

Dr. Á. Dávid-Kacsó, Dr. I. Orzea, Dr. S. Raiu, Dr. M. Roth  
(coord. Maria Roth)

## RESEARCH REPORT

Joining Forces România

# School climate assessment



Save the Children



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**SCHOOL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT – RESEARCH REPORT**

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**PREMIERE M**

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## List of abbreviations

<b>CCD</b>	Teaching-Staff Resource Center
<b>CE</b>	Student Council
<b>CJRAE</b>	County Center for Educational Resources and Assistance
<b>CMBRAE</b>	Bucharest Center for Educational Resources and Assistance
<b>C<math>\alpha</math></b>	Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient
<b>DS</b>	Standard deviation
<b>FRA</b>	Fundamental Rights Agency
<b>SAG</b>	Student Advisory Group
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>IES</b>	Institute of Educational Sciences
<b>ISJ</b>	County School Inspectorate
<b>IRSE</b>	Socio-educational risk index
<b>JF</b>	Joining Forces
<b>M</b>	Media
<b>MEN</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>SCP</b>	School Climate Profile (assessment questionnaire)
<b>SCP-P</b>	School Climate Profile for the primary cycle
<b>SCP-G</b>	School Climate Profile for the gymnasium cycle
<b>SCP-H</b>	School Climate Profile for the high school cycle
<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>PSS</b>	School Success Profile
<b>P4P</b>	Participation for Protection
<b>SIIR</b>	Integrated Information System for Education in Romania
<b>SSP</b>	School Success Profile
<b>UBB</b>	University of "Babeş-Bolyai" Cluj-Napoca
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>WVR</b>	World Vision România

## SCHOOL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT. SYNTHESIS

In the context of the *"Joining Forces Romania"* initiative, the organizations Terre des hommes Switzerland (Romanian delegation), Save the Children Romania, SOS Children's Villages Romania, and World Vision Romania launched the School Climate Assessment initiative with the participation of educational institutions contracted as partners (middle schools and high schools in 12 counties, serving disadvantaged communities). The consortium of organizations and researchers aims to collect students' opinions about the school climate: the relationship between students, the relationship between students and teachers, school safety, and learning atmosphere, and will then propose recommendations to improve the school climate.

Taking place between October 2020 and March 2021, the research called *School Climate Profile* was conducted under special conditions in the context of the global pandemic COVID-19, as a result of face-to-face interaction with teachers and school students was very difficult. Thus, the research activities took place under the conditions created by digital technology, both for the preparation and collection of data, and for communication with school leaders, teachers, parents, and students.

The defining approach of this research is to put children at the center of concerns, to support them to express their opinion and to create opportunities for them to participate through projects, as agents of change, in improving the school climate, as well as experiences and their views to help find solutions for today's school problems. The approach is based on children's rights, placing the principles of participation and inclusion, non-discrimination and equality at the heart of concerns for improving the school climate. By strengthening the capacity of schools to encourage students to express their views on the school climate, the Joining Forces Romania consortium contributes to efforts to reform the Romanian education system.

The consortium is a platform that supports the implementation of research-based practices, making available to schools reports on the *School climate profile* of all 15 participating schools (see Annex 1), including individualized data on schools, based on which students, in collaboration with the teachers in the school they can and are encouraged to build their own projects, which will positive the school climate in the directions they want and considered a priority. Applying the principles of listening to children and participating in decisions, the data obtained from research are provided to students and teachers, becoming central starting points for their involvement in activities to improve the school climate. Following this methodology, it turned out that the theme of projects carried out by students to improve the school climate offered participants the opportunity to discuss the principle of school inclusion, non-discrimination, and equal opportunities, designed to reduce inequalities in the Romanian education system.

The key issues covered by the **School Climate Profile (SCP) questionnaire** are the following: school satisfaction, attractiveness and attachment to school, student involvement in school life and decisions, inclusive schooling and perception of equal opportunities, school educational climate and student-centered education, student support and teacher conflicts, student support from peers and student relationships, students' maladaptive behaviors and student involvement in violent behavior, bullying, perpetrators, where violence occurs and how students seek help, violence from students, adults and ways for students to seek help; school facilities and family facilities, attitude towards online education.



### **The national context**

Starting with November 22, 2019, the education law was amended, prohibiting all forms of psychological violence/bullying, and the methodological norms (secondary legislation) necessary to allow the implementation of the law entered into force on June 11, 2020. The new regulations establish the legal framework for a flexible mechanism for intervening in bullying situations in schools, by promoting activities aimed at preventing and combating all forms of violence and by developing their own strategies and action plans to ensure and maintain an appropriate school climate, a precondition for the prevention of bullying, but also quality education. The research took into account a series of recent analyzes on school climate and student welfare, violence and bullying in schools, but also the situation of student participation in the Romanian education system (Mitulescu et al, 2015; Save the Children, 2016; MEN, 2020; European Commission, 2018; Human Catalyst, 2018; Marin et al., 2020).

### **The concept of school climate**

The school climate refers to the quality of school life, reflecting the norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching-learning practices, and school management. A safe and supportive school environment, in which students have positive social relationships and in which they are respected, involved in school work, where their sense of personal value is cultivated, becomes a climate that favorably affects their mental, social, and school development.

Therefore, the concept of school climate must be understood systemically and multidimensionally, being a result of the complex interrelationships between students, teachers, school managers, and the organizational culture of the school, respectively the community. Relationships between students and teachers, relationships between classmates, school safety, inclusive culture and practices, and students' participation in school life and decisions are the basic elements that define the school climate. In the conception of the ecological systems of Bronfenbrenner (1979) at the level of these aspects can be detected risk factors and protection factors, whose ratio leads to a certain degree of satisfaction with the school climate.

In the study of the school climate, we started from previous research, which showed that the way the student perceives support, indifference or dissatisfaction from teachers, acceptance or rejection from classmates, exclusion or inclusion, acceptance or discrimination, equal opportunities or preferential, in grading, the creation or not of opportunities for student involvement are all interconnected with the motivation for learning and the students' response to school tasks and students' behavior in school (Hărăguș et al., 2014; Orzea, 2016; Angi, 2019).

### **Research approach**

To build the research methodology, we took over some of the working tools that have proved useful in international and Romanian specialized studies so far (Bowen și Richman, 2005; David Kacso, 2010; Hărăguș et al., 2014; Orzea, 2016; Human Catalyst, 2020, Olweus, 1996), which show that the support received from teachers, the safety of the school where they study, the learning climate in the classroom, the satisfactions offered by the school, the behavior of friends, school facilities, cooperation between students and between teachers and students are the central factors of the school climate and clearly influence the success of the educational process. Although the present research does not aim at a new verification of some hypotheses related to the role of these factors, the analyzes performed following the application of the questionnaire once again confirm the importance of the mentioned school climate factors.



As **main objectives** of the research, we pursued:

Creating an *assessment tool* for the protection and risk factors of the school climate for all three levels of the school.

Elaboration of individualized *school climate profiles* (SCP), for the group of 15 general schools and high schools proposed by Joining Forces Romania.

In the conception of the *data-based practice*, elaboration of some intervention methodologies for the improvement of the school climate, in which the students should be encouraged to develop **change projects** starting from the SCP analysis of their own school.

The analyzes regarding the results of the SCP questionnaire and the profiles of the schools elaborated based on the collected questionnaires allowed the interpretation of the results obtained during the research and led to the construction of some interesting projects of the students from the participating schools. These were the starting point of an intervention methodology, applicable in schools, to encourage students of all ages, in planning and carrying out their own projects to improve the school climate.

