

**A. COVER PAGE**

**Romania**

**Education  
Thematic Report**

**January - December 2018**



*Children in Zemes school, Bacau County, Romania*  
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## B. TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Cover Page.....	1
B. Table of Contents.....	2
C. Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	3
D. Executive Summary.....	4
E. Strategic Context of 2018.....	5
F. Results Achieved in the Sector/in the Outcome Area.....	6
G. Financial Analysis.....	12
H. Future Work Plan.....	13
I. Expression of Thanks.....	14
Annex 1 – Financial Utilization Report	

### C. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ARACIP	- Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education
CPD	- Country Programme Document
EC	- European Commission
ECEC	- Early Childhood Education and Care
EU	- European Union
ESL	- Early School Leaving
FRA	- Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Commission
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
QIE	- Quality Inclusive Education
MoE	- Ministry of Education
OECD	- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	- Programme for International Student Assessment
SAI	- School Attendance Initiative
UNICEF	- United Nations Children's Fund
(UNICEF) CO	- (UNICEF) Country Office

## D. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In line with the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-21, the Romania UNICEF Country Office's efforts in education are responding to Goal Area 2, so that "By 2021, 700,000 out-of-school girls and boys are enrolled in high quality, inclusive pre-primary, primary and secondary education."

Education has seen significant improvements, but disparities remain. The gross enrolment rate in preschool education increased between 2001 and 2015, from 66 per cent to 90 per cent.<sup>1</sup> The enrolment rate of Roma children in preschool education was lower than the national average by 40 per cent<sup>2</sup> and by 16 percentage points<sup>3</sup> in rural areas. The enrolment rate of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools increased from 2 per cent (2000) to 63 per cent (2014).<sup>4</sup> An estimated 300,000 children remain out of school, and the rate of completion of compulsory education is decreasing. Roma children are 6 times more likely than other children not to complete secondary education. The rate of rural children leaving school early is 3 times that of urban children<sup>5</sup>.

### Social inclusion

The second programme component of UNICEF Country Programme Document aims at improving the social inclusion of all children in Romania, especially girls and boys in rural areas, Roma families, communities living in poverty and children with disabilities. This programme component seeks to achieve multisectoral results, as determinants of child rights violations occur across the various sectors. This approach has been promoted by UNICEF for several years and is consistent with the emphasis of the UNICEF Strategic Plan on cross-sectoral strategies.

At the core of this outcome is the testing of cross-sectoral models: the Minimum Package of Services for vulnerable children and their families, and the Quality, Inclusive Education Package. While the testing of the MPS modelled was finalized by end 2018, the QiE intervention continues until the end of the current school year – and both will be evaluated in 2019. The nationwide scaling-up of these two models is linked to the third programme component, on governance and partnerships. UNICEF will develop, monitor and evaluate — in close collaboration with State authorities at all levels and civil society — innovative basic and specialized services to benefit all children, especially vulnerable children and their families. As key strategies, UNICEF will support outreach, promotion of non-discriminatory social norms, empowerment of families and building the capacities of service providers.

Modelling is being complemented by the generation and sharing of cutting-edge evidence, technical expertise, intense advocacy and broad partnerships. UNICEF and national authorities, in cooperation with civil society, will strive to accelerate the deinstitutionalization process and transition to community-based care, and to improve learning and health outcomes of all children. This will be achieved by focusing on preventing unnecessary separation of children from their families, by enhancing the relevance, quality and inclusiveness of the pre-university education system, and by strengthening the capacity of the health sector to lead reforms for better health outcomes for children, especially around neonatal care and teenage pregnancy.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education, State of Education report, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, Toward an Equal Start: Closing the Early Learning gap for Roma Children in Eastern Europe, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education, State of Education report, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Romanian Agency for Quality Assessment in Pre-university Education, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Institute of Education Sciences data, based on National Institute of Statistics data.

Combating violence against girls, boys and women will remain a key priority of this programme of cooperation and will be an integral part of UNICEF work on modelling, policy support, evidence-generation, communication for social change, and advocacy. This component will contribute to translating the National Strategy on Child Rights and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), ratified by Romania in 2016, into policies and budgets. Ultimately, implementing the Strategy and Convention will result in new community-based and specialized services, as well as more protective social norms.

