

HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL
SERVICES DEVELOPMENT AT LOCAL
LEVEL IN ROMANIA

DEZVOLTAREA
RESURSELOR UMANE ȘI
A SERVICIILOR SOCIALE,
LA NIVEL LOCAL, ÎN
ROMÂNIA

Cristina MANOLE

Lecturer Ph.D., Administration and Public Management
Faculty, Bucharest University of Economic Studies
E-mail: cristina_manole68@yahoo.com

Abstract

In general, the economic development is based on human resources, so at central and local level, there must be concerns and responsibilities regarding the quality of skilled labour and the increase of its capacity to adapt to the environmental changes. This study is an analysis of the issue of ongoing professional development and promoting employment in the context of sustainable local development. The expected results, obtained after the analysis at the local level (Arad Municipality – the city of the same name became an important regional metropolis in 2020), will reflect some of the specific measurements, which will need to be implemented in the next period, in terms of human capital development and social services in the current economic crisis, even felt in Romanian economy.

Keywords: sustainable local development; continuous professional training; learning throughout life; promoting employment

JEL CODES: H83, J21, J64, O15

Rezumat

Dezvoltarea economică, în general, are la bază resursa umană, astfel că la nivel central, cât și local, trebuie să existe preocupări și responsabilități în materie de calificare a forței de muncă și creștere a capacității de adaptare a acesteia la schimbările de mediu. Studiul de față reprezintă o analiză privind problematica formării profesionale continue și promovarea ocupării forței de muncă, în contextul dezvoltării locale durabile. Rezultatele așteptate, obținute după efectuarea analizei, la nivel local (Municipiul Arad - orașul cu același nume devenind o importantă metropolă regională, în 2020), vor reflecta câteva dintre măsurile concrete, ce vor trebui aplicate, în următoarea perioadă, din perspectiva dezvoltării capitalului uman și a serviciilor sociale, în condițiile crizei economice actuale, resimțită și în economia românească.

Cuvinte cheie: dezvoltarea locală durabilă; formarea profesională continuă; învățarea de-a lungul întregii vieți; promovarea ocupării.



Proceedings of the 10th Administration and Public
Management International Conference
"Economic Sociology, Human Resource
Management and Organizational Dynamics"

1.INTRODUCTION

Globalization and the continuous introduction of new technologies attracts the necessity to ensure educated and competitive human resources. Only a flexible and highly skilled workforce will be able to react to the constant changes occurring in the labor market. Strategic approach to human resources development is a requirement in the era of globalization. Most researches agree that the strategic development of human resources involves systematic and formal processes, which need to be adapted to the existing needs at the organizational level (Manole *et al.*, 2011, p. 207). At the same time, this development can help the management of organizations to improve their management of operational capabilities, respectively all competences and specific abilities which enables better management of the existing crisis and prevents future ones (Wang, Hutchins & Garavan, 2009).

We can say that, at present, training of employees becomes essential. If decades ago, young graduates gained a profession based on the knowledge accured in schools, today the stock of knowledge, aptitudes, professional abilities, accumulated over time, become outdated very quickly. The existance of employees who are not longer able to professionally keep up with the changes occuring in the conduct of activities is a major issue for managers (Manole *et al.*, 2011, p. 208).

In this context, the Romanian public administration reform in the period 2008 – 2013, focused on two directions: one horizontal (cross – sectorial) referring to human resources, simplifying administrative processes and enhancing public policy; other vertical, of depth, focusing on accelerating the decentralization process (Manole, 2009, p. 241).

From the point of view of the cross – sectorial direction, the strengthening and development of human resources segment had a leading role. Thus, the change in the personnel management involved the following components: improving the recruitment and selection of personnel; better planning of professional careers (introduction of flexible career models); improving professional training (training programs at all levels); promoting rewards in relation to performance and level of responsibility, in order to eliminate inefficient actions and increasing accountability and sensitivity to civil servants, across the policies adopted (Manole, 2009, p. 241).