### **The tool used in assessing the school climate**

The questionnaire collected the scales used in the literature to assess the main areas of the school climate. The aspects covered by the School Climate Profile (SCP) questionnaire are the following: school satisfaction, scale taken from the questionnaire School success profile, adapted and validated in Romania by Hărăguș et al. (2014), based on "School Success Profile (SSP)", developed by Bowen & Richman (2005); attractiveness and attachment to school (Cocoradă et al., 2018); involvement of students in school life and decisions (SSP); the inclusive character of the school (Booth and Ainscow, 2005) and the perception of equal opportunities (SSP, adaptation of the authors of this research); the educational climate of the school and the focus on student education (SSP); student support from teachers (SSP) and conflicts with teachers (Orzea, 2016); student support from classmates and student relationships (SSP and Cocoradă et al., 2018); maladaptive behaviors of students and student involvement in violent behaviors (SSP); bullying (Olweus, 1996), those who commit aggression, the place where violence takes place and the ways in which students use it to seek help (Olweus, 1996); adult violence and also the ways in which students turn to help (Olweus, 1996, supplemented by the authors of the research); school facilities and family facilities, as well as the attitude towards online education (Youthtruth, 2020).

After applying the questionnaire to the whole group, the psychometric data were recalculated: mean (M), standard deviation (DS), and Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient(C $\alpha$ ). Following the information received as a result of the application of the scales, we subsequently restructured some of the scales, regrouping some items, for greater consistency and to shorten the questionnaires at all three levels (see Annexes 3.1, 4.1, and 5.1). At each level, the last question of the questionnaire addressed the students' desire to change something in school, in the form of an open question, in which we invited students to express their needs to improve the school climate: What changes would you like in your school as to be able to learn with pleasure?

## Summary of research results

Following the application of the scales, we proceeded to the realization of the individual profiles of the schools with at least 30 questionnaires per level and then to the presentation of the results of the three school cycles. In these school profiles, we identified the coordinates that may present risks and those that represent the resources of each school. These individualized profiles by schools were sent to the principals of the schools participating in the research, to be discussed by the school management, the teaching staff, and the students in the classes who participated in the research, to identify the directions that could be acted upon, improving the school climate. To exemplify the way of working for the elaboration of the profiles and the differences between the schools and the average of the group, we illustrate the presentation of the results at the items of one of the 16 scales, namely the *support from the teachers*, gymnasium level. At this scale it can be seen that the results of the school represented are significantly higher than the average of the researched group, the significance threshold being for this school  $p < 0.01$ .

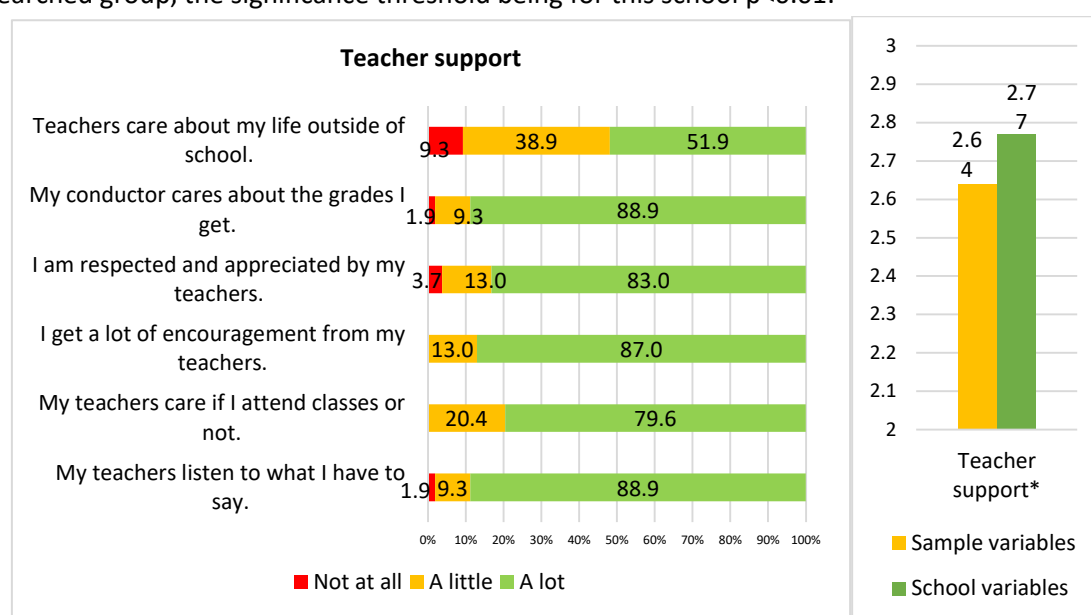


Chart 1.1 Illustration of the differences between the data of the scale "Support from teachers" at school X and the average of the schools in the research group (middle school level)

The graphs were accompanied by short interpretations of the results, drawing attention to the positive aspects, which constitute school resources, to those of risk and the more or less neutral area, named as the area of attention:

The vast majority of responding students consider themselves listened to and respected by their teachers in this school (over 88%). However, 16% of students do not feel appreciated at all or feel little appreciated by teachers. A high percentage of students (87%) say they feel encouraged by teachers. The data reflect the fact that students feel that the teacher is following their school situation (88.9%), but only half of them (51.9%) believe that teachers want to know and understand their life outside of school. Compared to the whole group of schools in this research, the support felt by the students of this school from the teachers is perceived significantly higher than the average of the sample ( $p < 0,01$ ).

Therefore, in the *Profile of each school and the profile of the cycle within the group*, it is described the percentage of students who declare themselves dissatisfied or who mention the high frequency of dangerous behaviors and which is a **risk category**; those who are undecided or who

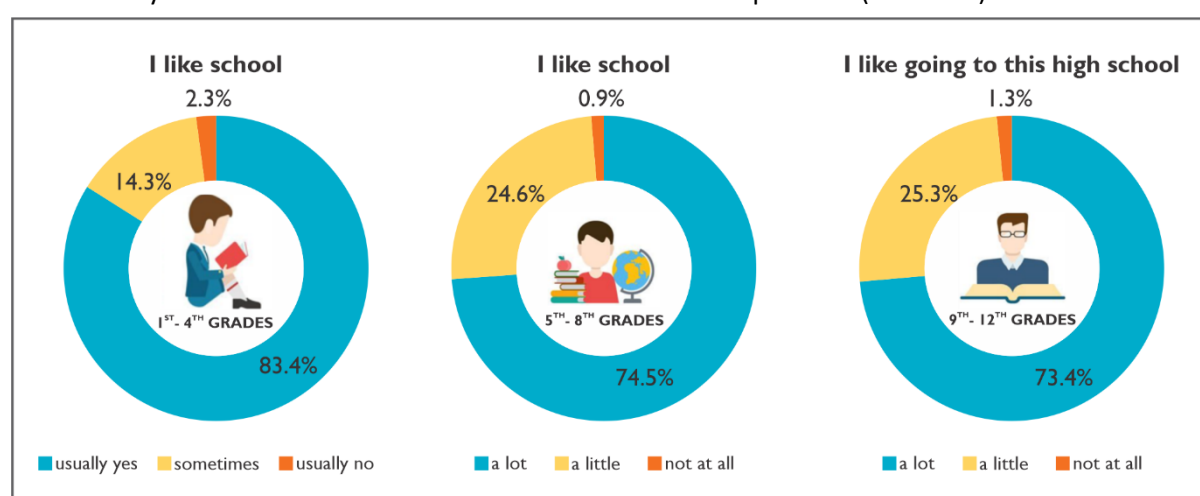
choose the middle answers enter the **warning area**; those who are satisfied will be the category of students who **perceive positive aspects**, i.e. resources (advantages) for the mentioned aspects. To illustrate these distributions we used the colors red, yellow, and green. These percentage delimitations on different items are those that can be used as benchmarks for initiating changes. For example, in graph 1.1, above (showing the data of a small school with a high socio-educational risk index), to the factor of the support relationship from teachers, we also presented a graph representing the position of this school in relation to the average of the schools in the research group. It can be seen that the school has indicators above the average of the schools included in the research, the difference being significant.

