



# Journal of Community Positive Practices

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# QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE, JOB QUALITY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN ROMANIA. MEASUREMENTS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS

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Laura A. TUFĂ<sup>1</sup>

***Abstract:** The paper addresses problems of measuring quality of working life, job quality and work-life balance and focuses on providing a comparative analysis using European data (ETUI, EWCS, EUROFOUND). Using multilevel regression analysis, we identified predictors for WLB (work-life balance) and also support for a theoretical critique of the limits and local understanding of work-life balance as a key issue in improving working conditions through policy recommendations.*

***Keywords:** work-life balance, quality of working life, job quality, shift-work working conditions*

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## Introduction

Quality of working life is a rather ambiguous concept because it entails a sum of multiple dimensions with regard to objective conditions, as well as the subjective positioning towards working conditions (satisfaction indicators or the perceived quality of the workplace). The major theoretical frameworks for considering quality of working life comes from western orientations and sometimes there is an overlap between these conceptual developments and its practical enforcements in East-European working environments.

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Different welfare regimes shape differences in working conditions as well across countries, there are, however, some efforts to detail and refine a satisfactory measurement for the diagnosis of working conditions, from a comparative perspective, so that these comparisons between European countries can be reliable. Such a measurement is considered the Job Quality Index. This index contains a series of objective and subjective indicators (ETUI<sup>1</sup> 2008, 2012) like: socio-economic security (financial remuneration, type and duration of work contract); professional training; working conditions; work-life reconciliation.

At European level, wages are considered a proxy variable for measuring the quality of workplace, but remuneration of individual labor is only one of the possible measures and, for that matter, an incomplete one (de Bustillo *et al.*, 2011, Eurofound, 2013). Attempts to measure the non-pecuniary dimension of quality of working life have drawn considerable efforts (Eurofound, 2013). In the post-crisis era, because of the large-scale job reductions, a new attention was given to economic growth through the strategy of increasing occupational rate. As a consequence, evaluation of working conditions, as an important dimension for quality of a job, is secondary and remuneration only tends to get the primary space in the conceptualization of the “good working conditions”. Therefore, the construction of a non-pecuniary job quality index (Eurofound, 2013) represents not a decrease of the importance of wages in how a decent workplace is conceptualized, but a sustained effort to take into account the social dimension of what constitutes a workplace and a job position. These conceptualizations have implications for job outcomes and outputs, for productivity and, on the long term, for the economic growth, but also for a more even distribution of labor within organizations, between different employees. Precarious working conditions have consequences as de-professionalization of labor force, reduced workplace productivity, a higher incidence of overtime labor (extra working hours), precarious health and politically justified defenses of maintaining low wages.

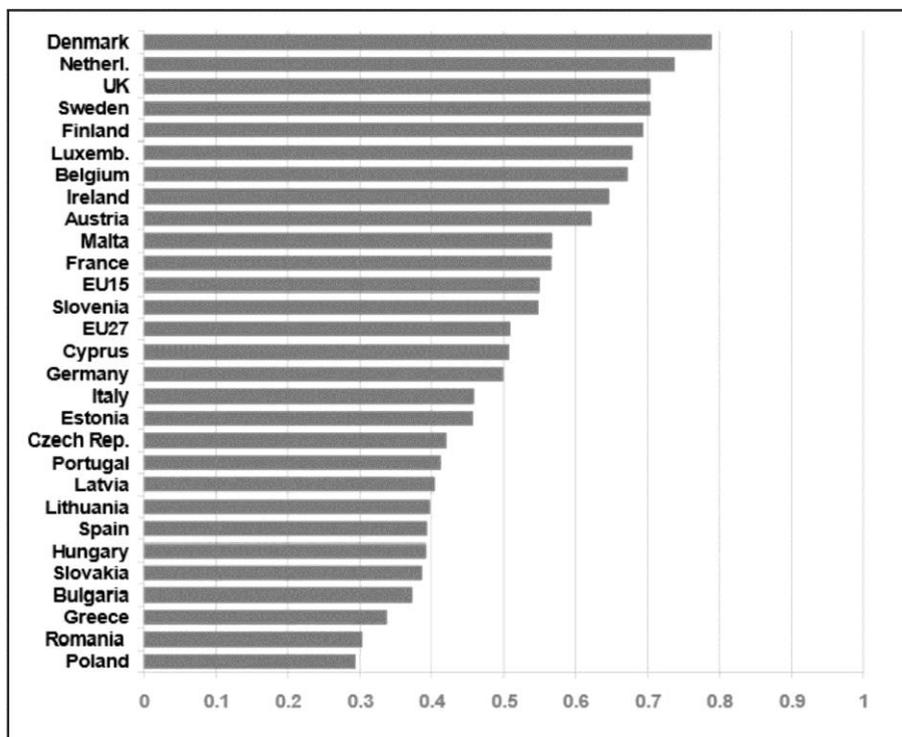
Concerns for the measurement and monitorization of job quality is reflected in index construction for comparative analyses (Quality of Job Index- European Commission, OECD<sup>2</sup>; Job Quality Index-ETUI, 2008). These complex measurements aim to facilitate comparisons between European countries in order to provide evidence-based support to improve occupational policies, especially in countries where workers’ protection is low because of reduced activity and power of unions. Job Quality Index (ETUI 2008) is a multidimensional construct and it includes: wages; atypical employment; working conditions; working time and work-life reconciliation; professional training and interest representation (ETUI, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup> European Trade Union Institute

<sup>2</sup> The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Figure 1. Job Quality Index**  
(2008, based on EWCS 2005)



Source: ETUI-REHS, 2008. Note: The index can vary between 0 and 1, countries with values greater than 0.5 can be considered as having a high job quality index.

Romania has a job quality index of 0.3, a very low figure. Also, each indicator from its composition places Romania in the lowest third in European comparisons (Eurofound, 2012; ETUI, 2012). In some countries, as it is the case with Romania, workplace quality is also associated with a low set of abilities for adaptation at the individual level, mostly reflected in the low occupational rate (Piasna, 2015).

The value of this index can reflect the precarious working conditions in Romania for most of the workers, but can also indicate different working environments with some dimensions of the index being more important than others, which can unsubstantially and unjustly place Romania at the bottom of the hierarchy. Many comparative analyses do not use different weights for each sub-indicator, which can be erroneously interpreted. In some organizational cultures, some dimensions can be more salient in how valued they are, as well as in how frequent they are reinforced in practical terms. At the same time, structural differences based on legislation and social dialogue as well

can affect how workers respond during surveys to each of the item from the job quality index (Gosetti & La Rosa, 2014).

A series of studies indicate the component of professional training as being the adequate choice for increasing the quality of the workplace, the most educated and trained workers being the most satisfied with their workplace, but at the same time technological development could compensate the negative role of lack of professional abilities on job quality (Stier, 2014).

At the same time, this measurement is critiqued for lacking indicators that describe the working environment, most of the indicators focus either on work characteristics and on workers. (Van Wanrooy et al., 2013). In a refined theoretical framework, *job quality* can be conceptually placed at the intersection of *quality of work* and *quality of working life* (Gosetti & La Rosa, 2014)

Capturing trends in quality of working life in a comparative perspective can be a useful tool for integrated public policies, especially for an international labor market. Recent studies have shown convergencies, as well as divergent trends of different countries, when it comes to job quality (Drobnič *et al.*, 2010, Holman, 2013). Task-autonomy is one of the sub-indicators of job quality and is defined as the possibility to change or choose task order, to choose or change the methods a worker accomplishes his tasks, and also the possibility to choose or change the speed and the rhythm of his/her work. (Holman, 2013). Task-autonomy is embedded in welfare regimes. Nordic countries significantly differ from other countries when task-autonomy is evaluated, mostly because unions have a better activity and a greater influence (Holman, 2013), so here task-autonomy is considerably higher.

## Conceptual and practical limits of “work-life balance”

Work-life balance (WLB) is a practical evaluation of policies that sustain family and social life outside the working environment, as well as an indicator of gender equality. WLB can be influenced by occupational policies and can also be considered a proxy indicator for working conditions, because individual evaluations frame time use in various life domains and depend on institutionalized time regimes at the worker’s workplace. Factors that influence WLB are family situation, number of children working hours, as well as task-autonomy.

Based on European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), we underline that in Romania satisfaction with the working conditions was higher in the pre-UE period, which can indicate an initial optimism related to future social changes that were largely anticipated at that moment, not necessarily an objective change in how strategies to harmonize family life with working life were developed. However, Romania repeats the same pattern as other post-communist countries (Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria).

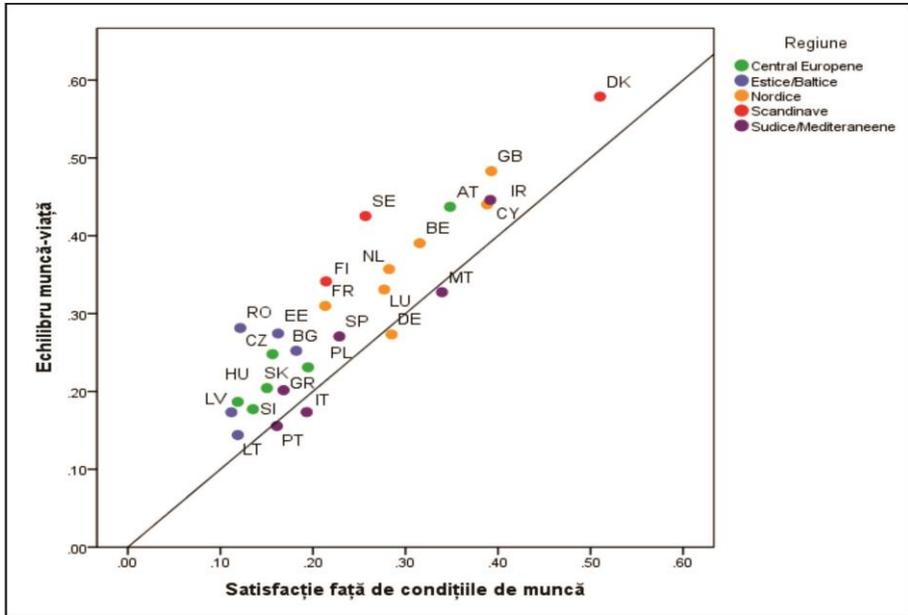
**Table 1.** Changes of WLB and of Satisfaction with working conditions (EWCS 2005, 2010)

	<b>WLB 2005-2010</b>	<b>Satisfaction with working conditions 2005-2010</b>
Romania	+12%	+17%
Poland	+14%	+6%
Latvia	+9%	+4%
Slovakia	+7%	+5%
Bulgaria	+4%	+8%
Greece	+7%	+3%
Ireland	+6%	+4%
Netherlands	+6%	+3%
Sweden	+6%	+2%
Denmark	+6%	+2%
Estonia	+5%	+2%
Cyprus	+4%	+3%
Italy	+2%	+3%
Malta	0%	+4%
Spain	0%	+4%
Finland	0%	+4%
Lithuania	0%	+3%
Hungary	+5%	-2%
Slovenia	+1%	+3%
UK	+2%	0%
Belgium	+1%	+1%
Luxembourg	0%	+2%
Austria	-1%	+1%
Czech Republic	-1%	0%
Portugal	-2%	0%
Germany	-3%	-1%
France	-2%	-3%

*Source: Own analysis, based on EWCS 2005 and EWCS 2010*

In Romania, working conditions differ substantially from those from other European countries, with a lesser extent of worker's protection because of a lower implication of unions in how work is organized; in 2011, changes in labor legislation and in provisions of the collective agreement in favor of the employer rendered forming unions even more difficult (Eurofound, 2014). Subjective social indicators are useful to expose how objective working conditions are dealt with by employees. These indicators collect observations about work satisfaction, which, from an institutional point of view, depicts international differences and possible proposals for changes in labor policies.

**Figure 2.** *Work-life balance and satisfaction with working conditions (EWCS, 2010)*



Source: own analysis, based on EWCS 2010

The relationship between satisfaction with working conditions and evaluation of work-life balance indicates that an evaluation of a satisfactory WLB does not necessarily mean that people are satisfied with their working conditions (from those 30% that have declared they have a good WLB, only 10% are very satisfied with their working conditions), a situation also accurate for other European countries, but with smaller differences between evaluation of work-life balance and satisfaction with working conditions. On one hand, this is a signal that WLB provides an evaluation embedded in gender roles marked by a highly gendered division of labor, at home mostly. At the same time, those who evaluated their WLB as being good provide a contradictory situation taking into account that Romania is one of the countries with the highest number of working hours. In this case, the explanation might be provided by the fact that, considering long working hours and the deteriorated working conditions after the economic crisis, family became even more important, as a compensatory reaction to the overall structurally-induced insecurity (Eurofond, 2014).

## Methodology

In order to identify how different predictors, influence WLB, a multilevel regression (MLA) was performed using data from three waves of the *European Working Conditions Survey* (2000, 2005 și 2010). There are three levels of analysis: individual (I.1), year of

survey (L2), and country level (L3). There were five cumulative models developed: the null model, (M0), the second model using socio-demographic variables (M1), the third model that also includes workplace characteristics like years of work experience, having a middle position, but not a managing one, whether the respondent is self-employed or not, whether is he/she working from home, how many hours per day does he/she work and what is his/her commute time (M2); the fourth model includes workplace and task organization and difficulties like the number of working weekends per month, autonomy in choosing working hours, if the job she/he holds has health risks, if there is perceived discrimination at the workplace and also if she/he works in shifts (M3); the last (fifth) model includes time and PIB/GDP (M4); an alternative model is the one with only the variable of whether the respondent works in shifts or not (M1alt)

Metrical variables are centered at the European mean, so that the intercept/constant should refer to a hypothetical person with medium characteristics randomly chosen from a random country. Each new model is more fit than the previous one, according to Chi Square tests.

## Results-Determinants of Work-Life Balance

**Table 2.** Multilevel regression with dependent variable as WLB

		M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M1alt
	Intercept/Constant	3.09**	3.04**	3.06**	3.17**	3.21**	3.15**
L1	Age		0.04**	0.03**	0.02**	0.02**	
L1	Household dimension		-0.03**	-0.03**	-0.03**	-0.03**	
L1	Gender (F)		0.10**	-0.03**	-0.02**	-0.02**	
L1	Work experience (25 years or more)			0.03**	0.04**	0.04**	
L1	ISCO 2,3,4			0.13**	0.03**	0.03**	
L1	Self-employed			-0.03**	0.00	0.00	
L1	Works from home			-0.04	-0.01	-0.01	
L1	Number of daily working hours			-0.18**	-0.14**	-0.14**	
L1	Commute time			-0.08**	-0.08**	-0.08**	
L1	No. of working weekends per month				-0.07**	-0.07**	
L1	Autonomy in working hours				0.06**	0.06**	
L1	Health-risk workplace				-0.22**	-0.22**	
L1	Perceived discrimination (yes)				-0.19**	-0.19**	
L1	Works in shifts				-0.16**	-0.16**	-0.33**
L2	Time					-0.06**	
L3	(GDP/PIB-gm)					0.03	
	-2LogL	179873	179109	172662	166000	165988	177779
	R2 (L3)		0.03	0.34	0.52	0.55	0.07
	R2 (L2)		0.00	-0.25	-0.25	0.00	0.00
	R2 (L1)		0.01	0.09	0.16	0.16	0.03
	L3var	0.029	0.028	0.019	0.014	0.013	0.027
	L2var	0.004	0.004	0.005	0.004	0.004	0.004
	L1var	0.597	0.591	0.544	0.499	0.499	0.581

Source: own analysis, based on three waves of EWCS: 2000, 2005, and 2010

Sociodemographic variables do little to explain WLB ( $R^2$  at L1 is only 3%). Women consider on average that they have a high WLB, but when the other variables are controlled, the relation between gender and WLB changes: at the same number of working hours and type of activity, a woman will declare that she has a WLB lower than a man does. The fact that the relation between WLB and gender is initially positive shows that when women work on average a smaller number of hours than man and in different conditions, women are more satisfied with their WLB, but when working conditions are the same, women are less satisfied with their WLB. Providing explanations for this gap should probably target other variables not included in the model, like having children or the amount of household chores they are in charge of, roles that are particularly gendered and could take a lot of women's time. It is possible that understandings of WLB in countries like Romania focus mostly on family relationships and family wellbeing, as satisfaction with family life is reported to be important (Pop 2015).

Age has a positive influence: an increase with 10 years is associated with an increase of 0.04 points of WLB, which means that, on average, older people have a higher reported WLB than their younger counterparts. This positive relationship is maintained when other variables are controlled, but it loses its intensity (0.02). When we have a household with a higher number of members (so a household more difficult to maintain), WLB will decrease (with -0.03 at each new member), and this relationship is the same when controlling the other variables.

Variables that describe type of work increase the explanatory power of the model at 9% at the first level and at 34% at the second level (country level). A great deal of international differences is based on differences in labor market composition (proportion of highly qualified workers, average number of working hours, commute time).

**How type of work influences WLB.** Each working hour reduces WLB with 0.18 points; those who work in qualified positions, but not on managing level (ISCO 2, 3 or 4) have, on average, a WLB higher with 0.13 points than those less qualified. The fact that this decreases at 0.13 when other variables are controlled (working conditions) shows that a great deal of differences can be explained through the higher level of autonomy and a smaller number of working hours in weekend and/ or in shifts or in having a workplace that is faced with health risks.

When commute time is increasing (with double the time), this decreases WLB on average with 0.08 points. Work experience slightly increases WLB (+ 0.03 points for those with more than 25 years of work experience), and being self-employed has the same effect (+0,03). Those that work from home are not significantly more satisfied with their WLB than those having commute time, when all other variables are controlled (but even when we don't control them, the effect is not significantly different from 0).

Models are improved by introducing variables for type of work and working conditions, the predictive power increases from  $R^2 = 0,09$  to  $R^2 = 0,16$  at first level, so differences between categories of people are partially explained by the working conditions they are faced with. Those who work in environments where they risk their health or where they

perceive they are discriminated against report lower values of WLB, when all other variables are controlled (-0,22 and, respectively, -0,19 points difference when compared to those who don't work in these type of environments). It is possible that health risk is a proxy for being tired or having burn out. Those who work on weekends report lower WLB (for each week-end day -0.07 points decrease in WLB). Instead, those who declare they have autonomy in choosing working hours declare a higher WLB (+0.06).

**The influence of country-level variables over WLB.** Economic development measured through GDP is positively associated with WLB (+0.03 at each 10.000 euro equivalents added to GDP), but the difference is not statistically significant. If other predictors hadn't been introduced in the regression model, the association between GDP and WLB would have been statistically significant and positive- an increased one in developed countries (+0.08 at each 10.000 euro added to GDP) and variations between countries would have been reduced with 24% when introducing the indicator in the regression model. The fact that individual predictors eliminate the national predictors' influence shows that, if we would standardize socio-demographics and the working conditions (those present in these particular regression models) of each active population from each country, there would not be differences caused by economic development, so two persons with the same socio-demographics and with the same working conditions from two countries with different economic development would not differ in how they appreciate their WLB.

**The influence of variable year over WLB.** Year of data collection was introduced in the regression models as a metric variable, to understand if there is a general tendency of increase or decrease of WLB at European level from 2000 until 2010. Variable TIME is coded with 0 for data collected in 2000, 0.5 for data collected in 2005, and 1 for data collected in 2010, so that the regression coefficient should describe the difference between the last and the first moment of observations (so between 2010 and 2000). The value of coefficient (-0.06) is statistically significant and suggests that a slight decrease of WLB took place from 2000 until 2010, a decrease that does not depend on changing the working conditions or the socio-demographics. This change is not visible when other predictors are not included, so we can say that although the WLB average didn't decrease, the general tendency is that at the same working conditions from 2000, a person would consider a lower WLB in 2010.

Working in shifts reduces WLB with an average of 0.33 points when we don't control other variables. This relationship is maintained even when we control other variables, but the effect is less intense. But does working in shifts have effects in each country? We estimated residuals at country-level in order to see if the influence of country over WLB is still maintained when we control individual predictors<sup>1</sup> on one hand. On the other hand, we also focused to see if differences between countries are also maintained when it comes to effects of shift work.<sup>2</sup> (See the above table).

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<sup>1</sup> (random intercept residuals)

<sup>2</sup> (random slope residuals)

**Table 3.** Variation of the effect of shift work over WLB at country-level

Country	WLB average ( <i>random intercept residuals</i> )		Shift work influence ( <i>random slope residuals</i> )	
	Coef	Rank	coef	rank
<b>UE27</b>	<b>3.20</b>		<b>-0.16</b>	
Italy	-0.27	1	+0.14	24
Greece	-0.21	2	+0.08	19
Latvia	-0.17	3	+0.18	26
Slovenia	-0.15	4	+0.00	12
Spain	-0.13	5	+0.03	15
Portugal	-0.11	6	+0.12	22
Lithuania	-0.07	7	+0.01	13
Hungary	-0.05	8	-0.02	11
Poland	-0.04	9	+0.13	23
Germany	-0.04	10	-0.03	10
France	-0.03	11	+0.02	14
Slovakia	-0.02	12	+0.08	18
Netherlands	-0.01	13	-0.12	6
Estonia	-0.01	14	+0.10	20
Bulgaria	+0.00	15	+0.15	25
Czech Republic	+0.01	16	+0.04	16
Luxembourg	+0.04	17	+0.06	17
Malta	+0.05	18	+0.11	21
Sweden	+0.06	19	-0.21	3
Romania	+0.06	20	+0.19	27
Belgium	+0.08	21	-0.07	8
Cyprus	+0.11	22	-0.30	1
Finland	+0.11	23	-0.16	4
Austria	+0.14	24	-0.07	9
Ireland	+0.18	25	-0.23	2
United Kingdom	+0.19	26	-0.14	5
<i>Denmark</i>	<i>+0.28</i>	27	<i>-0.10</i>	7

Source: own analysis, based on EWCS (2000, 2005, and 2010)

After doing a listing of residuals of average WLB estimations, from the country with the lowest level to the country with the highest level, we found in table 3 not average values of WLB at national level, but deviations from the European average value when we control individual predictors. When we have the same gender, age, number of working hours, overtime hours or the same health risks and perceived discrimination, people from Italy, Greece, Latvia or Slovenia will have a lower WLB than the European average WLB, whereas people from Denmark, UK, Ireland or Austria will have a higher WLB.

On the right columns, we registered the differentiated effect of working in shifts, which means how much is added or subtracted from the global effect of -.016 for each

country. Countries like Italy, Latvia, Poland, Greece, Bulgaria or Romania have positive residuals of an estimated +.015, which renders the effect of working in shifts a null one (0,16 - (de la 0,13 la 0,18)  $\approx$  0). In other countries like Cyprus, Ireland, Finland, UK or Sweden, the residuals are negative, which adds to the global effect (-0,16 + (de la -0,14 la -0,30)  $>$  0,3). It is interesting to note that in countries where WLB is considered high on the same type of employee (mostly countries from Western Europe), there are big differences between those who work in shifts and those who don't (the latter being less satisfied with their WLB), whereas in some countries where WLB is lower (Eastern-Europe and South countries), the differences are smaller (so even if they are working in shifts or not, they have similar subjective evaluations of WLB). A possible explanation is that there are different values in Western countries when expectations about spare time and family time come into place, and working in shifts could disturb these expectations. Being more restricted in harmonizing schedules with other family members or friends could affect the evaluation of WLB.

## Recommendations to increase Quality of Working Life

### *Suggestions for improving working conditions*

The improvement politics of quality of working life particularly address the increase of work productivity and efficiency. Two strategies can maintain this growth: occupational flexibility and enhancing working conditions. The second strategy considers a series of changes that improve not just the quality of working life, but also of the individual's wellbeing, while also maintaining labour sustainability. Labour organization in present-day Romania mainly follows a model based on intensive work (Docherty *et al* 2009, Eurofound 2015), consisting of an extended work schedule and a reduced control over working conditions and employee wellbeing; particularly in the context of a diminished labour market access (with an official number of 5.8 million employees), the idea of labour sustainability and encouraging the improvement of working conditions are not top priorities. The data available in the official systems for collecting statistical indicators for the Romanian working conditions are more likely to address organized strikes, conflicts of interest and the number of workplace accidents (from Institute of National Statistics<sup>1</sup>), focusing very little on the work relations, non-material benefits or regulations of working hours.

Both the National Strategy for Workforce Occupation 2014 – 2020 and the European Strategy 2020 follow integrated objectives related to occupation where the increase in quality of workplace conditions are present.

A number of directions can be developed for improving working conditions, which must be addressed both at an occupational policies level and through the employing organizations:

- Improving the employees' union representation. Following changes in the collective agreement of 2011, the power of employees is diminished and, consequently, the

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<sup>1</sup> Data from AMIGO survey, Working Conditions section.

pressure towards ensuring a decent labour is also reduced. The unionisation level in Romania is different between those who possess temporary jobs (fixed-term contract) and those with standard jobs (European Commission, 2011), which can indicate major differences between working conditions.

- Working relations should be monitored in a manner that is efficient and adequate to the realities of work environments in order to prevent workplace harassment, mobbing and discrimination based on ethnic, physical ability or age criteria.
- Collecting indicators regarding the quality of workplaces (across different sectors) on the following sub-dimensions: health and safety, ability and skill development, work organisation and working hours. They can be used for comparisons between the different sectors and for developing policies regarding working conditions improvements.
- Collecting individual indicators for the work availability (measurements regarding the evolution of individual work trajectories by marking relevant life events, skills and abilities, motivation level, indicators regarding individual wellbeing and health). They can be addressed through policies that support adapted trajectories (inclusion of disabled persons, of those with a precarious health).
- Undeclared labour control. The lack of regulations has led to vulnerable groups (particularly lower-educated Roma and disabled people) bearing the costs of lacking access to the official labour market.
- For new labour categories produced by emerging information and communication technologies, a focus on the increase of digital skills should be tackled.
- The incidence of overtime is not high in Romania, but a series of practices, such as working on-call are more prevalent compared to other EU countries. 50% of the Romanian employed population works on-call. (EWCS, 2010)
- Strategies for improving rewards for overtime labour and for motivating employers to register and report overtime labour. The EU working hours' directive marks a maximum number of 48 hours per week, but as the new change directions propose, countries can opt out of this directive if there is an individual agreement between employer and employee. Although Romania doesn't officially register as exceeding this limit, evening overtime is mentioned by 45% of the population (EWCS 2010).
- Developing ways of measuring sustainable life-long labour and of improving the effects of workplace transitions for occupationally vulnerable populations (NEETs, lower-educated people, those with deprecated skills on the labour market, those with low digital skills, Roma, those who were not extensively active on the labour market).
- Atypical arrangements regarding working hours (working in shifts, long hours), although associated with adverse health effects, can be preferred by individuals, depending on their stages of life, offering a more desirable work/private life balance (Eurofound 2012). The need to address these differences within the measures to

improve working conditions must be linked to the proposals for the aging active population and, implicitly, to the association at this stage between the work/private life balance and schedules.

- Innovative labour systems through the use of new technologies, such as long-distance work through TIC (telework) can be an opportunity for creating jobs with better working conditions and can be a desirable option for socially vulnerable categories (NEETs, people with special needs or disabilities). The incidence of telework can be positively associated with the autonomy linked to the schedules desired by the employer and, implicitly, for obtaining a better work/private life balance. However, strategies to use telework in order to exclude vulnerable social categories should be avoided.

## Conclusions

On an European level, the effort of changing policies also addresses handling workplace quality through the collection of a wide range of factors (EQLS, EWCS, ETUI, ESS, Eurobarometer): physical risk factors, physical strains, labour intensity, workplace intimidation and discrimination, emotional strain and work-related stress, autonomy and task discretion, training and learning opportunities, career advancement opportunities, personal development opportunities, participation and empowerment within the organisation, intrinsic rewards, good management practices, task clarity and performance feedback, social support and good relations in the work environment, work/private life balance, fitting the work schedule with one's social obligations, working hours flexibility and workplace satisfaction.

As we could see from the multilevel regression analysis performed on the three waves of EWCS (2000, 2005, and 2010), work-life balance (WLB) is a complex combination of influences that focus not only on individual characteristics, but its understanding and evaluation changes in time and differ between countries. Striving for WLB for Romanian workers should be an important focus for improving working conditions, taking into account local realities as well.

