

THE ROLE OF EXPENDITURES ON INSURANCE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE IN REDUCING THE LEVEL OF SCHOOL DROPOUT IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

The paper analyzes the evolution and specific features of public expenditures allocated to insurance and social assistance in Romania during the period 2020-2023, in a context marked by economic instability and increasing pressure on the public budget. The main objective of the research is to highlight the role of these expenditures in reducing school dropout levels, by supporting vulnerable families and facilitating access to education. The study is based on documentary analysis, the processing of official statistical data, and the interpretation of the dynamics and structure of expenditures, correlated with the evolution of indicators related to school dropout. The results indicate a clear upward trend in social protection expenditures, with significant effects on reducing the risk of early school leaving, emphasizing the importance of state intervention in supporting education and social cohesion.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, public expenditures allocated to social insurance and social assistance have gained increasing importance in the context of growing social vulnerabilities and the pressures exerted on the educational system in Romania. These expenditures represent one of the main instruments through which the state intervenes to support population groups facing difficulties, contributing to the reduction of social inequalities and ensuring equitable access to fundamental services, particularly education. Through social transfers, allowances, scholarships, benefits, and other forms of financial support, public authorities aim not only to provide immediate social protection but also to create favorable conditions for the long-term development of individuals.

Education plays a central role in the process of economic and social development, being considered one of the main drivers of sustainable economic growth. Investments in education contribute to the formation of human capital, increase productivity, and stimulate innovation. However, the efficiency of the educational system is affected by the phenomenon of school dropout, which continues to represent a significant problem in Romania. Early school leaving limits individual opportunities for professional integration and reduces the economy's development potential. At the same time, school dropout generates important social and budgetary costs by increasing the likelihood of unemployment, dependence on social transfers, and social exclusion.

The relationship between expenditures on social insurance and social assistance and the level of school dropout must be analyzed from an integrated perspective, since in many situations the causes of early school leaving are closely linked to the economic difficulties faced by families. The lack of material resources necessary for participation in the educational process, the indirect costs of education, or the need for children to engage in income-generating activities may lead to the interruption of studies. In this context, state intervention through the provision of allowances, social scholarships, educational vouchers, or other forms of financial support can help reduce the economic pressures that favor school dropout. Thus, social protection can function as an indirect mechanism supporting school participation.

The period 2020-2023 was marked by a series of economic and social crises that directly influenced the population's standard of living and the functioning of the educational system. The COVID-19 pandemic generated significant imbalances in economic activity and intensified existing difficulties, particularly affecting households

with low incomes. At the same time, the rapid transition to online education highlighted significant differences between students who had access to adequate technological resources and those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Subsequently, inflationary pressures and the rising cost of living in 2022 and 2023 further increased the economic difficulties faced by many families, amplifying the risk of school dropout.

From a theoretical perspective, the relationship between social protection and participation in education can be analyzed through the lens of human capital theory (Becker, 1964). This theory highlights the fact that investments in education contribute to increased individual productivity and long-term economic development. At the same time, the literature on the efficiency of public expenditures emphasizes the role of social policies in reducing inequalities and supporting equal access to educational opportunities. However, although numerous studies focus either on school dropout or on the analysis of social expenditures, research directly investigating the relationship between these two dimensions during the recent period characterized by economic and social crises remains relatively limited.

Starting from these considerations, the present paper aims to analyze the evolution of expenditures for social insurance and social assistance during the period 2020-2023 and their relationship with the level of school dropout across different levels of education. In this context, the research seeks to answer several questions, such as how social expenditures evolved during the analyzed period, whether there is a relationship between the dynamics of these expenditures and the school dropout rate, and to what extent social protection policies can contribute to reducing the risk of early leaving from the educational system. Through this approach, the study aims to highlight the role that social policies can play in supporting school participation and in promoting long-term economic and social development.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON SOCIAL EXPENDITURES AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

When a person takes care of their own family, they face a multitude of expenses that vary from one family to another, such as going out, grocery shopping, vacations, clothing, food, and so on, which are financed from their own sources of income earned through work. Efficient management can be achieved through a family budget, where the income sources of each family member and the corresponding expenses are centralized, allowing for the identification of a deficit or a surplus, which must then be analyzed. In the same way, the state operates through the state budget. This budget concentrates the revenues to be collected from individual or corporate taxpayers and the public expenditures of the respective state, according to the fiscal and budgetary policy of that year, as well as the priorities of the governing coalitions in power (Gruber, 2010).