The analysis of the data on the whole group indicates relevant results for the investigated schools, presented here on the basic dimensions of the questionnaire: the relations with the school, with the teachers, with the other classmates, aspects regarding the violence, and the relations between these aspects:

### *The relationship with the school*

Regarding the involvement of students in school life, half of the primary school students (51.4%) do not feel consulted about the choice of topics, 28.1% of them "never" participate in choosing the class leader and only 12.6% of students argue that "often" classes are based on student proposals. The percentages are quite similar at the gymnasium level, where 30.8% do not feel involved (covering the categories "little" or "not at all") in discussing school and class issues and only 21.6% consider that some hours are based on student proposals. This percentage decreases to 19.3% in the case of high school students and only 54.7% of them claim that students are consulted in choosing the electives.

Although primary school students are much more attracted to school than older ones, already in the first cycle every sixth student (16.7%) considers that "usually" or "sometimes" it is not pleasant to attend school. Among middle school and high school students, the percentage of those who do not like school is even higher: 25.6% of middle school students and 26.7% of high school students say that school attendance is "not at all" or is "little" pleasant (Chart 1.2).



*Chart 1.2. Satisfaction with school throughout school cycles*

### Relationship with classmates

The results regarding the relationships with classmates show that 24.4% of primary school students claim that they usually do not feel good with classmates. The percentage is similar in the gymnasium cycle, where 23% declare that they agree little or not at all with their classmates, and in high school, this percentage reaches 30.4%. Although the percentage of students who get along well with classmates is high (76.4% in middle school and 69.6% in high school), 49.4% of high school students would be reluctant to discuss personal issues with classmates, and among high school students, this percentage increases to 53.1% (Chart 1.3).

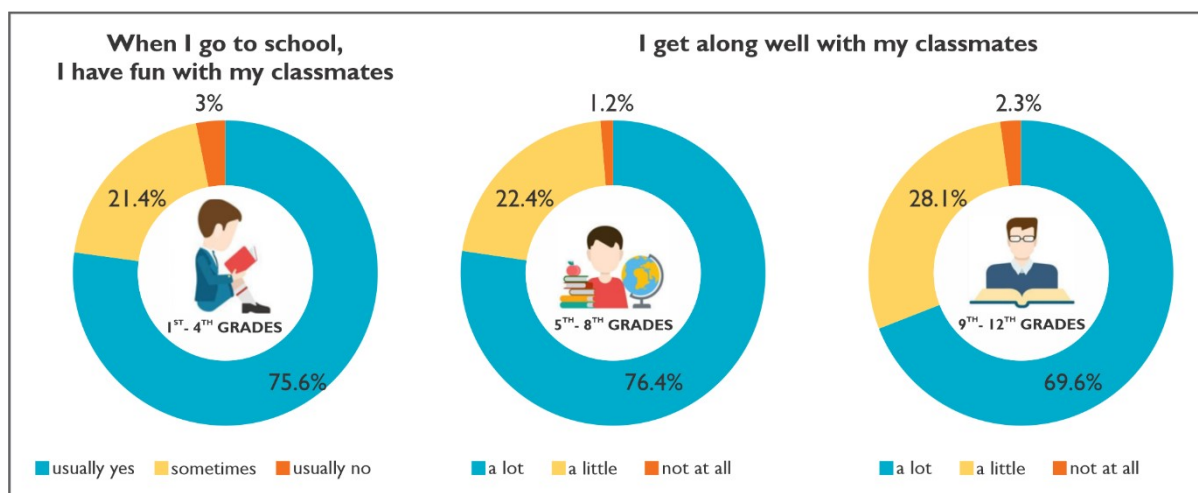


Chart 1.3. The relationship of students with classmates during school cycles

### Relationship with teachers

Fear of teachers, perception of distance between them and students' families, who are sometimes in various difficult life situations, reduce the motivation for learning and decrease students' confidence in the teacher's ability to understand and support them (Chart 1.4).

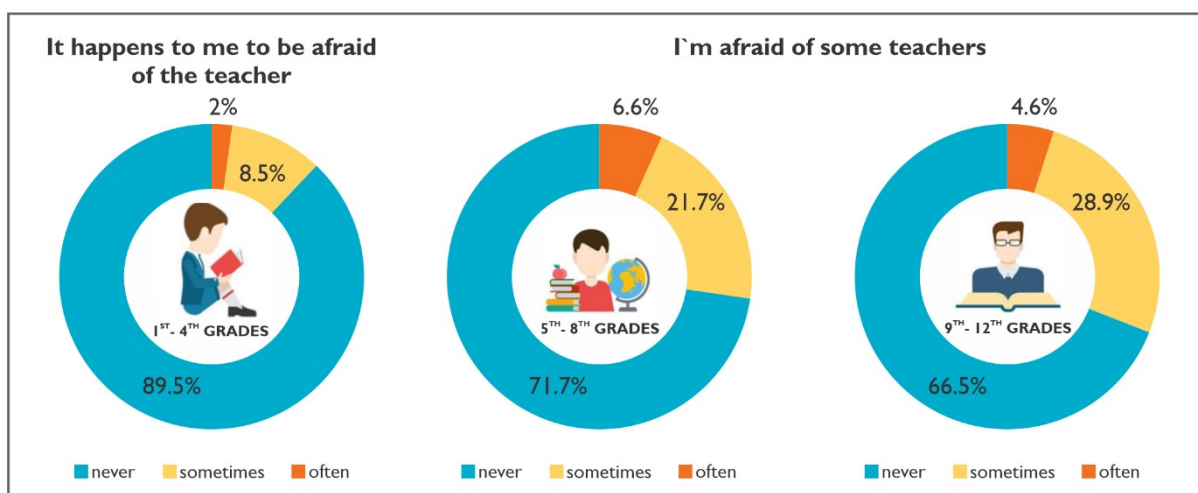


Chart 1.4. Students' fear of teachers

## Violence in school

Regarding school violence, the most common forms of aggression between students were verbal: spreading false rumors and teasing others (both suffered in a proportion of 10% of respondents in high school and 5.8% and 6.8% respectively among high school students).

The percentages that indicate different serious forms of victimization are not high (in high school: I was abruptly, 2.6%, I was intentionally taken out of the group of friends 6.8%; my money was taken, 2.1%; in high school: I was intentionally removed from the group of friends, 4%, my money was taken 1.3%), but they can have serious consequences and therefore they are warnings that must be taken seriously (graph 1.5).

The class leader (mentioned by 32.9% of the respondents in the gymnasium and 27.4% of the high school students), as well as those in the school management(mentioned by almost a quarter of the respondents in the gymnasium, but also by those attending high school), are considered the people who intervene more frequently in the case of aggression that takes place in school, between students, the rest of the answers are more fragmented (chart 1.5).