The weaknesses of many endeavours focusing on pecuniary aspects refer primarily to the limited opportunities to make fast changes on short terms. Secondly, to the economic resources that are often directed less often towards improving the wellbeing of employees and more towards improving efficiency through extrinsic motivation and pay increase. And last, but not least, the way in which many of these indicators can be improved only through structural changes such as legislation, occupational policies and organizational culture shifts.

Increasing the participation rate of the aged population is one of the long-term directives of the European Union. In this context, addressing questions regarding the conditions of developing active aging implies extra attention given to the growth of working conditions in order to satisfy the needs of the different age categories, to fight against discriminatory practices based on the age of the employee and their employment on precarious or marginalizing contracts. Furthermore, active aging is difficult in the context of a precarious health system that is unable to make up the

difference in healthy life expectancy between the elderly population of Romania and that of wealthier countries.

The improvement of working conditions is dependent on the existing policies, regulations and practices and on their ability to change. These changes take place at all four levels: institutional (occupational legislation and regulations), that of the employing organization, that of the workplace and that of the individual (marked by the individual trajectory though life). At the institutional level, the public policies are meant to redirect the way in which precarious forms of employment (fixed-term contract, under-employment, on-call work, informal labour, and undeclared labour) are being managed. At the employing organization level, the conditions of the workplace are shaped by the collective representation abilities and of the employees' interests, by the professional autonomy and of the workplace environment. The workplace quality level is given, as it appears in many European-level comparative studies, by: income level, career and workplace stability prospects, intrinsic quality of the workplace (competence and autonomy in task management, social environment and labour intensity), working hours' quality (length, working hours scheduling, working hours' flexibility and the autonomy in setting up one's working hours).

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR NEW ZEALAND ENTREPRENEURS TO BE SUCCESSFUL: SOME EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

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Andries J du PLESSIS<sup>1</sup>

***Abstract:** Entrepreneurship date back thousands of years. Effective workforces require training and education. Entrepreneurs need a thorough training needs analysis before adapting training programmes. Training describes learning activities to improve entrepreneurs' knowledge, skills and abilities to perform and manage effectively. Education improves competency of entrepreneurs. Models are referred to in the literature review. Training and education needs were identified for entrepreneurs to maintain competitive advantage and profit margins. A study done in 2008 in Auckland, New Zealand found that training and education is necessary for entrepreneurs and employees; how they could gain greater efficiencies and increased profit through training of current employees.*

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## Introduction

Entrepreneurship dates back many thousands of years and the complexities of wielding an effective workforce require training at all levels. History has proven that training is an essential part of creating a cohesive and effective workforce. In order to be an effective team member in a work situation, all personnel must be completely immersed in the organisation's culture and values and have an in depth knowledge of policies and procedures (Du Plessis, Marriott, and Manichith, 2016). An ancient example can be used to confirm that successful entrepreneurs and organisations need sufficient and effective training; the military training and precision in action is the phalanx formation where an advancing unit of soldiers would protect themselves by overlapping rectangular shields (Montgomery of Alamein, 1968). This formation was methodical

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and disciplined requiring the whole unit to move in unison to maintain the integrity of the shield. Training was needed to get this move to perfection. Where in the past, military training relied on discipline and the enforcement of rules, nowadays technology and the latest information with smarter ways of training is required.

Training, education, development and learning are often thought of as synonymous and although they can overlap, there are key differences. Training describes specific learning activities to improve an employee's knowledge, skills and abilities in order for them to do the job better. Education improves overall competence beyond the workplace. Development aims to fulfil an employee's potential within the organisation through a number of methods including career counselling, mentoring and job rotation. The main learning theories include behavioural, humanistic, cognitive and social learning theories and an individual's learning style reflects the way in which they prefer to learn. The organisation's approach to learning will also impact on how training is conducted (Du Plessis, 2014).

Entrepreneurs need to do a thorough training needs analysis to adapting training to suit advances in technology and to cater for the latest generation of employees. Generation Y, or the Millennium Generation, has posed a direct challenge to the traditional work environment as they do not have automatic respect for authority (Du Plessis, 2014; Lindquist, 2008). Millennials (people born between 1977 and 1994) tend to be confident and have a feeling of entitlement, constantly wanting feedback and ready to give criticism back in return. This does not fit the traditional work discipline mould where new employees are expected to do as they are told and be seen and not heard. Millennials are normally well educated in history and are high achievers so in order to take advantage of their unique talents, the entrepreneur must adapt by taking lessons from the studies into Human Resource Management (HRM).

Training is one of the key functions of HRM. Traditionally, the entrepreneur has not been structured to run their operation like a business but recent times have forced a rethink (Erasmus, 2006). Entrepreneurs have to compete for market share and make profits to survive. However, in recent times, entrepreneurs have found themselves competing in a diminishing recruitment pool and have been forced to become more expense savvy with rapidly constricting budgets. This has required entrepreneurs to start thinking as Chief Executive Officers and adopt business best practice.

The study into Organisational Behaviour (OB) has contributed to the evolution of HR through the understanding of employee behaviour (Robbins, Judge, Millett & Waters-Marsh, 2008). Drawing on psychology, sociology, anthropology and political science, the study into OB seeks to understand what people do in an organisation and how behaviour affects the performance of the organisation. By understanding the effects policies have on behaviour allows companies to adopt the policies that will result in the right behaviours to pursue a chosen strategy. It can also assist in trouble shooting when behaviours of individuals are undesirable. The revelation that employees can create competitive advantage launched HRM into the limelight.

Entrepreneurs strategies in order to gain a better sense of strategic direction and what is strategically important (Wheelan & Hunger, 2013). The internal and external scanning

and evaluation involved in the process of strategy formulation allows an entrepreneur (company) to identify key strategic issues. With knowledge of these strategic issues, management can make strategic plans to exploit strengths and opportunities while improving on weaknesses and minimising the impact of any threats. An internal strength or weakness is the organisation's workforce and effective management of employees is crucial to profitability and the firm's ability to compete (Becton & Schraeder, 2009). Achieving competitive advantage requires HRM policies and procedures to be aligned with the overall company strategy.

To accomplish whether training and education could be applied to the entrepreneurial environment, a literature review in the training area will be explored and training models discussed. This will be followed with an exploration of the entrepreneur's unique characteristics as a trainer and in a training's role in the pursuit of achieving their organisation's mission. A study done in 2008 in the Rosebank Business Precinct of Auckland, New Zealand, has very valuable and informative information that will be discussed as well.

## **Objectives of this study**

As training and education is essential to the successful induction of new employees into the work environment and is also a key function of HRM in an organisation the question can well be asked whether the research into the training area could be applied to entrepreneurial training? The objective of this study is to ascertain whether this is the case and if training models formulated are applicable to training and education in the entrepreneurial environment.

## **Problem statement**

Training and education needs were identified that are necessary for the entrepreneur to maintain their competitive advantage and their profit margins. A fine balance must be struck between entrepreneur's needs and the needs of their organisations. A study was done in 2008 in the Rosebank Business Precinct in Auckland, New Zealand. In the analysis and discussion we point out what training and education is necessary in 2016 for entrepreneurs and how they could gain greater efficiencies and increased profit through attention to the training needs of current and future employees. The purpose of these educational interventions is to provide better "equipped" employees with knowledge and skills to add value in these organisations.

## **Literature review**

It is important to define certain terminology. Entrepreneurship, as defined by Schermerhorn, Campling, Poole and Wiesner (2012), is dynamic, risk-taking, creative and growth-oriented behaviour. On the other hand they regard an entrepreneur as willing to pursue opportunities in situations others view as problems or threats. In the business concept an entrepreneur starts new ventures that bring life to new product or service ideas. The theory exists that entrepreneurs are 'jacks-of-all-trades' who may not excel in any one skill, but are competent in many. Individuals with balanced skills appear to be

more likely than others to become entrepreneurs (Erasmus, 2006). A different view is from Du Plessis (2007; 2014) that entrepreneurship is not a natural process in some countries and it should be managed until it becomes a more ordinary part of the daily existence. Training and education is therefore important for entrepreneurs' success.

Organisations train their staff for both the benefit of the organisation and the individual (Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda & Nel, 2016). There are a number of benefits to the organisation including employees with higher knowledge, skills and abilities, a workforce with high morale, enhanced corporate image and increased productivity and quality. Individuals also benefit from training by increasing motivation, empowerment and higher job satisfaction. However, many organisations believe training is unnecessary as skills can be learnt on the job or 'bought' when necessary (Macky, 2011). There is also the belief that training equips and motivates employees to seek employment elsewhere. Both of these viewpoints are flawed. The first is short-sighted as it only provides a temporary solution in up skilling staff and assumes the organisation is static. There is also widespread complaint that companies are not able to find the necessary skills required on the labour market (Ballot, Fakhfakh & Taymaz, 2006). The second viewpoint is a myth. Investing in employee training and development is more likely to retain employees and although there is a risk of poaching skilled staff, training is valuable to the success of the company. The long term effects of training and development highlights a strategic focus.

Training and development is in fact a strategic activity, as it helps entrepreneurs achieve organisational strategies (Du Plessis, 2015; Macky, 2011). Training and development can be an expensive cost and as such must be strategically managed through alignment with overall corporate strategies to ensure value for money. More companies today are becoming knowledge based in order to gain sustained competitive advantage (Noe, 2002). Training is a way to enhance an entrepreneur's knowledge base and managing that knowledge has the potential to create significant value, but only if linked to the company's overall strategy (Halawi, McCarthy & Aronson, 2006). It is also acknowledged that to keep up with the rapidly changing business environment, gaining new knowledge must be ongoing; enter the learning organisation.

A learning organisation is a company that both learns and fosters learning (Erasmus *et al.*, 2016). By integrating work and learning, a learning organisation seeks quality, excellence and continuous improvement. There is an emphasis on continual transformation in order to better collect, manage and use knowledge. Learning organisations can be distinguished by their ability to continually expand their capacity to learn and transform themselves (Thomas & Allen, 2006). It is through organisational learning that companies can gain sustained competitive advantage and the emphasis on training, education and development of individuals is most important.

Training, education and development are concepts often thought of as synonymous but the differences must be understood to effectively manage training in an organisation (Du Plessis, 2015; Erasmus *et al.*, 2007). The next few paragraphs will explore the definitions and roles of each of the three concepts. However, in practice, the concepts cannot be definitively compartmentalised, as each may have elements of the others. It is suggested that an integrated approach to achieving an organisations training and development needs will improve performance.

Training describes the specific learning activities undertaken to improve an employee's knowledge, skills and abilities in order for them to better perform their duties (Macky, 2011). Training can also be defined as a means for acquiring and pre-determining behaviours (Dugan, 2003). Whenever a new behaviour is needed in the workplace, a training programme is required to teach the employee the required new behaviour. Training is about giving employees the skills and knowledge to undertake their responsibilities and is related to their workplace. Training can be specific to their role, like operating a forklift, or generalised, like anti-harassment policies. Education goes beyond the restrictions of the workplace.

Education improves overall competence of the employee beyond the job they are currently performing (Dugan, 2003). In general terms, education is designed to prepare an individual for life while training prepares an individual to perform specific tasks. The range of competencies gained from education ranges from basic literacy, numeracy and interpersonal skills to advanced management programmes. Education programmes are generally outsourced to schools, colleges, universities and specialist private companies (Erasmus *et al.*, 2016) while training is usually an internal function. Up-skilling employees through education and training programs lead to employee development.

Development is designed to help develop and fulfil an employee's potential within an organisation (Macky, 2011). This may take many forms including training, on-the-job training, job rotation, mentoring and career counselling. Employee development is a necessary component of improving quality, retaining key employees and keeping up-to-date with social change, global competition and technological advances (Du Plessis, 2015; Noe, 2002). Many companies use development as a means for strategic succession planning where employees are identified early in their career and developed for higher management positions (Macky, 2011). Regardless of what label is given, the main thrust behind of training, education or development is learning.

Although there is no universally accepted theory of learning, it is recognised that organisations need to foster a learning environment to develop knowledge and intellectual capital. (Erasmus *et al.*, 2016; Mills, Helms Mills, Forshaw & Bratton, 2007). By being aware of the different learning theories, a company is able to critically examine the principles, in order to select a one that best matches the specific learning goals of the organisation. As such, it is not recommended that a company uses one particular theory as dogma, but should mix and match principles to suit. Learning can be explored and interpreted from many different perspectives, which have lead to the development of various schools of thought on learning.

Some of the main learning theories include behavioural theories, humanistic theories, cognitive theories and social learning theories (Mills *et al.*, 2007; Erasmus *et al.*, 2016). Behavioural theorists believe learning is the result of positive or negative reinforcement of behaviours. If a wanted behaviour is rewarded with positive reinforcement, it is more likely that the behaviour will be repeated. From a training perspective, the trainee will learn behaviours and skills better when the trainer can identify what outcomes the trainee finds positive (Noe, 2002). Humanistic theorists believe that the learner, being human, will act to achieve personal objectives (Du Plessis, 2015; Erasmus *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, the task of the trainer is not to teach but to facilitate learning by providing a

favourable learning environment and evaluating learning outcomes. The cognitive theorists believe the learning process is complex and learning is influenced by an individual's perception, how they evaluate feedback and how they process information given (Mills *et al.*, 2007).

Learning occurs when an individual applies their own perceptions and experience to think about a problem, by organising their ideas and therefore gaining insight (Erasmus *et al.*, 2016). Social learning theorists believe people learn through observing others, who they believe are knowledgeable and credible (Noe, 2002). Learning occurs when an individual directly experiences the consequences of using a skill or behaviour, or by observing the consequences of others using the same skill or behaviour. Behaviours learnt through observation need to be perfected through practice and are largely dependent on the individuals motivation to learn (Mills *et al.*, 2007). People's learning styles also have an impact on the way they learn.

A learning style is the different way in which individual's learn (Erasmus *et al.* 2016). Although the training is the same, each person has a different way of learning the content, determined by their preferred learning style. There are many reasons why an individual may have a particular preferred learning style, from gender, upbringing or culture. Research has identified four personality learning styles including: the activist, who is a busy individual, ready to dive into anything without much thought; the reflector, who learns from others experiences to avoid making mistakes themselves; the theorist, who wants to know how things relate; and the pragmatist, who is concerned with how they can apply the new knowledge gained. The challenge for the trainer is to be able to manage all four styles equally well in order to capture all students' preferred styles. As well as the individual aspect of training, the approach the organisation takes to training will impact on how training is conducted.

HRM is the management of work and people in organisations and began its evolution in the early 1900's (Du Plessis, 2015; Boxall, Purcell & Wright, 2007; Nankervis, Compton & Baird, 2005). HRM is an unavoidable consequence of doing business, as any organisation who employs staff will be involved in some form of human resource practice, whether they realise it or not. This requirement was first acknowledged in the early 1900's and since then, has transformed into an avenue for organisations to create competitive advantage by smart utilisation of its most valuable asset – people. However, there were significant differences of opinion in the evolution of effective employee management.

The term human resource (HR) has become synonymous with unitarism, proactivity and long term focus (Nankervis *et al.*, 2005). Unitarism is the belief that managers and employees have a common interest in the survival of an organisation and tensions can be completely resolved by nurturing a psychological contract based on cooperation (Abbott, 2006). 'Soft' HRM practices build positive attitudes through the fulfilment of employees needs (Edgar & Geare, 2005). By building commitment and positive attitudes to the organisation, HR grows a satisfied and productive workforce for future success. However, this can only be true if HR policies are aligned with overall company strategy.

Knowledge management and the identification and development of talent within an organisation are rapidly becoming key competitive factors (Halawi, McCarthy &

Aronson, 2006; Altman, 2008). In order to gain sustained competitive advantage, organisations must create strategies that leverage on intellectual assets (Halawi *et al.*, 2006). A human capital strategy supports the achievement of organisational strategic goals and talent management is essential in creating competitive advantage (Altman, 2008). Talent management strategies can take many forms; however, success of such a strategy is largely down to the degree of focus and fit to organisational strategies (Garrow & Hirsh, 2008). One of the avenues to develop talent in an organisation is through training and development.

### ***Approaches to Training and Education***

There are a number of different approaches to achieve training needs (Erasmus *et al.*, 2016). Each training approach has its own unique set of advantages and disadvantages and the degree of its success will depend on the individual characteristics of the organisation. For example, the ‘learning by exposure’ or ‘sitting by Nellie’ approach is considered a popular management option as training happens by chance by the trainee’s exposure to a colleague’s experience. The advantages are it is cheap and easy because the trainee learns ad hoc while doing the job. However, the disadvantages are the trainer is usually not trained to teach and the trainee will pick up any bad work habits they may have. Training the trainer will overcome these issues and therefore can be an effective approach for some organisations. The managerial approach places more emphasis on the training manager’s role in organisational training.

The managerial approach to training emphasises the responsibilities training managers have for the effective management of training and development needs within an organisation (Erasmus *et al.*, 2016). Under this approach, the training manager uses the planning, organising, guiding and controlling management model to manage training, keeping in mind the organisation’s vision, mission, strategies and objectives. In the planning phase, the training manager identifies the types of training required, establishes training objectives and plans for the successful delivery of the training. The organising phase gathers the resources and facilities required to meet objectives. The guidance phase is where the training manager co-ordinates, leads and motivates the students and trainers to achieve outcomes required. The control phase continuously monitors the progress of the achievement of goals, providing feedback in the process. In contrast to the managerial approach, the systems approach views training as an organisational sub-system.

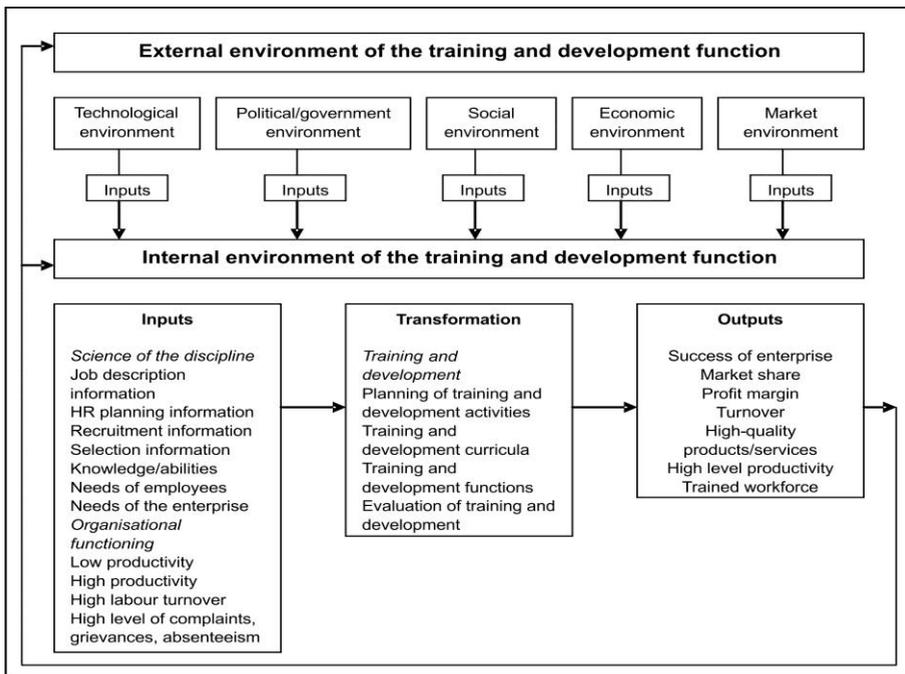
A systems approach to training regards training as a sub-system operating within an organisation, requiring inputs to achieve outputs (Macky, 2011). A system is a set of interdependent parts forming a unit, which obtains inputs and processes them to provide outputs in the form of goods or services (Erasmus *et al.*, 2016). As an open system, the training system is influenced by environmental factors including both the internal and external environment the training function operates in. This relationship is shown in Figure 3, below. Inputs of the training system include: technical input - such as job descriptions, HR planning, recruitment and assessment; and organisational functioning inputs – negative aspects the organisation wishes to improve, such as low productivity, wastage and high staff turnover. The transformation process represents the training function itself and the outputs are the desired outcomes of training, such as

improvements in productivity, quality and labour costs. Outputs also provide the feedback which links back to the environmental factors, repeating the cycle

### *Different Training Models*

A number of models are referred to and discussed in this paper to confirm the interdependency of training and education, and HRM and the importance of training for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs need to be aware of these models and the relationship between a HRM function (training) and entrepreneurship.

*Figure 1: Internal and External Training and Development Environment*



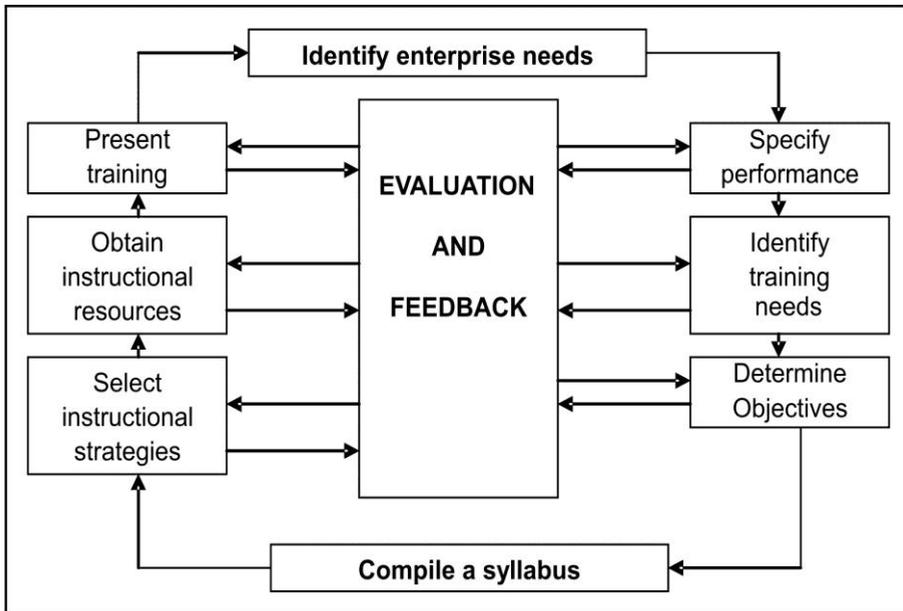
Source: Erasmus et al., 2007: 9

Training models give an overview of the overall training process but should not be treated as dogma according to Erasmus, et al, (2016) and Du Plessis, (2014). The general steps in the training process include: determining training needs; programme design; presenting training; and evaluating training. The models to be discussed in this paper are the Nadler’s critical events model, the Camp, Blanchard and Huszco Model and the High-impact Training Model. Each model is created with a certain organisation in mind. However, in reality, each entrepreneur’s (organisation’s) training needs will be different. As such, models should be look at as a guide to be adapted to suit the individual needs of the

organisation. The first model to be discussed, the Internal and External Training and Development Environment Model, provides a general view of training.

The idea of Nadler's Critical Events Model is to provide a general, holistic view of training in an organisation (Erasmus *et al.*, 2007; 2016). Shown in Figure 2, below, Nadler's model consists of nine steps beginning with identifying the organisation's needs. The most prominent aspect of this model is the evaluation and feedback step which actually takes place throughout each step of the model with the exception of identifying training needs and compiling a syllabus. This emphasises the need to continually monitor the progress of training to ensure it meets organisational needs. In contrast to a holistic view of training, the next model to be discussed takes a view of a definite need.

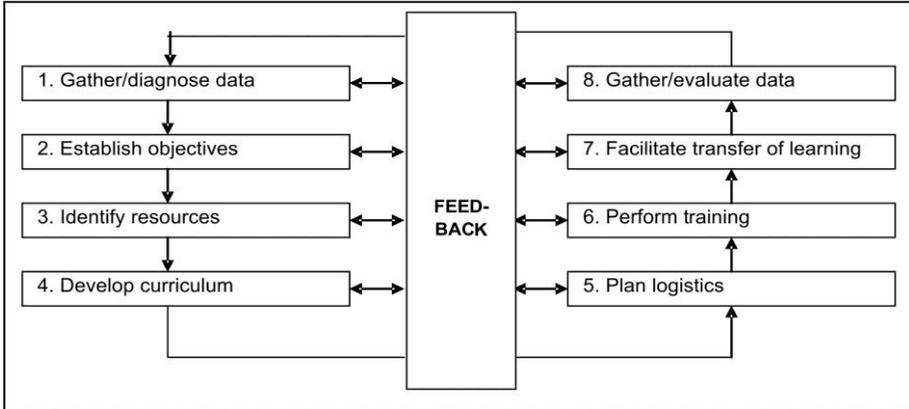
*Figure 2: Nadler's critical events model*



*Source: Erasmus et al., 2007:15*

The Camp, Blanchard and Huszco Training Model (Figure 3, below) is geared towards the definite needs of an organisation and consists of eight steps (Erasmus *et al.*, 2007; 2016). As such, the first step of diagnosing training needs is the most important step. There is an emphasis on gathering feedback throughout the eight steps to ensure relevance to the overall needs but evaluation is in itself a step in the model in contrast to the previous model.

**Figure 3:** Training Model of Camp, Blanchard and Huszko

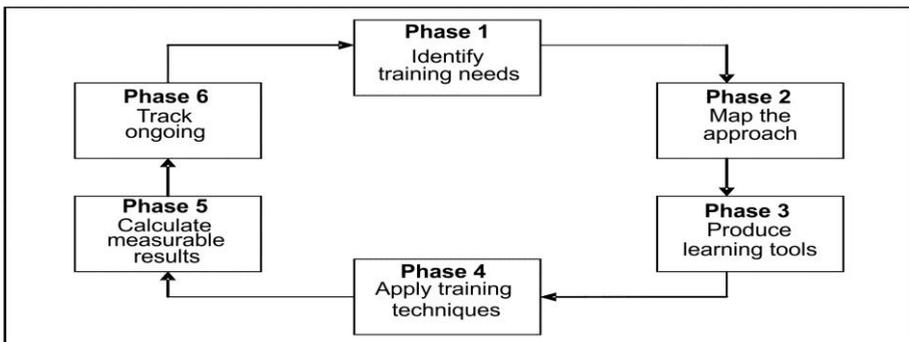


Source: Erasmus et al., 2007:17

It should also be noted that developing a curriculum is undertaken after resources have been identified. This takes into consideration that resources are limited and knowing what support is available will avoid the development of training programs that cannot be resourced. Targeting the training needs of an organisation is the focus of the next training model.

The High-Impact Training Model (Figure 4, below) emphasises the need to move training forward and consists of six phases (Erasmus *et al.*, 2007). Each phase builds on the previous and, as there is no continuous feedback, the success of each phase is dependent of the success of the previous. This model addresses the need for an organisation’s training system to be adaptable to constantly changing business environment but at the same time, runs the risk not meeting training needs if each phase is not successful undertaken.

**Figure 4:** High-Impact Training model



Source: Erasmus et al., 2007:18

## The Importance of Training and Education for Entrepreneurs

For all training within an organisation to be co-ordinated and complimentary, there must be a written training policy. Policies bring together assumptions and principles to form philosophies and can be thought of as an expression of intent (Du Plessis, Marriott and Manichith (2016) and Erasmus, *et al.*, (2007; 2016) Training, education and development policies should include: the aim of training and development within the organisation; the objectives to be achieved; the organisational values relating to training and development; the purpose for training and development and educational assistance to be provided. Training policies can take many forms and are influenced by a number of variables unique to every organisation. Once an organisation has identified its training philosophies and articulated them in policy, training needs can be assessed.

Assessing training needs is the first step in planning a training programme and can be linked to organisational success (Erasmus *et al.*, 2016; van Eerde, Tang & Talbot, 2008). As such, it must be thorough for training to be successful. Needs assessment is all about finding out whether training is necessary and if so, where, when and how. It is easy to come to the conclusion that a problem can be fixed by training before a proper assessment is done. This could end up wasting time and money on training programmes that will not work. Training should be based on needs defined by gaps or discrepancies in performance of an organisation. Types of needs include: organisational needs – taking into consideration the system-wide components of an organisation including goals, resources, internal and external constraints; group needs – related to a group of people doing the same type of work; and individual needs – addressing deficiencies in individual employees work; and job needs – identifying what knowledge or skills is required to do the job.

The dominant approach to needs assessment is the McGehee & Thayer three-level framework including organisational analysis, task analysis and person analysis (Macky, 2011). Organisational analysis is the broadest level of needs assessment, which examines the strategic situation and organisation is system-wide factors. This level of analysis identifies what the major issues are and, if training is relevant, answers the ‘where’ and ‘when’ questions. Task analysis is the mid-level of assessing training needs and examines how a job is done and what knowledge, skills and abilities a worker needs to be competent at the job. Task analysis identifies ‘what’ must be trained. Person analysis focuses on the individual needs and determines ‘who’ needs training (Du Plessis, 2014).

