those in nursery school education) attended theatre shows suitable for their age group and familiarised themselves with this art form; for most of them, it was the first such trip in their lives.

C.2. Describe the school's practices that facilitate learning: adapting curricula to children's needs, the collaborative education process (e.g. collaboration between teachers, collaboration between the management team and parents, relationships between pupils and teachers, etc.), use of specialist support services (counsellor, psychologist, speech therapist, support teacher).

To improve pupils' results in national assessments or assessments at the end of the school year, remedial activities were organised as part of the INSCHOOL project for pupils in primary and lower secondary education. To this end, primary teachers and teachers who teach subjects in which national examinations are sat ran weekly preparation classes for pupils who were weak at reading, writing and arithmetic. At the same time, more able pupils participated on a weekly basis in mentoring activities with weaker pupils and made preparations for the following day's lessons.

Teachers were actively involved in these activities and class teachers and the management of the school enabled as many pupils as possible to attend them through advice meetings with their parents.

As a result of these actions, for the first time in the school's history, more than half of pupils achieved marks above 5 in mathematics in the 2020 national assessment, so the school's pass rate was higher than the county rate and close to the national rate.

The school mediator improved communication with parents of Roma pupils and other people too, and the mediator's visits to the community increased the number of pupils who attended the remedial activities that were arranged. At the same time, the activities involving parents (some of which were run as a result of the involvement in INSCHOOL, e.g. themed meetings, courses run with the involvement of parents) increased the amount of respect and co-operation between the school and families, with parents finding out the teachers' point of view (everything the school does is justified by pupils' best interests) and teaching staff finding out directly from parents the difficulties that the latter have in general or in relation to their children.

The school counsellor held special meetings for pupils in Year 8 and individual counselling meetings for pupils at risk of dropping out of school and their parents. Personalised intervention plans are created for pupils with special educational needs. They take account of allocation forms, the environment that pupils come from and the individual circumstances of each child and aim to harness their potential and fit in with their personal interests.

As part of the INSCHOOL project, an activity for pupils and parents whereby the school counsellor, working together with class teachers and the education advisor, discussed topics such as absenteeism, leaving school early etc. took place every six months.

C3. Use in class of interactive teaching methods, involvement of teachers in learning activities that promote/support inclusion, diversity, co-operation and mutual support (with reference to INSCHOOL activities).

Since 2015, Conțești School has benefited from a project that has received EUR 20 000 of financing from a multinational company. Through this project, a laptop, a video projector and speakers have been purchased for every classroom and the speed of the whole school's Internet connection has been improved considerably. Since 2015, therefore, the teaching staff have been able to use digital textbooks and other digital aids.

During the pandemic and the online education period, the teaching staff at Conțești School have not had any difficulties in organising and running classes.

This year, as part of the INSCHOOL project, an interactive board will be purchased. This board and the school's existing board will be available to pupils and teachers so that learning activities can be made interactive.

During the coronavirus pandemic, pupils were involved in the online educational process, with teaching staff using interactive and innovative methods that led to an average attendance rate of over 85%.

At the same time, the school's teaching staff went on courses enabling them to deliver a skills-based curriculum in class and courses that promoted intercultural education (advice sessions run for teaching staff as part of the INSCHOOL pandemic intervention, the course run by Agenția Împreună and courses offered by Teleorman CCD [Teacher Training Centre]) or courses that related to intervention methods for children with special educational needs (advice sessions run for teaching staff and the dedicated course run during the first cycle of implementation of the INSCHOOL project).

D. Other aspects

Please mention any other relevant aspect in relation to the school's development in terms of inclusion: good inclusion practices, routines, lessons learned, notable outcomes, significant support activities, etc.

The most important outcomes achieved as a result of the activities conducted through the INSCHOOL project are the improvement in interethnic and interfaith relations at the school and the very good co-operation between the school, families and the local community.

The conditions in the school were improved as a result of the project and with the support of the local council. Conțești Council built a fence around the school and the school's administrative staff and parents erected a school gate to make pupils in the school safer. Together (local authorities, parents, teachers), they concreted over 1 000 square metres of the school's grounds, and the only outlay was the cost of the materials used. The school's green space was extended jointly with parents to an area in front of the nursery school where lawns were sown, flowers were planted, benches were painted, etc. A toilet for people with disabilities was built inside the school with the help of the school secretary and 10 parents.

Over 250 parents participated in the aforementioned activities and the other project activities, which means that 50% of the children's families sent at least one representative to the activities that took place as part of the project and the actions implemented over the last few years, which amounts to a 25% increase in parents' involvement in joint activities within the school.

Every pupil at the school participated in at least one of the INSCHOOL activities ("Pupil counselling activities", "Running a remedial education programme for pupils", "Pupil mentoring programme for pupils' lessons", "One trip to the theatre for every pupil", "Bullying", "Celebrating Diversity", "Meeting former pupils", "Interactive activities with parents", "Suggestion box", etc.).

The remedial and pupil peer mentoring programme led to very good results. The percentage of pupils who passed the mock national examination assessment for Year 8 pupils was very good and an improvement on the percentages achieved in previous years.

During the course of the activities, pupils gained an understanding of what aggression is, imagined what it is like to be on the receiving end of such treatment, laid down rules to reduce this phenomenon and took steps to combat it. The number of cases of intimidation at the school fell by 20%.

The range of activities offered through the INSCHOOL programme led to the creation of an inclusive school environment that promotes/supports inclusion, diversity, co-operation and mutual support.

Note: Although the items are worded in a positive way, it is expected that descriptions will capture positive aspects, examples of good practices and areas where improvement can be made or problems/challenges encountered by the schools analysed.

"Nicolae Titulescu" Lower Secondary School in Buzău, March 2021

A. Inclusive school culture

A.1. Describe the characteristics of the school community, with reference to the relationships between the main actors who contribute to school life: pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff, managers, representatives of the Board of Governors, parents, local authorities and other representatives of the community. Consider the extent to which the school facilitates

the development of close relationships within the school, at local level or at county/national level. Particular attention should be paid to describing relationships between pupils, including in terms of factors that help or hinder their relationships (such as living conditions, family situation, etc.).