In this regard, a clear definition of public expenditures would be the following: „*Public expenditures represent economic and social relationships in monetary form, which occur between the state, on the one hand, and individuals and legal entities, on the other hand, on the occasion of allocating and using the financial resources of the state in order to fulfill its functions*” (Văcărel, 2003: p. 127).

From an economic perspective, the concept of public expenditure involves the redistribution of the country's gross domestic product through the beneficiaries of budget allocations, both individuals and legal entities, from the state budget, in accordance with that year's strategy. These resources are collected through taxation, levies, and contributions from individuals and are managed by the competent public institutions of the state.

From a legal perspective, public expenditures refer to payments made by various public entities of the state, which are responsible for the allocation, collection, and management of revenues, carried out from the funds at the state's disposal, all in compliance with the legal norms in force at the time (Moroşan, 2017).

It is also important to emphasize that public expenditures serve two very significant roles. The first role is the promotion of GDP, through which the country actively participates in the creation of capital, both tangible and intangible, via development, innovation, research, and the development of efficient and modern transport networks to the highest standards, as well as the continuous improvement of infrastructure. In the same vein, the second role is the permanent consumption of GDP, reflected in the total budget allocations necessary for the proper functioning of public institutions, national security, and defense.

The state must adopt a social policy to ensure that every citizen has a minimum standard of living, through the periodic adjustment of the guaranteed minimum wage, to provide a well-organized healthcare system that delivers free and safe services, to minimize unemployment, and to address social issues through social aid or allowances (Boguş, 2021).

Budgetary expenditures are a subset of public expenditures carried out by the state apparatus, executed strictly through the state budget. Compared to public expenditures, they have a narrower scope, as illustrated in Figure 1, and are regulated by the state budget law, which sets the maximum limits up to which such payments can be made each year (Moşteanu, 2005).

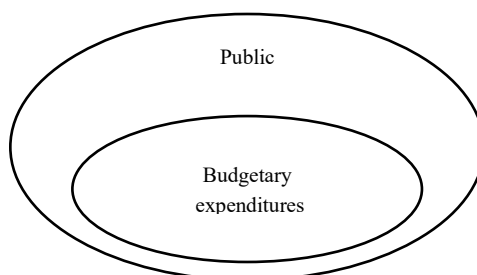


Figure 1. The relationship between public and budgetary expenditures

Source: own elaboration based on Boguş (2021)

Thus, from Figure 1, the relationship between public and budgetary expenditures can be observed. Public expenditures are more general than budgetary expenditures, which are carried out only through the public financial instrument used to track financial resources and budget allocations, namely the state budget.

Public expenditures are influenced by several factors. According to Peacock and Wiseman's law, as society evolves, expenditures diversify and increase in volume, and the state tends to spend the financial resources at its disposal if taxpayers do not wish to be excessively taxed (Peacock & Wiseman, 1961).

In this context, other factors that influence public expenditure are of an economic, social, demographic, political, and military nature. Additionally, urbanization, the demand for public goods and services, and globalization together with the regionalization of the economy also influence the level of public expenditure (Cioponea, 2007).

Pensions represent the main form of benefits provided to citizens by the state, serving to ensure a source of income for individuals who have reached retirement age, those disabled due to a workplace accident, and other categories of people (Tănăsescu, 2009).

Table 1. The variation of birth and mortality rate in Romania

2023	2024	Variation
<i>Birth rate</i>		
164.004	148.916	-15.088
<i>Mortality rate</i>		
244.624	244.735	111

Source: own elaboration based on data published in the journal 'Evenimente demografice în anul 2024' by the National Institute of Statistics, 2025

In our country, it can be observed that the population is aging, with the birth rate being much lower than the mortality rate. This means that the social insurance system is under significant pressure, and the effects are already visible at present, as the state does not consistently have the necessary financial resources to ensure the timely payment of pensions. According to the data presented in Table no. 1, in 2024 the number of newborn children decreased by approximately fifteen thousand, while the number of deaths increased by slightly more than one hundred. (Institutul Național de Statistică, https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/evenimente_demografice_in_anul_2024.pdf).