When conducting a training needs assessment, an organisation should consider who should be involved and how it should be done (Noe, 2002; Erasmus *et al.*, 2016). As needs assessments are done to determine if training is necessary, it is important to include managers and employees in the assessment process. Training managers, although they can advise on training matters, do not have the complete picture when it comes to proficiency in a task. There are many techniques for gathering data from key personnel including questionnaires, individual interviews, observations, group discussions, records and reports and job description analysis. When interpreting the

data collected, training managers need to be mindful of how individuals may differ in their perceptions of training needs based on their work experience, self-efficacy and skill proficiency (Dierdorff & Surface, 2008). Once the training needs have been established, programme design and development can begin.

## Phases in Training Programmes

A training programme sets the written framework to facilitate the learning in an organisation and training design is important in the success of a training programme (Velada, Cactano, Michel, Lyons & Kavanagh, 2007). Erasmus *et al.* (2016) define a training programme as a purposeful and structured set of learning experiences designed to enable learners to achieve pre-specified exit-level outcomes. As such, it includes the training outcomes, instructional methods and media to be used. Outcomes based learning is based on the successful achievement of the outcomes set by the programme. Every training programme must have a clear purpose, stating the reason for the programme and what learners will have to achieve to pass. The curriculum (a plan for the process of teaching in education) for any training programme must start with the intended outcomes (Du Plessis, Bhat and Williams, 2007). Outcomes of a course go beyond goals and objectives; they are demonstrable mastery of knowledge, skills and/or abilities gained as a consequence of learning (Du Plessis and Frederick, 2008). Outcomes based training focuses on organising everything around the end product of learning and the curriculum, instruction and assessment is built on this.

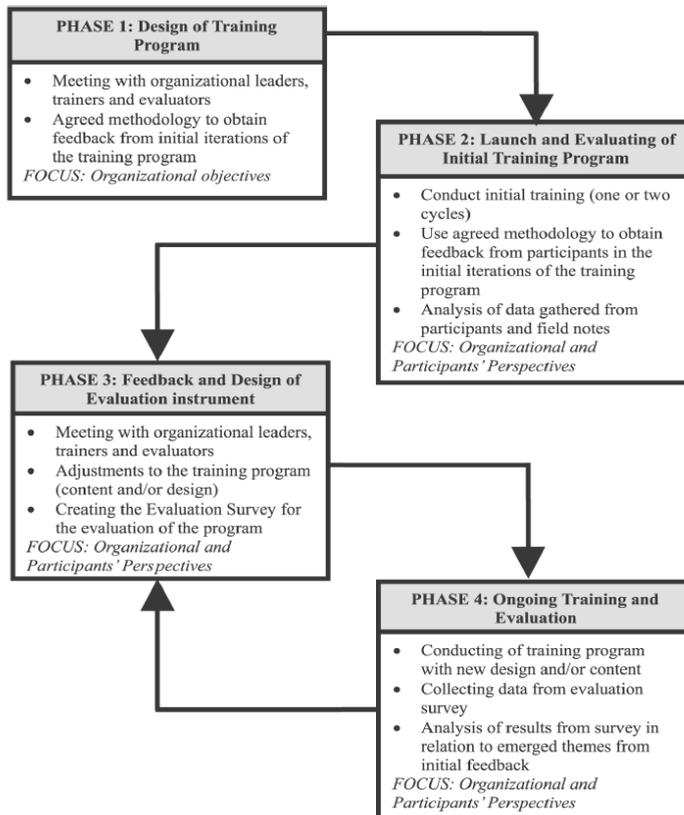
The next phase in training design is to select and sequence content (Du Plessis *et al.* 2007). Content is the subject matter, teaching points and learning activities that will assist the trainee in achieving the required outcomes. Preparing for a training programme turns the planning focus to how knowledge is to be transferred to the trainee. The traditional view of training, commonly known as the 'bucket theory', sees the information being poured from one mind to another (Erasmus *et al.*, 2007; 2016). Another approach is the facilitating trainer, where it is believed the trainer is not there to convey information but create opportunities for learners to gain information. Training methods include presentation, hands-on and group methods and a combination of all three can be used (Noe, 2002). Presentation methods include lectures and audio-visual techniques. Preparing and presenting a training programme is the culmination of all previous activities and as it is the part that is seen, is mostly the basis for evaluation. Assessment and evaluation is the last step in a training programme and encompasses trainee assessment and programme evaluation. The Kirkpatrick's evaluation level is a four-level model where each level is arranged hierarchically in terms of impact of training (Macky, 2011).

## The Importance of Training Evaluation for Entrepreneurs

Programme evaluation measures the return on training investment, being benefits to both the individual and the organisation. The purpose of a training evaluation system is to make decision on individual performance, make decisions on improvements, make

decision on effectiveness and determine whether set outcomes have been achieved. There are two types of evaluation: formative – concerned with decision made while programme was developed; and summative – concerned with the value of instructional materials after training has taken place. Lingham, Richley & Rezania (2006) support a four-phase model for training evaluation, shown in Figure 5, below.

*Figure 5: Four-phase Evaluation Model*



*Source: Lingham, Richley & Rezania (2006)*

In essence, delivering a successful training system relies on a deliberate and structured sequence of events. Each step along the way builds on previous work done, culminating in the delivery of the training. The evaluation and feedback loop is essential in assessing that required outcomes have been met and lessons learnt are used to improve training in the next cycle. The word cycle is used deliberately as the training system in an ongoing cycle, aimed at continuous improvement in the value to the organisation (Du Plessis 2016).

## Entrepreneurial High-Impact Model

Figure 6, below, shows the original model re-developed by the authors to reflect the unique needs of the entrepreneur. The model is an adaptation of the High-Impact Training Model of Erasmus *et al.*, 2007 (p. 18) which most closely aligns with the entrepreneur’s requirement for high intensity training. Each phase of the cycle moves training forward by using the work done in the previous phase as an input for the next. High impact training also fits with the need to establish habits and automated responses in certain situations. Repetitive and highly detailed training establishes an almost unthinking response, resulting in predictable behaviour (Eggenesperger, 2004). Each of the phases in the adapted model remains unchanged. As discussed earlier, the actual steps in establishing a training programme are relevant in the entrepreneurial context. What is different is the large circle in the middle representing the entrepreneur’s mission, vision, culture and values. It is large and in the middle of the model because of the primary significance it has.

*Figure 6: Entrepreneurial High-Impact Model*



*Source: Adapted and re-developed from High-Impact Training Model (Erasmus et al., 2007 p. 18)*

In Figure 6, above, mission, vision, culture, values and goals set for the organisation are the foundation blocks that the organisation is built on and as such, must be forefront in the minds of entrepreneurs within the training function when developing training programmes. The model shows arrows leading to each phase in the training cycle representing the influence mission, vision, culture, values and goals have in the development of each phase. The arrows are pointing one way, as training will not influence mission, vision, culture and values. Training may be used as a vehicle to shape culture but the actual change itself will be driven by influences outside the training system. Mission, vision, culture, and values needs to be ‘re-charged’ by reinforcement throughout an individual’s career. Following this model, any training within an employee’s career, from recruiting, training to ongoing professional development, would be constantly reinstating the importance of mission, vision, culture and values to their role.

This article sets out to ask if training theories are relevant to the entrepreneur in 2016. The literature review above discussed theories, models and reasons from an entrepreneurial context and confirms that training and education is of the utmost importance for entrepreneurs in 2016 and beyond. The next section is the empirical study confirming the literature review outcome.

## Methodology

Financed by Auckland City Council this study focuses on Auckland’s Rosebank Business Precinct (ARBP) where entrepreneurs are managing their businesses. The surrounding communities, particularly Māori, Pacific peoples and recent migrants, experience disparities in employment. Our research questions were:

Is there a skills match between the present-day workforce and actual business (entrepreneurial) needs over the medium term?

What can these data tell us about Rosebank’s trajectory as a skilled business cluster and about its future workforce requirements?

What education and training will be necessary for these organisations (entrepreneurs) to maintain their competitive advantage and profit margins?

The present research also examines the training and education needs of entrepreneurs in the ARBP. The target population were the 500-600 businesses operating in Rosebank including start-ups by entrepreneurs. When we combined and de-duplicated the data, we arrived at 529 businesses in the Rosebank population of businesses. We conducted face-to-face interviews with 102 companies within that population. We used a 36-question questionnaire and employed random stratified cluster sampling. We divided the population into “Industry” and “Firm Size” groupings to establish desired representative proportions based on Statistics New Zealand (2006). We selected a random sample from the members of each grouping. The grouping was treated as the sampling unit and analysis was done on a population of groupings. The sampling frame was entrepreneurs (owner-managers) of firms within the Rosebank Business Precinct.

## Analysis of the results

### Education qualifications

Table 1, below, shows clearly what the qualifications are of the employees in the neighbouring regions and cities of the ARBP. Overall, school leavers in this catchment area reached a lower level of attainment compared with both the regional average and the national average Department of Labour (2008a). Waitakere City, from which Rosebank recruits a great deal of its workforce, has 22.3% of its population with no qualification whatsoever (Du Plessis and Frederick, 2008)

**Table 1:** Education qualifications near Rosebank Business Precinct

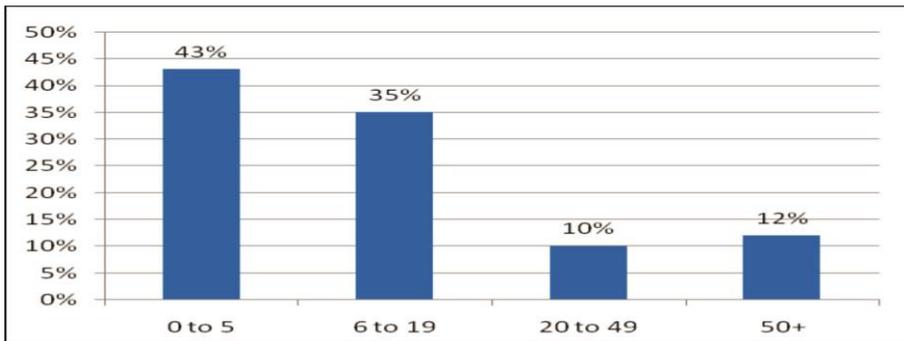
	Waitakere City	Auckland City	Auckland Region	New Zealand
% No qualifications	22.3%	14.1%	18.9%	23.2%
% school qualifications only	35.2%	33.0%	34.6%	32.5%
% post-school qualified	21.7%	19.2%	21.1%	22.4%
% Bachelor Degree and Higher	13.7%	27.4%	18.5%	14.7%

Source: Department of Labour Key Information Tool (KIT), January 2008

### Respondent's Firm size

In Figure 7, below, it is evident that smaller firms outnumbered larger firms. An enormous seventy-eight percent had less than twenty employees. Rosebank has more large firms than the national or even Auckland average, and so due consideration must be given to their needs as well. The one hundred firms in this sample were employing 1714 full-time employees. Respondents expected a decline of 1.8% in job numbers over the next year but a 1% increase by 2011, bringing the total decline in employee numbers to just less than 1% within three years. In other words, within the bounds of confidence, Rosebank entrepreneurs (owner/managers) are predicting a steady rate of employment. However, it is important to note that a quarter of respondents were not able to predict three years into the future.

*Figure 7: Respondent's Firm size*



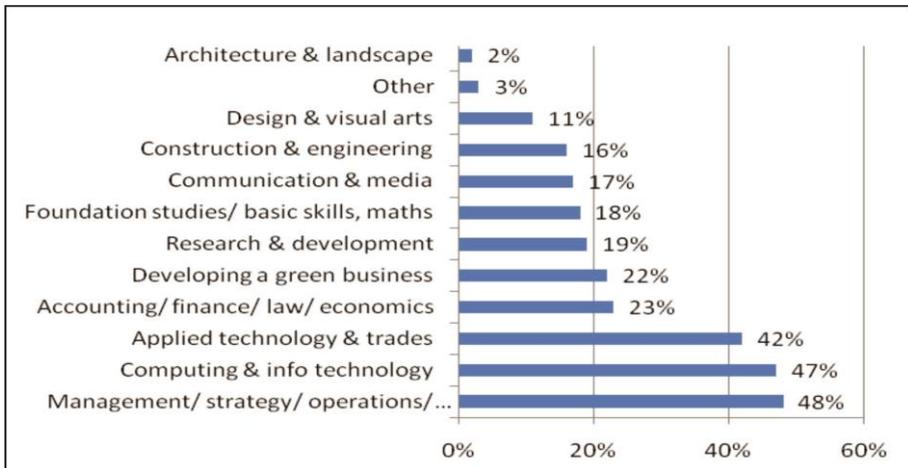
## Education and Training and Programme needs

The respondents were asked to describe the top education and training needs that they had over the next three years, respondents could choose more than one category and most respondents chose several categories (Figure 8 below). The top needs of ARBP businesses were:

- Management/ strategy/ operations/ sales and marketing
- Applied technology and trades.
- Computing & information technology, followed by
- Accounting, finance and law.

The Business Disciplines (Categories 1 & 4) had the greatest share of needs.

*Figure 8: Where are your training needs over the next 3 years?*



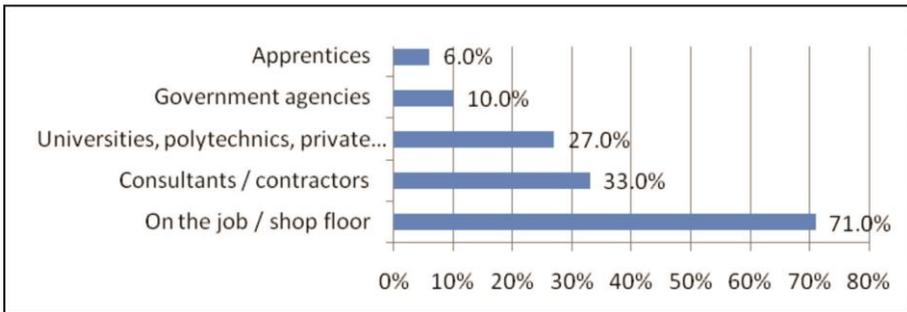
## Type of Training

Almost half of the respondents (41%) reported that they already undertook training when they were asked whether their firm had training at all whilst 57% had nothing. Of those who already have training, were asked to describe that training. This ranged from simple Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) training to more in-depth and expensive professional training. Responses included project management, time management, sales, IT training, electrical trade, food and hygiene, fire safety, first aid, warehousing, logistics, security, inventory management, competitor intelligence, trade certification, business coaching, and traffic management.

## Sources of training

According to the respondents, the greatest source of training was on-the-job / shop floor training at 71% (Figure 9 below). Consultants/contractors were also an important training source at 33%. Universities, polytechnics, and private educators provided 27% of the training within businesses. Government agencies and apprenticeships were relatively minor sources of training.

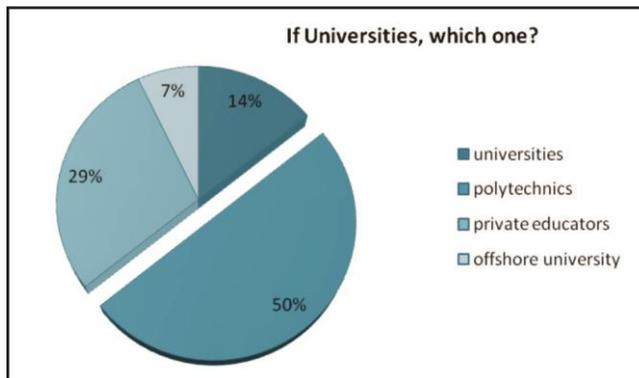
*Figure 9: What are your sources of training?*



## Universities, Polytechnics, and Private Educators

Polytechnics were the most favoured amongst the 28 respondents who used educational institutions, with 50% mentioning this option (Figure 10 below). Private educators were second at 29% with universities scoring only 14% and universities offshore at 7%.

*Figure 10: Which training / education source do you use?*



## Implications for Entrepreneurs for 2016 and beyond

Training is one of the key functions of HRM and can be utilised by entrepreneurs in the achievement of their strategic goals. Entrepreneurs need to strategies by scanning the environment, both internal and external, in order to identify strategic issues and gain a better sense of where their strategic strengths lie. By aligning HRM strategies with corporate strategies (that include training and education), employee attitude and behaviour will be influenced positively to support company objectives. The key to competitive advantage is the entrepreneur's knowledge, skills and abilities. As such, knowledge management and development of talent within an organisation are rapidly becoming key competitive factors.

## Recommendations for Entrepreneurs

Training and development within an organisation assist with corporate strategy in two ways. First, it grows the right employees to pursue their chosen strategy where the required skills may not be available in the labour market. Secondly, by investing in their employees, it will positively affect commitment to the organisation and attract talent by being an employer of choice. Training and development is a strategic activity given the long-term consequences.

## Conclusions

Training, education, development and learning are often thought of as synonymous. Training describes specific learning activities to improve an employee's knowledge, skills and abilities. Education improves overall competence beyond the workplace. Development aims to fulfil an employee's potential within the organisation through a number of methods including career counselling, mentoring and job rotation. The main learning theories include behavioural, humanistic, cognitive and social learning theories and an individual's learning style reflects the way in which they prefer to learn. The organisation's approach to learning will also impact on how training is conducted. There are a number of different approaches and models to explain the importance of training for entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur's approach places the success of a training system on the trainer's ability to plan, organise, guide and control training. The main training models discussed was the Nadler's critical events model, the Camp, Blanchard and Huzco model and the High-Impact Training Model. Each has been developed with different organisational needs in mind and therefore places more emphasis in different areas. The Nadler's critical events model provides a holistic and general view of training while the Camp, Blanchard and Huzco model is geared towards fulfilling a particular need. The Entrepreneurial High-Impact Training Model was re-developed and emphasises the need to move training forward. Each model in some form identifies four main themes. The training function within an organisation consists of four main areas: assessing training needs; training design and development; preparing and presenting training; and trainee assessment and programme evaluation.

Rosebank Business Association should seek best-practice advice on labour force education and training. Educational institutions and Rosebank businesses should

develop relationships to better understand business needs, provide education and training, and revamp curricula to fit needs.

Human Resource departments, and entrepreneurs (managers / owners), not outside contractors, are best placed to know the education, training and development of career needs as well as the corporate culture and will therefore need to make final decisions in consultation with their own business managers and other interested parties within the ARBP organisations in the future. Learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour or cognition occurring as a result of education, training and experience. Management / employers in the ARBP should budget for education and training of their employees. Knowledgeable employees are usually more productive and loyal.

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# NONGOVERNMENT SECTOR FIGHTING CANCER IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** *The burden of cancer is increasingly affecting patients in all European countries. The paper draws a landscape of the Romanian non-profit sector involved in tackling cancer. A descriptive analysis was done on two databases (the national registries of associations and foundations in Romania), for delineating the extent and the type of the NGOs' involvement in the cancer fight. Results show a cancer civil society still in its infancy stage, displaying an imbalanced situation in terms of goals' orientation and territorial distribution. Financially helping patients is a prevailing orientation, whilst there is not enough focus on prevention, education, rehabilitation and palliation. The paper raises concern for policy-makers to include NGOs as partners in national-cancer control programmes.*

**Keywords:** *nongovernment organisations; cancer; survivorship; return to work.*

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## Introduction

As part of civil society, nonprofit organizations can have a remarkable influence on the population's health status and on the health issues in general (Hawe and Shiell, 2000; Olafsdottir, Bakhtiari and Barman, 2014; Anheier, 2009). The NGOs involvement in health can either take the form of substituting services that governments fail to provide, or to complement services and functions offered by welfare states. More specific, civil society can influence health in several ways: by becoming direct service providers, by engaging in advocacy or by providing social capital through associational opportunities (Giarelli, Annandale and Ruzza, 2014).

The types of involvement and the benefits of civil society participation in health are stated by several studies (Giarelli et al. 2014). Especially in transitional or development

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countries with a welfare state having a weaker force, civil society actors can make the difference with regard to improving health in the short and long run. Apart from advocacy, they can significantly contribute to prevention through information and education campaigns, they can improve diagnosis and treatment by facilitating the access to services that are either not provided by the government or not accessible and they can provide services such as rehabilitation or palliation.

The NGOs involvement in cancer care is not only beneficial, but it has been shown to be essential, by providing technical knowhow, skills and resources relevant for cancer care and research (WHO, 2002). Here too, their role is most needed in developing countries due to the limited resources the health care systems have. A vital and active nonprofit sector can substitute missing public services, can reduce disparities and therefore can even inequalities in cancer care and control. The landscape of NGOs involvement in cancer is eclectic. Examples of good practice stand next to cases of minimal or non-existent implication. For example, the NGOs dramatically contributed in U.S. to the evolution of public agenda and its gradual shift in focus from the understanding of cancer as an individual problem generated by woman's choices concerning her lifestyle (e.g. diet, delayed pregnancy) to the framing of cancer as an environmental and institutional neglect for which the government and economic actors should be held responsible. This change in the framing of breast cancer has greatly impacted on the federal spending of cancer research and on the public discourses about the epidemic of a breast cancer (Kolker, 2004). On the other side, there are countries whose civil society cannot assume an active role due to lack of maturity or missing knowhow.

The nonprofit involvement in health care is usually a result of the features and particularities of the health care system in the country and it should be considered accordingly. Several articles, for example Serapioni and Matos (2014), are analysing citizen participation or civil society implication in health, by discussing first the opportunities and challenges of the health care system. In Eastern European countries, where the health systems face considerable resources constraints and organizational difficulties, the NGOs involvement is expected to be different than in Western countries. According to Eikemo and Bamba (2008, p. 5), the Eastern European welfare state type of regime Romania has is struggling to make the shift from the universalism of the communist state towards marketization and decentralisation. The ongoing health care system reform has provided in the last years several measures towards an increasing involvement of the local communities, i.e. public hospital decentralisation, community medical assistance (Popa, 2014a; Popa, 2014b). Through these measures, the framework for involving the civil society actors begins to be set up, but actual involvement is still low. Essential mechanisms for participation are still missing, as well as a culture of participation and volunteering.

How is the involvement in cancer care and control of NGOs in Romania? This is the main question this article is trying to answer. The analysis will focus on associations and foundations in Romania. More specific, we are addressing four directions when drawing a landscape of the Romanian nonprofit sector involved in tackling cancer: the role in cancer care and control, the cancer areas they are involved in, the territorial discrepancies in involvement and the support offered for cancer survivors, mostly the

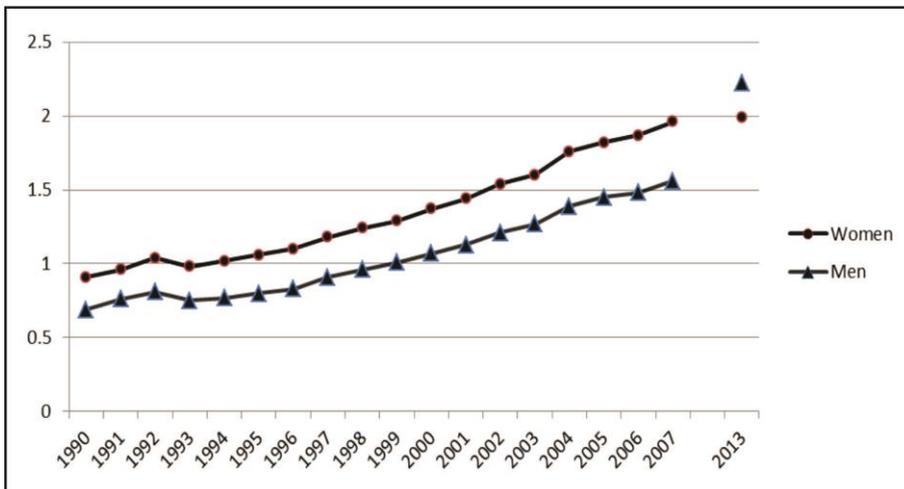
support for returning to work. The study also tries to address the limits NGOs encounter when fulfilling their goals. We will conclude by synthetically presenting the Romanian NGOs' role in cancer care and control, against the background of the current provision offered by the state.

## Cancer in Romania – incidence, prevalence, survivorship

The cancer is the second cause of mortality in Romania, although the total number of cases is smaller than in other European countries (Dégi, 2011). In 2012, the leading types of cancer in Romania were lung, colorectal and prostate cancer, for men, and breast, colorectal and cervix uteri cancer, for women (Ferlay et al. 2013). The number of avoidable deaths is high, indicating the need for more prevention programmes and more involvement from the relevant social actors (including NGOs).

During 2003-2011, the incidence of cancer increased in Romania with 32.36% and the mortality due to cancer increased with 9.67%. Cancer's prevalence in Romania displays a steady upward trend in the past two decades throughout which it has been growing from 0.85% in 1990 to 2.07% in 2012 according to World Health Organization (WHO, 2016). Based on WHO's European health for all database, Dégi (2013) draws attention to the fact that in Romania every year 52.000 new cases of cancer are diagnosed while about the same number of cancer-specific deaths are reported. Cancer prevalence by gender shows similar upward trends.

*Figure 1: Cancer prevalence (in%) in Romania by gender for the years 1990-2007 and 2013*



Source: authors according to data provided by WHO, 2016 for the selected years (<http://data.euro.who.int/hadb/param.php>)

Overall, Romanian women seem more affected than men by cancer disease, except for the most recent reported data concerning the prevalence of cancer for the year 2013 when there is a shift in the pattern with women being less frequently diagnosed than their male counterparts, as shown in the next figure. In the last years, the government began to address the higher prevalence of cancer in women through several programmes and policies targeted to prevention and early detection of cervical and breast cancer. In the same time, a significant number of NGOs in Romania are focusing on women with cancer, offering information or various types of support, as we will show next.

In this context of increasing prevalence but lower mortality, the number of people surviving cancer is higher every year in Romania: in eight years (2003 – 2011) it has increased 8 times. Part of the needs of these patients are related to treatment and we will analyse below how many NGOs are offering support for treatment. When finishing treatment, patients face the social and psychological effects of cancer, therefore the need for adequate assistance prevails.

Within the number of patients newly diagnosed with cancer every year, a considerable part are of working age. In 2012, 50.27% of the newly diagnosed patients were of working age in Romania (Globocan, 2012b). This points to the acute necessity of addressing their work-related needs (resuming work, job retention). This type of support is only scarcely offered by the state, therefore NGOs could play a significant role for helping cancer patients to return to an active role on the work market.

## **The Romanian nonprofit sector – opportunities and limits**

The limitations NGOs come across are even more severe and visible in the European countries challenged by institutional fragmentation, scarcity of financial resources and a short history of citizen participation (Serapioni and Matos, 2014). By the end of 1990s Romania registered around 5.000 non-governmental organizations, a reality which can be described as a promising revival of civil society after the long censorship triggered by the brutal control of the state over the informal associations, and its detrimental effects on people's private initiatives to set up non-profit organizations during the communist regime. An early systematic analysis of NGOs profile in the post-socialist Romania has shown that the main areas of non-profit sector were tied to peculiarities of the national context characterized by a high presence of international organizations and international funding, a moderate collaborative relationship between NGOs and state in some fields (e.g. sport, culture, environment), and a sense of pride Romanians have for their cultural heritage and the beauty of nature. In this context, some fields like health, recreation and housing were lagging far behind areas like education, advocacy or social services (Johnson and Young, 1997). In their analysis carried out on the 499 NGOs self-registered in the *Catalogue of Nongovernmental Organizations in Romania: 1991-92* provided by the Soros Foundation for an Open Society (Bucharest), Johnson and Young (1997) identified only 11 non-profit organizations in the health domain, in spite of large flows on international funds channelled into health institutions in Romania. A more recent study (Petrescu, 2014) dealing with the regional disparities and evolution of

social economy in Romania shows that NGOs ranks first in the top of such entities with a number of 29,226 organizations found in the REGIS database (2010) provided by the National Institute of Statistics. According to the same source, there was a rapid increase in the number of NGOs during the decade 2000-2010, in some regions the share of growth being amounting to 400% (South-East) and even 800% in Bucharest-Ilfov. To this dynamic, the changes in the legislation might have had also a major contribution. The legislation concerning the creation of associations in Romania has made visible progresses in that it shifted from the excessively bureaucratic conditions of the Law 21/1924 (e.g. it required 21 persons in order to form an association and the approval of the ministry under the area of which the association intended to exert its activities) to less restrictive conditions specified within the Ordinance 26/2000 (e.g. a minimum of 3 members to set up an association and at least the double of the minimum gross wage as initial patrimony).