The Nicolae Titulescu Lower Secondary School in Buzău is in a district with a mixed Romanian-Roma population where the main problem is big differences in terms of wealth: the Romanian population is extremely prosperous and lives in expensive houses, while the Roma population, which has traditionally been present in the area, lives at the opposite end, where there is a level of poverty that ranges from moderate to extreme.

Only a small proportion of the total population has completed more than compulsory education and there are a relatively large number of illiterate adults. The low level of the parents' education makes children from these families less motivated to go to school.

Against this background, children take interest in other things, lose their sense of purpose, lose interest in school and begin to miss classes, and eventually they drop out of school after having to repeat two or even three consecutive years. Educational intervention has been targeted at this problem in recent years (from the 2000s onwards), with the result that the phenomenon is no longer acute at the school and occurs only sporadically (particularly when the whole family moves abroad permanently); however, within the local community (the neighbourhood in which the school is located), there are instances where pupils drop out, in a situation where the streets in the neighbourhood are also within the catchment areas of other schools (streets within the neighbourhood lie within the catchment areas of another four schools).

In this environment, there are a number of specific problems, some of which arose a few years ago and were identified during various projects in which the school was involved, while others are recent: the problem of attendance in classes (which was identified by going through the school's registers and looking at the numbers of absences), the problem of school results, i.e. the pass rate (children who are absent from classes do not learn the content of the school curriculum and fail exams or have to repeat a year. This can be seen in the educational statistics that are drawn up at the end of every semester and school year), the problem of integration into the school community (children who are absent from classes lose contact with the school, become marginalised as a result and are no longer accepted by other pupils) and the issue of financial assistance (children from financially disadvantaged families do not have what they need for school activities, i.e. school supplies. As a result, children either do not attend or, if they do attend classes, do not do their homework, leading to failure at school). The statistics on absences and pass rates are also made worse when pupils go abroad with their families without complying with the legal transfer formalities (either because the parents did not tell the school they were going and the school found out through the school mediator, or because pupils are not enrolled in a particular type of education).

Having identified these issues, the school is seeking to create a climate favourable to education by promoting the well-being of everyone involved: teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and pupils. Projects offering non-reimbursable external financing (INSCHOOL, RODAWELL) are being accessed precisely in order to create this climate and to provide pupils with the teaching materials they need without their parents having to contribute to the purchase costs. Because the school's pupils are so diverse, inclusion is essential.

The school's relationship with parents is not being neglected and the school mediator plays a key role. As part of the INSCHOOL project, non-formal meetings were held with parents periodically in order to bring them closer to the school and break down barriers to communication, with creative activities or free discussions rather than the traditional

meetings with parents.⁸ The activities implemented through the INSCHOOL project involved the main actors who contribute to school life: pupils, teachers, parents, local authorities and other community representatives, and this led to the creation of an inclusive school environment.

The school's attitude towards the web of relationships within the local community is one of co-operation in that the school tries to meet the community's specific needs and parents are given a context in which they can support the school by redirecting 2% of their profit tax.⁹

The school co-operates constantly with the local authorities that are involved in the administrative side of the educational process and initiates letter-based correspondence in relation to a wide range of specific issues: National Drugs Agency – Buzău Regional Office, Community Police, Neighbourhood Police, “Vasile Voiculescu” County Library, Buzău Youth Foundation, County Sport Directorate, Directorate-General for Social Work and Child Protection, Town Hall, Local Municipal Council, etc.

A.2. Describe how the school community shares a common framework of inclusive values, with emphasis on respect for children's rights, the involvement of all children in school/extracurricular activities, the absence/presence of situations where discrimination occurs and respect for a safe and clean environment. You may also make reference to how the school deals with conflicts and the efforts it makes to increase children's confidence and self-esteem.

The school community shares a common framework of inclusive values that are promoted among pupils. Nicolae Titulescu Lower Secondary School has stood out for the quality of the education it provides, as illustrated by the results achieved in National Assessments and school competitions.¹⁰

The school's regulations were developed by consulting all stakeholders and in accordance with the Internal Regulations on the Organisation and Operation of Pre-university Educational Institutions. The Internal Regulations contain provisions on the activity of pupils, teaching staff, auxiliary staff and non-teaching staff.

With regard to the organisational climate, it can be said that this is open and characterised by dynamism and receptiveness to change, and the relationships between members of the teaching staff are cordial. Management has been flexible, stimulating and based on values such as belief in people, their creative abilities and their self-control. The head teacher works well together with staff members, takes their suggestions into account, takes decisions to mitigate failings reported in the activity of the school and tries to create an emotional climate that is based on harmony, balance, transparency, responsibility and fairness.

The teaching staff feel that they are involved in the educational process in a stimulating way and have faith in the organisation. They know how to work as part of a team and they show respect to each other, devotion to the children, devotion to their profession, enthusiasm and a desire to prove themselves. Through participatory management,

⁸ The eight meetings with parents covered the following topics: 1. The world is changing. What about us? / 2. Santa's Workshop / 3. Analysis of the school situation at the end of the semester / 4. Absenteeism / 5. How to become better parents / 6. National Assessment for Classes 2-4 / 7. National Assessment for Classes 6, 8. Final impressions. Suggestions. At the end of the meetings, most of the parents felt as if they had been to a counselling session with a psychologist because they not only found out that the school was an open and welcoming institution but also, in particular, because they themselves took a different view of the school, its teaching staff and their own children afterwards.

⁹ Parents and teaching staff formed the Nicolae Titulescu Buzău APP [Association of Parents and Teachers] which takes decisions on how they can support the school. This way, resources can be channelled in such a way as to cover precisely the needs that they identify.