Therefore we can say that education and continuous professional training have been and remain critical elements of which the development, in general, and that at the local level, in particulare, should take into account. But to tackle the issue of continious professional training and promoting employment in the current economic downturn, we felt the need to define three concepts: regional, local and sustainable development.

2. REGIONAL, LOCAL AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

According to specialists, regional development, as a form of local development, represents a set of central and local policies of the public administration authorities, drafted to improve the economic performance of some geographic areas, congregated in „development regions” (Matei, 2004, p.64). It should be understood in the context of regional development, the place and role of local development, partnership development and typology of relationships at various levels of government (Matei, 1998, p.95).

Local development, the second concept, from the point of view of specialists represents, the development process, mainly economic, in a particular region or administrative unit that increases the quality of local life. Local development aims to economic prosperity and social welfare by creating a favourable business environment, along with community integration of vulnerable groups, using endogenous resources, private sector development (Parlagi, 2004, p.86).

Local development diversifies and enriches activities on a given territory by mobilizing existing resources and energies in the area. Result of the efforts of a population, local development means the implementation of a project of economic, social and cultural means. This transforms a nearby space into an active help space (Frege, 1991, p.57).

In the current economic crisis, the development of the public sector requires the adaptation and implementation of a new model of local development, which requires the removal of the old paradigm and accepting innovative approaches, in which citizens are not only beneficiaries of the community development, but also co-participants in deciding on future development milestones (Popescu, 2011, p. 148).

At the same time, it requires rethinking the structure, from the point of view of their flexibility, both at central and local level, but also limitation of the government decision involving citizens and groups, community representative, in the decision-making process (Popescu, 2011, p. 148).

Regarding the third concept – sustainable development – we can say that it seeks reconciliation between two fundamental goals, namely the need for economic and social development, and environmental protection and improvement. Thus, the development based on the actual generation's needs which facilitates future generations with the execution of their needs is sustainable development (Ionaşcu, 2003, p.12).

In this context, Strategy Europa 2020, approved in March 2010 by the European Council, is a new strategy for jobs and growth, based on consolidation and on a better coordination of the economic-social policies depending on clear objectives (Table 1) set based on the following priorities (COM, 2010): Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy, and Inclusive growth (term used for the first time in official European documents): 'fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion; empowering the people by a higher level of occupation; investment in the increase of competencies; modernizing the labor markets and empowering people by developing their skills throughout the lifecycle with a view to increase labor participation, formation and social protection, supporting the citizens in the administration and anticipation of changes and in constructing an inclusive society' (Cace et. al., 2013, p.11).

TABLE 1: HEADLINE TARGETS OF STRATEGY 2020

–	An economic headline: employment rate: 75% (of the population aged 20-64);
–	An technological headline: '20×20×20' trinomial: 20% decrease of the greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990), 20% higher energy efficiency, or 20% decrease of energy consumption, 20% increase of the renewable sources of energy within the gross final energy consumption;
–	A social headline: 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty (25% decrease of the people running the risk of poverty);
–	An educational headline: share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation (aged 30-34) should have a tertiary degree;
–	A headline general support for development: 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D.

Source: COM, 2010

According to the National Strategy for Sustainable Development in Romania (SNDD)¹, (which is based on the EU Strategy for Sustainable Development), sustainable development is not one of the possible options, but the only reasonable prospect of becoming national, resulting in establishing a new development paradigm through confluence of economic, social and environmental factors. The strategy specifies that accurate assessment of the status and trans of human capital development in the medium and long term, are of fundamental importance for designing realistic prospects of a sustainable model of development, in all its essential components: economic, socio-cultural and environmental.

3. ONGOING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING CONCEPT

In general, organizations that have a proper philosophy about professional training, understand to work in a field where competitive advantage is achieved only with the help of high professional and moral quality

¹ See National Strategy for Sustainable Development in Romania, horizons 2013-2020-2030 (http://www.mmediu.ro/beta/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/2012-06-12_dezvoltare_durabila_snddfindromana2008.pdf)

employees. For this it is necessary investing in the organization's human resources, and in developing their skills and knowledge (Manole, 2006, p.148).