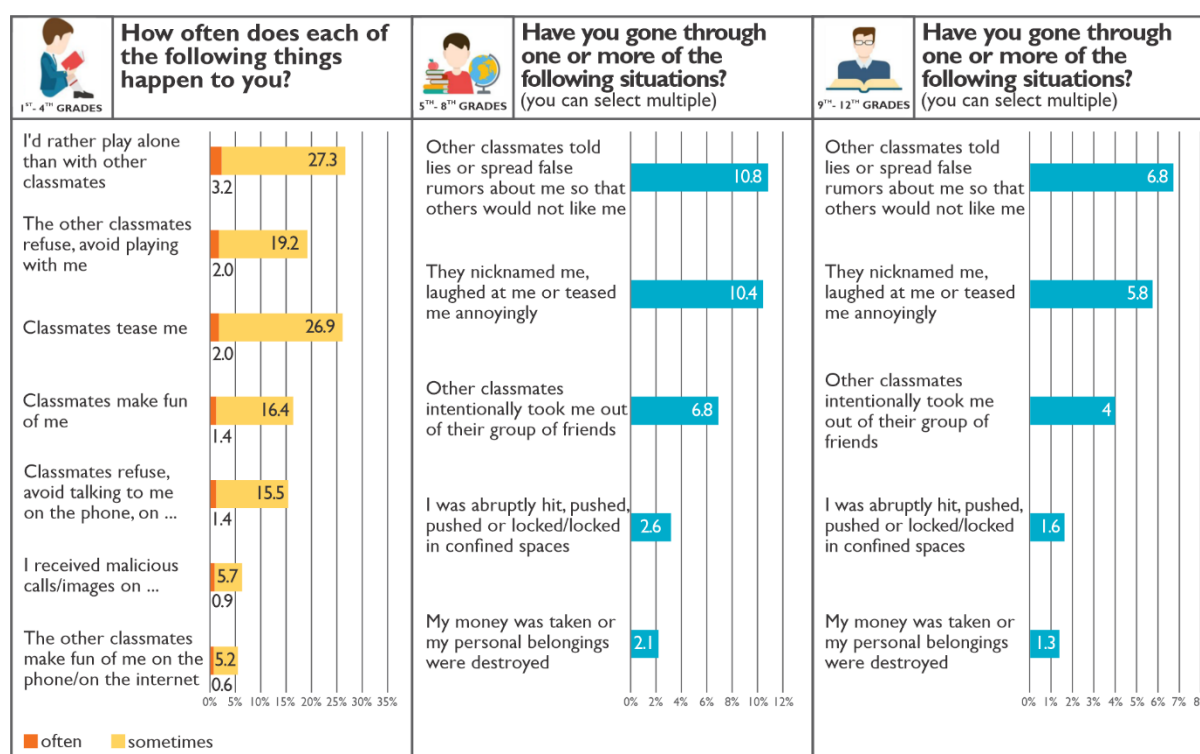
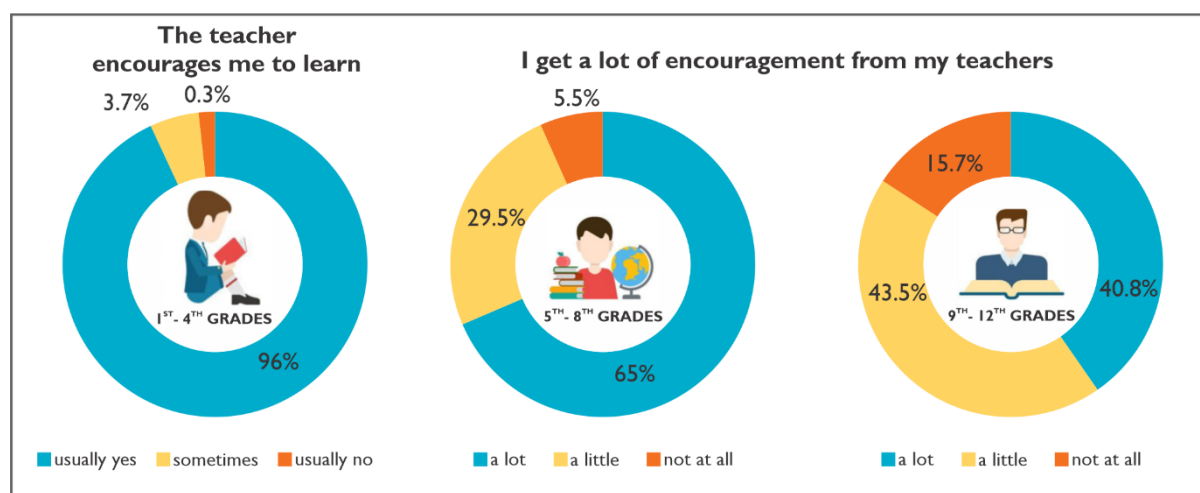


Chart 1.5. Forms of violence suffered by students during school cycles

### *The importance of student-teacher and student-student relationships*

The encouragement received from teachers shows a decreasing trend with the advancement to higher school levels: 96% of primary school students consider that they receive a lot of encouragement from the teacher, compared to 65% of middle school students and only 40.8% of high school students who feel encouraged by their teachers.

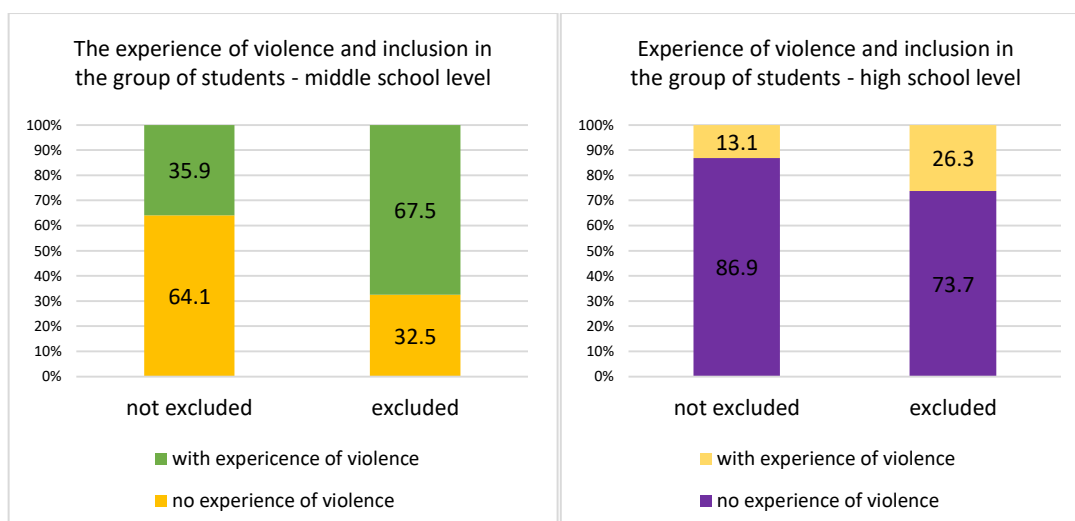
Students who feel listened to and encouraged by teachers are more satisfied with the school and have a greater school attachment compared to their peers, who do not feel at all or only to a small extent listened to and encouraged by teachers (chart 1.6).



*Chart 1.6. Encouraging students from teachers throughout the school year*

### *Relationships between school climate factors*

The results show strong interrelationships between school climate factors investigated by the SCP questionnaire. Satisfaction and school attachment are in interdependent relations with the attitude of the teacher, but also with the relations between the students, and with the school violence. For example, relationships with peers influence school satisfaction and attachment, in the sense that those who get along better with peers, those who feel they have a united class, those who have not had experiences of violence in school, those who they do not feel excluded and those who do not feel marginalized have greater satisfaction with school and an attachment to school. To highlight the effect of exclusionary relations between students, we graphically represented the share of violence suffered by the quartile of students in grades V-VIII and high school students who feel the most excluded compared to those who do not feel excluded and can be seen that exposure to violence of those who feel excluded is almost double, both in middle school and high school (chart 1.7).



*Chart 1.7. Differences in violent experiences for the students who feel excluded and included (in middle schools and high schools)*

## Key conclusions and recommendations

Quantifying aspects of school satisfaction, attractiveness, and attachment to school, involving students in decisions about school life, inclusive school practices, perceptions of equal opportunities, and school violence through the School Climate Profile (SCP) allows school management, teachers, and students to reflect/report to these data and opens the way for the elaboration of projects for the improvement of the relations with the students and between the students, as well as for the increase of the safety in the school.