¹⁰ For example, in 2019: National Assessment at the end of Class 8 – 90% of averages over 5 (national average: approximately 73%), in 2020: National Assessment at the end of Class 8 – 85% of averages over 5 (national average: approximately 70%); however, it must be borne in mind that there is only one Class 8 in each school year.

communication between teaching staff, between teaching staff and pupils and between teaching staff, non-teaching staff and the management was stimulated so that every member of the community could be an active and responsible participant in school life. There is a spirit of co-operation and emulation; the climate within the school gives a feeling of safety and balance. All of these things are reflected positively in teaching and educational activity and the behaviour of the teaching staff. Particular attention is paid to the relationship with parents of pupils who belong to disadvantaged groups: Roma pupils,¹¹ pupils whose parents (one or both) has/have gone abroad to work¹² and pupils with special educational needs.¹³

B. School policies that are favourable to inclusion

B.1. Analyse the school's openness to its main actors, pupils, teachers and parents. State to what extent the school has developed routines (such as procedures) to receive and support new arrivals. Also make reference to the school's infrastructure (including the area around it: sports grounds, playgrounds) and the extent to which it facilitates access for everyone.

At the "Nicolae Titulescu" Lower Secondary School, which is a diverse school with pupils in all social categories, Roma pupils, pupils with SEN and pupils from very poor families, the values of inclusive education are shared by all members of the school community. New arrivals (pupils, school staff) are given advice by the management team, mentors for the different cycles of education, class teachers, etc.

The school and its values are promoted every year on **School Day**, when there are activities and workshops that are open to anyone who wants to observe or obtain information.

The teaching staff were trained through the INSCHOOL project on parental education and until the coronavirus pandemic began, joint activities for pupils, parents and teachers were run as part of the project.

Parents are actively involved in the life of their children's school, and the methods by which the school informs all parents of matters of common interest in order to optimise the educational process or obtain the necessary support from parents include talks attended by parents and non-formal activities that are pursued with them.

With regard to infrastructure, except during the crisis period, recreation areas (green space outside the school, school grounds) are open to everyone at all times. The school operates in a single "shift" in the mornings at the request of parents, and the same applies to pre-school education (the nursery school). Despite its exceptional sporting results, especially in recent years, the school has no sports hall or sports field that comes close to existing safety standards. Its furniture is new and modern. It has 23 computers in the Computer Room, three computers and one notebook in the Journalism Room, two computers in the Physics and Chemistry Room, four colour televisions, a radio cassette system with a CD player, a home cinema audio system, an audio system that covers the entire school, including the hallways, a high-performance sound system for outdoor activities, a fax machine, photocopiers and printers. Every classroom has a computer (desktop or laptop), a projector and a printer.

¹¹ Where communication is difficult, the school mediator acts as an intermediary.

¹² Teaching staff constantly keep in touch with parents who have left through class groups so that they are always informed of their children's school results. In addition, parents have accounts on the educational platform that the school uses (which also serves as an electronic register) so that their children's results are communicated to parents in real time and seamlessly.

¹³ Personalised intervention plans are created for pupils with special educational needs; in addition, parents are kept informed about their children's legal rights.

The school was equipped with IT equipment, which is useful in general and especially in the context of the pandemic, through the INSCHOOL project with funding from the Council of Europe and Buzău Municipal Council and through the allocation of tablets by the Ministry of Education. The Adservio Platform, which serves as an IT interface between the school and pupils' families, should also be mentioned.

Both buildings – the school building and the one in which the nursery school operates – meet health requirements and Permanent Health Permits for operational purposes have been obtained for both of them in relation to both hygiene and lighting conditions or the distribution of the toilets.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the school established separate access procedures and routes for pupils studying on every level of the building. It also developed procedures for communicating with parents and giving them access to school grounds (especially for parents of pre-school children and pupils in primary education).

B.2. Analyse the attention that is paid to diversity in the school: the training for teachers, the support given to children with different needs, facilities for pupils with disabilities affecting their movement, etc. Mention the extent to which acceptance of others is a practice that is supported within the school.

Inclusive school policies create a friendly environment for the school community. The diversity of pupils is respected in the school and special support is given to children with different needs. For example, personalised intervention plans are created for pupils with special educational needs. They take account of allocation forms, the environment that pupils come from and the individual circumstances of each child and aim to harness their potential and fit in with their personal interests. The school's pupils are also incentivised to achieve by being entered for numerous competitions to do with general culture, the arts and sport and enjoy the prizes they receive.

These inclusive school policies are supported by projects, school and out-of-school activities and training courses. Teaching staff attended training courses/workshops to develop their cognitive abilities and skills in relation to inclusion so that they could gain a better understanding of the cultural and social differences of some of their pupils and their various educational or emotional needs. To this end, almost all of the teaching staff were involved in training courses as part of the INSCHOOL project in the 2018-2019 school year.

C. Inclusive practices

C.1. Mention the extent to which the curriculum decided by the school (CDS – optional courses) aids inclusion. State whether pupils benefit from CDS and other extracurricular activities that support inclusion, diversity, co-operation, mutual support, etc. outside the school's curricula.

The CDS that has been adopted at the school complies with the general principle of adoption, i.e. it is focused on developing the eight key skills and attitude skills in particular (cultural expression and identity, learning how to learn, self-assessment, relating to others within groups, negotiation skills) and meta-skills (entrepreneurial spirit and life design).

The selection of CDS is also based on the principle of proximity (of time, space and interests) so that the subject offered draws on pupils' life experience, cultural background, habits and knowledge with the aim of creating relevant learning contexts – and by extrapolation, they are useful in life *beyond the school gates*.

The following things may still be observed:

- a) a trend of offering optional courses out of inertia under arrangements that already exist (which are perpetuated from one year to the next) without attempting to update them constantly and tailor them to the specific circumstances of each class;
- b) CDS is viewed as a way of making up the number of teaching hours (sometimes, even when they are offered in this way, optional subjects are properly designed in terms of the syllabus and planning and are intended to develop key skills);
- c) the optional subjects offered are mono-disciplinary subjects, with no attempt being made to take a multidisciplinary or cross-disciplinary approach.

Extracurricular activities are the ones that contribute the most to developing an inclusive environment (in terms of relationships between pupils, relationships between pupils and teaching staff and relationships between parents and teaching staff), but it is extremely difficult to identify contexts in which they can take place, apart from “A Different Kind of School” week or the activities run as part of projects implemented by the school, including the activities run as part of the INSCHOOL project from 2018 onwards.

Besides requiring substantial and varied resources (human, time, financial), these activities are usually burdened by excessive bureaucracy due to the need to maintain safety or because of legal provisions concerning personal data protection.