Communication for social change will focus on strengthening the capacity of professionals working with children (including adolescents) and their families to prevent and address discrimination and violence. It also aims to improve the competencies of these professionals in the areas of communication and cross-sectoral approaches. This involves enhancing the capacity of parents and children to claim their rights and demand quality services. At the same time, caregivers will be helped to provide a protective, stimulating and supportive environment for children.

## E. STRATEGIC CONTEXT IN 2018

There is a growing, rigorous evidence highlighting the vulnerabilities of the Romanian education system, among which the access to and the equity and quality of education are key challenges. The most recent study on out of school children in Romania<sup>6</sup> has revealed that in 2015-2016 school year: 8.43% of children of primary education age (6-10 years old) were not attending school (i.e. almost 90,000 children), 9.96% of children of lower secondary education age (11-14) were not attending school (i.e. 84,000 children) and 25% of children of upper secondary education age (15-18) were out of school (i.e. 217,000 adolescents). Compared to the school year 2010-2011 all these rates of out of school children have recorded an increasing trend.

Early school leaving (ESL) in Romania is still high with a value of 18.3% in 2017 (decreasing from 19.1% in 2015 and 18.5% in 2016 but still far from the target set in Europe 2020 strategy of 11.3%)<sup>7</sup>. In contrast with this general, national statistics, the ESL rate for Roma minority in Romania is 77% (FRA 2016). When analysing the school cohort, the cohort dropout rate, calculated for the cohort covering the entire compulsory education cycles, is 20% for the cohort graduating grade 10 in the school year 2014-2015<sup>8</sup> (on a decreasing trend indeed but worryingly high yet).

The school cohort dropout analysis shows chronic problems in the education system of Romania, with severe disparities between the urban and rural areas in terms of participation to education: “almost a quarter of students from a school cohort is lost during the primary and lower secondary education, compared to 1 student in 10 that is lost during the same cycles of education in the urban areas (23.1% in rural and 9.7% in urban)”<sup>9</sup>.

Disparities between the urban and rural areas start early in the education cycles and become more predominant as children advance through the system. In 2014-2015, 81.8% of children in rural areas aged 3-5/6 years were enrolled in pre-school education against 97.7 % in urban areas. Early school leaving is predominantly a rural challenge in Romania. In 2015, the rate reached 27.8 % in rural areas against 19.3 % in towns and suburban areas and 5.9 % in cities<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> “La școală: o privire asupra participării la educație folosind analiza pe cohortă”, UNICEF, Institute of Educational Sciences, 2017

<sup>7</sup> EUROSTAT [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=t2020\\_40&plugin=1](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_40&plugin=1)

<sup>8</sup> “La școală: o privire asupra participării la educație folosind analiza pe cohortă”, UNICEF, Institute of Educational Sciences, 2017

<sup>9</sup> Idem

<sup>10</sup> EU Education and Training Monitor – Romania 2016

In terms of quality of education, 37% of 15-year-olds in Romania were assessed as functionally illiterate<sup>11</sup> in PISA 2012 and the percentage of low achievers (below level 2) in all three test subjects (reading, mathematics and science) was 24.3% in PISA 2015<sup>12</sup>. PISA 2012 and 2015 results show that huge inequities persist in the education system: “much of this basic skill deficit is due to inequities in the education system. Improving learning of children from disadvantaged backgrounds is, therefore, a key driver of better performance overall”<sup>13</sup>. Last, but definitely not least, PISA 2012<sup>14</sup> singled out Romania when it comes to the motivation of students: Romanian students ranked almost out of the chart and are the least motivated among the OECD participating students.

Considering the dynamics of the national context, UNICEF’s strategy in education was developed so to respond to the main outcomes listed at national level under the current National Strategy for the Prevention of Early School Leaving, focusing on equity and inclusion. The programmatic interventions were complementing key actions of the Ministry of Education carried out at the level of the pre-university education in 2018: continuation of the curricular reform, investments in teachers’ training (start of a new national project with financial support from the World Bank), strengthening of the infrastructure in the area of early education and revision of the per capita funding formula, while considering recent changes in legislation affecting the policy of human resources. In the same time, during 2018, UNICEF strengthened its partnership with the Ministry of Education for the development of the monitoring indicators on school segregation for all criteria covered in primary legislation (ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status of families, residence area, and school performance).