The data from the profiles of the school climate being indicative tools for projects to improve the relations in the school, they will be able to direct the attention of the school management towards the aspects that present risks, which to reduce with the help of those that constitute resources.

If the risks are mainly at the level of relationships with teachers in the school under investigation, we recommend developing projects aimed at improving relationships between teachers and students, trust in the fair treatment of students in school, and increase support for victims of bullying.

If the risks are mainly at the level of relations between students, then the projects will aim at increasing the cohesion between students, reducing the phenomenon of bullying and other forms of violence between students, as well as students' initiatives to develop their own projects.

If the risks are mainly at the level of school violence, SCP can serve as an assessment basis for a series of interventions aimed at reducing but also preventing violence, which can focus on improving cohesion between students and reducing conflicts between them and teachers, respectively on strengthening the support given to victims of violence by teachers and other adults in the school.

If the risks are primarily related to academic activities, then changes in teaching methods, student focus, organizing classes according to students' preferences, could increase the motivation for learning, but also the attractiveness of the school.

From the data on the positive effect of supportive relationships on the part of teachers on school inclusion, satisfaction, and attachment to school, but also the reduction of violence, it is



important to encourage and praise students, to clearly express the expectations of each student, interest from teachers for the lives of their students outside the school, but also for supporting students who are victims of bullying.

Developing students' prosocial and emotional skills through the application of consistent and coherent programs that develop their communication and relationship skills so that they can empathize with their less popular peers, marginalized in certain contexts or victims of various forms of violence and to empower them in the non-violent management of their own relationships and conflicts. The recommended ways to improve the relations between the students are the activities in teams focused on collaboration, as well as the encouragement of the students in the realization of some projects springing from their own needs, from their initiative.

The data on school climate research in the 15 schools in the Joining Forces group showed the importance of a positive school climate in promoting students' emotional health and maintaining the school's attractiveness for them. As a result, it is advisable to establish the **evaluation of the school climate as a systematic practice in all types of schools**, as part of **educational policies** that promote inclusive school practices, applied in a positive and intolerant relational school climate.

# 1 SCHOOL CLIMATE AND ITS FACTORS

## 1.1 *Current research*

The role of the school in shaping the well-being of children participating in the formal educational process is recognized as commonplace and proven by numerous international and national studies. The psychological well-being of students is related to their family situation, their perception of the community in which they live, their self-perception, their satisfaction with school, and their school performance Bălăţescu and Osvath (2015), Hărăguş et al. (2014). Studies such as those conducted by UNICEF (2017), Casas et al. (2013), Grigoraş et al. (2012), show the reciprocal interrelationship between children's well-being and their personal experiences as students of educational institutions. The psychological well-being of the child depends on the context in which the learning takes place, so the school climate and the school adaptation of the child, school well-being, and also his school performance depend, in addition to intellectual and personality factors, on the contextual characteristics of the learning environment (Ben Arie et al., 2009; Sameroff, 2009).

Among the landmarks of the quality of education and of the definition of a "good school" must necessarily include the aspects that students perceive as ensuring the development of the educational process in a pleasant school climate. Some schools operate in communities where factors such as lack of school base, wear and tear on the building and furnishing, conditions of access to school, lack of facilities, may affect the motivation of children to participate in formal education. Sometimes, in schools that operate in disadvantaged environments, the educational team creates a climate of closeness between teachers and students, by encouraging and motivating students, which leads to their stimulation to mobilize their ability to learn. Sometimes, insufficient concern, overwork, inability to work with students with special needs or characteristics, or teachers' frustrations can affect the school climate and demobilize the categories of students with school difficulties of any kind. At other times, the communities that host the school do not have material problems, they have sufficient educational resources, but they can face bullying between students, exclusion of some and favor of others, penetration of drugs in school, a confrontation between some gangs of students, dissatisfaction and conflicts between teachers and students, which can be behind the common phenomena of disinterest and absenteeism of students or the development of attitudes of defiance of school and authority by students. These issues often remain unobjective, but continue to be barriers to school success for many students. That is why it is necessary to develop an instrument that allows the objectification of the school climate as it is felt by students, through indicators that allow the school management and teachers to outline strategies to work with students to change the school climate in the idea that students feel as comfortable and valued as possible.

Public opinion and educational policies emphasize the importance of investments in the material base of the school, in the technical means to facilitate the instructive-educational process, in teacher training, in the judicious choice of learning content, or the individualization of the instructive-educational process, better adapted to the requirements of individual students. Without

minimizing the importance of all these aspects, this research emphasizes the analysis of subjective factors related to the climate felt by students in school and influencing their well-being and school behavior, bringing or removing the student from his schoolwork and being at the foundation of his educational path, with all its socio-economic consequences.

Research on the Romanian education system has drawn attention to many aspects of the quality of education that need to change and which, despite the commitments of previous governments and the efforts of public and private bodies involved in improving education indicators, have proved difficult to change. In this sense, the international study PISA and the Monitor of education and training in Romania showed that in 2017 almost 40% of Romanian adolescents aged 15 do not have a minimum level of basic skills in reading (38.7%), mathematics (39.9%) and scientific knowledge (38.5%), compared to the European averages of the same year, of 19.7%, 22.2%, and 20.6% respectively. The enrollment rate of students in the middle school cycle alternated between 2010-2015, but showed a downward trend at the end of the cycle (14 years), due to early school leaving (UNICEF, 2017). The influence of the socio-economic environment remains significant in the school performance of students (EU, 2018), and the gap of indicators of educational performance between rural and urban areas in the field of education has remained striking over the past decades. The socio-educational risk index (Human Catalyst, 2020) shows that financially disadvantaged schools are mainly concentrated in poor and marginalized rural areas.

Another aspect much discussed by studies on the quality of education, as well as by media and social media is the security that students have in school from their peers, but also how teachers contribute to ensuring it. A study conducted by IES and UNICEF Romania (2006) mentioned that the perspective of principals, students, and school counselors differs greatly in the frequency and severity of violence in schools, with the vast majority of principals considering that learning was very low, or not at all hindered by acts of intimidation and violence between students. The perspective of students is less optimistic than that of school principals, indicating a higher frequency of disciplinary problems in the school where they study. This perspective was confirmed in a study on the social factors that influence school success, which showed that 33.3% of students felt exposed to violence, 28.3% to sexual harassment, 48.5% to insults, and 40.9% to blackmail (Dămean și Roth, 2009). Studies by Save the Children with a national sample revealed that 31% of respondents were excluded from the children's group, and 37% revealed that they were victims of the spread of humiliating and denigrating rumors about them in the school environment. The number of those who witnessed such situations of bullying is more than double and so is the percentage of beatings and pushing, which even if they are considered minor physical violence, are not without dangers (Save the Children, 2016). UNICEF (2018) ranks Romania among the countries at high risk of bullying, with a total percentage of 56.95% and a large gender gap between boys (65.01%) and girls (49.93%). From the data of the study Children's Worlds (Bălțătescu & Oșvat, 2015), it appears that in the school environment 40% of students were victims of violence from other children and 44% suffered psychological violence, being excluded from social relationships with other children in the class.

