

# Research Report

**ROMANIA**

**Competence development of youth workers & youth  
trainers who work towards the social inclusion of young  
people with fewer opportunities**

**ARTSQUAD**

The logo for ARTSQUAD features the word "ARTSQUAD" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The letter "Q" is stylized as a black circle with a white vertical line through its center, resembling a lightbulb. A thick black line curves from the bottom of the "Q" to the right, ending in a small hook, suggesting a smile or a dynamic movement.

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### Current situation in Romania

#### Overview of Salvati Copiii-filiala Arges (Save the Children-Arges branch)

*Save the Children-Arges branch* is part of the Save the Children Romania NGO, also member of “Save the Children International” (the largest independent organization for Children Rights promotion according to the United Nations Convention), which implements programs in over 120 countries.

Established over 26 years ago, in 1991, with the MISSION to guarantee equal chances for children and youth, no matter their background, this NGO has been active and became well-known and trusted by the institutions at the local level and by national or international partners.

We have 300 members and 100 volunteers; among them we have experts on various topics such as: Children Rights, Human Rights, violence prevention, career guidance, parent’s guidance, trainers of teachers, social work.

The services provided by “Save the Children” NGO Romania-Arges branch, include: guidance services for youngsters of all ages (career guidance, personal development guidance, educational guidance); facilitation of education; social workers services; transfer of skills; psychological counselling for children at risk of social exclusion and/or with difficulty in accessing education.

“Save the Children” NGO-Arges branch involved over 2000 young people from local education institutions as target groups or as volunteers initiatives such as: Educational Global Campaign, The International Day of Sexual Abused Child, National Forum for Prevention of Violence against Children, Children Rights, Safety Internet Day, Children Home Alone Project (running since 2009), Unlabeled Children turn into Adults, etc).

Since 2011, “Save the Children” NGO-Arges branch, is operating an education centre – “**Growing together Centre**”/ “**Centrul crestem impreuna**” where both specialists and volunteers offer education and career guidance, psychological coaching and social assistance for families within the Parents School Module.

#### Overview of youth work (formal, informal and non-formal)

When you say “youth work” in Romania, the next thing that comes into mind is non-formal education, usually practiced by NGOs, although many categories of professionals, from

teachers to social workers, practice “youth work”. Traditional education institutions, like public schools (all levels), with few exceptions, use very little non-formal activities and when they do, they do it in extra-curricular activities, with or without the help of various NGOs, with or without trained teachers in non-formal education.

According to the Romanian National Office of Statistics, there are more than 60.000 NGOs in Romania but not all of them have as target group of their activity, youth work.

As for the formal education, it takes place in **national public system** and **private system** (this one mostly developed at the University level and kindergarten level). The national education system is free of charge up to University level (with limited available positions) and is organised like this: pre-school/kindergarten (2-5 years old), primary school (grades 0-4), gymnasium schools (grades 5-8), high-school (grades 9-12) or professional schools (for specific professions like mechanics) and University. In terms of adult education, there are institutions that supply trainings for specific professional categories like teachers (mostly young people follow them) and also the long life learning principle is reached with the free courses/trainings offered to the nonemployees.

A legal frame for the non-formal education in Romania was established in 2004 when the Ministry of Education, launched **the Strategy for Developing Educational Activities; both Curricular and Extra-curricular**. The document was known by the School Inspectorates of the country, for many years referred to in internal documents but due to the traditional style of education, mentalities and bureaucracy, the recognition of non-formal education was not moving forward. Years of NGOs and some University teachers’ work and European policy, lead to **the 2015- 2020 National Strategy for Youth Policy**. This Strategy is coordinated by the Ministry of Youth and Sport while 10 more institutions (among them the Ministries of Work and Social Protection, Education, Health, and Internal Affairs) have the responsibility for its implementation from national to regional and local level.

For this research, we asked members of our organisation to analyse this document and give an opinion over it. The general conclusion was that it has numerous weaknesses: it is a mix of various statistics with no obvious flow (from obesity rates to poverty or risk of exclusion rates), expected results are exposed quite generally (like “to capacitate youth to look for and find work”) and it foresees for shared responsibility between too many institutions without specific indications for their cooperation or common results.