C.2. Describe the school's practices that facilitate learning: adapting curricula to children's needs, the collaborative education process (e.g. collaboration between teachers, collaboration between the management team and parents, relationships between pupils and teachers, etc.), use of specialist support services (counsellor, psychologist, speech therapist, support teacher).

To improve pupils' results, adaptations of the curriculum aim to promote the talents and interests of the child as observed both by parents and also the teacher or specialist support team.

Personalised intervention plans are created for pupils with special educational needs. They take account of allocation forms, the environment that pupils come from and the individual circumstances of each child and aim to harness their potential and fit in with their personal interests.

These personalised intervention plans have been useful during face-to-face classes, but it is difficult to gauge their usefulness online; this disadvantaged category has been hit hardest by the pandemic as pupils with special educational needs are unable to use technology independently.

Co-operation between the actors involved in the educational process – pupils, teachers, parents and managers – is encouraged at the school. Communication is open and constructive and takes place by all means (face to face or online) and the school promotes co-operation between parties, taking beneficiaries' educational needs into account. Relationships within the school are characterised by respect, co-operation and a common denominator: pupils' best interests.

- *Between teachers* – co-operation is both horizontal and vertical. It is most intense when it is horizontal: primary teachers constantly share information, examples of good practice, problems that they encounter (for which the best solution is sought by drawing on personal experience within the department and providing educational

psychology training); in addition, lower secondary teachers have a co-operative attitude, especially in relation to the methods used and pupils' participation in the teaching process, in view of the fact that members of the same family (brothers, sisters, cousins) or neighbours are usually put in different classes. Vertical co-operation occurs on a smaller scale, and there is relative distancing between primary teachers and lower secondary teachers; co-operation is constant in Classes 4 and 5 (the class teacher co-operates with the primary teacher and teaching staff, especially those who teach Romanian and mathematics, participate in Class 4 lessons to make pupils' transition from one cycle of education to the next smoother); there is also co-operation in the creation of personalised intervention plans, as lower secondary teachers use helpful information provided by primary teachers in carrying out personalised interventions; those who have recently joined the school are given time to adjust to the (collaborative) nature of these relationships.

- *Between pupils* – relationships are based on co-operation and mutual support (with a focus on supporting those who have learning difficulties and SEN); there are no major conflicts that radically alter the dynamics of relationships between children; the methods used in class strengthen the nature of these relationships; sometimes, however, conflicts between families (relatives or neighbours) are transferred to children by copying, and in such cases, the school tries as much as it can, where it is allowed to do so, to intervene and resolve these conflicts between pupils and keep relationships at this age within the boundaries of decency and normality; the majority of conflicts occur during the pre-adolescent period, i.e. in Classes 7 or 8; those who have recently joined the school are given time to adjust to the (collaborative) nature of these relationships.
- *Between pupils and teaching staff* – relationships are based on respect and co-operation at both primary and lower secondary level; at primary level, the closeness between teaching staff and pupils is obvious; at lower secondary level, relationships are closer between teachers who also teach at primary level and more distant between teachers who also teach upper secondary classes (in both cases, there is “borrowing” from the nature of the relationships that exist at primary/lower secondary level, as appropriate); those who have recently joined the school are given time to adjust to the (collaborative) nature of these relationships.
- *Between teaching staff and parents* – relationships are based on respect and co-operation; the activities involving parents (some of which were run as a result of the involvement in INSCHOOL – e.g. Weekend Cafe, themed online meetings during the pandemic or courses with psychologists during the summer holidays) strengthened this relationship of co-operation, with parents finding out the teachers' point of view (everything the school does is justified by pupils' best interests) and teaching staff finding out directly from parents the difficulties that the latter have in general or in relation to their children; those who have recently joined the school are given time to adjust to the (collaborative) nature of these relationships.

The school is supported by a school counsellor, a speech therapist, a support teacher and a school mediator. Other than the mediator, who is employed by the school, the others are employees of the County Resources and Educational Assistance Centre or the School Centre for Inclusive Education, which makes intervention in the school difficult as an insufficient number of hours are allocated (yet having them is an advantage, in view of the lack of staff in this category in Buzău County).

C3. Use in class of interactive teaching methods, involvement of teachers in learning activities that promote/support inclusion, diversity, co-operation and mutual support (with reference to INSCHOOL activities).

All of the teaching staff at the school went on courses enabling them to deliver a skills-based curriculum in the classroom (those eligible as part of the CRED project, courses offered by Buzău CCD [Teacher Training Centre]) and courses that promoted intercultural education (advice sessions for teaching staff run as part of the INSCHOOL

pandemic intervention during the summer holidays, the course provided by Agenția Împreună and courses offered by Buzău CCD) or courses that related to intervention methods for children with SEN (advice sessions run for teaching staff during the summer holidays and the dedicated course run during INSCHOOL 1). However, those who have recently joined the school are given time to adjust to the community and the pupils, so continuity in the training of teaching staff is essential (either for skills training or to update existing information): from this point of view, there is a problem with inadequate (or non-existent) funding for professional training and the school is almost entirely dependent on the implementation of projects or the availability of allocations from teaching staff's own funds.

D. Other aspects

Please mention any other relevant aspect in relation to the school's development in terms of inclusion: good inclusion practices, routines, lessons learned, notable outcomes, significant support activities, etc.

Positive aspects:

- There are remedial education activities that help pupils to catch up and reduce the risk of school failure and abandonment in the current period;
- The school mediator has worked intensely and effectively (with teaching staff) and by visiting pupils at their homes, the mediator has addressed the lack of devices for online classes (even going so far as to offer tablets to all those who needed them);
- The "School After School" programme was run by primary teachers when the pandemic situation allowed this (it formed part of the school's educational offering through the preparatory class);
- Teaching activities took place (both curricular activities, including classes, and extracurricular activities) in a space set up especially for this purpose on the school grounds, outdoors (green space), in the spring, summer and autumn (when the weather permitted);
- Real inter-institutional educational partnerships (not just partnerships on paper, as sometimes unfortunately exist) ran extracurricular activities that were intended to make pupils more independent, boost their self-esteem and develop their attitude skills.