Against the background of limited public resources and demographic imbalances, the school dropout rate becomes an essential indicator of the efficiency of social and educational expenditures. Students who leave school prematurely often face difficulties later in the labor market and require additional social support, placing further pressure on the public budget. In Romania, this phenomenon is more visible in rural areas and in communities with limited resources, highlighting the direct connection between investments in education, social support, and the development of sustainable human capital.

The uncertain and variable nature of education-related expenditures at the individual level has, over time, led to increased state involvement in financing the educational system. Although Romanian legislation guarantees access to education for all individuals, in practice significant differences may exist among students regarding their real ability to continue their studies. For some families, the indirect costs of education, such as transportation, school supplies, or other materials necessary for school activities, can represent a major obstacle.

Under these circumstances, state intervention through social expenditures becomes essential for reducing educational inequalities. Measures such as the granting of scholarships, support programs for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, or other forms of social assistance help reduce the financial pressures faced by

families and support the continued participation of children in the education system. Therefore, public funding for education not only supports the functioning of the educational system but also plays an important role in preventing the occurrence of school dropout (Surdilă, 2013).

1.2 DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOL DROPOUT IN ROMANIA

Based on the specialized literature, school dropout in Romania is determined by a complex set of individual, family, and socio-economic factors that interact and influence students' educational trajectories. First, at the individual level, one of the most common causes is school absenteeism, with studies showing that an attendance rate below 80% significantly increases the risk of early school leaving. In addition, learning difficulties and low academic performance contribute to the accumulation of educational gaps that may eventually lead to grade repetition and, subsequently, to school dropout.

Another important factor is the lack of motivation for school activities and the low level of involvement in the educational process. Students who do not perceive the usefulness of education or who do not identify with the values promoted by the school tend to develop a lower level of attachment to the educational environment, which favors the premature abandonment of studies.

At the same time, the family context plays an essential role in maintaining or, on the contrary, interrupting the educational path. The low level of parents' education, the lack of emotional support and supervision of school activities, as well as reduced family expectations regarding children's educational performance are frequently associated with school dropout.

Last but not least, socio-economic factors significantly influence this phenomenon. Situations of poverty, limited access to educational resources, and living conditions in disadvantaged environments, especially in rural areas, may lead students to leave school in order to engage in work activities or to assume family responsibilities. In this context, school dropout appears as the result of the interaction between the individual difficulties faced by students and the socio-economic constraints of the environment in which they live (Alexa & Baci, 2021).

A report conducted within the project „Efficient solutions to prevent school dropout: costs and mechanisms”, implemented by UNICEF and the Education 2000+ Centre, shows that the main causes of school dropout can be grouped into three categories: factors related to the student and family, community factors, and factors specific to the school environment.

Regarding family factors, financial difficulties, the low level of parents' education, family conflicts, or migration may negatively influence the continuity of the educational path. At the same time, early involvement in the labor market or the lack of confidence in the role of education may lead to premature school leaving. At the community level, certain social norms, such as early marriage or the perception that education is not necessary after completing lower secondary education, may contribute to school dropout, especially in vulnerable environments. Furthermore, the school environment can influence this phenomenon through grade repetition, difficulties in integrating into the class group, or tense relationships with teachers and colleagues. In this context, school dropout appears as the result of the interaction between individual, social, and educational factors (Voicu, 2010).

School dropout does not represent only a punctual moment in a young person's educational path, but rather a process with long-term effects that can influence multiple dimensions of life. When a student leaves the educational system prematurely, a gap emerges between their development potential and the real opportunities they may access in the future. The lack of qualifications or adequate training considerably limits opportunities for integration into the labor market, and young people in this situation are more exposed to the risk of occupying low-paid, unstable, or informal jobs.

In the long term, the consequences of school dropout may extend beyond the individual sphere, generating effects at the social and economic levels as well. Individuals who do not complete a minimum level of education are more likely to face financial difficulties, dependence on social support, or reduced participation in economic and civic life. In this context, school dropout becomes not only an educational issue but also a social one, affecting the development of communities and intensifying existing inequalities (Miron & Mistrean, 2024).