According to statistics, in 2015, 6 million young people (15-34 years old) live in Romania. We believe that 400.000 were invisible to the standard statistics. They are the Romanian NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The National Office of Statistics measures only the ages 15-24 in regards to youth unemployment and the data base is still in progress. At the end of 2016, in an effort to increase employability for young people, Romanian authorities decided to give a financial support of about 200 Euros (900 lei) to the companies that hire graduates. Nevertheless, Romania has the highest rate of people migrating to other countries in search of a job, most of them, young.

### Overview of training provision for professionals working with young people

Except the youth workers from NGOs, teachers and social workers are probably most favoured in terms of access to trainings, although not always targeted on their specific needs.

One observation should be taken into consideration: in many cases, they also access training courses (or any other type of training provision), from the position of NGOs volunteers, so the trainings they take part to, are not specific for their daily profession. Training courses, specific educational material and/ or research development, etc are supplied by the Public Funding Mechanisms, the European grants (Erasmus, European Structural and Investment Funds), and European Economic Area- EEA- Grants. During the programme 2007-2013, Romania, a country new received in the EU, used most of its European funding in some areas (like Life-long Learning Programme) but less than 50% in others (Development of Human Resources). Consequently, the results were unequal in terms of quality, diversity of topics, and access to the potential beneficiaries. The newest European analyses and reports indicate that many projects were badly designed and implemented and the results achieved were not relevant.

An important fact is that in public schools, there is an increasing number of children with Special Education Needs/ SEN, according to all national reports but there are very little available training courses on this topic and the youth workers working with this target- group have no other alternative but self- education.

### Statistical overview of youth unemployment and disadvantaged youth

There is no common definition at European level for “disadvantaged groups”. They can also be found in the specialized literature as “marginalised groups”, “people in need of inclusion”, “risk groups”. According to the Romanian legislation, a “disadvantaged person” is a person that benefits from minimum guaranteed income or is in a family with minimum income and is in at least 2 of the following situations: is unemployed, doesn’t have a house; lives under improper conditions; has 1 or more children to raise; is an old person without legal supporters; is with Special Needs or invalidity; takes care of a person with invalidity. Although there isn’t a standard list of disadvantaged groups, Romanian specialized literature identifies more often, the following categories:

- poor people
- young people from rural areas
- young women
- unemployed
- young people with low level of education
- young people coming from the social assistance institutions
- the ethnic group of Roma people (gipsy)

Of course, there are cases of young people that meet more characteristics of the disadvantaged groups, for example: young women, from Roma ethnic group, low level of education, living in rural area.

According to 2016 Eurostat statistics, Romania has a lower rate of unemployment (5.8% in October 2016) than the European rate (8.3 %) but the number of youth unemployment is considerably higher in Romania( 20.4%) comparing to the European rate (18% ). Romania has a problem with youth unemployment (under 25 years old), because of 2 reasons according to the experts:

1. Employers’ reluctance to hire young people;
2. The youth inclination to leave to other countries in search for job opportunities.

The 1<sup>st</sup> cause is of major importance for the present research. What makes employers reluctant to hire young people? The National Association of Businessmen (AOAR) complained about the lack of proper competences the young graduates have.

## RESEARCH REPORT – ROMANIA

Below, you can see the tables with the most recent (2016) statistics data from the National Office of Statistics (INSSE) regarding youth unemployment.<sup>1</sup>

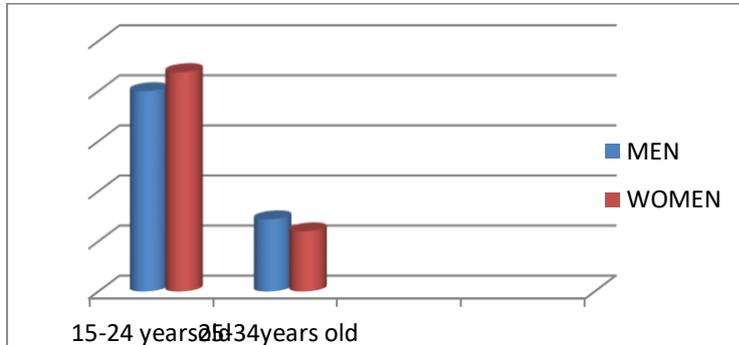
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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/com\\_presa/com\\_pdf/somaj\\_tr4r\\_16\\_0.pdf](http://www.insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/com_presa/com_pdf/somaj_tr4r_16_0.pdf)

### YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – GENDER DIFFERENCES

Category 14-24 years old: Men 20.0 %, Women 21.9 %

Category 25-34 years old: Men 7.2%, Women 6.0%

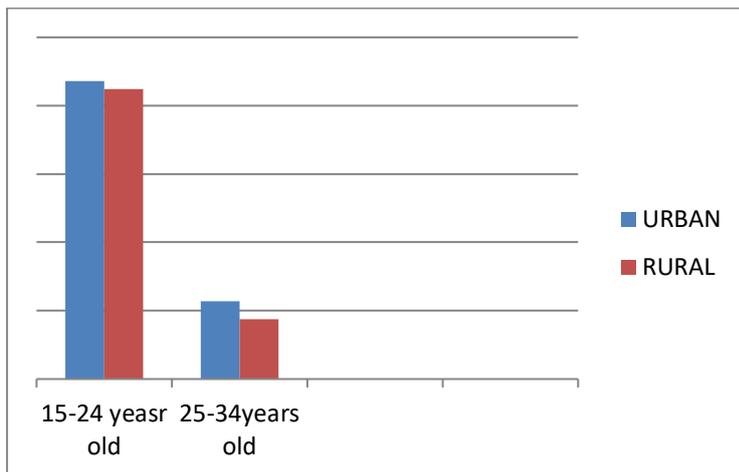


There is a big gap between 15-24 years old and 25-34 years old, the first ones being more likely to be unemployed. Why? A probable cause would be the lack of education and therefore of competences, the very thing the National Association of Businessmen was signalling.

### YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – RESIDENTIAL DIFFERENCES

Category 14-24 years old: Urban 21.8 %, Rural 20.2 %

Category 25-34 years old: Urban 5.7%, Rural 8.4 %



Unemployment is significantly higher in rural areas and even go beyond the rates depicted the chart. Local reports from some regions, like Moldova, emphasize there are rural communities where unemployment is over 50% of population.

## RESEARCH REPORT – ROMANIA

The study “Youth situation and their expectations” conducted in 2016 by the Ministry of Youth and Sports provided the following data:

**a) Level of satisfaction of youth with their own education:**

58% are not pleased with their education level and 26% are neither pleased nor displeased

**b) Expectation of the youth to find a job**

72% think they will face big difficulties in finding a job and 27% think this will be a small problem or not a problem at all.

Nevertheless, in the same study, there was an interesting result: 71% of respondents (15-34 years old) evaluate their **daily life** as good and very good and feel safe and optimistic about their future - 50 % appreciate they will live better next year.

We could conclude that although young people are aware it is not easy to find a job (72%) and at some point in life they become aware of their own insufficient level of education (58%), they are still satisfied with their daily lives (71%) and are even optimistic for a better future (50%).

## Needs Analysis

### Best practices in the design, development and provision of train-the-trainer programmes for youth professionals

“Trainer” is a profession found in the Romanian National Standard Jobs Register (COR), defined as the person who can host any training course and supervise practical competences development.

In Romania, trainings for trainers programs are implemented by:

1. Companies specialized in supplying various trainings and/or qualification
2. NGO's, within specific projects
3. Training institutions for specific professionals (like CCD- the House of Teachers)

All of the above design their own programmes, they get Certification for them from the National Agency, if they implement the training as a qualification or they implement them without National Certification if the training is implemented only with the purpose of continuous education.

## RESEARCH REPORT – ROMANIA

In 2012, a project (Construcția instituției “lucrătorul de tineret” pentru integrarea tinerilor în societate), financed by the European Social Fund, initiated the recognition of “youth worker”, in the Romanian National Standard Jobs Register (COR). Without limiting the use of the term “youth worker” to a profession, being understood that a “youth worker” can be also a volunteer in an NGO, a teacher, a social worker, a researcher, a trainer, the project was identified by our organization as an example for good practice. Two reasons weighted most:

- Its innovative goal –the recognition of a new qualification
- The design of training for the vast number of 810 youth workers.

A small youth NGO from Arges county, Imago Mundi Association for Young Initiatives, got our attention with their training programmes for youth professionals.

For 3 years, they have run the Project “Comunitati 3D”, financed by OMV Petrom Company. Yearly, they organised trainings for 10-30 teachers with the purpose of raising the employability of young people. Providing non-formal education for teachers from traditional education system, is itself a remarkable initiative.