Also there are other reasons why training is one of the elements of "outpost" of human resources management: aims to develop human potential, helps individuals to "grow", both professionally and in terms of socio-cultural factor. These aspects are nothing more than a result of socio-economic and cultural changes of the whole world, with repercussions on the training activity (Manole, 2006, pp.146-147).

According to specialists (Bennett,1990, pp.47-48), there are certain advantages resulting from the use of training, which have a significant effect on the organization's economic activities and increasing global and individual efficiency, such as: improved performance at the individual, team and organizational level in terms of results (outputs), quality, speed and overall productivity; increasing membership and involvement of employees in the organization's activities by encouraging them to participate in setting organizational goals and objectives; improvement of operational flexibility by widening the area of professional skills for the employees; developing a positive organizational culture, for example results orientated and continuous performance based.

According to experts (Louart, 1994, pp.133-134), the training activity must meet certain requirements to be a viable investment, such as: to focus on solving problems and to eliminate the cause of disruptions; to be directly linked to performance; to be geared towards obtaining obvious and efficient results; to be aimed at continuous improvement of personnel; to assume a strategic approach.

Currently, the education and continuous training of adults is the natural continuation of the initial education and training, as an objective necessity imposed by the transition to an economy and society based on knowledge, and the need to continuous professional fulfilment and personal development. In this context, the integrator concept of lifelong learning appeared (IPIV) (lifelong learning²), which includes the initial and adult education³, as learning forms in order to ensure the overall development of an individual, including

² All learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and / or qualifications for personal, social and / or professional. The horizontal / cross size of IPIV brings together the learning concept, either formal, non-formal or informal which is done in a full range of activities (personal, social and / or professional) in any stage of life (longitudinal dimension). The concept of *lifelong learning* includes all areas and refers to schools, vocational training and also referring to the university education and the education of adults, as components of a comprehensive system (Tissot, 2004, adapted by CEDEFOP, 2003).

³ The adult education provided is often designed for general purposes rather than the vocational education. The adult education is close, but not synonymous with the ongoing education / training, which is especially focused on vocational connotations related to the acquisition of skills that allow the practice of a profession. It is commonly used to highlight the general education of the adults (e.g. the popular universities); to ensure compensatory learning in basic skills that people might've not acquired in the initial education (literacy), in order to develop themselves individually and manifest as active citizens, but covers all the educational needs of adults, and those to facilitate persons (a) to access and obtain qualifications that have not been acquired for various reasons in the

professional. Constant investment in the individual's lifetime will allow the creation / development of performant human resources of high power, able to support the incorporation of technological progress and sustainable growth of the national economy and also the social and cultural development.

The current concerns show the need to develop a 'friendly environment' of occupation, to promote life-long education, to develop continuous professional formation, to ensure the continuous adaptation of the workforce, to improve the management of the active policies on the labor market, to provide access for minorities to the labor market, to promote equal opportunities, to develop the partnerships with social partners and with the civil society (Popescu, 2012). One must not overlook the aspect related to the supply of quantified information about the financial resources that may be allocated for the accomplishment of the different objectives of the policies (Cace et al., 2013, p.10).

At present, the Romanian economy and the entire public sector need skilled, performant and politically neutral labour, in order to face the competition and to be able to continually adapt to changes. This is all the more since at institutional level a set of new structures or policies were aimed at modernizing the administrative system such as Introduction of the Young Professionals Scheme "Developing The Corps Of Professional Public Managers" (YPS) with the goal of preparing a core group of new generation leaders in the civil service, politically neutral and professionally trained in the modern principles and values of European Union public sector management starting with 2003 (Mora & Țiclău, 2008, p. 94).

On 6 October 2011 the European Commission adopted the provisional version of the legislative package which consists of the implementation of the Cohesion Policy for 2014 – 2020. The new proposals are designed to strengthen the strategic dimension of the policy and to ensure that EU investments are targeted towards the European objectives for long term in relation to economic growth and employment, in line with the Europe Strategy 2020. To help achieve Europe Strategy 2020 objectives in relation to smart, sustainable and favourable growth, the new regulations for accessing the structural funds, aim among others, the following thematic objectives⁴:

- Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility;
- Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty;
- Investment in education, skills and lifelong learning;

initial education and training system (b) to acquire, improve or update their skills and / or competences in a specific field (Tissot, 2004, adapted by European Training Foundation, 1997; European Commission, 2008).