The number of employees working within NGOs has tripled during the past decade, reaching 17,268 in 2010. A Romanian NGO employs on average 2,3 persons, although there are significant regional discrepancies both in the number of employees and in average revenue by entity. Concerning the number of employees, the most developed NGOs appear to be found in Bucharest-Ilfov, the West and the South-East regions, while Bucharest-Ilfov, South Muntenia and the West are leaders according with the earned revenues (Petrescu, 2014). So, although these organizations are, in theory, associated with poor economic performance of those areas where vulnerable groups are most present, the Romanian case suggest that NGOs are more developed in regions that perform better in terms of economic and human capital. Social capital, as both a premise and an outcome of the membership in associations, is also less developed in regions like Moldova (North-East), compared to other ethnically mixed regions of Romania where people claim more often that they trust others, unlike their Moldovan counterparts who are more ethnically homogeneous and tend to limit their trust and exchanges to their kin (Sotiropoulos, 2005).

Within the cancer field, the civil society had some achievements by taking part in the fight against women cancers. Although along the years the incidence of cancer was constantly higher among women than among men (Fig. 1), the relatively lower prevalence of cancer among Romanian women lately could be partly accounted for by the increased awareness of women concerning the available screening for early detection of the most current forms of cancer (breast cancer and cervical cancer). The Romanian NGOs may have played a considerable role to the achievement of this outcome by challenging the traditional culture of care which has long relied on the private or family support for recovering from most diseases given the stigma and shame associated with ill-health in general, and cancer in particular (Dégi, 2013). Some NGOs campaigns, such as “Pearl of Wisdom”, engaged in reducing cervical cancer, became popular in Romania through the implication of several organizations (e.g. The Association of Cancer Patients, The Romanian Cancer Association, The Romanian Health Psychology Association) that have contributed to the spread of information and the broadening the access through free services allowing better coverage also for the less fortunate groups of women (e.g. those with low incomes, those living in remote and isolated areas witnessing a lack of care facilities) (Geană, 2012).

There remain however many issues to be addressed by civil society, especially its NGOs, with regard to the promotion of cancer patients' rights, the continuous and up-to-date information regarding screening procedures, population's awareness toward the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles and reducing of health-compromising behaviours, the quality and coverage of care and emotional support services throughout all stages, from prevention to rehabilitation. Frequently, the limits they encounter hinder the realization of these goals. If the scarcity of financial resources and the dependence on external financial aid, as well as their capacity to attract funding are usually the main limits, other problems appear too. The shortage of human capital (e.g. volunteers and other human resources) with appropriate knowledge and skills to deal with physical and psycho-social needs of cancer patients, or the lack of appropriate means to reach out to those vulnerable groups. Moreover, the organizational culture and role awareness within the NGOs in Romania are still sensitive points; Many of them are still learning how to shape health care reform and policy, whereas a significant part are assuming mere fundraising tasks or provide communities for helping their members, however are still not aware of the possible role in influencing health.

## **Theoretical considerations**

### ***Role of NGOs in cancer care and control***

Although recognizing the essential role governments have in fighting cancer, WHO urges all key stakeholders in society to take action in cancer control activities, including NGOs (Dunn, Herron, Adams and Chambers, 2013). In theory, NGOs could involve and have impact in all areas of cancer control, that are primary prevention, early detection and secondary prevention, diagnosis and treatment, survivorship and palliative care (Beaulieu, Bloom, Bloom and Stein, 2009). In fact, the NGOs involvement depends on so much variables that it greatly varies across countries and regions. Different countries achieved important results in some areas of cancer control mostly through the contribution of the nonprofit sector. Although the impact the nonprofit sector can have on various areas of cancer control can vary in a great extent, the idea that the government and the nonprofit sector should complement each other in their effort to fight cancer, is widely accepted.

In spite of growing recognition by states that there is a necessity for a genuine partnership between governments, NGOs and other civil society's organizations, some authors show that there are few national cancer control plans which clearly state the role of NGOs in fighting cancer beyond a cursory acknowledgment in their introduction. Dunn et al. (2013) infer that this collaborative goal between various sectors of society remains more a rhetoric than an effective commitment in most countries. On the other hand, other studies suggest that there is visible progress in some advanced resource settings. For instance, Klawiter (2004) illustrate the changes of disease regimes and their impact on the illness experience of a woman diagnosed twice with breast cancer in San Francisco Bay Area where breast cancer movements embedded in broader social movements (e.g. feminist activism, environmental

organizations) have transformed medical practices, legislations and subjectivities. The author emphasizes the importance of the concept of *disease regime* she defines as 'the institutionalized practices, authoritative discourses, social relations, collective identities, emotional vocabularies, visual images, public policies and regulatory actions through which diseases are socially constituted and experienced' (Klawiter, 2004, p. 851). Civil society can play a crucial role in the transformation of disease regimes through the activities of NGOs and the mobilization of various resources and shared sensibilities of communities that can become powerful sources of change for both medical practices and cancer patients' empowerment.

Grey and McMikel (2013) emphasize the need for enhancing the advocacy role of NGOs in developing countries because these collective actors have a great potential to address the aspects of cancer care which are often sidelined or neglected by other stakeholders (e.g. physicians, industries, governments). NGOs could play an influential role in improving the cancer-related policies and in raising awareness about the exposure to life-threatening habits characterizing the rapidly expanding modern lifestyles (e.g. unhealthy diet, sedentary behavior).

### ***Territorial discrepancies in the role played by NGOs***

There is a wide recognition of the high discrepancies between and within countries concerning cancer incidence and cancer mortality (Jones, Chilton, Hajek, Lammarino and Laufman, 2006). Aside of these notorious aspects, there are also under-researched cross-country discrepancies in the role played by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in cancer control.

The civil society involvement and role in health issues depend on the country development level and on the type of the welfare state. According to country development level, NGOs were found to play a major role in assisting hospitals and medical staff in providing direct medical services in low income countries, while in more developed countries they have broader purposes that go beyond clinical information and include emotional support, engagement in research activities and advocacy, especially in high income countries (Azenha et al., 2011). Similarly, NGOs involvement matters more in societies with weaker welfare systems, i.e. in transitional and developing countries (Olafsdottir et al., 2014). Such disparities might reflect not only the availability and inequality of resources that shape the quality of health care services and the profile of NGOs in this field, but also the maturity of cancer civil society. As an illustration, Azenha and colleagues (2011) show that in low income countries, NGOs' founders were more likely to come from health care professions, contrasting with the case of higher income countries where the share of cancer survivors-led NGOs gradually increase. This positive gradient could reveal that there is a strong association between the level of available resources and the capabilities of cancer survivors to mobilize resources through grassroots associations in order to disseminate the idea of cancer as curable disease, to dispel misconceptions and

population's fatalist attitude towards cancer, as well as to advance more effective cancer-related policies.

Apart from the discrepancies between countries, there are significant differences between regions within a country in the territorial coverage with NGOs working on health issues. The accretion of health NGOs mainly in urban areas and capital cities in post-socialist countries is explained by Dill (2014) as a resultant of the fact that most of them relied on some form of connection to professional service providers and institutions at their inception. They were either founded by health care professionals, or attracted members from the patients in public health care services, which reinforced the disproportioned location in urban areas.

### ***Areas of involvement of NGOs in fighting against cancer***

Several areas are mentioned with regard to the NGOs participation in health in general: providing information on health, diseases, lifestyle; aggregating social actors and groups based on their interests regarding health issues; monitoring health care services and policies provided by the state or the progress in the enactment of various changes; resolving crises in health care; contributing to policy design and implementation or representing the interests of the vulnerable population (Giarelli et al., 2014; Schmidtke, Falge and Ruzza, 2013; Guta et al., 2014; Mulvale, Chodos, Bartram, MacKinnon and Abud, 2014).

Regarding cancer in particular, similar areas can be targeted. Analysing the activity of the breast cancer civil society, Azenha et al. (2011) found that NGOs worldwide are involved in activities related to providing information, raising the community awareness, early detection campaigns, direct medical services, emotional support, research, basic material provision, advocacy, financial support, and legal rights. Although the accent should be put on prevention, Different types of interventions can be done throughout the cancer care and control continuum.

Looking from a different angle, the civil society can be part of a more complex intersectoral partnership. Dunn and colleagues (2013) argue the fight against cancer cannot be successful unless civil society organizations are involved from the planning stage of the programmes and policies and then all the way through the process of implementing an effective policy or programme. A legal and structural framework facilitating their inception and functioning has to be set up, in order for them to be empowered partners with full responsibilities.

### ***Involvement in supporting survivors, particularly work reintegration of cancer patients***

As longer cancer survivorship is more and more a reality today, NGOs should address the particular needs of the patients which come out of the treatment and engage on the difficult path of rehabilitation. Usually, cancer is approached in a medical manner, giving full consideration to proper diagnosis and treatment, but leaving the patient that

has completed the treatment with almost no support for the social and psychological needs of survivorship. The situation regarding this type of support differs from one country to another, but since the medical system is focused on prevention and treatment, NGOs could become a key actor in providing the services in this area.

Work is one component of survivorship that is often overlooked by individual or institutional stakeholders engaged in tackling cancer. But as the number of working-age cancer survivors is continuously growing, the work reintegration of cancer patients is providing not only individual benefits, but societal also. The literature on how NGOs can help with the return to work of cancer patients is limited, but there are voices stating that NGOs can partner with public and private employers in order to facilitate this outcome (Feuerstein, 2009). Rather, there are papers asserting the challenges and difficulties NGOs face when involving in cancer survivorship activism (Errico and Rowden, 2006; Durstine and Leitman, 2009).

## Data and method

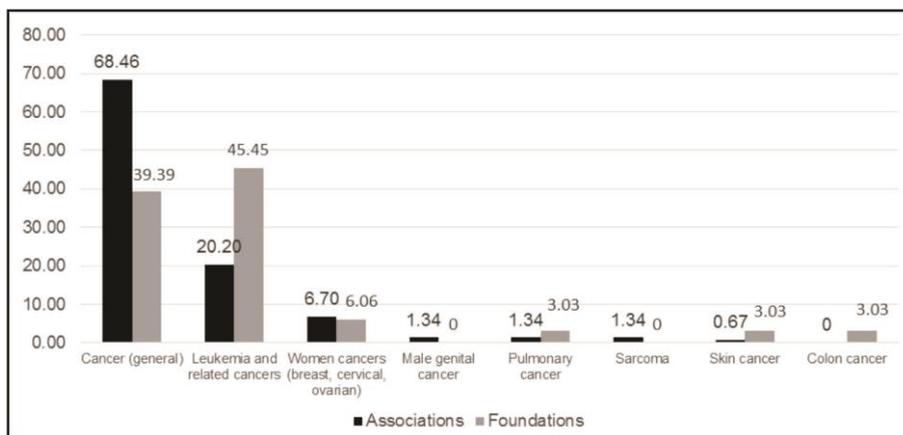
The data for this study are drawn from the National Registry of NGOs (Ministry of Justice, 2016). This is a public available database with information about all types of organizations with no patrimonial aim. Our search focused on associations and foundations as specific types of not for profit organizations. The database for associations has 70938 entries from which we targeted the organizations addressing cancer problem. Also, the database for foundations has 18464 entries from which we targeted the foundations addressing cancer problem. In order to identify these types of NGOs some keywords were used for our search: “cancer”, “neoplasm”, “neoplasia”, “carcinoma”, “leukemia”, “melanoma”, “lymphoma”, “sarcoma”, “blastoma”. The search triggered 135 cases for associations and 33 cases for foundations.

A content analysis on the aims provided in the National Registry database by all NGOs helped us draw the next categories of information: types of cancer addressed by NGOs, whether cancer is the main or the secondary goal of the NGO, the demographic categories targeted by NGOs (adults or children, male or female), the existence of goals targeting the return to work of cancer patients, as well as the main goals relevant for the cancer fight, proposed by each NGO. County (location) for each NGO is another variable included in our databases. We performed descriptive analysis on the two databases resulted.

## Results

Our analysis shows that within the 70938 association in Romania, 135 (0.19%) address the problem of cancer either in general, or for specific types of cancers. Around two thirds of these associations are addressing cancer as a main goal and one third as a secondary goal. 83% are targeting adult cancer, whilst 17% try to tackle cancer in children. The majority of association aims to tackle cancer in general, but apart from them, the main types of cancer Romanian NGOs are fighting against are leukemia, breast and cervical cancer (see Fig. 2)

**Figure 2:** *Types of cancers addressed by associations and foundations in Romania (percent)*



Source: National registries of associations and foundations in Romania

Regarding the foundations, there are 18464 foundations in Romania and 33 foundations (0.17%) are working on the problem of cancer. A little more than a half (57.6%) are addressing cancer as a main goal, and the rest put other goals on their agenda and also cancer. The majority of them tackle child cancer (54.5%), 39.4% address cancer at all ages (unspecified age) and 6,1% fight against women cancer.

### ***Areas of involvement and role in cancer care and control***

Glancing at the goals stated by the associations activating in the cancer field in Romania, three large categories are apparent: goals targeting the needs of the patients, goals concerning the problem of cancer in general and goals directed to the health care system. The first category is considerably more consistent than the others, with the great majority of organizations being interested in addressing the needs of the current and potential patients, e.g. offering support of any kind, improving care or support for patients with rare cancers. Of the total number of occurrences, two thirds are goals related to patients. Within the category, raising money for cancer patients and offering material support is an aim embraced by many organizations. Far less mentioned (around 15% of the total occurrences) are the goals related to fighting cancer in general, e.g. research on cancer, changing attitudes about cancer, or developing policies. Even less present (12%) are the aims related to the health care system: reforming the system, establishing social services or support for oncology institutions.

**Table 1.** Goals' orientation of associations and foundations in Romania

Categories of NGOs' goals	Specific goal	Number of occurrences for associations	Number of occurrences for foundations
Goals addressing the patients	Support for cancer patients (of any kind)	57 (33.1%)	4 (9.3%)
	Support for children with leukemia/cancer (of any kind)	-	15 (34.8%)
	Raising money for helping cancer patients	24 (13.9%)	-
	Information/education regarding cancer (prophylaxis, symptoms, treatment)	20 (11.6%)	2 (4.6%)
	Advocacy for the rights/interests of cancer patients	16 (9.3%)	2 (4.6%)
	Prevention, prophylaxis of cancer	15 (8.7%)	8 (18.6%)
	Support for work and social reintegration of cancer patients	9 (5.2%)	1 (2.3%)
	Counselling/psychotherapy for cancer patients	8 (4.6%)	1 (2.3%)
	Improving quality of life of cancer patients	7 (4.0%)	1 (2.3%)
	Support for diagnosing and treatment of cancer	6 (3.4%)	8 (18.6%)
	Offering care/improving care for cancer patients	6 (3.4%)	-
	Rehabilitation of cancer patients	2 (1.1%)	-
	Support for patients to be treated abroad	1 (0.5%)	-
Support for patients with rare cancers	1 (0.5%)	-	
	Informing the population regarding prevention and fighting skin cancer	-	1 (2.3%)
Goals addressing the problem of cancer in general	Supporting and promoting cancer research on cancer	15 (40.5%)	4 (100%)
	Decreasing the mortality rate from cancer and ease its burden	15 (40.5%)	-
	Changing attitudes regarding cancer and cancer patients	5 (13.5%)	-
	Developing policies, in accordance with the European policy and regulations in the field	2 (5.4%)	-
Goals addressing the health care system for cancer	Improving quality and access to medical services/ Reforming the system	8 (27.5%)	-
	Establishing/developing social services (social work services, support groups)	8 (27.5%)	-
	Support for oncologists (promoting profession, training)	5 (17.2%)	-
	Establishing/developing oncological centres (for diagnose and treatment, registries)	5 (17.2%)	-
	Support for oncology medical institutions/wards (donations, equipment)	3 (10.34%)	-
	Information, education of medical staff regarding prevention and fighting skin cancer	-	1 (50%)
	Social, medical and humanitarian services for children with cancer	-	1 (50%)

Source: authors' analysis on data provided by the National Registry of NGOs

Note: one association/foundation can propose more than one goal within the cancer fight.

When referring to the cancer care continuum, a deeper examination of the first category shows that most of the goals are targeting the diagnosis and treatment component, followed by aims regarding rehabilitation and social/professional reintegration. Prevention is less frequently present in the NGOs objectives, while screening and

palliation as explicit goals are not at all envisaged. This distribution is also prevailing in the aims declared by foundations.

Within the disease-centred goals, supporting research on cancer seems to be the most recurrent. Some goals are vaguely or inadequately enunciated, with no other details provided, which makes difficult to categorize them.

### *Territorial discrepancies*

Looking at the geographical distribution of the NGOs locations, apart from the capital city which has the higher number of associations, the rest of them are distributed around the whole country, except the South region where there are eight counties with no NGO registered. The Central, West and North West regions are the best represented with associations. This distribution is consistent with the regions' development level, level of social capital and trust (Voicu, 2005). Also interesting is the fact that the distribution is rather unequal, as five counties have the highest number of associations (6-15) and 27 counties have lower numbers (1-4). This distribution should be carefully considered, as 21.5% of all NGOs in the database have no specified county.

For the foundations, two counties (one is Bucharest) accumulate 60% of the Romanian foundations proposing goals related to cancer (they have eleven and six foundations respectively). Ten counties have one or two foundations and the rest (29 counties) have no foundations activating in the cancer field.

### *Involvement in survivorship and work*

Most of the Romanian NGOs present in the cancer area are targeting the diagnosis and treatment directions. They raise funds and offer support mainly for covering the medical needs of the patients. We looked how many of them have goals related to survivorship, i.e. offering services and support for rehabilitation, psychological, social or professional/career related needs. Less than a quarter (18,5%) are interested in offering counselling/psychotherapy services, or establishing/developing social services (e.g. support groups), or rehabilitation, or improving the quality of life of cancer patients. These are explicit goals related to survivorship, but many NGOs are stating goals in a general way, so that survivorship can be implicit (for example 'offering support of any kind for cancer patients').

Regarding helping survivors to return to work, nine associations and one foundation declare this aim. The small number reflects a marginal preoccupation with work challenges cancer patients face in their struggle with the disease.

## **Discussion**

In the context of increased burden of cancer and considerable pressure on the health care systems to decentralise the services, the local level should gain a significant role in fighting cancer. Shifting responsibilities from government to civil society becomes not a preference, but a necessity. Countries in Europe are struggling to provide a more

consistent role for the civil society and to make it a partner with full responsibilities. Dunn and colleagues (2013) show this is not an enterprise without difficulties, as most countries don't even mention explicit roles in their national plans for fighting cancer for the civil sector. Romania is no exception in this regard. A previous analysis (under publication) on the legal documents for the national health programme for cancer proves that civil actors (associations and foundations in Romania) are not once mentioned as partners of the government in the fight against cancer. The government assumes all the roles and does not officially envisage any responsibility for NGOs.

In a health care system oriented largely on diagnosing and treatment, the civil society could assume a steady role on prevention (by informing and educating population) and also on rehabilitation and palliation. Romanian associations and foundations are already doing some activities in this range, although they are legitimated by the government. Still, a consistent share of their activities are oriented to supporting patients for their treatment. Therefore, the treatment component is over-represented, and the rest are not enough covered. Analyses (Azenha et al., 2011) show that in lower-middle income countries, the most common program activities of NGOs included community awareness (76%), early detection campaigns (71%) and information (65%), whereas in Romania, around 50% are oriented towards financially helping patients. This is an urgency and crisis approach, not one oriented in long-term improvement of cancer situation.

The analysis presented in Table 1 allows us to infer that grassroots organizations in Romania give more consideration to cancer when the disease is already in place and to the main actor of this problem which is the patient. Support is rather understood and given in direct ways to people (money, other types of material help) and is less focused on developing or improving the system, which could indirectly help a larger number of patients. Many associations conceptualize their contribution as short-term rather than long-term help, by activating less on areas potentially decreasing the burden of cancer in the long run (e.g. research, policy). This picture is consistent with the pattern observed in the cancer policies available in the Romanian National Health Programme for Cancer, where significant consideration is given to early detection, diagnosis and treatment and far less to prevention, or the components ensuring better cancer control in the long run (developing cancer registries, research, etc).

The results further show that cancer civil society is still in its infancy stage, displaying an imbalanced situation in terms of both goals' orientation and territorial distribution. Following the results of Azenha and his colleagues (2011), Romania could illustrate the position of lower-middle countries where NGOs' efforts are mainly invested in the goals of alleviating the consequences of disease through rather medical services and personnel associated to hospitals. The primacy of these goals reflect in fact the structural constraints faced by the nascent civil society during the recent post-socialist history, as well as the urgency to tackle most arduous facts (e.g. pain relief, care provision for cancer patients) by complementing the low-quality healthcare services provided within the hospitals. These limits are compounded by the low sustainability of NGOs' activities in a context of structural barriers for securing the necessary resources to engage in broader awareness campaigns, advocacy and research programs. Efforts are usually limited in scope and space and are supported by narrow networks of

community members revolving around friendship, kinship and other relatively strong ties. Public discourses that attend to larger and groups and policy-makers are not yet capable of mobilizing public support and emotional vocabularies that can attract the interest of people across a wide range of age, class, ethnic, residential areas and so on. Such weaknesses and struggles have been also stressed by studies in other European post-communist settings, like the analysis by Fagan (2005) with respect to the obstacles faced by the development of civil society in Czech Republic. The latter author pointed to the critiques usually faced by NGOs in post-socialist countries given their long-term dependency on international donors and the disconnection with the local communities whose interests they should serve. For these reasons, NGOs in European post-communist countries may witness more difficulties in garnering recognition and credibility from the communities they are based in and may differ in regard to the pathway of becoming rooted in these social, cultural and political realms. By fear of being cut their scarce international aid, some NGOs may propose goals that are not actually reflecting local preoccupations, but rather aims which are dictated by their international donors, irrespective of the actual circumstances in the sphere of their local area of intervention.

The results regarding the territorial discrepancies show an unequal distribution of NGOs in Romania, but specific features can be identified for the regions where they are located. First, these regions have more developed economy and higher incomes, which is a favourable environment for the emergence of such organizations. A similar situation is present in other Eastern European countries, with NGOs led by highly educated and professional individuals (Dill, 2014). In this context, we consider that further research analysing the process of establishing these structures (the characteristics of the people developing them, on what grounds are they established, what are the barriers for their growth, where do they activate or the number of cancer survivors involved and the intensity of their activism in such associations), is necessary. Second, the entrepreneurial skills, usually hold by highly educated people, are an important component in establishing and managing organizations. Studies (Fagan, 2005) show the importance of knowledge and skills related to fundraising and mobilizing community resources. This know-how is accrued in larger cities and infrequent in rural areas.

## Conclusion

Using a descriptive approach, we have presented the landscape of NGOs activating in the cancer field in Romania. Results show a massive focus on patients undergoing treatment (mostly helping and supporting but also informing) but less on other stakeholders such as survivors, physicians, researchers. Furthermore, of the cancer control areas, the diagnosis and treatment are particularly emphasised and in some cases prevention, but there are fields almost not covered such as rehabilitation (physical, professional, etc) and palliation. The results can be partially explained by the structural barriers Romanian civil society faced in the aftermath of the communism fall: low incentives for civic responsibility after decades of learnt ignorance, dependence on international donor funds, disconnection with local communities, widespread suspicion and mistrust.

The paper raises two major concerns. First, it urges policy-makers to include NGOs as partners in national cancer control programmes. In the absence of guidance and legitimation from governments, NGOs make uncoordinated efforts that may not respond properly to the real needs in a specific society. The tendency is to focus on the urgent needs of current patients and to disregard the long run objectives that have no immediate benefits. This is particular important for NGOs in post-communist countries which have less experience on advocating in the health field. Second, NGOs development seems to be dependant of a set of local social and economic characteristics (social capital, social trust, economic development). The consequence is that in regions where these characteristics are less present, the civil society is weaker or absent. The lesson that should be drawn is that additional support is needed in such regions for setting up NGOs and maintaining their functionality.

### Acknowledgements:

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# COORDINATES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN 20 VILLAGES IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF COUNTY ARGES<sup>1</sup>

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Flavius MIHALACHE<sup>2</sup>

*Abstract: The present study analyses the situation of a cluster constituted from 20 villages in the southern part of county Arges, from the perspective of local budget coordinates and of the ongoing local development projects. From structural viewpoint, the social and economic characteristics of the analysed villages are circumscribed, according to several aspects, to the general coordinates of the Romanian rural area. The goal of the paper is to explore the different experiences that local authorities gathered in the last years of unfolding development projects with national or European funding. The analysed data are public data, gathered from official statistics, and reports delivered by various institutions. The main conclusions of the analysis show that the differences between localities regarding the coordinates of local budgets and the implementation of development programmes are significant, even at micro-regional level, when villages of the same geographic area are analysed. The involvement of local authorities in accessing funds intended for local development is the element which makes, very often, the difference between prosperous villages and the ones with development deficit. The analyses in this paper support this differentiation based on the various experiences recorded among local administrations.*

**Keywords:** rural development, NRDP, public infrastructure, local budgets

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## Theoretical framework and objectives

The Romanian rural area presents multiple particularities, constituted on the dimension of the socio-economic coordinates of the localities. The diversity registered at the level of the localities allows for debating on the various aggregation forms of the rural world, constituted based on the heterogeneity of social and economic characteristics at the level of regions and localities (Man et al., 2015; Marin, 2014; Sandu, 2011). The analyses

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at regional level and, especially, micro-regional one present detailed images about the importance of local contexts in favouring development or, as the case may be, in maintaining communities in a state of under-development (Balogh, Balogh and Filip, 2015; Marcu, 2015; Preotesi, 2015; Petrescu, 2015; Vincze, 2015; Croitoru; 2013; Ilie, 2013; Marquardt; Möller and Buchenrieder, 2012; Stănescu, Căce, 2011; Căce, Arpinte, Scoican, 2010). Rural micro-regions can be defined as areas shaped by territorial communities that have as basis geographic proximity and functional similarity criteria. These constituents comprise localities sharing a common social and demographic framework and which gravitate economically and functionally around the same centres represented either by urban localities, or more developed villages. In order to study the territorial differences and gaps in Romania, micro-regions represent optimum units of analysis, both from the viewpoint of socio-demographic coordinates, and from the perspective of the possibility to catch local factors that might be highlighted by macro-level analyses.

Based on these premises, we intend in the following to analyse a micro-region from the flatland area of the county Arges. The study is focused on analysing the social and economic coordinates of 20 villages located in the southern part of the county. At this level, the rural heterogeneity albeit present is much toned down by the economic, territorial and demographic coordinates comparable for the majority of analysed communities. The arguments regarding the selection of these localities for the analysis are, on one hand, based on the similarity between them and, on the other hand, grounded in the fact that this micro-region can be considered to a certain extent, representative for the type of rural localities with an average development level from Romania. By and large, we may consider that this micro-region meets the main defining characteristics for the Romanian rural area: negative demographic evolution emphasised by negative natural growth rate and marked ageing of the population; a predominantly agricultural profile of local economies, non-agricultural employed population working especially outside the locality of residence, low level of local infrastructure, and high dependency on the financial allocations from the state-budget.

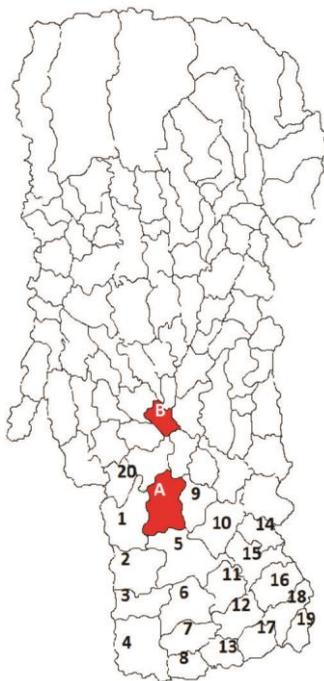
The proposed analysis is focused on two correlated dimensions. The first part of the paper pursues to describe the characteristics of rural localities in the area of interest, from the viewpoint of socio-economic coordinates and of the development level reached by them. In the second part, the emphasis is on presenting the development projects implemented by local authorities, and by underpinning the programmes developed by means of national and European financing. Both components pursue exploring the differences existing at local level based on the hypothesis according to which existing gaps in rural Romania tend to deepen becoming obvious not only in comparative studies realised at national level, but also in the analyses performed at the level of localities.