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data used in this study were obtained from official sources of the National Institute of Statistics (INS). Expenditures on social insurance and social assistance from the state budget, local budgets, and the state social insurance budget for the period 2020-2023 were extracted from the Statistical Yearbooks of Romania (editions 2022, 2023, and 2024). School dropout rates by educational level were taken from the INS TEMPO-Online database (indicator SCL113A), which defines dropout as the difference between the number of students enrolled at the beginning of the school year and those present at the end of the year, expressed as a percentage of initial enrollment.

The analysis covers the period 2020-2023, chosen both due to the availability of comparable data and to capture the effects of the pandemic context on social vulnerabilities. The study has a descriptive and exploratory character, using tables and graphs to examine the evolution of social expenditures alongside school dropout rates, in order to identify temporal associations between these data series. The main limitation of the research lies in the aggregate nature of the data and the short period analyzed, which does not allow for establishing causal relationships, but only for observing correlations that must be interpreted with caution.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section aims to examine statistical data regarding the percentage of students enrolled at different levels of education during the period 2020-2023, highlighting both positive aspects and areas that require intervention to improve the quality of the educational process, with the goal of minimizing the school dropout rate as much as possible, all in correlation with indicators related to the level and structure of social insurance and social assistance expenditures.

Table 2. The volume of expenditures on insurance and social assistance from Romania's general consolidated budget in the period 2020-2023, expressed in millions of lei

Indicator (milions of lei)	2020	2021	2022	2023
Expenditures on insurance and social assistance from the state budget	42.908,70	47.862,80	64.837,00	69.845,30
Expenditures on insurance and social assistance from local budgets	12.262,10	12.852,30	14.292,20	17.117,40
Expenditures on insurance and social assistance from the state social insurance budget	82.360,10	90.657,90	99.275,50	112.064,70

Source: own processing based on data published in the Statistical Yearbook of Romania, 2022-2024

The data from Table 2 highlight a steady increase in expenditures on social insurance and social assistance over the period 2020-2023, regardless of the budget considered. It is observed that this category of expenditures in the state budget and local budgets records significant growth, reflecting an intensified public intervention in the social domain, while the state social insurance budget shows the highest values and the most pronounced growth rate. This trend can be explained by the deepening of social inequalities in the context of recent economic crises, the increasing number of beneficiaries, and the expansion of social protection programs, emphasizing the increasingly important role of the state in supporting vulnerable groups.

Table 3. The level of school dropout according to education levels in Romania

Level/Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary and lower secondary education	1,20%	1,20%	1,20%	1,00%
Primary education	1,30%	1,30%	1,30%	1,00%
Lower secondary education	1,00%	1,00%	1,20%	1,00%
Upper secondary education - cycle 2 (general and vocational)	1,70%	2,10%	1,00%	0,90%
Post-secondary and foremen training education	7,10%	8,70%	8,00%	7,60%

Source: own elaboration based on statistical databases published by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, available at <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Table 3 presents the school dropout rates in Romania during the period 2020-2023. It can be observed that in primary and lower secondary education, dropout rates remain relatively low and stable, between 1 and 1.2 percent, indicating a higher capacity of the Romanian educational system to retain students at these levels. This trend may be associated with the compulsory nature of education, as well as the presence of social and educational support programs aimed at children from vulnerable backgrounds.

Regarding upper secondary education, particularly high school and vocational cycles, a more pronounced dynamic in dropout rates is noticeable, with a significant increase in 2021 followed by a sharp decline in subsequent years. This pattern reflects the sensitivity of this educational level to economic and social factors, such as family financial difficulties, early entry of young people into the labor market, or challenges in adapting to educational requirements.

The highest dropout rates are consistently recorded in post-secondary and master-level vocational education, where values exceed those of other forms of education. This situation suggests the presence of persistent vulnerabilities related to the cost of education, low motivation to continue studies, and the attractiveness of alternative occupational options.

School dropout can be reduced through a more efficient targeting of public expenditures on social insurance and assistance toward vulnerable groups, so that economic difficulties no longer represent a major barrier to continuing education. Financial support for low-income families, in the form of allowances, social scholarships, or material aid, contributes to covering education-related costs and increasing school participation.