⁴ See "We Invest in Your Future!" Project selected in the Regional Operational Programme and co – financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund, <http://www.inforegio.ro/ro/programare-2014-2020/dezvoltare-regionala.html>.

- Strengthening institutional capacity and an efficient public administration.

In line with the Europe Strategy 2020 objectives in Romania, the Project of Integrated Strategy for Human Resources Development (SIDRU)⁵, has as the overall objective for the period 2009 – 2020: improving the capacity and quality of human resources development systems, leading to an increased and stable level of employment, a higher quality of life and effective social cohesion for those Romanian citizens found at risk of social exclusion, in order to achieve, by 2020, the current average level of EU countries, at the key indicators of sustainable development. Moreover, “continuous learning in order to obtain new qualifications, further specialization and expansions” represents the governing objective for the period 2009 – 2020 provided by SIDRU.

In this context, there are increased demands for the system of continuous training of adults (FCA), as a fundamental support for SIDRU, given that, on one hand, almost a quarter of young people between 12-28 leave school without having basics skills and necessary qualifications to hold a job⁶ and, on the other hand, the Romanian economy will face in the medium and long term the aging effects. Therefore, it is necessary, an increased concern of the authorities for lifelong learning of elderly adults presents in the labour market, respectively supporting active ageing through the FCA services. However, solutions are needed to diversify training offers, respectively of the providers for basic adult education, for a better adaptation to the peculiarities and needs of the learners.

To conclude this part of the study, we can say that in recent years, unfortunately Romania has continued to the fragmentation of the professional training offers, sometimes unconsciously covering, at national level, with providers for continuous professional training of adults, and also relatively low level of interest from the employer (contractors, entrepreneurs) for investing in human resources development, all of which contributed to a low rate of participation of those concerned. However, even under the restrictive conditions imposed by the current economic crisis, we can say that human resources development remains an important factory in the economic revival.

4. LOCAL HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT. CASE STUDY

I can say that only a flexible and highly skilled workforce will be able to respond to the constant changes occurring in the labour market. To develop a viable strategy for human resources development it is necessary to consider the framework principles of supporting the development of human capital: the education and initial and continuous training, and thus develop a framework plan which is to emphasize

⁵ See Project SIDRU, http://www.irea.ro/images/docs/proiect_sidru_find_en.pdf.

⁶ Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities, <http://www.cdep.ro/interpel/2007/r3085B.pdf>

the involvement of all relevant stakeholders (state institutions, local government, universities, economic agents) in the human resources development policy, in increasing employment and combating social exclusion⁷.

I opted for studying Municipality Arad because, in 2020, the town with the same name will become an important regional metropolis of Romania, which will dominate by impressing through its rehabilitated historical centre dominated by the fortress of Arad – ordered by the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria and built by the plans of major General Filip Ferdinand Harsch (1763 – 1783), the fortress is an original variant of French fortifications – turned into a major touristic attraction, a strong community with a major impact in the region through economic dynamism and diversity. The Municipality of Arad is in the western part of the country, a region economically prosperous. West Region of Development, briefly called the West Region is one of the eight development regions of Romania. It was formed on 28 October 1998, by associating the counties of Arad, Caraş – Severin, Hunedoara and Timiş.

Nationally, the West Region is considered to be increasing with higher economic performance in relation to the national average, often second after the Bucharest – Ilfov region.

According to the Institute of Statistics (INS)⁸, in the West region it has been recorded in 2005 – 2007, the lowest rate of poverty compared to the rest of the country (Fig. 1). In general, the factors that influence the risk of poverty are: social position and career; education levels, each level obtained extra significantly reducing the risk of poverty.