Regarding the phenomenon of school dropout, the study of cohorts of school children indicated that, during the period 2010-2016, 1 in 10 children under ten do not participate in formal preschool or school education. Leaving the education system persisted at the gymnasium level, losing one percent per school year, per cohort, so that in the age group between 15-18 years the enrollment rate in formal education to reach only 3 out of 4 children (UNICEF, 2017). According to the recent study of MEC (2020) in primary and secondary education, the dropout rate in 2018/2019

was 2.1% (percentage representing 35.3 thousand students). Compared to the previous year, the value of the indicator is increasing (p. 23). In the period 2015-2018, the dropout rate in high school had a constant value (2.5%). At the end of the 2018/2019 school year, a number of 15,513 students were in the situation of dropping out of school (MEC, 2020: 36). Rural data on school leaving without completing primary or secondary school are the most worrying, amounting to 23.1%. Thus, almost a quarter of rural students enrolled in school drop out of education during the first eight years of school. In the urban environment, these losses are also significant, at 8.2%. Regarding gender differences, they do not seem too big, being in favor of girls (16.1% for boys and 14.5% for girls) (MEC, 2020: 28).

This phenomenon of early school leaving is a lasting feature of the Romanian education system and raises many questions about the roles and responsibilities of various participants in education, from decision-makers of educational policy measures to employees of the education system, students' families, and students themselves. Given the data showing that school dropout is higher and manifests itself at an earlier age in rural areas than in urban areas (UNICEF, 2017; IRSE, 2018, 2020), the educational offer of rural schools and their attractiveness, respectively the school climate can be important levers in keeping children inside the education system.

Recognizing that the risks of dropping out and failing school are increased among children with various special needs and for those from socially disadvantaged families (UNICEF, 2017), especially for families from poor Roma communities (FRA), the issue of the capacity for inclusion of schools attended by these categories of children, inclusion that does not refer both to the adaptation of educational content and teaching methods, and to the school climate to ensure equal treatment, free from prejudice, tolerant of cultural differences, safety both from the perspective of students' health, as well as from the perspective of violence of any kind.

As a national context of research, it should be remembered that starting with November 22, 2019, the education law was amended, prohibiting all forms of psychological violence - bullying. The methodological rules (secondary legislation) needed to enable the law to be implemented entered into force on 11 June 2020. The new regulations set the framework for a flexible intervention mechanism to promote activities aimed at preventing and combating all forms of violence and to develop their own strategies and action plans to ensure and maintain an appropriate school climate for quality education, as a precondition for the prevention of bullying.

## ***1.2 The socio-ecological model for analyzing school success and its factors***

Based on the socio-ecological model of education analysis (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Hărăguș et al., 2014) which, in addition to individual, psychological factors, emphasizes the importance of social context in the equation of school success, in this research we want to draw attention to the **importance of climate school**. This is an area of investigation that moderates the involvement of key actors in school life and for which effective intervention strategies can be planned at a minimal cost. Through concerted actions of students and teachers, the school climate can be shaped in the direction of focusing on the needs of students and achieving the objectives of the educational process.

In addition to improving the material base of schools and improving teachers, the lines of action for changes in the Romanian education system have so far aimed, among other things, in taking into account the views of students, especially through their representatives on student councils. The students' positions led to the elaboration of the *Students' Statute (2016)*<sup>1</sup>, which reiterated the principle of focusing education on students and their right to be consulted and to express their opinions in accordance with their learning needs and interests, the specifics of the school and the needs of the community. However, in pedagogical practice, the involvement of students is more situational and oriented towards high school students. Primary and secondary school students, the most withdrawn, those with poor learning outcomes, or those with disabilities are rarely considered as significant resources for evaluating the educational process, for planning decisions or introducing changes. Listening to children and adolescents, although enshrined in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and enshrined in the law of education, is a rare school practice, remaining in many schools at the desired level.

The socio-ecological model of the school climate takes into account the relationship between satisfaction with the school climate and the socio-economic situation of the children, finding greater dissatisfaction regarding students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. These differences are probably due to the attendance of less-equipped schools, in poor/rural/disadvantaged areas, where the share of well-trained teachers is lower, as such the opinions of students in these schools reflect the division of education quality, as described by research under the auspices of Human Catalyst (Greta Marin, L. et al., 2020). However, students who come from poor socio-economic backgrounds perceive the support provided by teachers in a more favorable way than students who come from a high socio-economic background, but are more critical of peers, constituting groups in which they feel supported (Way et al., 2007).

### **1.3 Defining the school climate and its factors**

The school climate can only be conceived systemically and multidimensionally, being a result of the complex interrelationships between individuals and groups involved (students, teachers, school managers) and the organizational culture of the school, community, and society (encompassing the norms, traditions, and values regarding education and learning). The literature refers to the school climate, school health, classroom climate, and interrelational climate. Sometimes, distinctions are made between the latter concepts and the school climate. Even though the definition of the school climate has been done in various ways, the generally accepted elements of the concept concern the common mentalities, fears, values, and norms of the students regarding the school in which they study. Researchers also agree on the role of the school climate in shaping students' emotional health and cognitive efficiency (Orzea, 2016).

Starting from the analysis of the social factors of education, the concern for the school climate, as a motivational resource, as an incentive and source of attachment for students to the educational institution they attend becomes a key aspect of efforts to reform the functioning of schools, but also to reconceptualize the functions and roles of schools in all educational policies. The

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<sup>1</sup> Student status available at [https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/OM\\_4742\\_10.08.2016-Statut\\_elevi\\_2016\\_0.pdf](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/OM_4742_10.08.2016-Statut_elevi_2016_0.pdf)

present research aimed to develop and pilot a diagnostic tool for the profile of schools in terms of their school climate, designed as the social context in which the educational process takes place. The school climate is characterized by a certain structure (more or less cohesive) of relationships between students, a support network for their educational needs, but also by a certain level of security in the school (violence of any kind, bullying, destruction, alcohol or drug use, etc.).

The school climate refers to the quality of school life and is based on its patterns, reflecting the norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching-learning practices, and school management. A safe and supportive school environment, in which students have positive social relationships and in which they are respected, involved in school work, where their sense of personal value is cultivated, becomes a climate that has a positive impact on their mental, social, and school development.

*A positive school climate* is based on the values of trust, respect, and cohesion manifested in the relationship between students, between students and school management, respectively teachers, but also in the relationship between teachers and school management, respectively between them and students' family members. Trust is seen as an essential element in the proper functioning of the organization, forming the basis for effective and creative cooperation and communication. The benefits of trust can be very high, especially when the group is relatively stable over a period of time, as is the case in the school system.

*Respect between members of a school* implies lasting relationships, empathy between members, but also trust that others behave honestly (Gonder și Hymes, 1994; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1999). Respect for all members of the school community - regardless of position as a student, teacher, leadership or parent - is necessary to strengthen the positive climate of the school, and other authors show that respect for students can reduce violence between them, by showing concern for students' personalities and investment in mutual knowledge. Other important values at the school level, in terms of the school climate, are *cohesion, collaboration, and collegiality*. According to Gonder and Hymes (1994), we can talk about cohesion in a school, when staff shares certain common values, such as confidence in students' ability to progress as a result of the education they receive, as such form a communion dedicated to educating young people. In cohesive schools and classes, students and teachers value each other and are proud to be part of the school. Thus, cohesion can improve the system by creating a sense of pride in "our school", which is the foundation for conforming to school values.

Positive relationships between teachers and students are established with greater chances in case of respecting the students' views by teachers and *recognizing students' ability to make decisions, valuing students, supporting them by teachers, but also respecting teachers by students* (Orzea, 2016). Regarding the relationships between classmates, they are positive insofar as they are based on the same values: *acceptance among classmates, respect, support, and mutual appreciation*.

Research conducted in various cultural contexts shows that a positive climate is associated with increased motivation for learning and well-being (Dweck, 2002), less violence (Cocoradă and Clinciu, 2009), resilience, the ability to respond to challenges and to find solutions (Cocoradă & Orzea, 2017). Therefore, safety in the school, the support of classmates, as essential aspects of the positive climate, are predictors of the well-being of students, which in turn facilitates learning and school success (Hărăguș et al., 2014).