The modelling strategy, supported through the Global Education Thematic Fund, was focused on the collection of lessons learnt and promotion of good practices in the field of quality inclusive education. While new budgetary cuts affect the education system, it is essential that interventions are tested are prioritized, while resources are directed especially towards the students that are most in need (Roma children, children with disabilities, children from poor and rural areas). From the perspective of social norms, UNICEF intervention in education was carried out in an environment still tolerant to multiple and various forms of discrimination. The resurgence of new forms of neo conservative’s narratives could also be noticed, influencing efforts to approve a National Strategy for Parenting Education.

However, new potential windows of opportunities appeared at the end of 2018. Most important, advocacy efforts on sustainable adequate financing for the education sector led to Government commitment to increase the education budget by 15% yearly to reach 6% of GDP by 2022. Adequate financing of ante-preschool education was equally secured via parliamentary approval.

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<sup>11</sup> PISA 2012: Central Europe and the Baltics are Catching Up – but Fast Enough?, World Bank, 2014, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/futuredevelopment/pisa-2012-central-europe-and-baltics-are-catching-fast-enough>

<sup>12</sup> PISA 2015 Results in Focus, OECD, 2018, <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> PISA 2012: Central Europe and the Baltics are Catching Up – but Fast Enough?, World Bank, 2014, <http://blogs.worldbank.org/futuredevelopment/pisa-2012-central-europe-and-baltics-are-catching-fast-enough>

<sup>14</sup> PISA –The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. Every three years students are tested in the key subjects: reading, mathematics and science. In one assessment there is a focus on one of the subjects. In addition to the three core subjects, PISA includes a specific focus on a domain of choice such as collaborative problem solving in 2015 and global competence in 2018. PISA 2012 particular focus was on equity and educational resilience and student motivation for learning was assessed (there are no more recent data on this issue).

## F. RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE SECTOR

### ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

#### ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE QUALITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL

To reduce inequities in access to education, promote school participation and improve school quality and inclusiveness, UNICEF, with the support of the Global Education Thematic Fund, started in 2015 the Quality Inclusive Education (QIE) Model.

The model is capitalizing on the previous experience and evidence generated in the School Attendance Initiative (SAI), a model previously implemented by UNICEF Romania at national level. The theory of change of the new model is looking in an integrated manner at a set of individual, family, school/community and system factors that impede participation to education and positive education outcomes. As a result, multiple actions are directed towards different target groups: school staff, caregivers and parents. The interventions included: development of training programmes for school professionals, organization of parenting programmes, promotion of inter-sectoral cooperation and the role models that succeeded through education

QIE Model is, as such, a coherent, functional and efficient set of interventions aligned with the measures included in the *Strategy for the Reduction of Early School Leaving* (a strategy influenced and informed by the previous UNICEF model: School Attendance Initiative), following 3 of its 4 pillars (early education, quality compulsory education and system capacity building). The model was designed as a universal package to be implemented at school level, at county or national level. However, its modular and flexible structure makes it versatile and customizable so that when applied at the level of a county or at the level of a school, this package is customized and applied according to the specific needs of the county or of the schools involved (based on the situation analysis conducted at the relevant level).

During 2018, QIE model was in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of implementation (the planning is for an entire education cycle of 4-years), covering 51 school units from Bacau County. The implementation of QIE Model at the level of one county is designed as an intermediate step towards scaling the model up at national level. Concretely, the QIE Model interventions specifically target the strengthening of the capacity of the school management and teachers to support each and every child, according to his or her needs; improving the teaching methods and tools; increasing the interactions between families and schools and improving parental skills (through parenting education); mobilizing the communities to support local schools; enhancing children's cognitive and non-cognitive skills; encouraging diversity among students regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, (dis)ability and socioeconomic status.

UNICEF Model "Quality Inclusive Education" consists of four/five key interventions:

#### 1) Improving school management

The model addressed key management problems located at school level such as: the lack of school efforts to prevent school dropout, the inability of early identification of children at risk of school dropout, the absence of risk-management plan, as well as the school's limited capacity to identify and attract additional resources. A comprehensive blended learning programme involved school management teams from all school units involved in the program. The program addressed multiple topics, including: setting up an early risk detection system and management procedures for the management of the risks of school dropout; proposal writing, fundraising and project management involving the parents into the school life and in supporting the education of their children.