“Prof. Ion Vişoiu” Lower Secondary School, Chitila, March 2021

A.1. Describe the characteristics of the school community, with reference to the relationships between the main actors who contribute to school life: pupils, teachers, non-teaching staff, managers, representatives of the Board of Governors, parents, local authorities and other representatives of the community. Consider the extent to which the school facilitates the development of close relationships within the school, at local level or at county/national level. Particular attention should be paid to describing relationships between pupils, including in terms of factors that help or hinder their relationships (such as living conditions, family situation, etc.).

A.2. Describe how the school community shares a common framework of inclusive values, with emphasis on respect for children’s rights, the involvement of all children in school/extracurricular activities, the absence/presence of situations where discrimination occurs and respect for a safe and clean environment. You may also make reference to how the school deals with conflicts and the efforts it makes to increase children’s confidence and self-esteem.

When the **INSCHOOL-Inclusive Schools: Making a difference for Roma children** project was implemented at the “Prof. Ion Vişoiu” Lower Secondary School in Chitila from November 2018 to June 2019, it marked the beginning of a reassessment and restructuring of the values of the school’s culture. The school’s vision (“Everyone for school, school for everyone”), its mission, the values it promotes, its targets and its strategic choices define a school and a community that “have their finger on the pulse of society at all times and are adapted to the world we live in”.

The institutional development plan (IDP) and the operational plan (OP) were analysed and reviewed with the involvement of a co-ordinating committee at school level. These efforts were supported by the education advisor and a facilitator. The documents were reviewed on the basis of the Index for Inclusion through school consultations with teaching and non-teaching staff and representatives of parents and pupils during the initial implementation of the Index for Inclusion methodology (March-October 2018) and the three applications¹⁴ for INSCHOOL grants were put together on the basis of the school’s priorities and vision as recorded in the final IDPs adopted by the school. The school carried out a further review of the IDP in the summer of 2020.

The activities implemented during the INSCHOOL project aroused the interest of all stakeholders and led to the creation of an inclusive school environment. In this regard, mention may be made of the participation of a very large number of **pupils** (over 90% of the 1 300) in the project activities, including those in disadvantaged groups (Roma, with SEN, from troubled homes, on low incomes, etc.).

The most attractive workshop held as an INSCHOOL project activity was “**Art for everyone**”. Drama/personal development and dance classes captivated participants and increased their self-confidence, stimulated their creative potential, mobilised them and hence attracted children to the school, with many of those involved being members of disadvantaged groups (40 children, 10 parents). Subsequently, there was a fall in absenteeism and the number of those at risk of dropping out, and opportunities to make progress at school were created for some beneficiaries. Relationships between pupils, which were a little slow to develop at first, became flexible and tolerant, with many barriers to integration being broken down one by one. Children worked together harmoniously during the activities on School Days (presentation of traditional costumes, traditional dance, short pieces of theatre), on International Roma Day, during workshops when models were made for the **non-formal space**, during the **sharing of experience** with fellow pupils in advanced school years (“**Let’s grow together**”) and when the image of an inclusive school was

¹⁴ INSCHOOL1, INSCHOOL 2 and COVID Emergency Grant

promoted in the magazine “**Everyone at school**”. The involvement of the Pupils’ Council in decision-making consolidated its participation in school governance within a short time.

The **training courses** (inclusive/intercultural education) and the team building exercise for teaching staff (over 60 nursery school teachers, primary school teachers, teachers, teachers at the beginning of their career and substitute teachers, with or without teaching experience) were intended to cultivate teachers’ inclusive education abilities, both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities, creating a context for understanding the differences between pupils as a resource for the learning process. They were also designed to lead to stronger group cohesion between school staff in order to develop an inclusive culture within the school and value and make use of different life experiences. The inclusive approach to teaching and learning led to a change in the entrenched beliefs of teaching staff, who adapted their educational approach to the different needs of pupils and used non-formal methods in their teaching and extracurricular activity. The relationship between teachers and pupils improved noticeably. Peer mentoring also took place between teachers, with young teachers helping their older colleagues to develop their IT skills, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **visit** made by teaching staff to the “Ferdinand I” Lower Secondary School and the **visits** made by fellow teachers from the “Ferdinand I” Lower Secondary School to Conțești and Cilibia played an important role by enabling good practices in relation to the values of social inclusion to be shared.

Co-operation with **parents** was constantly monitored during all activities, and they provided support to their children. The workshops forming part of the activity “**Let’s grow together**” clarified many of the problems encountered when moving up from one level of school education to another. The school counsellor’s participation in the meetings raised awareness of the cultural or other differences between pupils and led to acceptance of and respect for different traditions and life experiences. Parents are role models for their children, so a change in their attitude towards pupils in disadvantaged categories (including those of Roma ethnicity) gave positive support to education in a spirit of respect for inclusive values.

Parents and pupils are a binding force for the development of an inclusive culture in the **community**. Local authorities, NGOs and non-profit foundations also supported the project activities and laid the foundations for the creation of a friendly and tolerant school environment.

The **impact of the project** has been enlightening, but against the background of the pandemic crisis, the social context has changed over the past year, affecting the points of reference of inclusive education. Cultural, family and social divides became more marked and current learning needs and new challenges caused the Romanian education system to malfunction for a time. Last summer (2020), the focus was put on developing the IT skills of both pupils and teaching staff and on providing psychological and emotional counselling to children and parents from deprived environments. The current school year (September 2020 – June 2021) is once again in deadlock, with many pupils having to learn online and sometimes lacking devices or sufficient income for their day-to-day lives. As a result, it is not certain that their full potential will be tapped into or that they will be able to develop certain life skills given the uncertainty surrounding access to high-quality inclusive education.

*In addition to the tablets sent by the Ministry of Education, the school also ran a campaign to collect IT devices for everyone and obtained another 100 tablets, laptops and monitors. In total, as at February 2021, it has 387 tablets, five laptops and three video projectors.