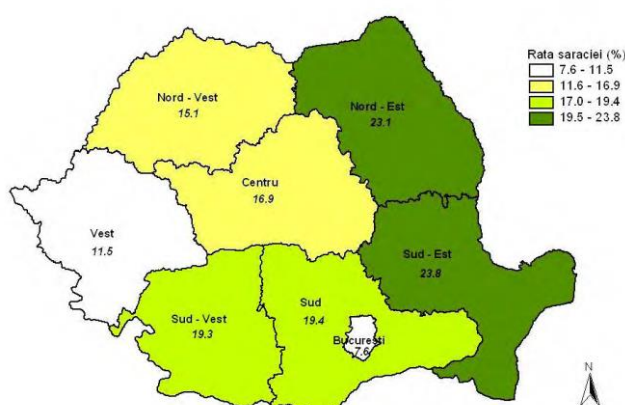


FIGURE 1. POVERTY RATE AT THE MACROECONOMIC LEVEL

Source: INS calculations using the UE 2005 methodology

⁷ See Local Development Strategy of Arad 2008-2013/2013-2020

⁸ See Local Development Strategy of Arad 2008-2013/2013-2020

The fact that the West Region is above the national average, is also shown to us through the evolution of several indicators in the period 2012 – 2017, such as: average net monthly earnings (lei/employee), registered unemployed at the end of year (thousand persons), and unemployment rate (Table 2)⁹.

TABLE 2. THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL – ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Indicators	2012	2103	2014	2015	2016	2017
Average net monthly earnings – lei/employee						
Total economic	1507	1594	1676	1750	1815	1879
NORTH - EAST	1229	1295	1357	1414	1462	1510
SOUTH - EAST	1307	1380	1448	1509	1562	1613
SOUTH MUNTENIA	1393	1474	1550	1627	1696	1764
SOUTH – WEST OLTENIA	1377	1455	1530	1598	1657	1715
WEST	1416	1510	1595	1674	1740	1801
NORTH - WEST	1280	1354	1427	1487	1537	1594
CENTRE	1330	1400	1473	1535	1592	1652
BUCHAREST -ILFOV	2187	2324	2443	2554	2652	2748
Registered unemployed, at the end of the year – thousand persons						
Total economic	493,8	438	435	420	415	410
NORTH - EAST	78,2	73	73	71	70	69
SOUTH - EAST	69,6	63	63	61	60	59
SOUTH MUNTENIA	87,9	83	83	79	78	77
SOUTH – WEST OLTENIA	75,6	65	65	63	63	62
WEST	34,1	30	30	28	27	26
NORTH - WEST	54,7	45	45	44	43	43
CENTRE	68,7	55	55	53	53	52
BUCHAREST -ILFOV	25,1	24	24	21	21	21
Registered unemployment rate - %						
Total economic	5,4	4,9	4,8	4,6	4,5	4,4
NORTH - EAST	6,0	5,6	5,6	5,4	5,3	5,3
SOUTH - EAST	6,4	5,8	5,8	5,6	5,5	5,4
SOUTH MUNTENIA	6,9	6,5	6,5	6,2	6,1	6,0
SOUTH – WEST OLTENIA	8,2	7,1	7,0	6,8	6,8	6,7
WEST	3,9	3,5	3,4	3,2	3,1	3,0
NORTH - WEST	4,4	3,6	3,6	3,5	3,4	3,4
CENTRE	6,2	5,0	4,9	4,8	4,7	4,6
BUCHAREST -ILFOV	2,0	2,0	1,9	1,7	1,6	1,6

Source: National Commission of Prognosis. Territorial prognosis, fall 2013

The analysis conducted on human resources development was based on information provided by the Local Development Strategy of Arad 2007-2013/2013-2020 , which was conducted through extensive consultations with various local community organizations: political, economic, social, etc., including meetings with citizens from all areas of the municipality (during June – July 2007, were distributed a total of 1251 questionnaires, of which 1087 were completed).