*The negative school climate* is built in antithesis with the positive one, being characterized by lack of trust and appreciation between teachers, management and students, as well as by the lack of involvement of teachers and students in the decision-making process of the school (Cohen și colab., 2009). The negative school climate at the level of the group of teachers is shaped by the same dimensions, but which tend towards the negative pole: lack of trust, appreciation, and support, which leads to job dissatisfaction and lack of motivation to achieve performance. In schools characterized by a negative climate, closed to the community, the relationship with parents is often strained, which generates, among the latter, the feeling that they are not treated as equals in their relationships with teachers. Therefore, the positive attitude towards school, even if it exists, is reduced and will make it difficult for parents - students - teachers to work together to achieve educational goals.

#### **1.4 Action levers on the school climate**

Analyzes of the effects of authoritarian and democratic styles on the learning process date back to the last century and have shown over the years the benefits of the democratic, participatory style, in which students are actively encouraged to take part in the decision-making process. If the authoritarian style is aimed at the extent to which teachers use external control, punitive discipline, emphasis on competition and obedience, the participatory democratic style encourages cooperation, the sharing of responsibilities, and respect for students' rights. When students' opinions are respected and valued, students' involvement in learning will be more responsible. The contribution of students in the creation of school regulations and other documents of their own school gives them a sense of affiliation and involvement, so such participation is beneficial, including for those who face behavioral problems or school failure. Such data attesting to the superiority of democratic school culture, based on the assumed participation of actors from schools in Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland, and Romania, were recently collected in a volume promoting the "The Whole Community" Model (CoE, 2017: 42). The authors conclude that schools that emphasize the active participation of students, along with teachers, and take into account their views in developing internal rules and procedures of the school, in curriculum selection have an academic progress in assessments and fewer problematic behaviors.

Even though learning involves individual cognitive and emotional processes, students' motivation to learn is significantly influenced by the supportive social environment, which refers to the help provided by others, adults, and children. Close student-student and student-adult / teacher relationships are a strong predictor of children's mental health. Students' motivation and school involvement increase as teachers, family, and friends are seen as supportive. Schools that promote students' school involvement, try to develop their sense of belonging by personalizing training and creating a supportive social environment, in which adults show interest in students and their experiences in school and outside of school. Numerous studies have established correlations between identifying supportive relationships within the school and academic success (Hărăguș et al., 2014). The support perceived by students from teachers is not limited only to the academic aspect, but also has an emotional aspect (Orzea, 2016) that mediates the student's relationship with the learning effort. According to the theory of self-determination (Ryan and So, 2000), students are



much more likely to internalize the values and recommendations of people they feel attached to. This behavior of students is favored by the warm, supportive attitude of teachers towards students.

*The relationships between students and teachers* are significant for the formation of attitudes towards the school climate. When students do not perceive school as a supportive environment for their needs for autonomy, emotional support, their psychological and behavioral health is in jeopardy (Dweck, 2002).

School environments with a favorable academic climate are those that are able to channel the energies and attention of students towards learning and the development of their academic skills. Schools where teachers provide feedback on homework, support students in achieving their school goals, and encourage student involvement in achieving school success, face fewer behavioral problems (Wang and Dishion, 2012). Ensuring a learning environment that emphasizes student autonomy and has realistic demands on students increases students' sense of self-efficacy, and prevents their psychological disorders. The school climate with exaggerated requirements, or the one that does not stimulate students' thinking, respectively with an increased level of stress, leads to a negative attitude towards the educational process, creates doubts about their own learning capacity, leading to decreased interest in school and to school failure.

Children are concerned about *relationships with their peers* and become emotionally attached to them at all ages. With the transition to adolescence, interest in equality increases, and psychological and emotional dependence also increases. As school success studies show, students who are supported, popular, and accepted into peer groups are more likely to achieve school success, while those who are rejected or have a low level of acceptance in the peer group face academic difficulties (Hărăguș et al. 2014). Exclusion from the peer group, isolation of students, but also their teasing lead to alienation from school and the formation of maladaptive behaviors. At the same time, dissatisfaction with the school increases, the climate being appreciated as a negative one, at which point the school involvement of the students is reduced, and the consequence is, most of the times, the school failure.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study surveys the perception of the school climate of students from 15 general and high schools in rural areas, small urban areas and/or serving marginalized communities - contacted by the Joining Forces consortium. For this, it was necessary to choose scales, respectively to build tools that would put under the microscope the students' satisfaction with the way the school represents their interests and meets their educational needs, but also those of personal development, socialization and affirmation, specific to childhood. Schools, as institutions with democratic values, policies and practices, face growing expectations of children and their families to prevent any form of violence in the school, and to provide an education at the highest possible level, but without affecting the well-being of children.

According to the publications (Bowen and Richman, 2005; David-Kacso, 2010; Hărăguș et al., 2014; Orzea, 2016; Human Catalyst, 2020) the support received from teachers, the safety of the school where they study, the learning climate in the classroom, the satisfactions offered by the school, the behavior of friends, the endowments of the school, the cooperation between students and between teachers and students clearly influences the success of the educational process. Although the present research did not aim at a new verification of some hypotheses related to the role of these factors, the analyzes performed following the application of the questionnaire once again confirm the importance of the mentioned factors.

### 2.1 *Purpose and objectives of the research*

**The aim of the research** is to develop study procedures and tools that allow the fine capture of students' attitudes towards aspects of the school climate which, according to individual subjectivity, generate differences in motivation for learning. In the study of the school climate we started from previous research, which showed that the way the student perceives safety in school, support, indifference or dissatisfaction from teachers, acceptance or rejection from classmates, exclusion or inclusion, acceptance or discrimination, equality of chances or preference in grading, whether or not to create opportunities for student involvement are all interconnected with students' motivation for learning and students' response to school tasks and behavior in school (Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Dweck, 2002; Hărăguș et al., 2014; Orzea, 2016; Angi, 2019; Bălțătescu & Osvath, 2015; Casas et al., 2013, Ben-Arieh et al., 2009).

#### **Research objectives**

1. Development and application of a **tool for assessing school climate factors**.
2. Elaboration of **individualized school profiles**, for the group of 15 general schools and high schools proposed by Joining Forces Romania, to detect the resources at the school level in order to ensure a pleasant school climate for students, but also risk factors that may affect students' well-being.

3. According to the concept of data-based practice, **encouraging schools to discuss SCP outcomes with teachers and students and supporting students in developing projects** aimed at improving the school climate.

4. **Description of a methodology of participatory actions of students, starting from the participatory work carried out in this pilot stage.**

5. Elaboration of conclusions and recommendations for the extension of research and participatory actions based on the evaluation of the school climate profile.

The inclusion of the idea of developing student projects among the objectives of the project started from the idea that if we want such change projects in schools to be considered by students as interesting and motivating from their point of view, students' proposals must be taken seriously, that is, they themselves must be involved in research, but also in the development of intervention projects.

## 2.2 Conducting research

- a. In the research preparation phase, for the elaboration of research tools, we reviewed the specialized literature and organized discussions with the experts of the Joining Forces consortium for the **selection of scales and items from the questionnaires used in the research**. The way of working for choosing the scales is shown below.
- b. At the same time, student advisory groups (SAG) were organized at the three school levels, from one of the schools that accepted the collaboration with us as a pilot research school („Radu Negru” National College Făgăraș, Brașov County), which agreed to focus groups with primary school students (*guide focus group for primary school students can be found in Annex 2.1*), secondary school (*focus group guide for secondary school students can be found in Annex 2.2*) and high school (*focus group guide can be found in Annex 2.3*). *The focus group guide for teachers can be found in Annex 2.4, and the focus group guide for parents can be found in Annex 2.5.* They aimed on the one hand to connect and inform researchers with students' priorities and attitudes regarding the school climate, and on the other hand to prepare this group of students to be with us throughout the project.
- c. Also during this period, the forms for **informing students and parents were developed, as well as the consent forms** for parents (Annex 2.6) and for students who participated in focus groups (Annex 2.7). The Joining Forces Romania Alliance accepted the idea of the passive agreement (meaning that the parents have the option to refuse the research, but if they do not send the refusal, it means that they agree for the students to participate in the research). Parents who do not agree to have their children participate in completing the questionnaire will respond by mentioning the name of the child to whom the questionnaire will not be sent. Students under the age of 16 were also informed that they needed their parents' consent, asked if they had obtained this agreement, and if not, then the questionnaire was not included in the sample.