At the level of communes, towns, and municipalities, public social assistance services operate. The relevant legislation (Parlamentul României, Legea nr. 272/2004) stipulates that „*public social assistance services organized at the level of municipalities and towns, as well as social assistance officers within the local councils' own apparatus, monitor and analyze the situation of children in the administrative-territorial unit, as well as the observance of children's rights, ensuring the centralization and synthesis of relevant data and information, and carry out activities to prevent the separation of the child from their family*”.

To avoid separating children from their parents, local authorities are required to organize day services. If the local council identifies sufficient financial resources and human capacity to organize such services, the county council, upon request, will allocate funds for their establishment (Ichim, 2020).

At the same time, social support measures must be aligned with educational policies that stimulate student motivation and reduce inequalities in access to education. A better allocation of public resources, alongside interventions adapted to the specific needs of each educational level, can limit the risk of early school leaving and help maintain a low dropout rate.

Thus, the data highlight that the risk of early school leaving increases as students progress through the educational system, emphasizing the importance of state policies and social expenditures aimed at supporting transitions between educational levels.

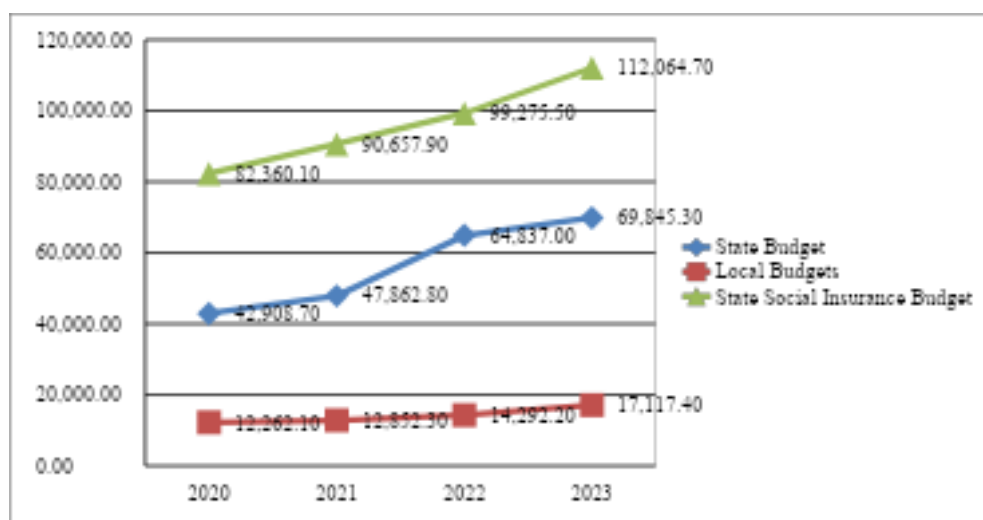


Figure 2. The evolution of expenditures on insurance and social assistance from Romania's general consolidated budget in the period 2020-2023

Source: own elaboration based on data published in the Statistical Yearbook of Romania by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, 2022-2024

The graph above reveals that during the period 2020-2023, two parallel trends appear to be related. On one hand, public expenditures on social insurance and social assistance increased steadily across the state budget, local budgets, and the state social insurance budget. Expenditures from the state budget rose from approximately 42,900 million lei in 2020 to 69,800 million lei in 2023, local budget expenditures increased from 12,262 to 17,117 million lei, and the state social insurance budget grew from 82,360 to 112,064 million lei. This increase demonstrates that authorities allocated more resources for social protection and support for vulnerable families.

On the other hand, school dropout data show a decline in rates for primary and secondary education, while post-secondary education continues to exhibit higher rates. In primary education, the dropout rate decreased from 1.3% in 2020 to 1% in 2023, and in upper secondary education (high school and vocational cycles) the reduction was more pronounced, from 1.7% to 0.9%. In contrast, post-secondary and master-level vocational education maintained high rates, even slightly increasing, ranging between 7.1% and 7.6%.

A comparative analysis of the evolution of the two data series suggests a temporal association between the increase in social expenditures and the decline in dropout rates in primary and secondary education. For

example, between 2020 and 2023, state budget expenditures grew by approximately 62.7% (from 42.9 billion lei in 2020 to 69.8 billion lei in 2023, according to Table 2), while dropout in upper secondary education decreased from 1.7% to 0.9% (according to Table 3). This parallel trend suggests a possible link, although it must be interpreted with caution, as correlation does not imply causation and other factors (e.g., educational policies, pandemic effects) were not controlled for.