⁹ see Projection of main social and economic indicators in the territorial profile in 2017, http://www.cnp.ro/user/repository/proгноza_in_profil_teritorial_toamna_2013.pdf

According to the methodology of work that led to the development of the strategy and the analyses performed in the city of Arad, in 2005 – 2007, have been highlighted several phenomena present on the labour market, such as :

- Low level of participation in training programs, which has led to a low skilled local workforce;
- The inability of educational and employment structures to quickly adapt to the constant changes of the labour market's needs;
- Decreased active population, against a slow but continuous aging process and an increasing trend of emigration;
- The growth of poverty, especially in risk groups (rom population, single parents, families with many children, post-institutionalized youngsters, and persons with disabilities).

All these have occurred due to: lack of qualification and demand on the labour market; poor correlation of demand and supply on the labour market and the insufficient diversity of the training/conversion offers; poor offers for professional training; mismatch between the educational system with the needs of the economic development of the municipality; migration and emigration of the workforce, which led to the immediate effect of increasing the average age of skilled labour; lack of effective partnerships between the educational institutions and businesses; the existence of underdevelopment services for different categories of people (disabled, institutionalized children, youngsters from orphanages); employing a small number of people with disabilities or those exposed to social exclusion (persons released from detention, single parent families, youngsters from orphanages, rom population), etc.

Therefore, some of the negative aspects of the local labour market at the end of 2007 were: shortage of skilled labour, poor correlation of supply and demand on the labour market, insufficient diversification of training/conversion offers, lack of competition among providers of offers, lack of correlation between education supply and with the future needs of qualifications, lack of correlation between the education system with the practical needs of the economic development of the municipality, migration and emigration of qualified labour, which led to the immediate effect of increasing the average age of skilled labour, low level of investment in human resources in SMEs, the lack of effective partnerships between the educational institutions and businesses. In the city of Arad, 75% of the total employed population (76.909 people) work in late 2007 in a SME, so it has begun to be undertaken specific actions focused on encouraging their development (table 3).

TABLE 3. TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN SMEs

Number of employees in SMEs	Year 2005	Year 2006	Year 2007
TOTAL	53053	57760	57748

Source: Labour Inspectorate Arad

One of the few positive aspects of the local labour market refers to the unemployment rate recorded at the end of 2007 it read a relatively low level of 6-75, to a total number of 76.909 employees spread across economic sectors such as (table 4):

TABLE 4. THE LABOUR FORCE DIVIDED BY INDUSTRY (SEPTEMBER 2007)

Current issue	ECONOMIC BRANCHES	EMPLOYEES
1	AGRICULTURE	99
2	INDUSTRY	36.29
	- mining	80
	- manufacturing	33.16
	- electricity, gas and water	2.33
3	CONSTRUCTIONS	4.90
4	COMERCE	10.53
5	SERVICES	16.25
	- transportation, storage, postal and communication	7.15
	- financial, banking and insurance/reinsurance	1.22
	- education	3.61
	- health and social	4.25
6	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	2.42
7	OTHERS	5.49
	TOTAL:	76.90

Source: Local Development Strategy of Arad 2008-2013/2013-2020

As such, human capital and social services development – encouraging access to education, supporting training by providing equal opportunities for lifelong learning and the development of a modern and flexible labour market by promoting employment and support distressed social categories – were strategic objectives for 2007 – 2013 in the city of Arad.

In terms of human capital development, some of the specific objectives could be summarized as follows (Local Development Strategy of Arad 2008-2013/2013-2020):

- Improving education and training of human capital;
- Development of human resources in the education system;
- Create a framework for coordinating joint efforts and satisfy the interests of stakeholders (local government, schools, business, civil society);
- Creating programs to attract and retain highly skilled workforce locally and increase attractiveness of Arad on the labour market;

- Diversification of advice and training services in order to increase their capabilities to deliver quality services;
- Facilitating access for the young people on the labour market;
- Developing and inclusive, flexible and modern labour market;
- Promoting the (re) insertion of the inactive people on the labour market;
- Improving public employment service;
- Facilitating access to education and the labour market of vulnerable groups;
- Linking supply on the labour market with specific local economic resulted in the demand for labour.