## **Particularities of the micro-region**

In the following, we focus on analysing the social and economic characteristics of a rural micro-region located in the southern part of the county Arges, in the flatland of the county, with a total surface of 1360 square km and where by the beginning of the

year 2015 were registered about 54 thousand inhabitants (NIS, Tempo-online database). This constituency comprises 20 villages, most of these having a medium level of development, as compared to the situation recorded at national level. The respective localities represent a territorial analysis unit with internal relevance and consistence from the viewpoint of symmetrical evolutions before and after 1989 and based on approximately similar economic coordinates. The differentiations between them result from the local economic context, based on the weight of individuals employed in nearby towns (especially in the Pitești municipality), and on the level of conditions provided for community life.

*Figure 1: Southern Arges Micro-region in the county context*



The villages of the micro-region constituency: Bârla (4), Buzoești (5), Căldăraru (7), Hârsești (3), Izvoru (12), Lunca Corbului (1), Miroși (8), Mozăceni (16), Negrași (15), Popești (13), Râca (17), Recea (11), Rociu (10), Săpata (20), Slobozia (18), Ștefan cel Mare (19), Stolnici (2), Suseni (9), Teiu (14), Ungheni (6), oraș Costești (A), municipiul Pitești (B)

From the geographical viewpoint, the micro-region consists of two formations which are circumscribed in the larger structure of the Romanian Flatland. These are the Flatland Găvanu - Burdea in the western and southern area and the Flatland Câmpia înaltă a Piteștiului in the northern and eastern area. The region is crisscrossed by a

network of rivers on the North-South direction, and from these the most relevant are Argeş, Teleorman, Neajlov, Cotmeana and Dâmbovnic. At the level of roadways, the most important roadways are DN 65 – E574 Piteşti-Slatina-Craiova which cross the locality Lunca Corbului and DN 65A Piteşti - Roşiori de Vede which crosses from North to South the micro-region. The system of communication ways is completed by a series of county roads ensuring the connections between the component localities and the towns Piteşti, Costeşti or Topoloveni. At the same time, the relative easy access to the localities in the eastern part of the region should be mentioned, towards the highway A1 Bucharest-Pitesti. The railways network has not underwent any significant development, and most of the villages we refer to have no direct access to this type of transport.

Most of the analysed localities are connected functionally to the town Costesti which is located in the northern part of the region at a distance of 25 kilometres from the Pitesti municipality. This town is included into the category of small urban localities (population barely exceeds the threshold of 10000 inhabitants) and is characterised by a low level of social and economic development. After 1990, the locality entered into a marked decline considering the economic coordinates, and lost most of the entities ensuring jobs for the inhabitants of the town and for a good share of individuals from the neighbouring villages. Currently, the town Costesti maintains its influence at micro-regional level, especially due to the two high-schools, of the hospital and justice court which provide the respective type of services for the entire southern area of the county Arges. At the same time, in Costesti are operational work points of the Public Finances Administration Arges, the County Employment Agency of Labour Force and of the General Directorate of Population Records. Nowadays, large part of the employed population in the town is active outside this town, in Pitesti or on the industrial platform from Mioveni. Thus, the small town has a diminished economic functionality, but plays an active role at micro-regional level based on its social and administrative functions ensured by institutions developing activities at its level.

From the demographic perspective, the southern area of the county Arges is faced as many other rural areas from Romania, with the spectre of considerable population ageing, obviously visible in the decrease of demographic density and in the emergence of depopulation risk in certain areas. According to the data of the National Institute of Statistics (Table 1), the population of the region diminished between 1995 and 2015 by 22%, thus decreasing from 70 thousand inhabitants to 54 thousand inhabitants. On localities, the most important decreases in the numbers of registered population, of over 30% in the period 1995-2015 were recorded in the villages, Teiu, Negrasi and Ungheni<sup>1</sup>. At the opposite pole, the smallest decreases as percentage (12%) were recorded in the villages in the northern part of the region (Suseni, Buzoesti) where, due to the proximity of the villages Costesti and Pitesti, internal migration was attracted on the way urban-rural. A particular situation is registered in two villages in the southern part of the county (Slobozia and Stefan cel Mare) where the population numbers

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1. The significant diminishment recorded in the case of the Popesti village was determined by the separation from it, in 2003, of the hamlets Raca, Adunati and Bucov, and which based on Law no. 185/2003 constituted the village Râca.

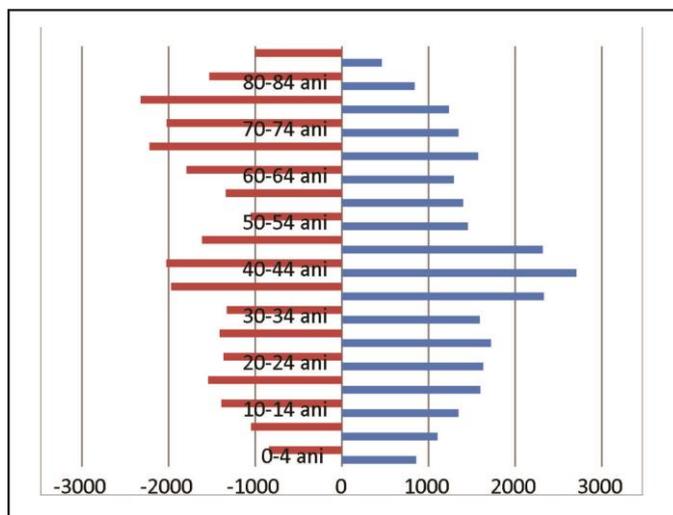
decreased (by 12%, respectively 15%), while benefitting, at the same time, of a relatively high birth-rate for the micro-regional context.

**Table 1:** Demographic evolution of the villages from the micro-region South Arges

	1995	2005	2015	Evoluție
<b>Bârla</b>	6205	5551	4738	-1467
<b>Buzoiești</b>	6548	6106	5716	-832
<b>Căldăraru</b>	3261	2804	2407	-854
<b>Hîrsești</b>	3065	2662	2332	-733
<b>Izvoru</b>	2923	2594	2224	-699
<b>Lunca Corbului</b>	3548	2871	2725	-823
<b>Miroși</b>	3319	2836	2425	-894
<b>Mozăceni</b>	2938	2590	2179	-759
<b>Negrași</b>	2985	2478	2104	-881
<b>Popești</b>	4505	2556	2044	-2461
<b>Râca</b>	Lipsă date	1247	1144	
<b>Recea</b>	3643	3155	2817	-826
<b>Rociu</b>	3240	2840	2535	-705
<b>Săpata</b>	2123	1852	1660	-463
<b>Slobozia</b>	5411	5241	4794	-617
<b>Ștefan cel Mare</b>	2832	2584	2386	-446
<b>Stolnici</b>	4054	3462	3121	-933
<b>Suseni</b>	3489	3214	3065	-424
<b>Teiu</b>	2025	1686	1387	-638
<b>Ungheni</b>	4142	3508	2858	-1284
<b>TOTAL</b>	70256	61837	54661	-15595

Source: NIS, TEMPO-online database ([www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro))

The age pyramid of the population from the 20 villages has a rhomboidal graphic representation, which indicates a strongly aged structure, as the numbers of population aged 65 years of age and over are by almost 50% higher than the volume of population with ages up to 20 years of age (Figure 1). On the graphic structure of the ages' distribution we find the existence of two more numerous age groups. On one the hand we have the population aged 65 years and over, that corresponds to the mature age cohorts of the communist period and who were active before 1990 in particular in agricultural cooperatives or industry and, on the other hand, we have the population with ages between 35 and 55 years of age, that corresponds to the generations born during the communist period. The less numerous rural generations, now with ages between 50 and 60 years are explained by the urbanisation policy of the sixties and seventies, based on which an important share of the rural population was moved into the expanding towns of that period. The basis of the ages' pyramid reflects very precisely the substantial decrease of the birth-rate after 1990, and which turned even stronger in the last decade on the background of constant consistent diminishment in the numbers of rural population of fertile age.

**Figure 2:** Ages' pyramid of rural population in the micro-region South Arges (2015)

Source: own data processing based on NIS, TEMPO-online database

The decreasing trend in the number of rural population, and the increase in the weight of elderly population are two demographic processes which are expected to continue also in the following period. Due to these instances, the small and aged hamlets of the southern area of the micro-region are placed under the spectre of depopulation. In this context, legitimate questions arise regarding the functional viability of the villages with reduced numbers of population. Even if the topic stirs nowadays controversies at the level of local authorities, considering the demographic evolutions in the areas affected by marked ageing processes, measures of administrative reconfiguration are necessary by aggregating small-sized villages. Most probably, for the southern area of the county Arges the effects of marked population ageing will become chronic on a medium-term time-horizon (10 to 20 years), as the current negative trends gain in consistency.

## The development level of villages in the southern area of county Arges – An image about the local development programmes

The first necessary observation is that all 20 analysed villages represent localities with an average level of poverty at community's level. According to the poverty degree classification grid for villages, as used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Development for evaluating the financing applications submitted for measure 322 within the NRDP (National Rural Development Programme) 2007-2013, the majority of analysed villages have poverty levels between 30% and 40% from total population (Table 2). The poorest localities are situated in the southern extremity of the micro-region (Popesti,

Izvoru, Harsesti, Barla, Recea and Stolnici) where estimates based on this indicator showed values of over 40%. For these villages, the absolute poverty rate, considered to represent the weight of population suffering from severe material deprivation exceeds 10% out of the population. Beyond any other debated about the fidelity of this type of estimates, it is obvious that the analysed micro-region does not represent an advantaged area from the economic viewpoint and that, overall, the issues recorded in this area are rather similar to those registered at the level of most rural areas from Romania.

**Table 2:** The poverty degree of villages

	<b>Rata sărăciei (%)</b>
<b>Bârla</b>	41,4
<b>Buzoiești</b>	34,5
<b>Căldăraru</b>	39,5
<b>Hîrsești</b>	43,1
<b>Izvoru</b>	46,8
<b>Lunca Corbului</b>	31,7
<b>Miroși</b>	39,5
<b>Mozăceni</b>	36,9
<b>Negrași</b>	38,3
<b>Popești</b>	46,6
<b>Râca</b>	Lipsa date
<b>Recea</b>	41,4
<b>Rociu</b>	26,3
<b>Săpata</b>	34,3
<b>Slobozia</b>	40
<b>Ștefan cel Mare</b>	38,3
<b>Stolnici</b>	40,3
<b>Suseni</b>	30,5
<b>Teiu</b>	31,7

*Source: MARD, Applicant's guide for measure 322, Appendix 11: List of villages with the corresponding poverty rate (www.apdpr.ro)*

In the context of the analyses regarding the development level of the rural localities, a series of observations are necessary about the coordinates of local budgets and to the main sources by which the development of localities is supported by the administration. Four main dimensions contribute to building up the public amounts managed by mayors: *own incomes, amounts allocated from the central budget, subventions granted for specific objectives, loans and sums from the EU and other institutions for projects* (Law no. 273/2006 regarding local public finances). Own incomes represent the sums that local administrations collect and manage locally from dues and taxes. The financial autonomy degree of a locality is the higher the more own incomes are higher in relation to the sums directed from the central budget. Another category of incomes based on which local budgets are constituted, and preponderant in the case of villages without an extended taxation basis, is represented by the amounts allocated from the central budget. Public transfers are intended to support the activities of public institutions and to contribute to balancing local budgets by supporting less developed localities. Another important dimension for ensuring the financing of local budgets is represented by subventions. These are public sums directed from the local budget by the ministries for specific purposes. The three enumerated sources were completed by another

resource in the last years, together with the implementation of the new structural programmes, respectively the fourth category representing sums from the European Union for implementing projects at local and regional level. Next to these resources, the local administrations might supplement their budgets by donations, sponsorships, or loans, yet most times the amounts obtained by these means are very scarce.

The data regarding the coordinates of the income budgets of the analysed villages show an important variance from one case to the other, but also on multiannual basis. The explanation resides in the differentiated allocations of the sums directed from the central budget for investments, and the differences recorded regarding the amounts entering into the budgets of villages due to implementing some European financed projects. In the period 2008-2014, the most consistent amounts were managed by the villages Barla (63 million Lei), Buzoesti (40 million), Suseni (34 million), Harsesti (33.9 million), Slobozia (33.1 million) and Rociu (30.5 million), while in the villages Popești, Teiu, Sapata and Izvoru the multiannual budgets were below the threshold of 20 million Lei (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Total incomes collected to local budgets in the period 2008-2014 (million Lei)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	TOTAL
<b>Bârla</b>	6.5	5.3	5.3	12.6	15.5	11.5	6.7	63.4
<b>Buzoiești</b>	5.2	5.1	5.8	5.1	5.3	5.2	8.2	39.9
<b>Caldararu</b>	3.4	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.5	4.5	3.7	22
<b>Hârsești</b>	2.9	2.9	2.3	2	11.3	8.1	4.4	33.9
<b>Izvoru</b>	3.2	2.3	3	2.3	2	1.9	2.6	17.3
<b>Luca Corbului</b>	4.3	4.2	3	3.4	2.6	4.5	5.8	27.8
<b>Miroși</b>	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.6	3	4.5	4	21.8
<b>Mozăceni</b>	4.2	4.1	3.7	2.9	3.3	4	4.6	26.8
<b>Negrași</b>	4.9	3.1	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.6	3.3	21.6
<b>Popești</b>	3.6	3.3	3.1	2.2	2.2	2	2.3	18.7
<b>Recea</b>	4.5	3.2	2.9	2.8	2.6	3.4	4.1	23.5
<b>Rociu</b>	5.9	4.1	3.7	5.6	3.5	3.2	4.5	30.5
<b>Săpata</b>	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.8	3.8	15.9
<b>Slobozia</b>	6.8	4.4	4.1	3.7	4.1	4.3	5.7	33.1
<b>Stolnici</b>	4.4	4.6	3.1	3	3.1	3.1	5.7	27
<b>Suseni</b>	5.3	3.9	3.4	4.6	5	3.8	8.2	34.2
<b>Ștefan cel Mare</b>	3.7	2.6	2.3	2.7	2.8	2.8	7	23.9
<b>Teiu</b>	5.6	2.2	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.6	2	16.5
<b>Ungheni</b>	3	2.8	4	3.1	3.5	6	5.2	27.6
<b>Raca</b>	2	1.9	1.9	3.8	1.6	2.2	2.4	15.8

Source: Own processing after the data of the Ministry of Rural Development and Public Administration, the Directorate for Fiscal Policies and Local Budgets [http://www.dpjbl.mdrap.ro/sit\\_yen\\_si\\_chelt\\_uat.html](http://www.dpjbl.mdrap.ro/sit_yen_si_chelt_uat.html)

The own incomes recorded by the villages are in none of the analysed instances enough for supporting development programmes. In most cases, the weight of own incomes varies between 30% and 40% from total budget, in the context of some limited total income budgets, such as the case of the localities we refer to, and where the amounts collected yearly on this dimension vary between 500 thousand and 2 million Lei. In the period 2008-2014, only five villages had own budgetary incomes exceeding the threshold of 40%: Sapata, Stolnici, Izvoru, Roiciu and Buzoesti. The first three from

these had, however, registered high values of this financial indicator, under the conditions in which the administered budgets were very low.

Regarding the volume of subventions that villages benefitted from, the data show a considerable dispersion. The multiannual differences between the amounts from the state budget directed towards projects for modernising the rural area are significant (Table 4). A first observation that can be detached from analysing this type of data shows that in the majority of cases the subvention amounts were insufficient for supporting vast projects and that sums directed in this manner had the role to ensure the financial flow required for supporting some multiannual projects or the activities of local institutions. Nevertheless, at the level of the micro-region were financed from budgetary sources a series of important projects for developing local infrastructure. From the most important amounts, which exceeded in the period 2008-2014 the amount of three million Lei benefitted the villages Ștefan cel Mare, Barla, Ungheni, Suseni, and Rociu, while for villages such as Teiu, Miroși, Negrasi, Săpata, Caldararu or Mozaceni the amounts were significantly less.

Table 4

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	TOTAL
Bârla	455,166	28,894	422915	231,222	1,787,616	1,554,047	161,869	4,641,729
Buzoiești	393,731	24,557	656303	89,848	31,195	46,745	118,147	1,360,526
Căldăraru	210,379	111,520	183611	104,618	73,569	93,096	38,275	815,068
Harsești	210,265	113,745	129572	107,358	43,643	80,000	1,333,899	2,018,482
Izvoru	145,267	108,637	112731	68,263	67,866	64,560	163,693	731,017
Lunca Corbului	227,668	9,223	229180	490,112	76,154	25,005	1,115,967	2,173,309
Miroși	167,924	39,892	140621	59,931	24,730	38,982	44,563	516,643
Mozaceni	219,438	6,274	177450	31,842	30,503	46,535	326,354	838,396
Negrași	421,195	14,880	173805	81,899	35,705	36,635	33,783	797,902
Popești	432,219	732,275	203352	452,526	109,774	50,696	24,864	2,005,706
Recea	1,171,490	272,606	373929	141,983	110,263	430,334	477,690	2,978,295
Rociu	751,779	7,096	152711	1,625,862	72,589	118,935	816,167	3,545,139
Săpata	133,387	10,009	106106	22,984	22,722	26,593	468,905	790,706
Slobozia	991,256	39,263	417170	47,742	44,602	61,598	924,036	2,525,667
Ștolnici	261,776	18,636	206377	117,729	67,353	99,150	1,389,764	2,160,785
Suseni	373,809	697,025	522506	966,709	1,006,015	37,826	674,678	4,278,568
Ștefan cel Mare	638,978	610,884	243145	41,063	325,528	61,716	3,270,329	5,191,643
Teiu	222,446	5,447	119143	78,805	10,487	19,742	13,043	469,113
Ungheni	317,646	16,503	752679	1,008,032	816,339	168,961	932,343	4,012,503
Râca	129,957	257,138	101716	1404789	139,324	142,023	127,959	2,302,906

Source: Own processing after the data of the Ministry of Rural Development and Public Administration, the Directorate for Fiscal Policies and Local Budgets [http://www.dpjbl.mdrap.ro/sit\\_ven\\_si\\_chelt\\_uat.html](http://www.dpjbl.mdrap.ro/sit_ven_si_chelt_uat.html)

Regarding the dimension of accessing European funds intended for the modernisation of rural areas, the situation is just as diverse. The sums received into the account of effected payments within projects of this type reveal a strong differentiation of the villages according to the size of received financial support (Table 5). The localities Barla and Harsesti, which developed several such programmes, received 20 million Lei, respectively 15 million Lei for the realised investments. The villages Suseni, Ungheni, Lunca Corbului and Buzoesti benefitted also from amounts varying between 2 and 3.5 million Lei for implementing in-point projects. At the opposite end, eight localities

didn't manage to attract any European funds at all, and another six have developed small-scale projects. At the core of this differentiation are two dimensions, regarding the specifics and nature of the developed projects. Thus, localities that accessed large financing lines, such as the National Rural Development Programme and the Environment Operational Programme have benefitted of generous financial allocations, as compared with the localities where smaller-scale projects were implemented.

**Table 5:** Budgetary incomes of villages in the southern area of county Arges ensured by implementing European funded projects

	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Bârla	7,590,026	8,357,031	4,020,071	0	19,967,128
Buzoiești		0	0	1,906,274	1,906,274
Căldăraru		0	0	0	0
Hârsești		9,251,145	5,739,304	171,967	15,162,416
Izvoru		0	0	0	0
Lunca Corbului		0	1,303,200	1,085,821	2,389,021
Miroși		0	0	88,695	88,695
Mozăceni		0	0	0	0
Negrași	39,000	12,520	117,000	177,343	345,863
Popești		0	0	0	0
Recea		0	0	226,173	226,173
Rociu		0	0	0	0
Săpata		0	0	0	0
Slobozia		0	0	0	0
Stolnici		0	0	84,075	84,075
Suseni		0	0	3,563,161	3,563,161
Ștefan cel Mare		0	0	220,363	220,363
Teiu		0	0	0	0
Ungheni		0	3,393,156	1,650	3,394,806
Râca	490357	0	0	229,189	719,546

*Source: Own processing after the data of the Ministry of Rural Development and Public Administration, Directorate for Fiscal Policies and Local Budgets [http://www.dpfbl.mdrap.ro/sit\\_ven\\_si\\_chelt\\_uat.html](http://www.dpfbl.mdrap.ro/sit_ven_si_chelt_uat.html)*

The amounts available by means of the measure 322 of NRDP represented the most consistent financings available to the rural localities for the last years. In Arges, based on measure 322 were financed 17 integrated development projects from which only two were implemented in villages in the south of the county (Barla and Harsesti). Both projects were selected for financing in 2009, being developed effectively in the period 2010-2013. The respective projects benefitted of generous financial allocations of over 2.4 million Euros each and aimed at investments in drinkable water networks and sewerage, road modernisation, rehabilitation of some cultural houses and the creation of an after-school type centre. All in all, the majority of the projects accessed based on measure 322 present a marked symmetry from the viewpoint of the objectives proposed for investments, a thing originating in the way the programme was designed at national level, based on the proposed percentage grid.

Other important projects developed at the level of the micro-region were those implemented based on measure 125(a) dedicated to modernising agricultural roads at the level of the villages Harsesti, Suseni, Lunca Corbului, and Buzoesti. These localities benefitted of financial support up to an amount of 1 million Euro for investments in

access roads to agricultural areas located next to the villages. The impact of these projects on the quality of life of the rural population is, obviously, low having more an economic functionality for the communities. There are many voices debating over the opportunity of implementing these projects, considering that the allotted amounts should have been directed to objectives aimed at increasing the quality of life for the population, motivating that an agricultural road according to high quality standards contributes less to reaching this type of objectives.

The financing framework for the modernisation projects of rural infrastructure underwent a significant reorientation in 2013 as the National Local Development Programme (NLDP) was initiated. The initiation of this governmental programme was a requirement on the background of contracting the entire available amount based on European funds and aimed at investments in rural infrastructure. Thereby, the National Local Development Programme had the role of contributing to covering partially the financing demand of modernisation projects for the period 2013-2016. This programme was set-up by merging and harmonising several specific measures which were previously regulated<sup>1</sup>. NLDP was substantiated by the Emergency Ordinance of the Government no. 28/2013 and structured on three sub-programmes: a) “Modernising the Romanian Village”, b) “Urban Regeneration of Municipalities and Towns”, c) “Infrastructure at County Level”. The development objectives of rural areas aimed at by the sub-measure “a” from within the National Local Development Plan pursue a wide range of investments in the public infrastructure of the villages: drinkable water and sewerage, road and bridges networks, school and medical infrastructure, sport halls, investments in touristic and cultural objectives, etc.

The list of development projects financed by the National Local Development Programme (Table 6) show that public funds were directed towards financing 11 priority projects. The projects with the most consistent budgets are those providing for setting-up public networks of sewage in the villages. Beyond these objectives, two projects were selected regarding the expansion and modernisation of drinkable water networks (in Lunca Corbului and Ungheni) along with four projects meant to realise investments in the rehabilitation of the communal roads (Barla, Lunca Corbului, Recea, and Rociu).

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<sup>1</sup> Up to 2012 there were several ministerial programmes with distinct objectives, which were subsequently included in NLDP:

- *Governmental Resolution (GR) no 577/1997: “The Programme regarding rehabilitation, modernisation and/ or asphalt works for roads of county and local interest, water supply, sewage and treatment of used waters for villages, and in the territorial-administrative entities with touristic resources”*

- *Governmental Emergency Ordinance (GEO) no. 7/2006, approved and completed by Law no. 71/2007: “Programme for developing infrastructure and some sport bases in the rural area”.*

- *GEO no. 40/2006, approved and completed by Law no. 61/2007: “Multiannual priority programmes for environment and water management”*

- *GR no. 530/2010: “The Rehabilitation and modernisation programme - 10.000 km roads and ways of county and local interest”.*

**Table 6:** List of objectives financed by NLDP

Locality	Objective	Period	Total project value (Lei)
Barla	Communal road modernisation	2015-2017	1,5 million
Izvoru	Sewage and treatment station	2015-2017	2,2 million
Lunca Corbului	Communal road modernisation	2015-2017	1,4 million
Lunca Corbului	Water supply	2014	1,8 million
Mozăceni	Sewage and treatment station	2015-2017	1,2 million
Recea	Communal road modernisation	2015-2017	1,5 million
Rociu	Communal road modernisation	2015-2017	1,1 million
Ștefan cel Mare	Sewage and treatment station	2014- 2015	5,2 million
Ungheni	Expansion of water supply network	2013-2015	1,8 million
Slobozia	Sewage and treatment station	2014	4,7 million
Stolnici	Sewage and treatment station. Water supply	2014 – în implementation	3,7 million

Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, List of objectives financed in 2015 (<http://www.mdrap.ro/lucrari-publice/pndl/-8564> )

## Conclusions

We could mention the existence of a certain degree of symmetry between villages that benefitted from the most consistent support based on amounts directed from the state budget and the villages that managed to access the most important projects with national or European financing. Actually, a cluster of villages can be highlighted that attracted significantly more public funds, whether we consider subventions granted from the state budget, or financing granted by the National Local Development Plan, the National Rural Development Programme, or the Operational Programme “Environment”. The village Barla is the best example in this respect. This village benefitted in the period between 2010 and 2015, of over 26 de million Lei for supporting local development (most part of this amount was assured by gaining a

project of integrated development financed by measure 322 of the National Rural Development Programme 2017-2013). In a similar situation is also the village Harsesti, which had available over 17 million Lei for developing investments in local infrastructure. Consistent sums (between 7 and 11 million Lei) were to the benefit of the villages Stefan cel Mare, Ungheni, Lunca Corbului and Slobozia, as well. At the opposite pole are six villages (Caldararu, Mirosi, Negrasi, Popesti, Sapata and Teiu), which did not succeed to develop any important project of modernising the local infrastructure. Actually, for these localities the period of the last years did not bring any notable development regarding an increase in the quality of life level within the community with respect to the dimension of modernising local infrastructure. Thus, the local development gaps, even at the level of a relatively homogeneous micro-region from the economic and social viewpoint, such as the southern area of the county Arges, have only turned more marked for the last years.

The distinct experiences recorded by the villages in their approaches for accessing funds aimed at rural modernisation might be explained starting from the dimension of competences and of the varying degree of local administrations' involvement in writing and implementing projects. Gaining a project brings with it additional competences, useful also for accessing other programmes of this type. In most instances, the success in implementing a development project brings with it increased chances of gaining other projects in the future. Comparatively, administrations failing to implement important projects remain with an experience deficit which decreases their chances in attracting such financing. Leaving aside this objective aspect, we might also discuss about the existence of a subjective component in ensuring access to financial resources, highlighted by the dimension of direct allocation of resources under the form of subventions from the state budget. The differences appearing on this dimension between villages might be explained, largely, based on the political influence networks at various decision levels.

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# REPOSITIONING RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR RURAL ELECTRIFICATION IN A FOSSIL FUEL-RICH ECONOMY

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**Abstract:** *How has being a fossil fuel-rich country affected the large scale adoption of renewable energy and its associate technologies for rural electrification and development projects in Nigeria? This is one of the most prevalent questions of significant interest to energy experts and observers in Nigeria. Discerning the factors at play it is believed, could help soothe the troubling energy dichotomy of having an abundance of energy sources and being one of the least served with electricity in the world. This qualitative phenomenological study explored across a spectrum of selected energy bureaucrats within some federal government agencies, the seemingly lack of interest in the utilization of the abundant renewable energy sources for rural electrification projects in Nigeria and the influence if any, fossil fuel has had on the use of these energy sources for rural electrification. Following a qualitative research methodology, data on specific issues affecting the uptake of renewable energy technologies in rural electrification in Nigeria was collected through document analysis and semi-structured interviews. It was found that for renewable energy to be entrenched in the rural electrification sector in Nigeria, it needed a high level of legitimacy. As found by the study, this required conscious government participation, increased awareness, serious advocacy, improved bureaucratic involvement, and efforts to overcome liabilities of newness of the concept of renewable energy powered rural electrification.*

**Keywords:** *Legitimacy; Renewable energy; Rural electrification.*

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## 1. Introduction

Very few countries can boast of an abundant supply of both renewable and non-renewable energy sources. Nigeria is one of such countries – a nation “endowed with abundant energy resources, both conventional and renewable, which provide her with immense capacity to develop an effective national energy plan” (Akinbami, 2001, p. 155). However, owing to prevalent flaws in the electricity sector and poor exploration of available renewable energy sources (GEF, 2013; Ohiare, 2015) the overall level of

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electrification and “household access to electricity services in Nigeria is low” (Oyedepo, 2014, p. 261). The abundant renewable energy sources in Nigeria, “have not played a major role in its developmental efforts so far” (Efurumibe, Asiegbu, and Onuu, 2014, p. 74). Compared to other Sub-Saharan African countries with similar topography, for example Kenya; with one of the most active renewable energy sectors in Africa (ABB Group Media Relations, 2015) the level of uptake of renewable energy sources for electrification especially in the rural areas is more or less at its barest.