These associations can be explained by several possible mechanisms:

- (1) Income effect - social transfers reduce financial pressure on families;
- (2) Funding of support services - such as transportation, meals, and scholarships provided from local budgets.

However, in the absence of detailed individual-level data, these mechanisms remain hypothetical.

The effects are not uniform, however. The reduction in dropout rates is clearly visible at the secondary level, while in post-secondary education, where young people may be more attracted to the labor market, dropout rates remain high. This indicates that merely increasing budgets is not sufficient; it is essential that funds are directed toward measures that genuinely influence school participation.

It is also important to note the limitations of this analysis. The data are aggregated at the national level, meaning that only correlations, not causation, can be observed. Factors such as unemployment, migration, the COVID-19 pandemic, or local policies may influence both expenditures and family decisions.

Overall, there is a clear association between increased social spending and reduced school dropout in primary and secondary education, suggesting that additional resources helped retain students in school. To improve the situation at the post-secondary level and maximize the impact of funding, budgets need to be allocated to targeted measures, such as apprenticeship programs, support for labor market transitions, and scholarships for vulnerable students.

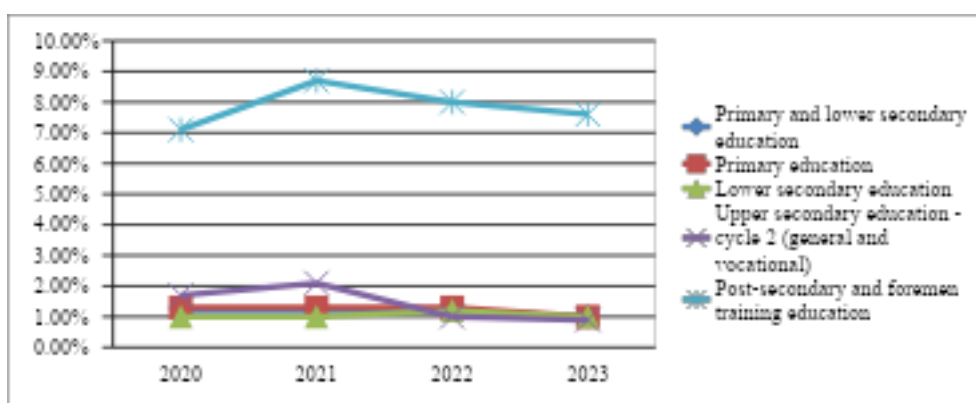


Figure 3. The evolution of the level of school dropout in Romania in the period 2020-2023

Source: own elaboration based on statistical databases published by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, website accessible at <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

The analysis of the data in Figure 3 for the period 2020-2023 shows that school dropout rates decreased at the primary and secondary levels, while post-secondary education continues to exhibit higher rates. In primary education, the percentage fell from 1.3% to 1%, and in upper secondary education (high school and vocational cycles) from 1.7% to 0.9%. This decline coincides temporally with the increase in public expenditures for social insurance and assistance, suggesting that additional funding may have helped retain students in school through direct effects (scholarships, transportation, school meals) or indirect effects (family transfers that reduce economic pressure).

In post-secondary education, the dropout rate remains high (over 7%), indicating that this segment is less responsive to general financial support. Young people at this age are already attracted to the labor market, and keeping them in the education system requires targeted programs, such as apprenticeships or partnerships with employers.

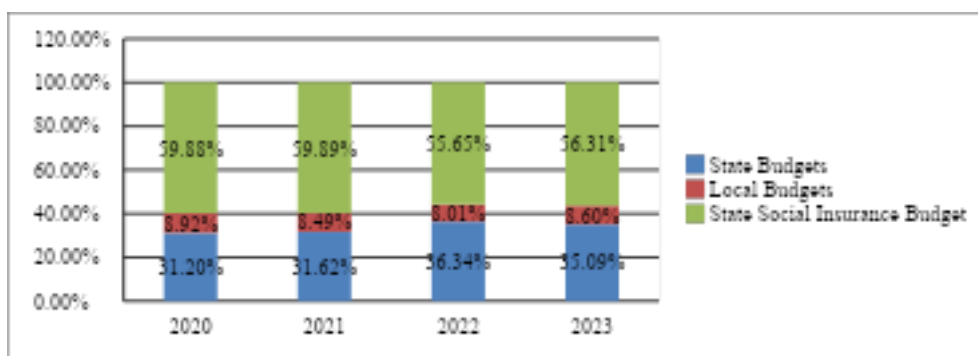


Figure 4. The structure of expenditures on insurance and social assistance in Romania by the budget from which they are financed in the period 2020-2023