It is known that the low results in education and training are factors that increased the risk of becoming unemployed and to enter a phase of long term unemployment or exclusion from the labour market. In this regard, the reduction of early school leavers and the support to increase access and participation in the continuous professional training substantially contributes to approaching learning and work as a process that takes place throughout life, in order to support employability and labour market integration.

In order to achieve the identified objectives, in terms of human capital development, was designed a plan of action, divided into two time horizons: S – short (2008 – 2010) and M – medium (2010 – 2013). Some of the actions contained in this plan aimed (table 5):

TABLE 5. ACTION PLAN

Current issue	Project – short description	Estimated date of commencement	Comments (short, medium, long term)
1	Develop a program of concrete measures on the financial support of infrastructure development and the material in educational schools	2008	S
2	The organization of half term symposia in town halls, involving representatives of universities of Arad and Chamber of Commerce, to present business management courses and increased internal capacity development of human resources	2009	S
3	Prepare, in collaboration with the Local Committee, the development of a social partnership for professional training, of a study on current trends present on the labour market in order to correlate them with the offer, and adapting the educational offers of educational institutes	2009	S
4	Logistical support and advertising of job fairs	2009	S

	organized by A.J.O.F.M. and superior education institutions in order to attract students		
5	Creating a program of concrete measures to support groups at risk of social exclusion (access to housing, education, transport, creating schools and kindergartens with special program)	2010	S
6	Creating a program of concrete measures to support local providers of training services (reducing taxes, logistical support and advertising etc.)	2011	M

Source: Local Development Strategy of Arad 2008-2013/2013-2020

One of the main directions of sectorial development, under the Local Development Strategy of Arad, refers to social services, respectively, to bring them in close proximity of potential beneficiaries and improving their accessibility by beneficiaries, both in terms of information, and their effective delivery.

Thus, from the perspective of the development of social services, were established, in the city of Arad, following carrying out analysis, several strategic objectives, as follows (Local Development Strategy of Arad 2008-2013/2013-2020):

- Creating an individualized social services centred on the needs of people in distress: creating a map of social problems, creating a unique plan for services, conducting surveys/studies applied to specific problems, investment in training / professional development;
- Implementing welfare measures in the protection of children, family, single people, the elderly, disabled people, any person in need, during 2007 – 2013;
- Developing inter – institutional communication and civil society structures, expansion of social partnership – institutions, ONGs, citizens, at local, county and central level domestically and internationally.

In this sense, the actions taken to achieve the set objectives have resulted in a structured plan of action on short, medium and long term, and on the following target groups: children and youngsters, elderly, disabled people, people in a risky social status due to poverty, disadvantaged minorities. Some of the projects included in the action plan, mentioned above will be presented below (table 6 and table 7):

TABLE 6. MEDIUM TERM ACTION PLAN (2007 – 2013)

Current issue	Project – short description	Operational program (cf. CSNR)	Estimated date of commencement
1	Advice and professional guidance – counselling and career guidance for better access to the labour market	4.5. PO Human resources development Priority 1	2008
2	Collaboration between local government and education institutions for education and skill oriented toward market demand – increased employability and adaptability, promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities	4.5. PO Human resources development Priority 1	2008
3	Care centre for elderly people – expansion, modernization of care centres for elderly people. Creating a multifunctional centre with dining, day-care centre and modernizing, efficient and ecological networks of cold water, heating and sanitation.	4.4. PO Regional Priority 1	2009
4	Training courses for people with disabilities – increased employability and adaptability, entrepreneurship development, promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities for people with disabilities	4.5. PO Human resources development Priority 1	2008
5	Equal chances for the Gypsy population to access the labour market – fighting extreme poverty and social exclusion faced by the Gypsy community and promote full integration into society of its members by gaining qualifications and employment for the community members	4.5. PO Human resources development Priority 1	2008
6	International cooperation to equalize standards in social work – comparable standards between EU countries in the social assistance industry	4.4. PO Regional Priority 1	2008
7	Training programs for staff involved in social work – improving required competences and aptitudes in the social work field	4.5. PO Human resources development Priority 2	2010
8	Creating an annual calendar (agenda) of joint work between the local government and other local stakeholders in social work – increase social cohesion by addressing in partnership, by all stakeholders in the field.	4.4. PO Regional Priority 1	2010