### Best practice in the design of blended learning<sup>2</sup> curricula and e-learning environments

#### Positive facts:

Romanian educational system gives attention to ICT competences in the national curricula, schools and the Ministry of Education being the responsible institutions responsible to implement ICT strategies.

- The national curricula, introduces ICT classes from the 1<sup>st</sup> year of school -1 class/week.
- Teachers are encouraged to combine traditional methods with active methods (connected with non-formal methods) and digital media.
- Teachers are evaluated from the perspective of usage of digital media in their teaching.
- Schools get accreditation according to their level of digitalisation and the level their teachers use blended learning.
- Some schools have new ICT equipment and also the internet is increasingly available.

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<sup>2</sup> Education approach (formal or informal) that combines online digital media with traditional classroom methods.

### Negative facts

Many schools, both rural and urban, lack of proper technology for e-learning. Trainings on blended learning traditional/online digital media are not available for teachers. For this study, we asked teachers from 2 schools: 1 from rural area, 1 Art school from a town. Together they have more than 100 teachers. None of the respondents attended a course on this topic in the last 3-4 years. The last training they heard about was more than 5 years ago and those who attended that one, were not satisfied with the received information.

### Prototype tools that use different artistic disciplines to support the key competence acquisition process

Drama is used in non-formal education in Romania through tools like: forum theatre, labyrinth theatre, and street theatre.

*Forum theatre* is used as a tool for social intervention. It started to be known in Romania around 2004. The first to use this tool were “A.R.T Fusion Association and Chance for Life” and later, more NGOs adopted it in their activities. The general opinion is that Romanian people are open to this type of method. Traditional education does not use it.

*Labyrinth theatre* and *street theatre* are used more as therapeutic social experiences. They are implemented by specialized associations or theatre companies and not in daily non-formal activities.

*Flashmob* is also a newly used tool in Romania bringing into attention music and elements of drama.

### Digital media

*Graphic facilitation* can be used with the help of digital media and it is a tool quite often used in non-formal education in Romania. Sometimes, teachers that were in connection with non-formal education, use it or elements of it in traditional education (formal education).

### Music

The Association for Autism ANCAR-from Pitesti, wanted to implement music therapy for their highly functional beneficiaries, in order to improve their concentration and enhance social skills. They designed their own programme in cooperation with pupils from the High- School of Art from the same town:

- small concerts held by the young students for the autistics, in an environment they feel comfortable with –the therapy spaces
- the use of various instruments in small groups workshops helped the therapists to reach their goal.

### Main issues to be addressed in the proposed curriculum

We propose the following issues to be addressed in the proposed curriculum:

- creativity
- language skills
- self-confidence
- social skills
- self-discipline
- stress and promotion of relaxation
- blended learning.

### Potential areas where the four artistic forms (Digital Media, Storytelling, Drama and Music) can be applied to the design of learning resources for development of key- competences

We believe that the four artistic forms promoted by ARTSQUAD could be used in the following areas:

#### **Music**

Initiatives such as the Association for Autism ANCAR described previously proved that music can have an important role in the inclusion of people with Special Education Needs (SEN).

#### **Digital media**

Schools, NGO's and social workers could use digital media for job orientation and communication competences.

Social workers in Romania don't normally use digital media in their activity, beyond presentations for their target groups. As they are confronted with young people without jobs or proper living conditions, digital media tools could raise the impact of their work.

Enhanced Digital literacy can help the young people improve their communication competences in order to access a job.

#### **Drama**

Drama can support communication in foreign languages. It can be used mostly by foreign language teachers and NGO workers in the promotion of international mobility.

The lack of confidence to speak in a foreign language is common among learners. Teachers and trainers need participants who communicate, even with some mistakes. Drama in

classes (which can take the form of role-play in non-formal education) can improve self-confidence and help the teacher or trainer to reach the goal of their educational activities.

### **Storytelling**

Storytelling is not very well known in Romania but we believe it has a great potential to be used by psychologists/ therapists, social workers, teachers and non-formal education trainers.

Creativity is highly important for the development of the key competence “Initiative and Entrepreneurship”. There are companies who hire specialized storytellers to develop the institutional culture among their employees. In Romanian schools, psychologists use storytelling in group therapy.



# Erasmus+

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**Salvați Copiii**  
Save the Children Romania



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