The project was made **sustainable** by keeping the spotlight on inclusive values: equal access to high-quality education for all children, respecting differences in ethnic origin, religion, culture, social situation, etc., non-discrimination, tolerance, developing a sense of dignity and self-esteem and respecting fundamental human rights and freedoms. Projects or activities were initiated and run in partnership with different NGOs, foundations and community representatives; they focused on inclusion, prevention of bullying and non-discrimination and were aimed at pupils in all social categories. Pupils worked in teams, online or face to face and formed relationships of support and mutual understanding (“**County anti-violence forum**”, “**Let’s go to the theatre**”, “**Together for the community**”, “**Education is your chance!**”, “**It takes everyone**”, “**Giving pupils responsibility through mentoring**”, “**Attitudes**”, “**Autumn fair**”, “**International Roma Day**”, “**Without hate, with tolerance**”).

During the activities, pupils adapted their role playing to hypothetical situations of bullying, violence or discrimination and took decisions in teams to solve problems. At school level, there is the **Pupils’ Council**, which is made up of representatives of all classes/primary pupils and lower secondary pupils and debates real-life situations at the school that relate to the proposed topics. **Class councils**, which are made up of teaching staff, a class teacher/primary school teacher, a representative of parents and a representative of pupils, deal with the issues of bullying, violence, inappropriate behaviour and discrimination at school level. Their aim is not to punish or label, but rather to resolve and improve this behaviour.

B. School policies favourable to inclusion

B.1. Analyse the school’s openness to its main actors, pupils, teachers and parents. State to what extent the school has developed routines (such as procedures) to receive and support new arrivals. Also make reference to the school’s infrastructure (including the area around it: sports grounds, playgrounds) and the extent to which it facilitates access for everyone.

The values of inclusive education are shared by all members of the community within the school, which is diverse and has pupils in all social categories, with over 15% of its pupils being Roma and 29 pupils with disabilities at present. **New arrivals (pupils, school staff) are given advice by the management team, colleagues on the Teachers’ Council, mentors for different cycles of education, class teachers, etc.**

The “**professional development plan for new teachers**” is a document that helps new teachers to integrate into the school through the strategy that it proposes.

Young teachers are guided and advised by experienced colleagues, assisted during classes and given plenty of support so that they do not feel like outsiders.

Integration processes for non-teaching staff are also useful in supporting new hires. Children who enrol in a **preparatory class or are transferred to the school** are accepted without discrimination as long as they live within the locality. Parents are invited to visit the school and to talk to their children’s prospective primary teachers or class teachers before their children are enrolled or transferred. New pupils are taken and introduced to the classes to which they are assigned by the head teacher or the teacher on duty.

The school and its values are promoted every year on **Open Day**, when nursery school pupils and parents of children at the school have the opportunity to visit the classrooms and other areas and attend lessons or workshops which are

jointly arranged in advance. On **School Days (22-23 January)**, workshops are open to anyone who wants to observe or obtain information.

With regard to infrastructure, except during the crisis period, recreation areas (green space in front of the school, school grounds) are open to everyone at all times. Pupils have planted trees and looked after them in randomly created teams. There is free access to corridors, classrooms and toilets provided that safety measures are complied with. Pupils who have disabilities affecting their movement are put in classes whose classroom is on the ground floor so that they can move around safely.

B.2. Analyse the attention that is paid to diversity in the school: the training for teachers, the support given to children with different needs, facilities for pupils with disabilities affecting their movement, etc. Mention the extent to which acceptance of others is a practice that is supported within the school.

The school's inclusive policies create the framework for a friendly ethos for the school community. These policies are confirmed by projects, school activities, extracurricular activities and training courses. The teaching staff went on training courses to develop their cognitive abilities and skills in relation to inclusion so that they could gain a better understanding of the cultural and social differences of some of their pupils and their different educational or emotional needs. To this end, almost all of the teaching staff were involved in the INSCHOOL training courses in the 2018-2019 school year. Some of the teachers subsequently applied to be trained on intercultural education, class management and inclusive education. Encouragement of diversity and acceptance of the uniqueness of every pupil are among the motivations for any teacher. A special role is currently being played by the school counsellor, the speech therapist and visiting teachers who support children with disabilities of any kind and hence the work of teachers. The school has a policy on prevention and early intervention programmes.

C. Inclusive practices

C.1. Mention the extent to which the curriculum decided by the school (CDS – optional courses) aids inclusion. State whether pupils benefit from CDS and other extracurricular activities that support inclusion, diversity, co-operation, mutual support, etc. outside the school's curricula.

The curriculum decided by the school (CDS) is the educational offering proposed by teaching staff in line with pupils' learning needs and interests, the organisational culture and the traditions of the local community. However, the scope for putting together a CDS offering based on the expectations and needs of direct and indirect beneficiaries is limited as the new framework plan is restrictive (integrated optional subject requirement, large number of class hours devoted to the weekly core curriculum). As a result, many options are tailored to children's general needs: "Health education", "Counselling and guidance", "I am clean, I am healthy", "Road education", "Fun maths", "Reading and life skills", "The history of Chitila", "In the world of stories", etc.

Extracurricular activities (including projects) are catalysts for group cohesion, teamwork and mutual support. "**English Language Programme for Youth**" (ELPY) was a two-year project aimed at Roma children, mainly from families on low incomes, who wanted to improve their American English. "**The joy of giving**" was aimed at children in a children's home, and pupils belonging to vulnerable groups at the school got involved in the project and enjoyed being able to give some of the little that they had to others who were less fortunate than themselves.

Global Campaign for Education, with support from Save the Children; **“Together for the community”** (which targeted inclusion); **“Respect for diversity”**, **“Home alone”**, **“Choose to value, not to crush”**, **“Uncensored”**, **“Antibullying Week”**, etc.

C.2. Describe the school's practices that facilitate learning: adapting curricula to children's needs, the collaborative education process (e.g. collaboration between teachers, collaboration between the management team and parents, relationships between pupils and teachers, etc.), use of specialist support services (counsellor, psychologist, speech therapist, support teacher).

Inclusive practices help pupils to change their mindset, learn to co-operate and achieve progress at school. The school encourages co-operation between education actors: pupils, teachers, parents and managers. Joint workshops, open and constructive communication through all channels (social media, online or face-to-face meetings), the creation of communities of parents and teachers, the Pupils' Council and the specialist support team (counsellor, speech therapist, support teachers) promote co-operation between parties, taking the needs of education beneficiaries into account. Adaptations of the curriculum aim to promote the talents and interests of the child as observed by both parents and also the teacher or specialist support team.