Renewable energy has been touted “as one of the strong contenders to improve the plight of two billion people, mostly in rural areas, without access to modern forms of energy” (World Bank, 1999 cited in Painuly, 2001, p. 73). As a source of energy, it comes in different forms, with each form having its own unique costs and benefits depending on the type of technology adopted. The consensus is that renewable energy produces no emissions, is clean, affordable, domestic, and effectively infinite. Harnessing renewable power inherently creates jobs and generates revenue for local communities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012). Renewable energy sources “in contrast to fossil fuels, are environmentally friendly, ubiquitous, self-replenishing, infinite, and consequently considered world-wide as the way of the future” (Sesan, 2008, p. 2). However the reality is that, in most developing parts of the world, for example Nigeria, where renewable energy has been promoted as a likely solution to rural electrification and development problems (Okafor and Joe-Uzuegbu, 2010), there still exist a considerable amount of issues militating against its use for developmental energy and electricity projects.

Different reasons responsible for the dearth of renewable energy in rural electrification in Nigeria have been advanced in various studies. Some of these studies (e.g. Akinbami, 2001; Efurumibe et al., 2014; Karekezi and Kithyoma, 2003) argued that the issues with the development or large scale adoption of renewable energy sources for electrification in Nigeria were as a result of the country being a very large fossil fuel economy which basically implies little or no attention to renewable energy sources; others (for instance Mohammed, Mustafa, Bashir, and Mokhtar, 2013; Oyedepo, 2012) acknowledged that the generic barriers to renewable energy have essentially contributed to the challenges faced by Nigeria in its renewable energy deployment for rural electrification in particular and electricity provision in general. Likewise, policy implementation was emphasized by Ajayi and Ajayi (2013) and Brew-Hammond, Mensah, and Amponsah (2014) as one of the main issues facing the widespread adoption of renewable energy for rural electrification in Nigeria. While according to Chineke and Ezike (2010) and Eleri, Ugwu, and Onuvae (2012), it had more to do with political will and government support. All these concerns are not mutually exclusive as a proper orchestration of them all is required for renewable energy powered rural electrification to make any meaningful headway in Nigeria.

Going by the above assertions and considering the favorable characteristics of renewable energy, it has been argued that renewable energy powered decentralized systems should be the approach to rural electrification and sustainable rural development in Nigeria (Ajayi and Ajayi, 2013, p. 62; Oyedepo, 2014, p. 263). However, several structural and systemic constraints in the electricity supply industry in Nigeria have impeded the success rate of the government’s interest in rural electrification in

general (Eleri, 2002). Considering the nation's potential energy sources and her estimated reserves (see *Table 1* (based on 2005 data)), it can be argued that ideally energy crisis shouldn't be an issue in Nigeria but unfortunately, the reality is that most "of these resources are yet to be explored while" the maximum utilization of the few that have been tapped has been inadequate (Ohunakin, Ojolo, and Ajayi, 2011, p. 2007). Nigeria's energy reality is that the potentials of renewable energy not withstanding, "regrettably, renewable energy resources are presently disregarded from the energy supply mix" (Shaaban and Petinrin, 2014, p. 79). The country as alluded by Okoro (1999) is one solely dependent on non-renewable fossil sources of power for electricity.

**Table 1:** Nigeria Renewable and Non-Renewable Energy Reserve and Capacity (2005)

Source of energy	Estimated reserve
Crude oil	36.5 billion barrels
Natural gas	187.44 trillion cubic feet
Tar sands	30 billion barrels of oil equivalent
Coal and lignite	Over 40 billion tonnes
Large hydropower	11,235 MW
Small hydropower	3,500 MW
Fuel wood	13,071,464 ha
Crop residues	83 million tonnes/year
Animal wastes	61 million tonnes/year
Solar radiation	3.5–7.5 kW h/m <sup>2</sup> /day
Wind	2–4 m/s @ 10 m height

*Source:* Draft National Energy Master Plan, Energy Commission of Nigeria, June 2007 (Oseni, 2012, p. 3968).

That the nation depends on fossil fuels for its energy needs, however doesn't mean there has not been efforts to implement renewable energy projects. Taking into account the amount of resources that have been expended in rural electrification and renewable energy development programmes in Nigeria and considering the plans as documented in the Renewable Energy Master Plan (REMP) as well as the National Energy Policy (see Energy Commission of Nigeria, 2005a, 2012), it could be said that the issues facing the use of renewable energy sources especially in powering rural electrification projects are more of a reflection of the difficulty of translating priorities established at the policy level into practice down the bureaucracy. The existence of these renewable energy-friendly mechanisms as it seems, have not transformed into any tangible programmes or schemes. This paper emanates from a study that sought to explore this phenomenon of a seemingly lack of interest in renewable energy sources for rural electrification projects in Nigeria despite the abundance of these resources.

## 2. Methodology

This paper tries to address the first research question of the PhD dissertation: "*Issues affecting the uptake of renewable energy sources for rural electrification and development projects in Nigeria.*"

It seeks to provide an insight to the question of how the availability of fossil-fuel in the country has affected the large scale adoption of renewable energy for rural electrification and development, by highlighting those factors deemed to influence the choice and diffusion of renewable energy technologies for rural electrification in Nigeria. An iterative and inductive process following a phenomenological approach from an interpretivist theoretical perspective (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012; Creswell, 2012) was adopted in the research design. Data was collected over a three month period from semi-structured interviews with 17 purposively sampled senior energy bureaucrats in some of the agencies tasked with energy and electric power development in Nigeria. Following Glesne (1999), analysis was carried out in most part simultaneously with data collection and document review to help focus and shape the study as it came along.

Significant statements, generation of meaning units, and the development of an 'essence' description were applied (Moustakas, 1994). Focus was on attitude and response to the phenomenon under study, with the aim of achieving an analytic description of the phenomenon devoid of prior assumptions (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012). In typical qualitative methodological sense, the transcripts and field notes were read, analyzed and reviewed line by line. Analysis was carried out manually and using the highlighting tool in Microsoft Word, codes were highlighted and reflective remarks added as comments where necessary. This iterative process mirrored that used by Graham (1997). It entailed the systematical coding of data into as many themes and meaning categories as possible through first level coding which served the purpose of summarizing segments of data as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Limiting the data collection to a selection of senior executives in the bureaucracy, ensured that the study focused on those participants deemed to be best suited for the job of making meaningful changes in the renewable energy powered rural electrification arena. This is because their concerns and perspectives were what was expected to form the basis of the findings and subsequent recommendations.

### 3. Findings

The findings from the study that addressed the issue of how the availability of fossil-fuel in the country has affected the large scale adoption of renewable energy for rural electrification and development emerged as the themes classified under the category: Factors for entrenching renewable energy for rural electrification. An overwhelming majority of the participants provided responses associated with the themes in this category. The responses indicated that these factors were crucial to the process of legitimizing and institutionalizing renewable energy as a viable option for rural electrification projects in a fossil fuel rich economy like Nigeria. The factors that emerged include serious advocacy, efforts to overcome liabilities of newness, improved bureaucratic involvement, conscious government participation and increased awareness. This finding is noteworthy in terms of the large number of responses from the participants associated with it, and how relevant the issues in this categories are to achieving a renewable energy powered rural electrification programme in Nigeria. A compiled summary of the emerged factors for entrenching renewable energy for rural electrification in Nigeria is presented in *Table 2*.

### 3.1. Conscious Government Participation

A vast majority of the participants (15 of 17) accentuated the notion that a conscious participation from the government was required for renewable energy to gain a strong footing in rural electrification in Nigeria. The prevailing culture of Nigerians encourages this – an element of expectation that getting things done was the sole responsibility of the government. As remarked by one of the participants: “*even if you are going to do renewable energy powered rural electrification, government has to shoulder the bills because that is the belief of the Nigerian people*” [NERC2]. This view of having government involvement in ensuring the successful uptake and sustainability of a renewable energy powered rural electrification programme in Nigeria was also conveyed by some other participants, as seen in the following statements:

*I think the motivation for the use of renewable energy will come from the Government. Especially in pilot projects, understand? ... that one will motivate investors to also go, seeing the one that has been implemented by the Government. [MOP7]*

*If the president decides today that we are going on renewable, there is nobody who will stop it ... The government machinery will be set in place to make renewable work in Nigeria. So it's more of the government will. [MOP2]*

**Table 2:** Factors for Entrenching Renewable Energy for Rural Electrification

**Participants' Interview Markers:** First three-four letters represents the agency acronym while the number represents the participant interviewed. For instance, ECN1 indicates participant 1 from Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN).

Respondent	Marker	Advocacy	Overcome Liability of Newness	Improved Bureaucratic Involvement	Conscious Government Participation	Increased Awareness
1	ECN1	✓		✓	✓	✓
2	ECN2	✓		✓	✓	✓
3	ECN3	✓		✓	✓	✓
4	MOP1			✓	✓	✓
5	MOP2	✓		✓	✓	✓
6	MOP3	✓		✓	✓	✓
7	MOP4	✓	✓			✓
8	MOP5			✓	✓	✓
9	MOP6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	MOP7	✓	✓		✓	✓
11	NERC1	✓		✓	✓	✓
12	NERC2	✓		✓	✓	✓
13	REA1	✓	✓		✓	✓
14	REA2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	REC1				✓	
16	REC2			✓	✓	✓
17	REC3					
Total	17	71%	29%	71%	88%	82%

Source: Data based responses from research interview

Government involvement was also viewed from the perspective of cushioning the effect of the high cost of implementing renewable energy projects [MOP1] and financing of such projects [REC1 and NERC2]. As gleaned from such comments like: *“the Government should take the lead. That is what I am saying”* [MOP7], and *“a serious government, okay, on seat, will do it and it will move faster”* [REC2], government participation for the propagation of renewable energy powered rural electrification in Nigeria from the perspective of some of the participants was more of a getting-it-done-because-the-government-wants-it-done.

### 3.2. Create Better Awareness

Creating better awareness of the idea of having renewable energy powered rural electrification schemes in Nigeria also made up a vast majority of the responses from the participants. Better awareness both at the government/bureaucratic level and at the rural community/recipients level was emphasized by 14 of the participants as one of the key means through which the application of renewable energy and its associate technologies could be ingrained in the Nigerian energy and electricity arena. Most of the responses showed that though there already exist some elements of awareness and enlightenment as regards the viability of renewable energy for power generation in Nigeria, a lot more had to be done in light of the issues facing renewable energy. The importance of creating increased awareness was echoed by ECN1 who saw awareness as a means of showcasing the feasibility of renewable energy projects when he surmised in his response that: *“the execution of pilot projects for people to see; demonstration projects that these things are working, that is it.”*

Other comments by some of the participants highlighting the emphasis placed on increasing awareness include those by REA1 who stated: *“... To create awareness, we have also done some feasibility studies and we have done some pilot projects and also like I just, I told you earlier, we have done some solar street lights,”* and that by MOP6 who highlighted that: *“... to guide the Government in ensuring effective policy to encourage the use of renewable energy which is what we are doing ... by the time the policy becomes more effective, and awareness is created we will be able to see the advantages of renewable energy.”* Better awareness was also presented as a tool to help streamline the numerous and conflicting information about renewable energy that has somewhat stifled its acceptance among Nigerian energy bureaucrats. According to MOP2, *“Nigeria has heard so much that at times to take a decision becomes difficult ... so better awareness will help reduce this over flux of information.”* The argument for the creation of better awareness on how the use of the abundant renewable energy sources could be expanded for power generation was extended by REA2 along the lines of a re-orientation of the Nigerian education curriculum. He stated that *“the curriculum in the universities in Nigeria should take renewable energy option serious, for our own graduates to begin to understand that it’s not only grid system alone that should be considered in electricity generation.”*

### 3.3. Advocacy

Closely linked to issues relating to increase of awareness are activities that had to do with advocacy. Most of the responses from 12 of the participants indicated that for renewable energy to play any significant role in rural electrification in a fossil fuel rich

country like Nigeria, it will have to be supported by a very strong coalition of advocates especially among the stakeholders. Advocacy was deemed to be required among the stakeholders as a means of promoting renewable energy and reducing the challenges of promoting it. Such statements like: *“There has to be strong advocacy for these renewable energy powered electricity projects, for them to gain ground ... and there has to be total buy-in by the communities”* by REC2; and those by REC3 who indicated that *“for renewable energy electricity to gain ground in the communities, the beneficiaries have to clamor for it through their political representatives that this is a good way to provide us with electricity,* highlighted this.

MOP2 saw the possibility of advocacy only if there was a champion for the course. According to him, a huge challenge faced by renewable energy is not having someone who can act as a voice, strong enough to break the perception of policy makers towards the use of renewable energy for rural electrification. According to him, *“if somebody can get these key people to agree, you understand? Or to adapt the renewable energy thing, the country will start singing that song immediately.”* He buttressed his point citing a recent occurrence: *“When we started the energy efficiency, how did they get government’s attention? It was basically because through ECOWAS, we were able to get some of the key people to go to Cuba to see how these bulbs worked and how they had implemented it”* [MOP2].

### ***3.4. Improved Bureaucratic Involvement***

12 of the participants indicated that improved bureaucratic involvement in the renewable energy development and rural electrification process will go a long way to ensure that renewable energy finds its place in rural electrification projects in Nigeria. Some of the concerns raised, reflected the shortcomings in the activities of the bureaucrats in the various agencies related to renewable energy development and rural electrification. MOP2 astutely pointed out why it could be said that involvement by the bureaucrats was subdued or very passive. To him, no matter how much the bureaucrats would want to be involved, their effort will always be constrained by the final say from the people in power. A major area of involvement by the bureaucrats as indicated by NERC1 was in the aspect of ensuring standards and regulations. According to him, the bureaucrats are meant to ensure that *“standards ... are what they are supposed to be. If there’s no regulatory body then there will be so much fake products.*

Responses from other participants indicated that each agency was invested in different degrees in seeing to the widespread use of renewable energy for rural electrification in Nigeria – the question being to what degree? Most of the participants (for instance ECN2 and NERC1) felt that their agencies were already well involved in the successful adoption of renewable energy. Acknowledging that being fully involved in the process of promoting the use of renewable energy technologies was important for its propagation in Nigeria, ECN2 highlighted the accomplishments of his agency, stating that: *“We were also able to set up Jathropha farmers association for production of biodiesel ... the World Bank gave us assistance in the development of biodiesel using Jathropha Caucus. So these are some of the things we have been able to do.”* Though most of the participants were able to establish the involvement of their agencies in seeing to the successful propagation of renewable energy programmes, it was obvious that their commitment to these programmes were not very strong. This could be attributed to the length of the

bureaucratic chain which could well dampen the momentum behind efforts geared towards the implementation of renewable energy projects as can be inferred from the response by ECN1 when he presented the Renewable Energy Masterplan document to the researcher:

*This document that I have given to you is what ECN has done. All the resources are there, the opportunities are there, the timelines are there, the targets are there ... We are now asking them to take it to the Federal Executive Council. So that they will look at it, approve it and send to the national assembly. So the Commission has done all that they need up to date.*  
[ECN1]

The need to improve the commitment of the agencies to a renewable energy programme was not lost on the participants. They were quick to emphasize the importance of building on what has been achieved so far – human capacity development [ECN3], creating and maintaining a better framework [MOP1] as well as facilitation and mediation [MOP3].

### **3.5. Overcome Liability of Newness**

Only a few of the participants provided responses that had to do with the issue of overcoming the liabilities of newness as a means of institutionalizing the use of renewable energy for rural electrification in the Nigeria. Their view was that due to its novelty, very few people within the decision making arena were actually aware of the practicality of renewable energy technologies in rural electrification. As such many don't see renewable energy technologies as sustainable means of electric power generation. REA2 underscored this stating: "*Now this is another option that is very new and strange to most of the technical people in this country, and the policy makers ... renewable energy is new and our attitude to imbibing new technologies is usually slow.*" Although mostly portrayed as a liability, the issue of novelty of renewable energy technologies in Nigeria was however seen by some of the participants as an advantage to its development [REA1]. To them, having a fresh canvass provides a means of trying out the concept without the hindrance of legacy infrastructures [MOP7].

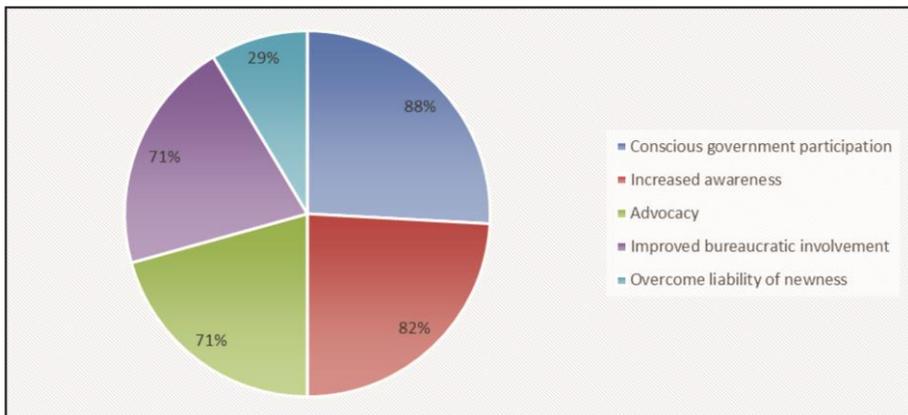
## **4. Discussion**

The literature on the acceptance of a new or alternate form of energy like renewable energy (see Bergek, Jacobsson, Carlsson, Lindmark, and Rickne, 2008; Jacobsson and Bergek, 2004; Jacobsson and Lauber, 2006; Negro, Hekkert, and Smits, 2008) indicates that entrenching and hence repositioning renewable energy for rural electrification in a fossil fuel rich economy, required a certain level of legitimacy. This was needed to help overcome institutional barriers that could pose as obstacles both in the near term and in the long run. An overwhelming majority of the participants were of the stance that for renewable energy to be accepted, legitimacy will depend on the concept of a renewable energy powered rural electrification programme in Nigeria overcoming several misconceptions while building on already proven strengths of the concept.

Legitimizing and institutionalizing a renewable energy powered rural electrification programme in a country like Nigeria with a seemingly more accessible and dominant

alternative, entailed several factors. Among these factors are: the involvement of the administrators and policy makers, ability to make renewable energy more attractive, advocacy, awareness, and a conscious participation of actors (e.g. government, stakeholders etc.) (Akpan, Isihak, and Udoakah, 2013; Bergek, Hekkert, and Jacobsson, 2008; Bergek, Jacobsson, and Sandén, 2008). Responses from the participants tallied with the above factors from prior studies. Just like the literature suggested, the responses from the participants showed that legitimizing renewable energy as a viable option for rural electrification projects in a fossil fuel rich economy like Nigeria required conscious government participation, increased awareness, serious advocacy, improved bureaucratic involvement, and efforts to overcome liabilities of newness. *Figure 7* shows the distribution of the responses from which the themes in this category were obtained.

**Figure 7:** *Factors for Entrenching Renewable Energy for Rural Electrification in Nigeria*



*Source: Author's Conceptualization from Research Interview Data*

#### **4.1. Analysis of the Emergent Themes**

The literature on legitimacy and institutionalization as suggested by Bergek, Jacobsson, and Sandén (2008) established the need for conscious participation from the government, as this is required for the fulfillment of such government responsibilities as regulative alignment, market regulations, tax policies and the direction of science and technology policy. With government participation, it is easier to establish renewable energy powered programmes, as government can easily exercise their powers by creating enabling institutions with mandates to promote the programmes (Agboola, 2011; Bugaje, 2006). This notion is consistent with the perception of almost all of the participants, who saw the onus of building the foundation for a viable renewable energy powered rural electrification programme in Nigeria as primarily that of the government. As one

participant puts it, for you to actually do renewable energy powered rural electrification, “... *government has to shoulder the bill*” [NERC2]. The participants’ perception of how crucial government involvement was, also reinforced the proposition by Akinbami (2001, p. 178) that “the development, application and diffusion of renewable energy systems especially for decentralized electricity generation and supply into the Nigerian economy require adequate institutional support and strengthening.” A conscious government participation as the finding showed, consolidated the participants’ expectation of a success highly dependent on the Nigerian government being fully involved or invested in the idea of actually using renewable energy for rural electrification.

With regards to *the creation of better awareness*, the analysis showed that the participants all saw the awareness of the long term economic and environmental benefits of renewable energy sources and technologies in Nigeria both at the public and the bureaucratic levels, as being generally low. An improvement of the awareness level was deemed by most of the participants as paramount to the successful adoption of a concept like renewable energy powered rural electrification in a fossil fuel rich state. This finding aligned strongly with the proposition in the Renewable Energy Master Plan 2005 that “public awareness and promotion will be critical elements of the drive to expand the market for renewable energy” (Energy Commission of Nigeria, 2005b, p. 10). Awareness of the potentials of renewable energy as it has been found, can be more widely disseminated by integrating renewable energy into government programmes like rural electrification, rural development, poverty alleviation, and social welfare programmes. This strategy as Flavin and Aeck (2005) showed, could help advance the effectiveness of such programmes in many cases.

Similar to the findings by Akinbami (2001), the responses suggested that due to lack of awareness, there were really no immediate incentives to motivate the people to influence the government to begin to take more decisive actions in enhancing the development, application, dissemination and diffusion of renewable energy resources and technologies in the national energy market. While this was seen as a pitiable situation, most of the participants acknowledged that increasing awareness, would be one way of enabling a wider uptake of renewable energy in power generation in Nigeria, especially for rural electrification. It was seen as one way of streamlining the numerous and conflicting information about renewable energy that has somewhat stifled its acceptance among Nigerian energy bureaucrats. This view of increasing awareness as echoed by the participants resonated with the findings by Chineke and Ezike (2010, p. 682) that “the need to increase awareness within governments of the benefits of a renewable energy strategy will serve as momentum-drivers” for the propagation of renewable energy technologies.

*Advocacy* as expressed by a majority of the participants was very relevant in achieving a sustainable renewable energy powered rural electrification programme. The finding implied that a very strong coalition of advocates especially among the stakeholders was needed to better position renewable energy alongside the already established fossil fuel. This followed along the lines of the argument that “for a new technology to gain ground, technology-specific coalitions need to be formed ... to advance the perception that a particular technology, e.g. solar cells or gas turbines, answers wider policy concerns” (Jacobsson and Lauber, 2006, p. 259). The participants’ position on advocacy

was accentuated by the realization as pointed out by Suurs (2009, p. 98) that “the emergence of a new technology often leads to resistance from established actors. In order for an innovation system to develop, actors need to raise a political lobby that counteracts this inertia, and supports the new technology.” Taking this into consideration, their supposition supported the conclusion by Van Leeuwen and Ruff (2014) that to achieve the desired targets and impacts of universal energy access, such a process requires a well-organized, structured, branded, and sustained advocacy. The participants’ views on advocacy with respect to renewable energy powered rural electrification also resonates with the one shared by Mostert (2002, p. 63), “that rural electrification needed strong political and institutional champions to succeed.” It is believed that the intensity that comes from such champions or advocates could pressure or influence policy makers to fix ambitious but realistic quantitative targets for rural electrification and create appropriate institutional launch pads for achieving it.

The argument for *improved bureaucratic involvement* simply called for more and better participation of the administrators in the process of implementation. Bureaucrats and administrators have been described to wield enormous influence and power in the final implementation of government decisions. Their role within the implementation agencies in shaping the actual policy outcome was acknowledged by Lipsky (2010) who emphasized that the everyday problem-solving strategies of ‘street-level bureaucrats’ was part of what makes up implementation. While acknowledging the importance of energy bureaucrats and their role in facilitating a wider uptake of renewable energy in Nigeria, the responses from the participants showed that the Nigerian energy bureaucrats currently operated under too many restrictions. This sentiment could be observed in the following response: “... usually in government, there should be the technocrats who should now propose or recommend but that’s the reverse in Nigeria actually ... here the technocrats try to fit into the government decision” [MOP2]. This however shouldn’t be the case as energy and expert bureaucrats have been shown to occupy a prominent role which they can use to influence policy decisions by virtue of their position (Uba, 2010).

The responses underscored the fact that energy bureaucrats and administrators in Nigeria were yet to take control of the importance of their position to start influencing the government especially on renewable energy matters. These government executives tasked with seeing to the development of electricity in Nigeria should come to the realization that they occupy a very influential and powerful position. Their responsibilities as indicated by Gruber (1987) go beyond the proverbial paper pushing, as decisions they make significantly affect the way government serves or regulates its citizens. As the analysis showed, the constraints within which bureaucrats perceive themselves, can be loosened if these bureaucrats are provided with better information and capacity development as also noted by the participants.

Legitimacy as portrayed in institutional theory by Stinchcombe (1965), is a fundamental resource that organizations deploy in their efforts to lessen the negative impact of the liabilities of newness in an industry, market, organizational field, or economic sector. This implies that *overcoming the liabilities of newness* of renewable energy technology for rural electrification was essential to strengthening its acceptance as a viable energy source. Similar to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), and Weber (1978) the participants acknowledged legitimacy as a basis for survival and growth, and “a precondition for the

continuous flow of resources and the sustained support of organizational constituents” (Turcan, Marinova, and Rana, 2012, p. 426). Though only a few of the participants reflected on the novelty of renewable energy as an issue, the magnitude of their responses highlighted the fact that overcoming the liability of newness of renewable energy would really enhance its legitimacy in a fossil fuel dominant environment.

#### ***4.2. Relating the Finding to the Study’s Research Question***

Relating the findings in this category to the research question entailed the alignment of the emergent themes that made up the findings to the various research questions. Synthesis of these themes showed that the issues relating to each research question were addressed in part by most of the themes directly and in some areas by a combination of two or more themes. On the question of “How has being a fossil fuel-rich country affected the large scale adoption of renewable energy technology for rural electrification and development projects?” the general assumption was that being a fossil fuel-rich country has greatly affected interest in the use of the abundant renewable energy resources for electric power generation in Nigeria. Fossil fuel has had a considerable amount of influence on several aspect of electricity development in the country, ranging from policy to the perception of the average Nigerian regarding power generation (Ajayi and Ajayi, 2013; Akinbami, 2001). When Nigerians think of electricity what comes to mind is basically fossil fueled/large hydro and not renewable energy based generation of power. However, the findings show that the renewable energy–fossil fuel dynamics in Nigeria or the relationship between the existences of both energy sources isn’t as clear cut as was initially assumed.

While data from other studies and most of the responses confirmed the initial assumption that the existence of fossil fuel has had an adverse effect on the use of renewable energy for electric power generation in Nigeria, data from this study showed that this notion wasn’t as strong as was first presumed. From the views of the participants and the documents reviewed, several arguments that emerged from this study supported the fact that the existence of fossil fuel in itself wasn’t really the obstacle to renewable energy development in Nigeria. The issue was with the way the energy policy and electric power industry were set up. Which has only fueled the perception that renewable energy in the presence of fossil fuels had no place in power generation in Nigeria. Improved bureaucratic involvement, was expected to lead to a more active bureaucracy that could help galvanize more involvement of the government, subsequently help plug the gaps in the policy system as well as rectify issues obstructing renewable energy development for rural electrification in Nigeria. It could also help with a reorganization of the sector which will lead to better awareness, efficiency, effectiveness and reliability. It is believed by the participants that a strategy of co-existence of both energy sources; where renewable energy is applied at the rural front and the fossil fueled/large hydro powered grid dedicated to the urban areas, should be pursued.