Source: Local Development Strategy of Arad 2008-2013/2013-2020

TABLE 7. LONG TERM ACTION PLAN (2008 – 2020)

Current issue	Project – short description	Operational program (cf. CSNR)	Estimated date of commencement
1	Networks of social assistance from Arad between D.D.A.C., D.S.P., D.D.F.S.S., A.J.O.F.M., C.A.S. Arad – creating a computer network in Arad between institutions specialized in providing social and health services, to reduce bureaucracy and to shorten the time to solve problems through effective collaboration of all service providers	4.6. PO educational capacity development Priority 2	2013
2	Facilitating access to the labour market for people in the risk status category because of poverty – increasing employability and adaptability, entrepreneurship development, promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds	4.5. PO Human resources development Priority 6	2015
3	Forming a network of flexible social services, with services adequate to local needs, including even temporary services, according to the needs' duration – customer service orientation to increased adequacy and quick response to the needs	4.4. PO Regional Priority 1	2014
4	Forming working groups (composed on representatives of different partners) covering relatively small areas of the community, in order to provide support to people in difficulty - increase social cohesion by addressing in partnership, by all stakeholders in the field. The existence of working groups lead to interventions focused on the case and to a complementary intervention.	4.4. PO Regional Priority 1	2015
5	Creating a unique plan of services to approach each social case by developing the individualized intervention plan - customer service orientation to increased adequacy and quick response to the needs. The existence of databases, that are supported by individual sheets, ensures the creation of a unified plan of action on cases, and also a detailed comparison of casuistry, order to develop prevention	4.4. PO Regional Priority 1	2016

Source: Local Development Strategy of Arad 2008-2013/2013-2020

In order to effectively implement all of the mentioned projects, it was appropriate to created, at the town's level, a Committee for the Supervision of the Implementation of Strategic Planning, by resolution of the City Council whose purpose was to oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation of strategic plans. In Fact, the role of the Committee was to review the strategic objectives to ensure that they include all the major issues the community is facing, to review the identified objectives / projects, and decision making regarding the prioritization of projects and initiatives which follow to be implemented, based on the criteria contained in the Local Development Strategy of Arad and other relevant criteria.

In conclusion we can say that remains to be seen if the local authorities will be able to implement all the projects envisaged in the strategy, and to complete the strategic objectives relating to the development of human resources and social services in the context of a local sustainable development.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study showed us some of the measures that must be adopted by local authorities for the development of human capital and social services system, in order to increase their capacity to adapt to new trends of the development of the economic environment. It is known that local development is accomplished through local development strategies, through integrated and multi-zoned areas, being placed on the community's responsibility, local action groups, made up of representatives of local socio-economic interest parties of the public and private sectors, local action groups developing and implementing local development strategies (Local Development Strategy of Arad 2008-2013/2013-2020).

In terms of human resources development and the development of the social service systems, a crucial role is played by the social economy. In Europe, social economy consists of a multitude of actors and it manages to produce social utility, and to cover the needs which neither the public sector, nor the business environment can cover. The social economy addresses all forms of social needs, and the funds for these activities are obtained either by donations and grants, or, as it is lately desired, by running economic activities whose profit is directed towards such services (Cace et al., 2013, p.12).

We can say that, being a former communist country, Romania is willing to develop a strong voluntary sector of the social economy and to avoid the extremes of the capitalism and communism (Nicolăescu et al., 2011, p. 259), applying different ways to support the disfavored communities and groups running the risk of social exclusion (Nicolăescu et al., 2011). The proposed transfer of responsibilities from the state towards the non-governmental sector is important and debated (Neguț et al., 2011), and may yield good results, but the transfer of these responsibilities will take a while, which will delay the overall development of the system of social work services and, implicitly, of the social economy sector, in Romania (Arpinte, 2010, pp. 126-127).

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