Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

A National Strategy on Social Inclusion [1] exists in Romania and the Youth Strategy has a dedicated pillar to youth inclusion. A separate strategy on the social inclusion of young people as such does not exist in Romania.

Both strategic documents have been approved by Government Decisions in 2015: the Youth Strategy by Government Decision no. 24/2015 and the National Strategy on Social Inclusion by Government Decision no. 383/2015.

All measure for social inclusion stipulated by different governmental strategies and programmes have been reunited in 2016 in the Anti-poverty Package [2]. The package includes several provisions for young people. For young people who dropped out of school and have reduced chances to get a job, developing programmes to assist their professional development as well as to continue their studies were planned. The Anti-poverty Package is not a legal document by itself. It is an instrument used to organise all the government strategies, initiatives and programmes regulated by law or Government Decision.
Scope and contents

In the field of social inclusion of youth the anti-poverty package has measures targeting children and young people under 18 and measures targeting young adults. These measures are:

1. **School - the inclusion motor in disadvantaged areas**

   The initiative is centring social services for the inhabitants of the LFA (less favoured area) around school, so it becomes a motor of social inclusion, by supplementing the activity of Public Social Assistance Services and by giving information, counselling and social, health and educational services to the children and young people attending school and their families. By means of:

   a. social and medical office (including dentist’s office) in schools;
   b. specialised staff (psychologist, school counsellor, speech therapist);
   c. schools canteen

1. **School after school - national program in the less favoured schools**

   The programme aims at educational support for vulnerable children and young people in order to prevent school dropout by providing after school programmes, including hot meals. The programme will establish the mechanism to extend the existing programme at national level. The programme was to be piloted in 50 schools and expanded then at the national level.

1. **Second Chance - national program in the LFA**

   The programme aims at increasing the number of schools offering the Second Chance. The programme offers a flexible school approach to bring children, young people and adults back to school in order to graduate mandatory education levels.

1. **Grants for schools in LFA**

   The initiative is following an implementation plan model from the World Bank, by

   a. Revising the per capita financing formula
   b. Grants for increasing the efficiency of disadvantaged schools
   c. Grants for school - community partnerships
   d. Prizes for talented teachers in disadvantaged schools

1. **National programme following the 'Teach for Romania' model**

   The initiative aims at developing a national program consisting of recruiting highly talented young people, including teachers already employed in the education system, training them, offering support scholarships and grants and a mentoring program for teaching for 2 years in...
disadvantaged, vulnerable and/or remote schools.

1. **Schools accessible to children**

   The initiative aims at ensuring enough and proper spaces for classes by also stimulating entrepreneurship in vulnerable areas in:

   a. construction, extension and/or repairing works in kindergartens and schools with a high number of less favoured children.
   b. ensuring local transportation (school buses or minivans) by providing vouchers to pupils

1. **Preventing early dropout through sport** [6]

   This is a pilot program aimed at attracting and keeping children and young people in school through sport activities development. The initiative is be funded by the European Economic Area programmes.

1. **Integrated national program for young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)**

   The initiative offers individual assistance for each case: registration, profiling, information and counselling, monitoring the measures dedicated to NEETs, including either employment measures (including auto-employment) or measures to get young people back to education, using initiatives like the Second Chance school programme.

1. **Revival of vocational and technical education in urban and rural areas**

   The initiative aims at developing the professional and vocational education – scaling pilot projects of vocational schools, in partnership with the employers.

1. **The socio-professional insertion of young people leaving the special protection system**

   The initiative aims at developing Transit Centres, Social Apartments, social housing and support for socio-professional inclusion, measures for mentoring in the placement period and foster care centres. Moreover, the initiative aims at developing of quality standards and monitoring of institutionalised persons (children in foster care, children with disabilities).

Specific objectives of the Youth Strategy in the area of social inclusion of youth include:

a. Promoting inclusive measures for youth with the aim of facilitating access to the formal labour market;
b. Promoting direct non-formal education at the social reintegration of socially excluded youth, maintain or restore access to formal education while effectively promoting non-formal and informal learning and the recognition of acquired competences;

c. Promoting equal access to health for young people, maintain free access to the basic healthcare package, and improve the quality of medical procedures benefiting children and youth in difficulty;

d. Promoting the ‘voice’ of and empower the poor communities with high shares of children and young people, as well as the socially excluded youth;

e. Re-launching policies that combat poverty and promote social inclusion in Romania, with a focus on youth and children, to reduce any gaps accumulated in the early life stages which can adversely affect an individual’s entire future life course and be difficult to offset later on;

f. Developing new programmes aimed at building or retrofitting social housing so as to enable the implementation of the legal provisions that entitle disadvantaged young people to a dwelling;

g. Creating and implementing special support measures for socially vulnerable youth groups, in partnership with all the competent institutions from all sectors.

All these objectives were to be carried out through the action plan of the Youth Strategy, action plan that is still under development.

**Responsible authority**

There is no unique responsible authority for the implementation of the social inclusion measures. Different measures are in the responsibility of different authorities, as follows:

- all measures regarding activities in schools are supervised by the [Ministry of Education][7] and Scientific Research, and implemented by the County School Inspectorates;
- the [National Employment Agency][8] and its local offices, under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice has to implement all measures including activities aiming at the employment of vulnerable young people
- the [General Offices for Social Assistance and Children Protection][9] under the [Ministry of Labour and Social Justice][10] has to implement all measures regarding young people from the special protection system
- the [Ministry of Health][11] has to implement measures to ensure health protection of vulnerable youth
- the [Ministry of Youth and Sport][12] has to implement measures to ensure the participation of vulnerable young people in their communities, in addition to projects implemented by the local communities with the support of the European Social Fund (project aiming at community development for social inclusion of all their members, including young people).

**Revisions/Updates**

No updates have been made to the present [Youth Strategy][13], to the [National Strategy on Social Inclusion][1] or to the [Anti-poverty Package] since their adoption or drafting.