C.3. Use in class of interactive teaching methods, involvement of teachers in learning activities that promote/support inclusion, diversity, co-operation and mutual support (with reference to INSCHOOL activities).

The pleasant, co-operative and accepting environment that is conducive to learning in the classroom results from the development of certain abilities and skills of teachers that support inclusion. In this regard, the training courses forming part of the INSCHOOL project in relation to inclusive education and non-formal methods have provided real support.

At the moment, due to the pandemic crisis situation and online teaching, 122 children did not complete Semester 1 because they did not have a tablet, a telephone/laptop or IT skills or because their families were disorganised and disinterested in supporting them. Absenteeism and the risk of dropping out of school are still challenges for many of them. To support them, the **“School After School”** national programme was recently launched for 112 pupils, and this number will increase if more people want to join in. This is a remedial school programme in which children “will be taught how to learn”, first and foremost, in four groups at primary level and another four groups at lower secondary level.

Appendix 5 – IDP/OP inclusion/inclusiveness analysis grid

No.	Indicators	Assessment	
		YES	NO
IDP – INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN			
School's medium-term and long-term strategy (3-5 years)			
I. Introduction			
	a. Is the IDP based on and adjusted in line with the outcomes of the previous IDP?		
	b. Is the IDP validated by the Teachers' Council and approved by the Board of Governors?		
	c. Does it cover a period of 3-5 years?		
	d. Are the names of the team members who co-ordinate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the IDP mentioned?		
II. Diagnosis of the environment inside and outside the school organisation			
II.1. Analysis of the community			
	a. Is the geography of the community described with reference, where appropriate, to its administrative structure (districts, villages, zones)?		
	b. Is the ethnic and religious structure of the population captured in qualitative and quantitative terms?		
	c. Are the socio-economic aspects of the community (broken down by district/zone, where appropriate) highlighted?		
	d. Are cultural aspects of the community (events, traditions, customs, etc.) described?		
	e. Are institutions within the community presented as possible partners of the school?		
	f. Is the community's involvement in school life captured?		
II.2. Overview of the school – quantitative and qualitative data			
II.2.1. Identifying details of the school			
	a. Are the school's identifying details (name, address, telephone number, etc.) given?		
	b. Is a brief history of the school, including elements of continuity, given?		
II.2.2. School's curricular resources			
	a. Is the curriculum that the school offers outlined?		
	b. Is the curriculum decided by the school outlined?		
	c. Does the curriculum decided by the school meet the needs/expectations of all children?		
	d. Does the school's curriculum include topics relating to: ecology, children's rights, democratic citizenship, first aid?		
	e. Are details of the way in which the curriculum is addressed in school activities given?		

		f. Is reference made to the teaching methods, techniques and strategies that are used?		
		II.2.3. Human resources – teachers		
		a. Is the structure of the teaching staff described in quantitative and qualitative terms?		
		b. Is the structure of the auxiliary teaching staff and non-teaching staff captured?		
		c. Are staff members who provide counselling, speech therapy, support and school mediation services, as applicable, described?		
		d. Are human resources differentiated in terms of status (permanent/substitute, qualified/unqualified)?		
		e. Are human resources differentiated on the basis of the level of teacher certification that they have attained?		
		f. Are human resources differentiated in terms of areas of the curriculum?		
		g. Has qualitative analysis of human resources data been carried out?		
		h. Is the level of training of teaching staff to work with pupils with special needs described?		
		i. Is reference made to continuous training of teaching staff, particularly in the fields of: inclusive education, multicultural education, democratic citizenship, modern teaching strategies, etc.?		
		j. Are deficiencies in relation to human resources (number, training, involvement, etc.) described?		
		k. Is the motivation of teaching staff to optimise their teaching and develop an inclusive school described?		
		l. Is reference made to resource teachers for new arrivals or new starters?		
		m. Is a description of the relationships between members of the school's staff (co-operation, conflicts) given?		
		II.2.4. Human resources – pupils		
		a. Is a breakdown of the number of pupils in each year group given?		
		b. Is a breakdown of pupils in terms of ethnic origin and religion given?		
		c. Is the socio-economic status of pupils described?		
		d. Are the languages that pupils speak at home stated?		
		e. Is the presence of pupils with special needs in the school described, with a breakdown by category of needs?		
		f. Have pupils with a certificate of school and professional orientation been taken into account?		
		g. Are pupils' results in terms of achievements and failings described?		
		h. Is a description of the progress made by pupils who encounter difficulties in learning given?		
		i. Are pupils' talents, concerns and opportunities to give support to their classmates described?		
		j. Are data concerning pupils' attendance (absenteeism, dropping out) given?		

		k. Are data concerning pupils' attendance correlated with data concerning results and family environments?		
		l. Is the situation regarding violence at the school and relationships between pupils described?		
		II.2.5. Material and financial resources		
		a. Are the spaces within the school described in qualitative and quantitative terms?		
		b. Are the school's resources described in qualitative and quantitative terms?		
		c. Are the adaptations/spaces/resources that facilitate the integration of all pupils described?		
		d. Is reference made to spaces within the school that offer equal conditions of comfort to all pupils?		
		e. Are the spaces that are made available to pupils/parents for relaxation/recreation/discussions described?		
		f. Are deficiencies in terms of spaces/resources within the school mentioned?		
		g. Have any hazards/risks faced by participants in school life in learning spaces, if applicable, been assessed?		
		h. Are details of the budget and extra-budgetary financing given?		
		i. Have aspects of the design of the school (furniture, displays, decor, etc.) that meet the expectations of all beneficiaries also been considered?		
		j. Are the teaching materials that are available in the school (equipment, pictures, books, multimedia CDs, etc.) described?		
		II.3. SWOT analysis		
		a. Do the strengths and weaknesses make reference to internal aspects of the organisation?		
		b. Do the opportunities and threats make reference to aspects external to the organisation?		
		c. Do the four analysed aspects (SWOT) relate to functional areas: the curriculum, human resources, material resources, community relations?		
		d. Are both positive things and those that have been less successful described accurately?		
		e. Does the analysis make it easier to highlight the identified needs?		
		f. Does the analysis make it easier to highlight the needs in terms of inclusion?		
		II.4. PEST(ELE) analysis		
		II.4.1. Political		
		a. Do the <i>Political</i> factors make reference to national education policies?		
		b. Do the <i>Political</i> factors make reference to regional/local education policies?		
		c. Have inclusion policies been taken into account?		
		II.4.2. Economic		