Source: own elaboration based on data published in the Statistical Yearbook of Romania by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, 2022-2024

The analysis of the structure of social insurance and assistance expenditures for the period 2020-2023, according to Figure 4, shows that the majority of funds are allocated from the state social insurance budget, accounting for between 55.65% and 59.89%, while the share of expenditures from the state budget ranges from 31.2% to 36.34%, and from local budgets between 8% and 8.92%.

When these data are correlated with school dropout rates, it can be observed that in years when the share of social expenditures remains relatively stable, dropout rates in primary and secondary education decrease slightly (for example, in high school and vocational education from 1.7% in 2020 to 0.9% in 2023). This correlation suggests that a consistent and significant allocation of resources toward social assistance can help keep students in school by reducing economic pressure on families and supporting access to complementary educational services (school meals, transportation, scholarships).

However, post-secondary and master-level vocational education, with higher dropout rates (between 7.1% and 7.6%), indicates that the overall share of social expenditures is not sufficient to significantly influence participation at this level, highlighting the need for dedicated programs and targeted measures for post-secondary youth.

Consequently, the stability and share of social expenditures appear to support the reduction of dropout rates at the primary and secondary levels, but their actual effectiveness depends on how these resources are directed toward programs and services that directly benefit students.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the analysis of school dropout trends during 2020-2023 highlights a clear correlation between the increase in public expenditures on social insurance and assistance and the reduction of early school leaving at the primary and secondary levels. This suggests that financial support for families and resources allocated to complementary educational services, such as scholarships, school meals, and transportation, contribute significantly to keeping students in the educational system.

Against the backdrop of overlapping events during the analyzed period, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the shift to online learning, followed by inflationary pressures, the expansion of transfers and social programs helped alleviate financial pressures on vulnerable families and enabled children to remain in school. The most likely mechanisms are the direct income effect, reducing the need for students to contribute to household income, and the funding of complementary services that support school participation (free meals, transportation, scholarships, remedial programs). Importantly, these effects are most visible where interventions are well-targeted and coordinated between central authorities and local administration.

However, the persistence of high dropout rates in post-secondary and master-level vocational education points to the limits of a strategy based solely on general increases in funding. Youth at this level are more sensitive to immediate labor market opportunities and the practical relevance of training. Therefore, funds need to be translated into targeted programs: apprenticeship schemes and workplace placements, conditional scholarships to continue studies, paid internships, and career guidance services that facilitate the transition to employment. At the same time, investment in quality local social assistance services, which can identify at-risk families, provide day services, counseling, and coordinate with schools, is essential to convert budgetary resources into measurable educational outcomes. To enhance policy effectiveness, the key recommendations are: financial targeting toward specific measures rather than general percentage increases; strengthening administrative capacity at the local level for implementation and monitoring; integrating social interventions with educational programs (remedial, mentoring, and counseling); and developing monitoring tools. Policies should be initially tested through pilot

programs and rigorously evaluated using econometric methods or experimental assessments where possible to determine the cost-effectiveness and return on investment of interventions that effectively reduce dropout.

This study has several important limitations. First, the analysis relies on aggregated national-level data, which does not allow for identifying causal relationships at the individual or local level. Second, the short analysis period (four years) and the lack of control for other factors (such as educational policies or demographic changes) make the results largely exploratory. Future research could use county-level data and econometric methods to more rigorously test the hypotheses.

Overall, the main conclusion is that the increase in social insurance and assistance expenditures in Romania during 2020-2023 contributed to mitigating the risk of school dropout at the primary and secondary levels. However, achieving lasting impact and extending benefits to post-secondary education requires a policy rethink toward youth-adapted measures and an integrated social-educational approach, supported by continuous evaluation and well-prepared local administration for implementation.

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