## **2) Promote child friendly pedagogy**

Looking at the quality of education, the model's design and planning considered some key issues persisting in the education system in Romania: insufficient initial teachers' training, paying limited attention to the social and cultural diversity of school population, or weak customization of the teaching-learning methods to the needs of the students with disadvantaged backgrounds. The interventions proposed considered also the recent change of the national curriculum and the transition from the traditional cognitive based curriculum towards a competency-based curriculum. As a result, staff school was exposed to face-to-face and on-line training programmes for teachers on 7 curricular areas and 4 cross-curricular areas. During 2018, a partnership with 5 universities from Romania was agreed to scale up the training curricula. In the same time, experience and lessons learnt from the model are informing the new Early Childhood Education National Strategy and future Action Plan.

## **3) Promote role models that succeed through education**

To enhance the inclusiveness and equity of education, UNICEF tested an innovative intervention, focused on building non-cognitive skills among students. By showcasing success stories from adults belonging to various disadvantaged backgrounds (Roma, disability, poverty affected or from rural), the applied strategy was to provide children/students with credible, successful models, so that they nurture higher aspirations in education, develop non-cognitive skills (e.g. resilience, motivation, self-esteem) and continue their education path. A set of educational resources were developed for promoting this strategy at school level (eg. a documentary movie about the professional success of the role models that continued their educational path, publications for children or adolescents and youth comprising the life stories of the role models and a pedagogical toolkit for school teachers on how to use in various educational activities the resources developed in the model and to foster inclusion and valorisation of diversity). Initially developed in Bacau County, this intervention was recognized at European level as a good practice model and received funding for being scaled up by UNICEF CO in another county as well.

## **4) Test a parenting education program**

The parenting education component looked at improving parenting skills, enhanced parent – child communication and parents' know-how to promote their child's best interests. Parenting education curricula has been developed to cover all cycles of child life. A program of training of trainers has also been developed to create a network of parent educators, including mostly education staff. At national level, UNICEF was involved in an inter institutional working group that developed a draft of National Strategy for Parenting Education that is now under consideration within the Ministry of National Education prior to be submitted to the Romanian Government for its adoption.

## **ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE HORIZONTAL COOPERATION AND LEARNING FROM BEST PRACTICES**

UNICEF organised in 2018 within the Horizontal Cooperation efforts an exchange of experience with a delegation from the Republic of Moldova on parenting education. Within this exchange of experience on parenting education, representatives of the Moldovan delegation (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Protection and UNICEF Moldova) met with their Romanian counterparts and visited schools, teachers and parents in Iasi and Bacau Counties. The exchange of experience was an opportunity not only to discuss with the parent educators from the visited school, but mostly to discuss with parents taking part in the program, sharing their perspectives on the initiative and its results at local level. County authorities from Romania also shared their plans for ensuring the sustainability of the parenting initiatives in Romania.



## ACTIVITIES WITHIN UNICEF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE GOVERNMENT

With the support of the Global Education Thematic Fund and in line with its current CPD, UNICEF Office in Romania continued several technical assistance activities.

The Ministry of National Education has adopted in December 2016 two Ministerial Orders on school desegregation: **1)** Order of the Minister of Education No. 6158 of 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2016 on the Approval of the Action Plan on School Desegregation and Improving the Quality of Education in the Pre-university Education Schools and **2)** Order of the Minister of Education No. 6134 of 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2016 on Prohibiting School Segregation in Pre-university Education Schools. Basically, the Action Plan includes 7 strategic objectives of which the first objective is related to the revision and completion of the legal framework of school desegregation.

The second Order (No. 6134/2016) on Prohibiting School Segregation represents the achievement of this first objective of the Action Plan as the legal framework on school desegregation was revised and includes 5 criteria of school segregation: 1) the ethnic criterion, 2) the disability criterion, 3) the socio-economic status of families criterion, 4) the students' school performance criterion and 5) the area of residence criterion.