		a. Do the <i>Economic</i> factors make reference to the community's economic situation?		
		b. Are any economic and financial resources within the community that can support the school described?		
		c. Is reference made to the level of parents' income, those who are in receipt of social/unemployment benefits, etc.?		
		II.4.3. Social		
		a. Do the <i>Social</i> factors make reference to the demographic structure, the structure of the school population in terms of social environments, the level of parents' education, the state of children's health, etc.?		
		b. Is reference made to children who are certified as having various disabilities?		
		c. Are the ways in which the community addresses social and education issues described: poverty, unemployment, delinquency, single-parent families, children whose parents have gone abroad, disabilities, etc.?		
		II.4.4. Technological		
		a. Do the <i>Technological</i> factors make reference to technologies that exist within the school/community and support learning?		
		b. Are technologies that make learning easier for pupils with special needs described?		
		c. Is the extent to which technology is used during classes and extracurricular activities described?		
		d. Are the staff's abilities to use new technologies described?		
		II.4.5. Ecological		
		a. Do the <i>Ecological</i> factors make reference to air and water quality, access to water resources, green spaces around the school, etc.?		
		b. Are any possibilities for selective collection of waste mentioned?		
		c. Is the fact that all of the school's activities are designed to comply with environmental protection standards mentioned?		
		d. Is the extent to which the topic of environmental protection is taken into account in both classes and out-of-school/extracurricular activities highlighted?		
		II.4.6. Ethical		
		a. Do the <i>Ethical</i> factors make reference to respect for equality of opportunity for all participants in school life?		
		b. Is reference made to ethical values/principles that govern school life such as: fairness, equality, access, participation, respect, development of dialogue, etc.?		
		II.5. Elements of organisational culture		
		a. Are traditions, school customs, ceremonies and annual events described?		
		b. Are things that serve an identifying purpose – logos, leaflets, etc. – described?		

		c. Are formal and informal rules mentioned in terms of their role in optimising inclusivity?		
		d. Are the school's projects and partnerships, particularly those relevant to increasing the level of inclusivity, described?		
		e. Are events relating to recognition of children's rights and the development of democratic practices described?		
		f. Is the school's climate/atmosphere described?		
		g. Are aspects relating to methods of communication/interaction within the school described?		
II.6. Needs of the school				
		a. Have the school's main needs been identified from the diagnostic assessment of the organisational environment?		
		b. Have the needs been identified realistically?		
		c. Are they described concisely?		
		d. Are they described in terms that enable them to be addressed in practice?		
III. Vision and mission of the school				
III.1. Vision of the school				
		a. Is it worded concisely in clear, easy-to-understand terms?		
		b. Is it worded so as to enable all those involved in school life to participate actively?		
		c. Does it include components relating to inclusion/inclusivity?		
III.2. Mission of the school				
		a. Does it express the aim of the organisation and its values and principles in a focused way?		
		b. Does it stem from the school's vision?		
		c. Does it answer the questions: what does the organisation offer, who does it offer it to and how does it offer it?		
		d. Is it worded in such a way that it can be evaluated?		
		e. Does it include components relating to inclusion/inclusivity?		
		f. Can it be understood by parents, pupils, members of the community, etc.?		
IV. Strategic aims and choices				
IV.1. Strategic aims				
		a. Have 4-6 strategic aims been established?		
		b. Do they stem from the identified needs?		
		c. Are they worded in general terms, without overlapping with the organisation's obligations?		
		d. Are they realistic?		
		e. Are they worded in such a way that there is no overlap between them?		
		f. Are they adapted to the context and resources of the school?		
		g. Does at least one aim target aspects of inclusion (e.g. <i>enrolling all children within the locality/district in the school</i>)?		
		h. Can they be implemented through specific activities?		

		i. Have the reasons for choosing these aims been explained?		
IV.2. Strategic choices				
		a. Are the strategic aims analysed in the light of the four strategic choices: curriculum development, development of human resources, development of material resources and development of community relations?		
OP – OPERATIONAL PLAN School's short-term strategy (1 year)				
V. Structure				
		a. Are there SMART objectives for every aim?		
		b. Is every objective implemented through activities?		
		c. Is every activity described together with the necessary resources (material, human, time and space)?		
		d. Are the expected outcomes/performance indicators indicated for each activity?		
		e. Are the monitoring and evaluation methods for each activity described?		
VI. Content				
		a. Are the proposed activities realistic and feasible?		
		b. Are the proposed time limits realistic?		
		c. Are the resources that are mentioned appropriate to the type of activity?		
		d. Do the proposed activities draw on the varied experience of local people, teachers and pupils and their interests and needs?		
		e. Are inclusive activities proposed?		
		f. Are activities that encourage the sharing of opinions and interaction between children proposed?		
		g. Are the proposed activities targeted at all categories of staff?		
		h. Do the proposed activities include all pupils at the school?		
		i. Are the proposed activities non-discriminatory towards different categories of gender, religion, ethnic origin, etc.?		
VII. Monitoring and evaluation methods				
		a. Are methods of monitoring and evaluating the IDP proposed?		
		b. Are methods of monitoring and evaluating the OP proposed?		
		c. Do the monitoring and evaluation methods make reference to operational procedures of the school?		
VIII. General				
		a. Are the components of the IDP/OP presented in a logical and continuous manner?		
		b. Is there consistency of content and action between the components of the IDP/OP?		
		c. Is the language used specific but understandable?		

		d. Are the analyses, aims and actions that are proposed realistic and achievable?		
		e. Do the strategic documents indicate the attention that is paid to the inclusion of all children in the school's activities?		
		f. Is inclusivity a defining aspect of the strategic documents?		