## 5. Conclusion

There have been a lot of misconceptions about the concept of a renewable energy powered rural electrification strategy in Nigeria. While the hurdles faced by a renewable energy powered programme might easily be discounted as a consequence of the existence of an abundant supply of fossil fuel in Nigeria, in reality the existence of fossil fuel shouldn't have any adverse effect on the propagation of renewable energy, as both resources can easily complement each other. If the findings from this study are to contribute to practice, there has to first be a rethink of the fossil fuel vs. renewable energy dialogue – a misconceived dialogue prevalent in the Nigerian energy and rural electricity sector. With respect to the context in which this study was carried out, it is believed that a government driven process backed by an active bureaucracy with lots of advocacy and legitimating practices which could help overcome the perceived liabilities of newness of renewable energy will be required in order to reposition renewable energy for rural electrification in a fossil fuel-rich economy like Nigeria.

In sum, it is hoped that by reflecting on the findings from this study, development administrators can find that achieving a renewable energy powered rural electrification in Nigeria is not as daunting as it seems. This study illuminates the fact that development administrators wield a lot of power in how electrification projects can and should be implemented. They have a say in specifying the requirements for rural electrification and can easily stipulate that such projects get powered by local renewable energy sources. This is one way they could help create more positive interest in the use of renewable energy in rural electrification in Nigeria.

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# FAMILY'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE ROMANIAN ROOM AS COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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**Abstract:** *The situation of family for the last 25 years begins to be increasingly of concern for social policies at national and European level, under the conditions in which, this institution is already regarded as endangered since the beginning of the third millennium. The last graphs of the 2011 Census indicate that Romania's population is on a continuing decrease trend, based on birth-rates and higher divorce numbers, while similar phenomena are also encountered in other Western countries of the EU. The challenges and reasons behind these data raise questions about the chances of the youths to set-up their family. Statistical data can highlight part of reasons and answers. The paper intends to make a comparative analysis regarding the development of some socio-economic indicators in the Romanian area against other EU countries. The topic required multidisciplinary research in the effort of understanding the reasons determining the decrease of autochthonous populations by using, mainly, statistical indicators on various areas of interest. Fertility, infant mortality, marital status, divorce rate, evolution of monoparental families, social services, education and the number of households are only part of the key-indicators proposed for determining the reasons representing vulnerabilities and triggering this decline. The approached topic is necessary for identifying and determining some efficient policies to assist family as main institution by which the stability and development of a safe and sound society is ensured for future generations.*

**Keywords:** *fertility, infant mortality, divorce rate, illiteracy, monoparental families, social services*

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## Introduction to the topic and research methodology

The rate of marriages, the evolution of divorce, birth rates, and mortality are part of the key-indicators by which the direction and development of more or less vulnerable young couples can be estimated. Unfortunately, the legislation of social services and

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protection differs even today from one country to another. At global level, the development of economic gaps leading to poverty, early school-leaving, massive migration of Muslim populations to Europe, the post-effects of the 2008 economic crisis, the emergence and outspread of terrorism triggering insecurity feelings are challenges that reach and discourage young couples in the effort of setting-up a family.

The migration of non-European populations to Europe maintains and even increases the number of the population at State's level, but with very many costs implying: the multiplication of refugee camps, lack of jobs, cheaper workforce, difficulties in identifying jobs, all in their turn leading to increased discontent among autochthonous populations, strikes, union protests, the development of intercultural conflict areas, increased unemployment, the need of spending on social assistance, etc. It is obvious that the aggregation of these processes discourages the autochthonous population and especially the young seeking a job or intending to set up a family. The socio-economic issues affect thus the confidence in family as institution on medium- and long term. Some questions could be why the traditional family is on decline? Can young couples adjust to the new challenges? Is the modern family, such as the mono-parental one a solution that could gradually replace the traditional family concept? These questions justify a careful analysis of a sensitive subject, but necessary for configuring future evolutions.

The methodology was built by interpreting and comparing statistical data gathered from the Eurostat and NIS (National Institute of Statistics) databanks. In order to gain a complex image of the topic, we resorted also to part of the empirical researches finalised during the last 5 years by IQLR (the Institute for Quality of Life Research), World Values Survey, European Values Survey, and the Public Opinion Barometer "Couple Life". As field of research, the paper is circumscribed to the theoretical and statistical analysis of the evolution and changes pertaining to the specifics of social sciences.

After referencing to the specialised literature of the last 5 years, we established and determined the following research objectives:

- a. analysis and comparison of the birth rate in Romania and the EU as evolution for the last years, depending on access to and update of the latest statistical data;
- b. analysis of households' development in Romania, as compared with the other countries within the European Union;
- c. analysis of the divorce development in the case of young couples, as well as the causes and reasons leading to this phenomenon;
- d. analysis of mono-parental families' evolution in Romania and in the other countries within the European Union;
- e. analysis of the illiteracy rate for children and couples in Romania;
- f. to catch an image regarding the demographic evolution of the autochthonous and migrant population at European Union level.

## Evolution of the demographic and social context of families in Romania

One first background remark, that we emphasise upfront, is that the differentiation of social policies addressed to families is still rather high from one country to another within the EU area. The unifying vision is lacking, along with a shared legislation of social protection and assistance services at European level. The most developed system of services and social assistance was created by the Northern countries. This fact was possible because an operational progressive system of taxes and duties was created, but also because the philosophy of the Northern state took into account the importance of family irrespective of ethnic, social or cultural particularities.

The Scandinavian model could be a good practice example verified in particular by the Swedish model. The resources' distributiveness, social justice, social inclusion, the progressive system of taxes and duties are dedicated means and strategies by which the essential interests of the family are defended. The "*welfare state*" - type protectionist model inspired an important part of the programmes initiated by the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties. Due to these treaties, in the 2009 Romania, 9.721,1 persons benefited of a certain form of social protection, representing about 45.3% from the population (evaluation of the official report of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection [MLFSP]), and over 18.436,5 benefited either directly or indirectly of social protection (MLFSP, 2011, p. 1)".

The European legislation struggles to support traditional family in the modern understanding agreed on by all EU members. However, the economic differences justified by the fact that Romania is still not included into the Euro Area, by the purchasing power, and by the income per capita allow also for very differing taxes and duties, thus hindering the fulfilment of this aim. Unfortunately, we cannot discuss about a united and strong Europe as long as these factors lack the required standardisation for cancelling the gaps between East and West. Europeanisation means satisfying the necessary balance so that any family might nurture children starting with the same equal chances and rights regarding education, health and social security. The European decision factors play an important role in accomplishing this aim by employing some smart public policies that would provide for medium- and long-term outputs.

Family enjoys today a high rate of trust among Romanians (Cace C., Cace S., Nicolăescu V., 2011), but marriage begins to become a decreasing institution as stage in shaping young couples. In a recent research by IRES, in August 2015, for "9 out of 10 Romanians, family is very important, and 70% out of them have high trust in family". Youths, women, educated respondents and those living in Moldova value family to higher extent. The declared trust regarding family is higher among men, and for higher educated respondents, and for those in the southern part of the country, and decreases as respondents grow in age. Half of the Romanians state they are very content with the family life they have currently. Men, mature respondents and those from Moldova are among the respondents with the highest contentment level regarding family life (IRES,

2015)<sup>1</sup>. From the same study we learn that 8 out of 10 Romanians state that they trust the marriage institution, but less than half show high levels of trust. Among elderly, marriage has the highest trust shares. Over 6 out of 10 married respondents or out of those living with a partner maintain that they are content with the life in a couple. The less content are women and respondents with ages between 51 and 65 years of age, and those with secondary education.

The statistical data of the last 5 years show that Romania is declining with regard to fertility, divorces, early school-leaving for young children, and on increase regarding monoparental families with one or more children. The same phenomenon is present also in Western Europe, where the divorce rates for the last 10 years positioned Europe in the world negative top. The East-West gap is closed only regarding negative scores and chapters. At the time, the “marriage rate in our country is among the highest at European level: 6.79 per thousand inhabitants in 2006. After the lowest value of 5.85 per thousand in 2001, the marriage rate is on a constant ascending trend for the last years. The data for 2007 indicate a spectacular increase, placing Romania on the top position within the European Union: 8.78 per thousand inhabitants (the level is identical with the one from 1990). The average age for the conclusion of the first marriage is among the lowest in Europe, of 25.2 years for women and 28.5 years for men in 2005” (Popescu, R., 2010, p.7). Employment, incomes and health of each member influence the birth-rate and the adequate development of the new generations.

The decrease in population in the last 25 years represents another issue of concern demanding an adequately developed mitigation with respect to the traditional Romanian family. A historical explanation could be given based on the sudden and violent shift from the communist regime to the democratic one which generated changes inclusively in the birth and mortality rate. The transition of political regimes was followed by a demographic transition which occurred because of several economic, social, legal, cultural and health factors, etc. Warren Thompson (1929) and Frank Nolestein (1954) are the first authors formulating a theory regarding the *demographic transition* process which applies also for Romania. It is obvious that the change of political regimes leads, according to the revolutions' theory, to an irreversible institutional, legal, economic and social change. The circumstances of the nineties and the first effects of transition were harsh, triggering deep social changes with demographic impact. In the theories about demographic evolution emerged specific concepts, which are concerned with the numerical evolution of the population, such as the fertility transition.

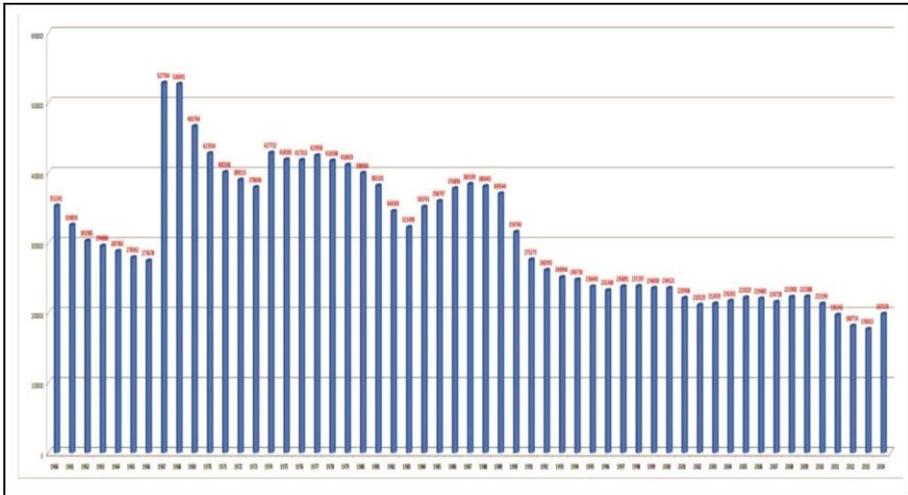
If in the post-war period, 1947-1955, in Romania was recorded a high birth-rate, more specifically 23.4 live-births per thousand inhabitants in 1947 and 25.6 live-births in 1955 this is just an reflection of returning to normality after the World War. After 1957 (in

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<sup>1</sup> The data are part of the study “Familie și viață de cuplu în România – percepții și reprezentări” (Family and Couple Life in Romania – Perceptions and Representations), realised by the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy – IRES in the period 20-24 August 2015 on a total sample of 1.032 respondents with ages over 18 years, representative for the Romanian adult population, margin of error  $\pm 2.6\%$ . The CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) method was used for the study

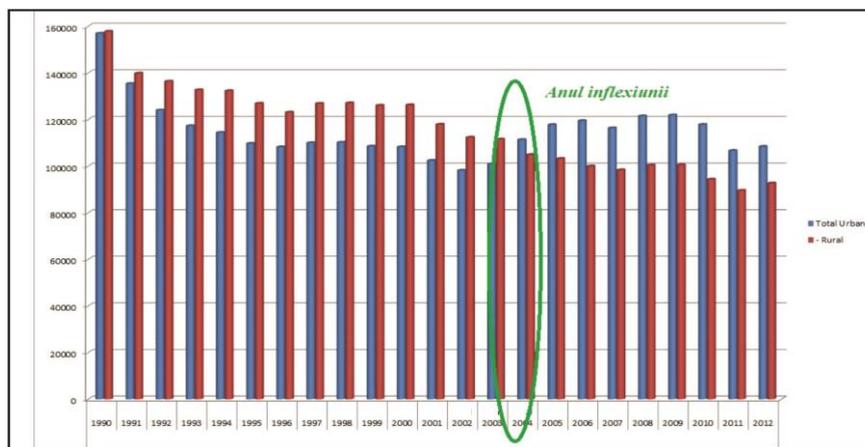
full process of forced collectivization) these birth-rates decreased to 24.2‰ and in 1966 (after Ceausescu came to power) to 14.3‰ per thousand inhabitants. However, the demographic policies of 1966 increased yet again this percentage, so that in 1967 the birth rate was of 27.4‰, followed by a slight decrease to 26.7‰ in 1968. Nevertheless, this pro-birth policy adopted in 1966 brought with it a certain amount of risks and among its effects could be mentioned the increased number of abandoned children, and the birth of more malformed children (Cozma, 2012, p. 120). In the period 1980-1989, in full process of food rationalising, the birth-rate varied between 14 and 18‰ (NIS, 2012, p. 11). In Figure 1 we present the evolution of the birth-rates in Romania from 1960 up to the year 2014.

*Figure 1: Number of live-births in the period 1960-2014*



Source: NIS

This figure reveals that the birth-rate development as of the 1990s is on continuing decrease, phenomenon that might be partially explained by the theory of social and political changes which resulted in a long transition process. In 2008 a slight increase is noticeable, but immediately after the outbreak of the crisis in the same year this rate begins to decrease anew. A fact worth mentioning is that the increased birth-rate of the years 1967 and 1968 was never exceeded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, save for the period 1910-1914. After the year 2000, respectively in 2004, another remarkable change occurs: the urban area surpasses with its birth-rate increase the rural area. The next figure illustrates this differentiation of the birth-rate depending on the urban-rural area distinction for the period 1990-2012.

**Figure 2:** Number of live-births in the period 1990-2012

Source: NIS

The birth-rate decrease after the nineties up to 2012 indicates that Romania entered into a transition based on uncertainty and insecurity. The stable couples begin to decrease in numbers, and the migration phenomenon begins to gain considerable weight. Based on the linear analysis of these data indicating the drastic decrease of the birth-rate, the job migration and the effects of the successive economic crises, it might be said that Romania will be in less than 50 years among the European countries with the considerable ageing populations.

## Evolution of Romanian households as compared with other countries within the European Union

The next step of the analysis is the identification of households. According to the final report regarding the Census, it was established that the stable population of Romania is of 20121641 million inhabitants, from among which 10333064 women (51.4%) (NIS, CPH 2011, p.1). At the same time, were recorded about 7.1 million households and 8.4 million houses (NIS, CPH, 2011). Over half from total households and houses are in the urban area. The CHP data from 2011 show that the average number of people in households is smaller in the urban area, about 2.53 individuals per household, against the number of individuals in rural households which is about 2.83 individuals per household. "The territorial distribution shows that the average size of a household is higher in the counties Ilfov – 3.10 individuals/household – as in Dâmbovița, Giurgiu, Bistrița-Năsăud, Maramureș and Suceava – between 2.93 – 2.82 individuals/ household. The smallest average number of individuals per household is in the Bucharest Municipality with 2.39 individuals per household, and in the counties Neamț and Hunedoara – 2.50 individuals per household. Save for county Sălaj, the average size of households is smaller in municipalities and towns than in villages "(NIS, CPH 2011).

In table 1 we can notice the evolution of households with children from Romania, as compared with other countries of the European Union for the period 2005-2014 (scale of 1/1000).

**Table 1:** Situation of households (per total) including at least one child at European Union level

GEO/TIME	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
European Union (28 countries)	63,577.9	64,028.3	64,130.7	63,854.0	65,575.6	65,830.9	65,671.1	65,551.8	65,273.9	65,422.8
Belgium	1,472.8	1,474.5	1,485.9	1,485.7	1,517.8	1,533.6	1,548.9	1,542.2	1,529.2	1,543.7
Bulgaria	1,022.2	966.9	913.3	861.6	846.9	811.3	745.7	701.4	743.1	793.9
Czech Republic	1,501.4	1,479.8	1,497.2	1,510.0	1,516.3	1,511.1	1,490.2	1,509.8	1,515.7	1,478.1
Denmark	:	:	:	:	:	668.9	723.5	726.0	720.3	707.4
Germany	9,667.5	9,562.1	9,379.6	9,258.6	9,370.7	9,225.0	9,057.9	8,879.2	8,802.2	8,787.5
Estonia	203.7	201.5	196.5	195.8	201.1	196.1	189.2	188.5	186.7	187.6
Ireland	:	607.1	630.7	649.8	685.7	708.7	722.6	732.4	718.7	708.9
Greece	1,325.8	1,298.4	1,289.1	1,257.4	1,281.6	1,291.2	1,259.4	1,235.5	1,225.9	1,201.9
Spain	5,569.3	5,596.4	5,752.3	5,846.5	5,971.6	6,117.1	6,188.7	6,226.0	6,271.5	6,251.3
France	8,470.1	8,531.0	8,574.3	8,575.7	8,664.5	8,632.6	8,609.9	8,638.9	8,709.7	8,842.0
Croatia	509.0	513.0	524.7	525.0	527.4	542.6	545.9	546.8	534.9	539.6
Italy	7,465.1	7,550.7	7,610.2	7,648.7	7,724.7	7,744.8	7,765.5	7,756.6	7,822.2	7,819.2
Cyprus	111.0	111.0	111.3	116.0	112.3	111.8	115.0	116.8	118.3	114.2
Latvia	331.0	319.7	320.6	319.2	311.3	300.5	299.4	275.3	270.8	264.4
Lithuania	531.3	506.5	500.6	490.2	485.0	473.1	447.3	434.6	420.3	409.5
Luxembourg	65.7	65.6	67.5	68.8	76.5	75.4	77.4	77.9	81.2	82.4
Hungary	1,367.3	1,365.9	1,355.4	1,348.2	1,336.4	1,321.1	1,296.2	1,272.0	1,244.4	1,226.3
Malta	56.9	56.7	56.7	56.5	56.2	53.9	54.1	56.3	56.3	55.3
Netherlands	2,181.6	2,183.1	2,199.3	2,183.4	2,183.2	2,192.7	2,177.5	2,201.3	2,200.4	2,197.6
Austria	1,028.4	1,021.1	1,008.3	997.5	990.3	988.1	984.5	976.1	971.0	978.8
Poland	5,907.1	5,860.6	5,826.1	5,754.0	5,666.4	5,494.1	5,471.7	5,486.3	5,432.2	5,418.5
Portugal	1,561.2	1,547.2	1,528.4	1,529.9	1,534.9	1,521.8	1,500.9	1,489.8	1,478.1	1,487.3
<b>Romania</b>	<b>3,291.6</b>	<b>3,277.6</b>	<b>3,217.5</b>	<b>3,191.6</b>	<b>3,157.7</b>	<b>2,919.6</b>	<b>2,871.3</b>	<b>2,825.1</b>	<b>2,754.7</b>	<b>2,712.4</b>
Slovenia	286.6	281.9	282.8	281.6	283.2	281.8	283.5	277.5	272.2	271.8
Slovakia	764.5	753.4	722.0	722.1	712.9	707.5	702.7	692.9	674.5	688.2
Finland	604.8	616.1	604.3	599.1	594.5	591.7	592.7	591.1	583.6	586.7
Sweden	:	:	:	:	1,199.0	1,204.1	1,195.7	1,159.4	1,179.2	1,260.9
United Kingdom	8,282.3	8,280.5	8,476.1	8,381.0	8,567.4	8,610.8	8,753.8	8,936.1	8,756.5	8,807.3

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

The Netherlands is closest to Romania in terms of number of inhabitants (16856620 inhabitants) has maintained the same constant rate for the last ten years. In the period 2005-2014 it is noticed that Romania is on a continuing decreasing trend regarding households including at least one child, irrespective if couples or mono-parental families are considered. The European countries registering a decreasing trend regarding households with children are: Bulgaria, Czech R., Germany, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Austria, Poland (on a slight decreasing trend), Portugal (country leading currently the top regarding the number of divorces), Romania (on significant

decrease, corresponding to the drastic fall in the number of births), Slovenia (a slight oscillating decrease), Slovakia and Finland. The countries registering a relative significant ascending trend are: Belgium, Ireland, Spain, Italy, England, Croatia, France (with significant increases), Luxemburg, and Sweden. At European Union level (28 member-states) was registered a significant increase, from 63.577,9 in 2005 to 65.422,8 in 2014 (in the case of the European Union, for the year 2014 were included into calculation also immigrant households and families).

## Evolution of mono-parental families in Romania and in the other countries of the European Union

In Table 2, is presented the situation of mono-parental families from Romania, against the other countries of the European Union, for the period 2005-2014 (scale 1/1000).

**Table 2:** Situation of mono-parental families with at least one child at European Union level

GEO/TIME	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
European Union (28 countries)	7,660.5	7,999.3	8,131.9	8,054.0	8,572.9	9,114.7	9,342.9	9,380.5	9,487.0	9,692.0
Belgium	255.3	264.7	258.4	264.5	277.7	275.3	267.7	267.1	260.4	264.7
Bulgaria	85.5	81.6	81.4	76.4	80.6	60.6	60.4	70.9	76.5	78.2
Czech Republic	189.2	192.5	199.6	210.5	216.4	216.3	201.9	208.9	219.5	216.2
Denmark	:	:	:	:	:	181.8	234.7	236.4	204.5	196.2
Germany	1,477.3	1,595.0	1,515.2	1,450.8	1,523.9	1,559.2	1,577.5	1,514.3	1,510.1	1,519.9
Estonia	43.4	39.3	37.0	38.2	39.2	35.8	32.9	34.4	37.1	38.1
Ireland	:	82.1	90.3	89.7	107.9	114.7	122.6	124.9	116.8	106.9
Greece	70.0	73.4	77.0	67.7	72.0	78.8	77.3	81.1	83.1	80.2
Spain	257.1	271.6	310.9	303.0	346.8	427.3	466.0	502.3	583.9	641.8
France	1,259.2	1,331.7	1,338.9	1,390.7	1,422.6	1,483.5	1,492.8	1,471.1	1,621.7	1,705.7
Croatia	24.5	26.4	25.6	28.1	31.0	24.2	25.4	25.8	25.0	30.6
Italy	466.0	489.3	513.1	556.4	571.4	589.4	606.1	657.7	707.3	728.3
Cyprus	6.0	8.3	7.9	7.2	8.2	8.7	9.4	10.0	10.1	10.8
Latvia	47.0	42.0	52.1	49.9	44.9	50.0	53.5	47.0	45.1	47.1
Lithuania	59.9	62.7	67.1	90.8	89.9	94.1	90.1	92.7	92.9	86.4
Luxembourg	6.0	6.4	6.5	7.2	10.4	9.4	10.6	9.9	10.1	10.1
Hungary	141.9	140.2	153.2	160.6	167.5	180.8	177.8	175.7	170.0	170.1
Malta	2.6	2.6	3.1	2.8	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.5	4.4	4.8
Netherlands	274.1	301.9	320.4	321.2	326.4	300.8	298.2	299.5	321.8	324.7
Austria	123.5	121.4	121.3	116.8	118.4	118.8	113.2	118.1	117.4	113.3
Poland	514.2	547.8	559.3	522.0	486.1	454.4	465.9	490.1	499.3	521.9
Portugal	107.3	108.5	106.7	120.7	140.4	145.0	156.6	165.6	167.9	174.9
<b>Romania</b>	<b>173.3</b>	<b>167.5</b>	<b>153.9</b>	<b>143.5</b>	<b>146.8</b>	<b>209.3</b>	<b>202.3</b>	<b>195.5</b>	<b>186.7</b>	<b>183.2</b>
Slovenia	22.4	22.7	23.5	27.1	26.7	23.9	26.3	23.6	21.8	23.1
Slovakia	47.3	49.1	51.9	51.1	50.5	58.4	55.5	52.1	55.9	63.1
Finland	52.1	46.2	40.4	38.8	42.2	38.2	43.6	36.3	35.0	42.4
Sweden	:	:	:	:	240.0	273.9	278.5	242.6	264.4	290.1
United Kingdom	1,955.5	1,924.4	2,017.4	1,918.2	1,981.6	2,098.7	2,192.7	2,223.0	2,038.1	2,019.4

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

The presence of mono-parental families in Romania has known a continuing increase from 2005 up to 2014 in Romania. The rather high difference is explained mainly by the job migration phenomenon, as economic factor, and by the insufficient incomes or wages that cannot provide for the accepted threshold of subsistence. To these factors might be added other reasons such as the increase of early school-leaving in the case of youths, domestic violence, the increase in drug and alcohol consumption, etc. Regarding the other European countries, as can be deduced from the Table, Sweden (one of the welfare states' models) seems to record an increase in the number of mono-parental families with at least one child, while Finland also registers positive outcomes. A negative increase is recorded also in Slovakia and Portugal (where this increase is alarming), the Netherlands, Hungary, Lithuania, Italy, France and Spain (both with an alarming increase), Germany, the Czech R., and Belgium. The image of this phenomenon is reflected at European Union level by a worrying increase from 7.660,5 in 2005 to 9692 in 2014.

## Evolution of families with both parents and at least one child in Romania and in the other countries of the European Union

In the following, is presented the evolution of families with both parents and at least one child for Romania, against the other countries of the European Union for the period 2005-2014 (scale 1/1000).

**Table 3:** Situation of couples with at least one child at European Union level

GEO/TIME	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
European Union (28 countries)	42,165.8	42,400.1	42,559.0	42,560.3	43,998.1	43,914.2	43,803.4	43,849.0	43,599.9	43,722.8
Belgium	929.5	907.8	900.5	883.0	892.0	888.4	880.0	1,052.0	1,049.8	1,038.7
Bulgaria	595.9	569.0	551.8	523.3	506.4	490.3	450.9	415.5	443.2	481.4
Czech Republic	1,039.8	1,030.9	1,040.4	1,052.3	1,053.6	1,063.6	1,042.5	1,064.3	1,062.1	1,051.4
Denmark	:	:	:	:	:	435.5	433.5	427.9	461.8	468.9
Germany	6,754.9	6,545.5	6,498.5	6,457.7	6,560.9	6,381.4	6,269.9	6,105.6	6,063.6	6,038.8
Estonia	123.4	120.5	118.5	121.8	126.3	124.0	120.6	123.2	122.2	120.9
Ireland	:	401.5	411.8	435.9	458.3	479.1	488.6	495.5	495.0	494.1
Greece	1,005.0	985.1	994.1	984.0	995.6	1,006.1	973.0	949.3	935.4	918.8
Spain	3,561.1	3,622.4	3,704.1	3,848.0	4,023.3	4,142.3	4,250.9	4,294.1	4,311.9	4,274.6
France	6,249.2	6,203.0	6,287.8	6,220.5	6,284.6	6,157.7	6,143.7	6,231.4	6,125.2	6,138.3
Croatia	290.3	295.9	293.6	289.1	280.2	244.0	249.7	259.4	255.8	295.7
Italy	5,392.6	5,501.6	5,565.5	5,581.8	5,637.4	5,634.2	5,654.8	5,563.7	5,560.0	5,546.4
Cyprus	81.4	81.6	81.3	85.7	80.9	79.5	81.0	79.2	80.4	77.9
Latvia	158.0	161.8	152.3	155.0	154.9	140.5	146.5	140.1	139.6	134.5
Lithuania	265.8	254.9	258.4	275.2	264.1	257.2	251.4	241.1	231.5	230.3
Luxembourg	50.7	49.8	51.4	52.9	58.2	56.7	58.3	58.0	60.4	61.6
Hungary	851.5	861.2	855.1	847.6	829.7	813.5	811.7	786.5	772.0	773.1
Malta	38.9	38.0	38.5	36.9	36.2	35.6	35.2	36.9	36.9	35.7
Netherlands	1,681.4	1,683.0	1,677.2	1,654.7	1,654.9	1,686.2	1,672.5	1,683.2	1,666.3	1,653.2
Austria	658.2	661.3	645.2	642.7	638.6	642.7	649.5	640.6	632.7	649.2
Poland	3,308.3	3,294.3	3,295.9	3,277.8	3,339.6	3,226.8	3,222.6	3,233.0	3,216.9	3,249.7
Portugal	1,032.8	1,035.4	1,005.9	998.5	992.7	986.9	977.2	957.2	946.6	969.5

GEO/TIME	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Romania	1,922.0	1,902.9	1,879.6	1,861.5	1,854.9	1,731.8	1,667.3	1,616.2	1,565.0	1,540.6
Slovenia	185.3	184.6	177.1	178.9	186.9	190.1	196.1	195.7	194.5	191.6
Slovakia	432.4	438.8	415.4	421.8	427.6	421.5	424.2	409.8	412.2	418.7
Finland	500.0	513.3	509.4	507.9	500.3	496.9	498.3	499.8	492.4	491.9
Sweden	:	:	:	:	869.6	844.7	837.1	817.0	795.6	894.6
United Kingdom	5,057.2	5,055.7	5,149.7	5,165.7	5,290.5	5,256.8	5,316.3	5,472.9	5,470.7	5,482.8

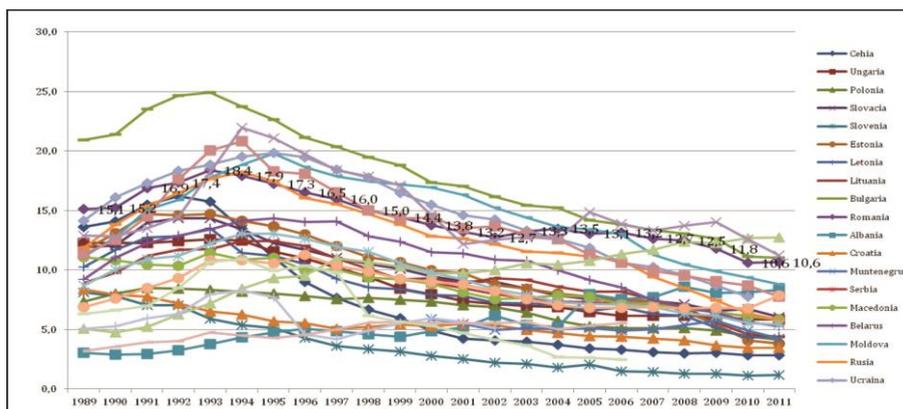
Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

Corresponding to the increase in the numbers of mono-parental families, couples in Romania are, unfortunately, on a decreasing trend. All three statistics are very clear in explaining the reasons why Romania is faced with the population ageing phenomenon. Save for some European countries recording increases with respect to births and population growth, EU is faced, by and large, by the same process of population ageing and, implicitly, with a continuing decrease with respect to labour force, where the only exception is migration as key-indicator in changing the final data. Due to these considerations, it is necessary to approach two major phenomena at EU-level:

1. The autochthonous or host-population is on continuing decrease and ageing.
2. Immigrant population which contributes, as phenomenon, to the increase of the EU population which, otherwise, would decrease.