However, although Order No 6134/2016 on Prohibiting School Segregation has been adopted in 2016, it is not yet in effect (according to the Order, the entrance in effect is conditioned on the adoption of the two methodologies stipulated there: the school segregation monitoring methodology and the methodology for the prevention and intervention in cases of school segregation). As such within the reporting period the former Order of the Minister of Education No. 1540/2007 on Prohibiting School Segregation of Roma Children is still in effect. The Ministry of National Education also requested UNICEF technical assistance for the implementation of a consistent part of the strategic actions included in the Action Plan on School Desegregation and Improving the Quality of Education in the Pre-university Education Schools and a MoE-UNICEF Romania Cooperation Protocol was signed in December 2016. The partnership with the Ministry of Education on school desegregation continued as previously agreed and UNICEF provided technical assistance for the development of the legal and policy frameworks for school desegregation. In 2018, the integrated monitoring indicator framework on school segregation for all criteria (ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status of families, residence area, and school performance) has been finalized. A draft methodology for the monitoring of the school segregation was also developed and the technical assistance included the development of a vision and of a regulation for the organization and functioning of the National Commission for School Desegregation and Inclusion.

In 2018, UNICEF strengthened its partnership with OECD, focused on the review of the assessment and evaluation system. The review was finalized and launched in partnership with the Government, OECD and European Commission. UNICEF provided technical assistance to translate the report's recommendations into a national action plan, which will inform the country's education sector reform.

In the same time, UNICEF, in close partnership with the Ministry of National Education and other partners in education have convened to review the existing framework of non-competitive EU funded projects (as well as some competitive projects) to incorporate elements or components of QIE in the terms of references for such EU Funds. The strategy is targeting multiple objectives, including ensuring the necessary resources for scaling up of QIE Model.

UNICEF Romania contributed to national efforts on developing and promoting parenting education through a National Strategy on Parenting Education. A draft project was put in public debate in the summer of 2018 but withdrawn soon after, as a result of increased pressure from conservative neo-orthodox groups.

## RESULTS WITHIN THE QUALITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL

**Increased capacity of schools to provide quality inclusive education**, covering more than 23.000 students from 51 school unites (out of which 8.8% were identified as students at risk) in Bacau County;

- 776 teachers, school managers and school directors improved their knowledge and professional skills;
- 51 school management teams received technical assistance trained on addressing school dropout and absenteeism through the Institutional Development Plans and Action Plans.

### School-family-community partnerships

- 10 schools involved in QIE model managed to attract additional funding (€170,000)
- 13.033 children, 4.758 parents and 1270 teachers involved in common activities carried out at school level on the following topics: early education, health education, intercultural education, prevention of school-based violence and parent counselling;
- 5630 students and 102 parents took part in demonstrative lessons focused on role models that succeeded through education;

### Better parenting skills: parents as advocates for education

- 10 270 parents (out of which 25% are men) improved their knowledge on parenting skills;
- A curriculum on parenting education was developed, covering the entire educational cycle.

### Knowledge management

- Educational materials developed for promoting quality inclusive education;
- A manual presenting QIE approach, best practices and results developed;
- Training curricula authorized by the Ministry of National Education;
- Training methodology for promoting diversity developed and tested at school level;
- Methodology for identifying role models developed, with 46 role models being identified at school level.

### Impact

- A draft National Strategy for Parenting Education developed and submitted to the Romanian Government for adoption;
- A revised National Strategy for Early Childhood Education and Care (in progress);
- A model of integrated approaches and interventions where education is complementary with health, child protection, social assistance and local governance developed, functional.

## RESULTS WITHIN THE HORIZONTAL COOPERATION AND LEARNING FROM BEST PRACTICES

**An exchange of experience on parenting education**, between the representatives of the Moldovan Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health and Social Protection and UNICEF Office in Moldova and their Romanian counterparts that included:

- visiting schools, teachers and parents in Iasi and Bacau Counties;
- discussing with the parent educators from the visited school and parents;
- sharing of experience and perspectives of both parties;

- County authorities from Romania also shared their plans for ensuring the sustainability of the parenting initiatives in Romania.

## RESULTS WITHIN UNICEF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE GOVERNMENT

With the support of the Global Education Thematic Fund the following results were achieved:

- **Technical assistance for the reform of the assessment and evaluation in the education system in Romania:**
  - Following the UNICEF–OECD education report, key policy recommendations on assessment and evaluation were included in the European Commission “Education and Training Monitor” for 2018. UNICEF contributed to finalize the national action plan on assessment, influencing curricular changes and assessment of competencies in 2018 and beyond.
- **Technical assistance for the development of the policy framework for school desegregation:**
  - An integrated framework of indicators for the monitoring of school segregation (on all criteria stipulated by the new Ministerial Order) was developed.
  - Development of a draft school segregation monitoring methodology;
  - Development of a vision document for the National Commission for School Desegregation and Inclusion (NCSDI);
  - Facilitation of the consultations for reaching a consensus on the vision document for the NCSDI;
  - Development of the Regulations for Functioning and Organization of the NCSDI;
  - Development of a draft ministerial order for the adoption of the Regulations for Functioning and Organization of NCSDI (which was officially adopted and published in the Official Journal of Romania in February 2019);
  - Facilitation of the NCSDI set up process (development of selection criteria for NGOs and international organizations).
- **Technical assistance for education financing**, including strategic measures to be promoted through the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds - synergies between UNICEF initiatives and EU funding were agreed regarding the following projects:
  - Financing of the ante preschool education by Parliamentarian Order approved in 2018;
  - The EU Funded Project for Curricular Abilitation “Curriculum relevant educatie deschisa pentru toti” (CRED), a project with the objective to deliver training on the new curriculum to 55,000 teachers in primary and secondary education with an implementation period between 2017 and 2021 and a 42 million Euros budget;
  - The EU Funded Project for Teaching Career;
  - The EU Funded Project on Early Education.
- **Technical assistance for the promotion of the national parenting education strategy** provided:
  - A draft of the National Parenting Strategy put in public debate by the Ministry of Education; although the first draft was withdrawn, public commitment related to the need to have interventions at national level in the field of parenting education was expressed by key stakeholders in November 2018, at a meeting organized by the Education Commission from the Chamber of Deputies, Romanian Parliament.

**G. FINACIAL UTILIZATION REPORT**

See: **Annex 1 – Financial Utilization Report**

## H. FUTURE WORK PLAN

Building on current experience and lessons learnt, a sustainability plan for the current model on quality inclusive education will be thoroughly developed in early 2019. If QIE model was built as a universal intervention, looking overall at the pre-university system, evidence showed us that more is to be done to facilitate completion of children's compulsory education. As a result, UNICEF developed a theory of change for a new model, looking at how to better encourage school transition of children at risk of drop out from lower to upper secondary education. The local implementation of the new model is expected to start early in 2019, combining targeted and universal measures. A qualitative study will collect data to support advocacy measures informing educational programs at county and national level.

In the same time, with new legal changes approved in 2018 in the field of ante preschool education, UNICEF will support the Romanian Government in building an inter-sectoral cooperation framework focused on early childhood education and care (ECEC). With the support of national and international partners, UNICEF will test and document results for a new intervention in the field of ECEC at the level of 21 rural and urban communities.

Within the efforts for the school desegregation, UNICEF will continue in 2019 the implementation of the activities planned within the MoE-UNICEF Cooperation Protocol. The following activities will be implemented: testing on a national sample of schools the school segregation monitoring methodology, development of the methodology for the prevention or intervention in cases of school segregation, facilitation for the development of training materials on school desegregation new legal framework and methodologies for school desegregation, facilitation for the delivery of a Training of Trainers at national level, providing technical assistance for amending the legal framework (in conformity with the Action Plan on School Desegregation).

## I. EXPRESSION OF THANKS

UNICEF Romania expresses its gratitude for the valuable contribution to its initiatives and activities, which would not have been possible without the involvement and commitment of the following partners:

- Children
- Parents
- Teachers and School Managers
- Local Authorities and their technical structures (Mayors and Community Team Members);
- County Authorities – County School Inspectorate, County Centre for Resources and Educational Assistance, County Councils;

UNICEF Romania also wants to thank its national level partners for their involvement, guidance and commitment:

- Ministry of National Education;
- Institute of Educational Sciences;
- Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP);
- Holt Iasi Foundation;
- Community Development Agency Impreuna;
- Step-by-Step Centre for Education and Professional Development.

UNICEF Romania expresses its gratitude to all the donors, both private individuals and corporate partners: Botnar Foundation, JYSK, Lidl, Dedeman, Carrefour, Ikea, who supported UNICEF initiatives in education.

Last, but not lastly, UNICEF Office in Romania expresses its gratitude to the Global Education Thematic Fund for its consistent contribution to Romania, a contribution valuable not only in terms of level of funding but also in terms of the flexibility of funding (which allowed the prompt and less bureaucratic adaption of interventions and activities based on the on-going monitoring and evaluation feed-back