The birth-rate policies notice an increase in the age of women at the first birth, and a decrease of fertility, this phenomenon being explained partly by the effort of families to adjust to the new economic conditions, while job migration is indicative for the fact that many families could not plan their financial efforts correspondingly at the time of their first child birth. As can be deduced from Figure 3, one child out of ten was born by a young mother, under 20 years of age.

Figure 3: Weight of children born by mothers under 20 years of age in Central and Eastern Europe



Source: TransMonEE data base

Also in the case of very young mothers, as can be noticed from the above figure, Romania records a significant decrease for the period 1989 – 2011.

## **I literacy, early school-leaving and divorce – a triangle of social issues in Romania today**

In Romania, early school-leaving is more frequent in the case of mono-parental families than in traditional families where children are nurtured by both parents. From the perspective of social assistance nowadays, children are the main beneficiaries of some State and European strategies so as to increase the safety, education, and health degree and to improve their quality of life in the spirit of social justice and of the equality of chances (Fitzek, 2015, p.564). In the post-December Romanian context, social assistance is visible in research, but less present in the family protection policies due to the poor resources' support by the State. The material scarcity in rural Romania was an important factor contributing to the increase in the number of divorces and in the early-school leaving growing trend.

In the case of under-aged children, parents play an important role in motivating them for obtaining an education. Behind the indifference or lacking ability to motivate children, chain effects emerge that may lead to social collapse. Alcoholism, drugs, arguments in family, or domestic violence and gambling are all difficulties with repercussions on children. Children from such environments tend to copy parental behaviour as models in the socialisation process and as they shape their own mature personality. For many parents, education no longer is a priority and sometimes they even detest or deny education completely. To this is added the severe poverty because of which parents cannot ensure the minimum necessary living means for their children. The lack of adequate clothing for school, of the necessary stationery, of food and hygiene lead to delicate attitudes and situations when faced with the other children. In the Romanian rural environment, child exploitation for labour in order to ensure food often leads to parents' refuse to allow their children going to school, and this list could be continued.

In the case of Rroma children, most of them are included in a well-defined vulnerable group. Not all parents allow their children going to school, and part of those attending school abandon it as soon as they learn reading and writing. Social marginalisation begins already in the first years of life. For many of the Rroma communities, the economic conditions, the lack of motivation, of hygiene, health and of many other essentials, encourage early school-leaving, and if we add also the lack of efficient policies for social integration on the job, then the situation becomes even more critical.

Another important reason which determines and maintains poverty is the educational level. The complete illiteracy phenomenon simply has worrying shares in the rural area and begins to increase just as much in the urban area. Romania recorded in 2011 a population of 20121641 individuals, and currently we count about 2 million illiterate individuals; a number explained also by the increase in mono-parental families, and within these the phenomenon of early school-leaving develops more frequently. The economic situation of mothers who have to nurture their children alone is increasingly

harder (Stăiculescu A.R.& Jitcov D., 2006, p. 11). In the negative top of the counties registering the highest numbers of illiterates are counted: Calarasi, Giurgiu, Ialomita, Tulcea and Teleorman. In Bucharest was registered the smallest number of illiterates, 1%. However, there are some positive developments in 2011 according to the Census from the respective year, against the data gathered by the 2002 Census when the number of illiterates was at least twice as high at the level of the entire country. Nevertheless, it is still worrying that living in the era of information today, 10% of the population is considered as illiterate according to the comparative census at the beginning of 2000 which mentioned only 4% of population as illiterate (data extracted from the report of the Romanian authorities to UNESCO for the Conference "Education for All in Europe and North America"). If, next to these data we add also functional illiteracy, of about 40 to 45%, then we can state, sadly, that in Romania there are almost 10 million illiterates and half-illiterates. In the following table, we present the situation of early school-leaving in primary and secondary education.

**Table 5:** Rate of early school-leaving in primary and secondary education (%)

		2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2011/ 2012
Primary education	Total	1,5	1,7	1,7	1,4	1,4	1,6	1,6
Secondary education	Total	2,0	2,1	2,3	2,2	1,9	1,7	2,0

*Source: UNICEF 2013, (based on the calculations of experts from the Institute for Education Sciences)*

Even though is acknowledged how important is to support education already from early ages, especially in disfavoured areas, Romania is in an alarming situation regarding the increases for this indicator. We mention, in this context, that the aim of the Europe 2020 Strategy is for Romania to reach 95% in the process of integrating children in primary and secondary education.

In the following table we show the situation of early school-leaving at higher education level for the age group between 18 and 24 years of age in Romania and in the other European countries for the period 2008-2014.

**Table 6:** Early school-leaving for youths between 18 and 24 years of age at European Union level

GEO/TIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
European Union (28 countries)	14.6	14.2	13.9	13.4	12.7	11.9	11.2
Belgium	12.0	11.1	11.9	12.3	12.0	11.0	9.8
Bulgaria	14.8	14.7	13.9	11.8	12.5	12.5	12.9
Czech Republic	5.6	5.4	4.9	4.9	5.5	5.4	5.5
Denmark	12.5	11.3	11.0	9.6	9.1	8.0	7.8
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	11.8	11.1	11.9	11.6	10.5	9.8	9.5
Estonia	14.0	13.5	11.0	10.6	10.3	9.7	11.4
Ireland	11.4	11.7	11.5	10.8	9.7	8.4	6.9
Greece	14.4	14.2	13.5	12.9	11.3	10.1	9.0

GEO/TIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Spain	31.7	30.9	28.2	26.3	24.7	23.6	21.9
France	11.8	12.4	12.7	12.3	11.8	9.7	9.0
Croatia	4.4	5.2	5.2	5.0	5.1	4.5	2.7
Italy	19.6	19.1	18.6	17.8	17.3	16.8	15.0
Cyprus	13.7	11.7	12.7	11.3	11.4	9.1	6.8
Latvia	15.5	14.3	12.9	11.6	10.6	9.8	8.5
Lithuania	7.5	8.7	7.9	7.4	6.5	6.3	5.9
Luxembourg	13.4	7.7	7.1	6.2	8.1	6.1	6.1
Hungary	11.7	11.5	10.8	11.4	11.8	11.9	11.4
Malta	27.2	25.7	23.8	22.7	21.1	20.5	20.3
Netherlands	11.4	10.9	10.0	9.2	8.9	9.3	8.7
Austria	10.2	8.8	8.3	8.5	7.8	7.5	7.0
Poland	5.0	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.4
Portugal	34.9	30.9	28.3	23.0	20.5	18.9	17.4
<b>Romania</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>18.1</b>
Slovenia	5.1	5.3	5.0	4.2	4.4	3.9	4.4
Slovakia	6.0	4.9	4.7	5.1	5.3	6.4	6.7
Finland	9.8	9.9	10.3	9.8	8.9	9.3	9.5
Sweden	7.9	7.0	6.5	6.6	7.5	7.1	6.7
United Kingdom	16.9	15.7	14.8	14.9	13.4	12.3	11.8

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

In this table is highlighted that regarding the indicator of early-school leaving at higher-education level, Romania takes a rather satisfying position, as the top negative performers are Portugal and Spain. However, in the 2008-2009 interval, Romania registered a slight increase (by over 2 percentages), a phenomenon that might be explained based on the interest of youths of not enlisting for higher education in order to leave for working abroad. On the other hand, the percentage of youths planning to pursue higher education abroad increased as well. At the other end, the smallest percentage was recorded by Croatia, a country recently entered into the European family, and that maintains, probably, a rather robust strategy of social and educational policies in order to determine youths to remain in the country.

The absence of a coherent strategy for the last 25 years is noticeable in the lacking vision of social policies from Romania, especially with respect to those dedicated to child education and development. The sustainability of a plan with long-term funds and investments that do not change depending on the minister or government was the main issue of the governmental strategy. The monetary resources allotted to health and education had only insignificant increases for the last 10 years, and in the area of social assistance and protection the policies intended for supporting families as vulnerable groups had an inexplicable decrease.

**Table 7:** Public expenditures for health, education and social protection as percentage of the gross domestic product

<b>Total public expenditures</b>							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	46.7	46.2	45.5	47.0	51.0	50.6	49.0
Romania	33.6	35.5	38.2	39.3	41.1	40.1	39.4
<b>Health expenditures</b>							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.9	7.6	7.4	7.3
Romania	2.7	2.7	3.1	3.2	3.8	3.6	3.4
<b>Education expenditures</b>							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.3
Romania	3.6	4.1	3.9	4.5	4.1	3.3	4.1
<b>Social protection expenditures</b>							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	18.2	17.9	17.5	18.0	20.0	19.9	19.6
Romania	11.1	11.0	11.2	12.4	14.6	14.9	14.1

Source: Eurostat statistics, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

**Table 8:** Expenditures for family and child protection as percentage of total public expenditures on social protection

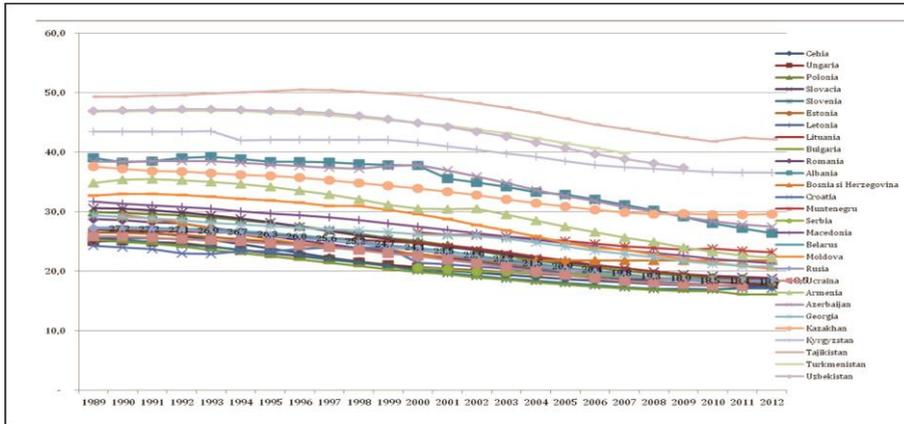
2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
11.3	12.5	13.9	14.1	12.7	10.6	10.0	9.6

Source: Eurostat statistics, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

As can be seen from the above tables, Romania against the European Union is on a continuing decreasing trend regarding the number of children and the weight of expenditures on social protection. It is inexplicable why, while expenditures for child nurturing increased, the aggregate of public expenditures as social assistance decreased. Currently, the weight of children in the urban area is of 16.5%, and the one of children in the rural area of 20.2%, against the nineties, when the data indicated a ratio of 28% and, respectively 29% (NIS: TEMPO-online databank). The two positions show, yet again, why Romania is swiftly entering into a population ageing process, fact which will be felt strongly in the next 20 years.

The next figure shows the weight of children in total population in countries from the central and eastern European region.

**Figure 4:** Weight of children in total population in the region of Central and Eastern Europe



Source: TransMonEE, data base

From this figure we notice the critical decrease in the weight of children in total population for the area of Central and Eastern Europe. The migration for the last 10 years of Romanian youths as labour force seeking jobs to other countries is an explanation for why Romania is heading slowly but surely towards an irreversible process of population ageing. It should be mentioned that, in this instance we include only the autochthonous population and not the immigrant population from outside the EU.

With respect to health, Romania registered another negative record about the high rate of infant mortality, a fact which shows the acute lack of an emergency redress strategy for these adverse trends.

The next table highlights the situation of infant mortality, which in 2012 was three times lower than in the years 1989-1990. In this respect, Romania registers again a negative record against the other EU countries.

**Table 9:** Infant mortality in Romania and in other European Union countries

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
UE27	4,9	4,6	4,5	4,3	4,2	4	3,9	:
Bulgaria	10,4	9,7	9,2	8,6	9	9,4	8,5	7,8
Czech R.	3,4	3,3	3,1	2,8	2,9	2,7	2,7	2,6
Germany	3,9	3,8	3,9	3,5	3,5	3,4	3,6	3,4
France	3,8	3,8	3,8	3,8	3,9	3,6	3,5	3,5
Hungary	6,2	5,7	5,9	5,6	5,1	5,3	4,9	4,9
Poland	6,4	6	6	5,6	5,6	5	4,7	4,6
Portugal	3,5	3,3	3,4	3,3	3,6	2,5	3,1	3,4
<b>Romania</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13,9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10,1</b>	<b>9,8</b>	<b>9,4</b>	<b>9</b>

Source: Eurostat statistics, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

As noticeable, in the post-crisis period there is a slight decrease against the year 2005, respectively 2006, that is the years with maximum infant mortality rates.

Another poverty reason is of psychological-social nature, and is shown in the conjugal misunderstandings reflected by the divorce rates, especially in the case of families with children. The following table shows the marital status of Romania's population.

In this table can be seen that in 2011, even though for the single status are recorded more men than women, in the case of widow(er) are 5 times more women than men. Same as in the case of divorce, we find more women than men. The number of divorces in Romania did not register any significant variations. According to the NIS data from 2013, the number of divorced couples was of 28507, respectively a decrease by 3000 against the year 2012. The number of those divorced with at least one child in care reached in 2013 the share of 44.2% from total.

**Table 10:** Marital status in Romania 2011

ROMANIA	STABLE POPULATION TOTAL	LEGAL MARITAL STATUS					Persons living in a consensual union
		Single	Married	Widow(er)	Divorced	Unavailable information	
A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Both genders	20121641	7676974	9687183	1901912	845882	9690	745534
Male	9788577	4268428	4818357	348869	349223	3700	372767
Female	10333064	3408546	4868826	1553043	496659	5990	372767

Source: Census 2011, <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/>

As result of the marriage dissolution, over 17000 under-aged children remained with only one parent. From among these divorces, 48.1% were because of the guilt of both partners, 13.2% because of the guilt of the husband, 4.3% because of the wife, and 34.4% were justified by other reasons. As other reasons are counted the migration phenomenon, in this case the couples separating because of the distance imposed by their jobs.

**Table 11:** Divorces by number of under-aged children remained through marriage dissolution

Years	Total	Without children	With 1 child	With 2 children	With 3 children	With 4 children	With 5 children and over
							With 5 children and over
2006	<b>32672</b>	16558	11878	3544	481	146	65
2007	<b>36308</b>	18929	12825	3851	524	122	57
2008	<b>35685</b>	18910	12166	3881	539	124	65
2009	<b>32341</b>	17410	10616	3653	473	120	69
2010	<b>32632</b>	16922	11299	3727	496	123	65
2011	<b>35780</b>	19626	11591	3865	500	129	69

Source: NIS, <http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/content/anuarul-statistic-2013>, Statistical Yearbook, 2013.

As can be seen from this table, as well, the highest rate of marriage dissolutions as total number was recorded in 2007, one year before the outbreak of the economic-financial crisis in 2008, and the lowest rate is registered in 2009. The 2008 crisis did not represent an immediate factor in increasing the number of marriage dissolutions. Same situation is noticed also in the case of families with one or more children. However, between 2010 and 2011 a slight increase is registered which could be explained based on the effects of the crisis on the financial situation.

Hereunder we present the situation of marriage dissolutions at EU-level, as well (calculated per total, without the criterion regarding the number of children, for the period 2008-2013).

**Table 12:** Marriage dissolutions at EU-level in families with at least one child

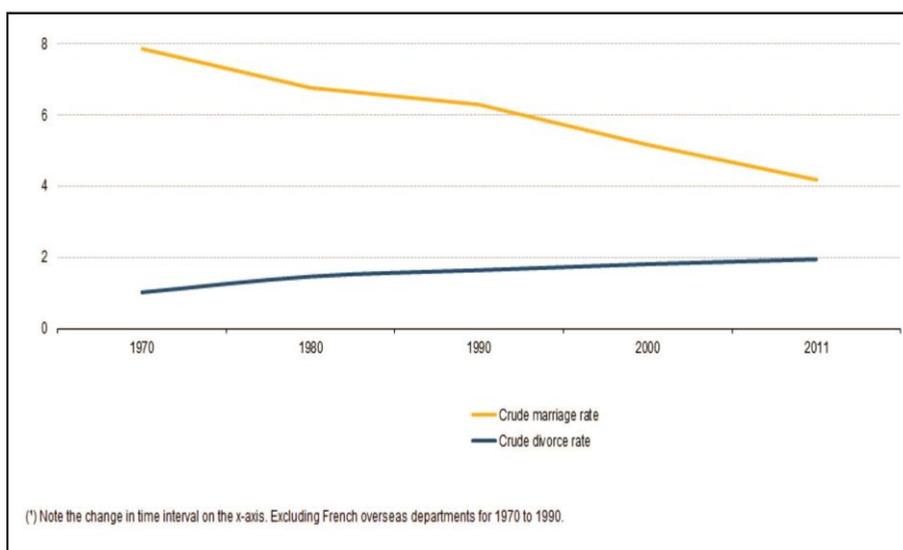
GEO/TIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union (28 countries)	1,019,104	974,575	986,247	986,066	:	:
Belgium	35,366	32,606	28,903	27,522	26,145	:
Bulgaria	14,104	11,662	11,012	10,581	11,947	10,908
Czech Republic	31,300	29,133	30,783	28,113	26,402	27,895
Denmark	14,695	14,940	14,460	14,484	15,709	18,875
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	191,948	185,817	187,027	187,640	179,147	:
Germany (including former GDR)	191,948	185,817	187,027	187,640	179,147	169,833
Estonia	3,501	3,189	2,989	3,099	3,142	3,343
Ireland	3,630	3,341	3,113	2,819	2,892	:
Greece	13,163	13,607	13,275	12,705	14,880	:
Spain	109,922	98,207	102,690	103,290	104,262	95,427
France	132,594	130,601	133,909	132,977	:	:
France (metropolitan)	129,379	:	130,810	129,802	:	:
Croatia	5,025	5,076	5,058	5,662	5,659	5,992
Italy	54,351	54,456	54,160	53,806	51,319	:
Cyprus	1,639	1,738	1,929	1,934	2,036	:
Latvia	6,214	5,099	4,930	8,302	7,311	7,031
Lithuania	10,317	9,270	10,006	10,341	10,399	9,974
Luxembourg	977	1,052	1,083	1,218	1,074	1,163
Hungary	25,155	23,820	23,873	23,335	21,830	20,209
Malta	:	:	:	42	441	338
Netherlands	32,236	30,779	33,723	33,755	34,721	33,636
Austria	19,701	18,806	17,474	17,295	17,006	:
Poland	65,475	65,345	61,300	64,594	64,432	66,132
Portugal	26,394	26,464	27,903	26,750	25,380	22,525
<b>Romania</b>	<b>35,685</b>	<b>32,341</b>	<b>32,632</b>	<b>35,780</b>	<b>31,324</b>	<b>28,507</b>
Slovenia	2,246	2,297	2,430	2,298	2,509	2,351
Slovakia	12,675	12,671	12,015	11,102	10,948	10,946
Finland	13,471	13,527	13,619	13,469	13,040	13,766
Sweden	21,377	22,211	23,593	23,389	23,422	26,933
United Kingdom	135,943	126,520	132,358	129,764	130,469	:

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

As observable in the above table, the negative top of marriage dissolution is led by Germany (related to a population of 82.5 million inhabitants) and Great Britain (with a

population of over 63 million). Romania recorded in the year 2014 a number of 35685 thousand marriage dissolutions in total, and the trend is slightly increasing, save for the year 2011. In order to understand and make clearer these data regarding the evolution of marriage dissolutions in relation to the decrease in the number of marriages, we consider the following Eurostat figure as relevant:

**Figure 5:** *The relationship between the number of marriages against the number of marriage dissolutions at European Union level for the period 1970 – 2011*



Source: Eurostat, [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/a/ae/Crude\\_marriage\\_and\\_divorce\\_rates%2C\\_EU-28%2C\\_1970%E2%80%932011\\_%28%2B%29\\_%28per\\_1\\_000\\_inhabitants%29\\_YB15.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/a/ae/Crude_marriage_and_divorce_rates%2C_EU-28%2C_1970%E2%80%932011_%28%2B%29_%28per_1_000_inhabitants%29_YB15.png)

The figure above shows that the number of marriage dissolutions increases, but the number of marriages decreases in the interval 1970-2011. Europe, as reflected by the statistics on topic, is in a certain demographic decline. With respect to children born to unmarried couples, the data show that the young families from Romania, just like the ones from other EU countries, have registered an increase against the traditional type of family. In the 28 member-states, in 2012, over 40% of the children were born outside the wedlock. Extra-marital births increased gradually in almost all EU-28 countries. If we compare 2012 with 2011, about this evolution, save for Estonia, an increase was registered in all other countries, including Romania. A worrying fact is that in 7 of the member-states, the majority of children were born outside wedlock, as follows: Bulgaria (59.1% in 2013), Estonia (58.4% in 2012), Slovenia (58.0% in 2013), France (56.7% in 2012), Sweden (54.4% in 2013), and Belgium (52.3% in 2012), as well as Denmark (51.5% in 2013). In Iceland, in 2012, was registered the highest number of

births before marriage, respectively 66.9%. On the other hand, the Mediterranean countries – Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Italy and Malta – to which are added the central and eastern European countries Poland and Lithuania, are at the opposite pole with over 70% of the couples having children inside marriage. An extra-EU-28 associated country, Turkey, has the absolute record of over 97% of children born to married couples (Eurostat Report, 2013).

**Table 13:** Share of births outside marriage in EU-28 countries

GEO/TIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union (28 countries)	36.7	37.6	38.6	39.3	40.0	:
Belgium	44.6	45.5	45.7	50.0	52.3	:
Bulgaria	51.1	53.4	54.1	56.1	57.4	59.1
Czech Republic	36.3	38.8	40.3	41.8	43.4	45.0
Denmark	46.2	46.8	47.3	49.0	50.6	51.5
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	32.1	32.7	33.3	33.9	34.5	34.8
Germany (including former GDR)	32.1	32.7	33.3	33.9	34.5	34.8
Estonia	59.0	59.2	59.1	59.7	58.4	:
Ireland	33.4	33.4	33.8	33.9	35.1	:
Greece	5.9	6.6	7.3	7.4	7.6	7.0
Spain	33.2	34.5	35.5	37.4	39.0	40.9
France	52.6	53.7	55.0	55.8	56.7	:
France (metropolitan)	51.6	52.9	54.1	55.0	55.8	:
Croatia	12.0	12.9	13.3	14.0	15.4	16.1
Italy	18.9	19.8	21.5	23.4	24.5	26.9
Cyprus	8.9	11.7	15.2	16.9	18.6	:
Latvia	43.2	43.5	44.4	44.6	45.0	44.6
Lithuania	26.6	25.4	25.7	27.7	28.8	29.5
Luxembourg	30.2	32.1	34.0	34.1	37.1	37.8
Hungary	39.5	40.8	40.8	42.3	44.5	45.6
Malta	25.4	27.4	25.3	23.0	25.7	25.9
Netherlands	41.2	43.3	44.3	45.3	46.6	47.4
Austria	38.8	39.3	40.1	40.4	41.5	:
Poland	19.9	20.2	20.6	21.2	22.3	23.4
Portugal	36.2	38.1	41.3	42.8	45.6	47.6
<b>Romania</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>30.5</b>
Slovenia	52.8	53.6	55.7	56.8	57.6	58.0
Slovakia	30.1	31.6	33.0	34.0	35.4	37.0
Finland	40.7	40.9	41.1	40.9	41.5	42.1
Sweden	54.7	54.4	54.2	54.3	54.5	54.4
United Kingdom	45.4	46.3	46.9	47.3	47.6	:

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

Romania registers a slight increase in 2008, up to and including the year 2013 from 27.4% to 30.5%. Nevertheless, against other EU countries, the increase is not significant, as opposed to Cyprus and Portugal, where the increases are about 10 pp. Correlating the evolution of births inside marriage with the indicator of divorces, we notice an interesting similarity: in 2008, in Romania were recorded 35685 divorces, according to Eurostat, while in the same year 27.4% of the children were born outside

the wedlock. In 2013 the number of marriage dissolutions in Romania was of 28507, according to Eurostat data, and the percentage of children born outside the marriage was of 30.5%. The two rows of statistical data show that, even though in 2008 were recorded more marriage dissolutions than in 2013, the number of children born outside the marriage is higher in 2013.

## Conclusions

Family is the micro-social centre in which is reflected the demographic stability of a society. Its particularities depend on the economic and social status of the individuals, who depend on a system which is required to ensure a minimum of vital needs and necessities (Arpinte D., Cace S., Theotokatos H., Koumalatsou E.; 2010). The right to health, education and work indicate the self-esteem as categorical imperative for the times we are living in. “Even though after 1997 was opened the path for social assistance community services centred on child and family that were thereafter developed and expanded based on governmental policies after 2001, for the last 8 years the decision factors left this central component of social assistance only in the responsibility of the social funds which were developed based on European programmes” (Zamfir, 2015, p. 45).

A first general conclusion shows that in Romania increased the number of mono-parental families to the detriment of families with both parents. The last data indicate that Romania heads gradually towards an irreversible process of population ageing. Save for few European countries which register increases, most of the EU-28 countries are faced today with major demographic issues. Due to these considerations it is necessary to mention two categories of population at the level of the European Union:

1. Autochthonous or host-population which is on continuing decrease and ageing.
2. Immigrant population which due to the exponential increase of the last 5 years determines an increase in the overall EU-28 population.

These data show that traditional family is on continuing decline for reasons exceeding economic and social indicators. Its complex form implies, as well, other criteria determinant for population decrease, such as the increasing number of marriage dissolutions in favour of a growing number of mono-parental families. To the question: ‘Romania and the European Union where to?’ and to the one about medium- and long-term mitigation solutions, the answers depend on the positive or negative evolution of families with both parents, an aspect poorly represented and supported by the current social protection policies from Romania. Currently, the development and support policies for families as vulnerable group did not find any answers for the showcased issue.

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