- d. For testing the questionnaires we were supported by the National College "Radu Negru" Făgăraș, Brașov County, Târlisua Vocational School, Bistrița-Năsăud County and the "Ciprian Porumbescu" Art College, Suceava. In the piloting phase, answers were obtained from 126 students from the primary cycle, 190 students from the gymnasium cycle and 179 students from the high school cycle.
- e. The sampling of the classes included in the project started from the students' numbers of the schools and is presented in detail below.
- f. In order to inform the schools contracted in the project, the partner organizations kept in touch with the school management. In order to mobilize and keep in touch with the directorates of the educational units, the consortium organized two **webinars** in which we presented the concept of the project and communicated the procedures for sending the consent and information sheets to parents and students. These were followed by two other webinars addressed to parents in which we presented the project and how to involve students in assessing the school climate.
- g. Each principal was informed of the classes to which the questionnaires were to be applied and was asked to **provide information** on the process of data collection to the teachers and leaders of the classes included in the sample, informing them of the work to be carried out. The principals or the contact person in the school provided us with the contact details of the teachers and homeroom teachers of the classes included in the sample, in order to receive the **information related to obtaining the consent of the parents** and to send the link to which the questionnaires can be completed.
- h. We sent to the principals the internet addresses where the questionnaires were to be filled in, specific for each of the 3 cycles of education (primary, secondary, high school), and they passed them on to the teachers and homeroom teachers. Teachers and homeroom teachers had evidence of refusal from parents and **did not send the link to children whose parents refused** to complete the questionnaire.
- i. With the help of contacts from the JF Alliance, researchers and teachers, primary school students were assisted in completing the questionnaires, through **meetings on their platforms or on their online groups**.
- j. *Consulting students on school climate questionnaires.* Student consultation activities (focus groups) were organized on the questionnaires developed at each primary, secondary and high school level. The activities included warm-up exercises, group cohesion exercises, questions about school in general, then punctually about relationships with classmates, teachers, school safety, sources of help. The questions referred to the participants' experiences so far, recent changes and future expectations regarding the school climate. Focus organized groups served as incubators for student advisory groups (SAG).

### **2.3      *Research ethics***

The participation of the children throughout the project was voluntary, both in terms of data collection through questionnaires, participation in focus groups, and in advisory groups that designed and implemented projects to improve the school climate. No personal data such as personal numerical code or other contact data could be collected, recorded or stored that could lead to the identification of the people participating in the research, respecting the GDPR rules. The data collected and stored were treated confidentially, statistically processed, respectively were analyzed and cited by researchers without being able to be connected by the person who provided them. In the data collection process, all participants were informed about the purpose and conditions under which they participated in the research and signed a participation agreement. The participation of children under the age of 16 in the research was conditioned by the consent of their parents, who in turn were informed in advance about the research. All research participants were informed that they would be able to decide at any time whether to withdraw from the process.

### **2.4      *Sampling strategy***

The objective of the research being to obtain profiles on the school climate, for each of the educational institutions involved in this pilot research by the Joining Forces consortium we aimed to have a number of questionnaires in each school that allow us to perform statistical processing both at school, as well as on educational cycles.

Given that we complied with the obligation to request parental consent for their children's participation in the pilot research and the children's right to decide whether or not to respond to questionnaires following their information about its purposes, the planning of the participating groups took into account that the number of completed questionnaires will be less than the number of students in the selected classes. In addition to the lack of motivation of some students and the reluctance of some parents, we were also aware of the difficulty of some children to access the questionnaire by connecting online, either due to the lack of a device or the internet connection. So the sampling was stratified, random in each school. The first layer in each school was given by the level of education (elementary, middle school, high school). Where the number of classes and the enrollment in these classes at a certain level were high, but the classes had a different profile (e.g. vocational, high school with a technological profile, vocational high school and high school with a theoretical profile), in the first layer of the level of education) was added that of educational profiles (e.g. Theoretical High School of Amărăștii de Jos). In schools where enrollment was less than or equal to 80 students / level, all classes were selected. Thus, a sample of 109 classes was planned, of which 31 at primary level, 53 at gymnasium level and 25 at high school level, with a total number of 2067 students, of which 585 at primary level, 993 at gymnasium level and 489 at the high school level. In the data collection phase, 364 primary school students, 873 middle school students and 792 high school students were retained in the database, in total the sample numbering 2029 students.

## 2.5 Data collection

The data collection took place between December 1, 2020 - February 15, 2021, during the first semester of the 2020/2021 school year, during the Coronavirus pandemic, when education was conducted in online format. The questionnaires were also completed online, using the *SurveyMonkey* platform, on the secure server of the Terre des hommes organization. The target schools were contacted by the representatives of the organizations in the consortium, through the principals, who sent the link for the questionnaires to the leaders, teachers and homeroom teachers of the selected classes.

*Table 1.1 Number of classes planned to be included in the research*

Grade level	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Class no.	16	16	14	14	15	13	10	14	12	6
Urban	7	7	4	4	4	4	3	6	6	2
Rural	9	9	10	10	11	9	7	8	6	4
Total students	317	306	246	283	288	221	222	281	195	111
Total students/cycle of education	623		1038				809			

Given that the selection of schools was targeted by the Joining Forces consortium to schools located in localities or are attended by children from low socio-economic communities, neither the students included in the research nor the group of selected schools constitute a nationally representative sample. To these observations is added the fact that some students did not have access to online questionnaires. However, the number of 15 schools in 12 different counties, as well as the total group of 2029 respondents makes the research results worth a careful study by education analysts and reflections on the proposed change measures based on the data. In the data collection phase, 364 primary school students, 873 middle school students and 792 high school students completed the questionnaire. In the case of partially completed scales, but to which at least half of the items were answered, the score was replaced by the average of the completed items.

## 2.6 Preparation of questionnaires

The elaboration of the tool for data collection started from several questionnaires confirmed by the specialized literature as validity and with high internal consistency: *“School success profile”* (SSP) (Bowen & Richman, 2005), adapted and validated in Romania (Dămean, Roth, 2009; Roth, Hărăguș et al., 2014), *“School climate questionnaire”* (Cocoradă et al., 2018), *“Questionnaire for students’ school climate”* (Orzea, 2016), *the scale of school attractiveness and the scale of attachment to the school* (Orzea, 2016), *“Participation for Protection Questionnaire (P4P)”* (Siobhan, coord., 2018), *“Olweus victimization bullying questionnaire”* (Olweus, 1996). All the mentioned questionnaires were validated by previous researches in Romania.

The scales were chosen and discussed by the researchers together with the team of experts/professionals Joining Forces. Once the scales were chosen, the questionnaires for the three levels of pre-university education were composed and prepared both in printed and online format.

The scales used were grouped into the following areas: *I. Attitude towards school* (school satisfaction, school attractiveness, attachment to school, attitude towards online school, perception of inclusive school policies (guidelines) and practices; *II. Students' relationships with teachers* (teacher support relationships with students, academic support for learning and conflicting relationships with teachers); *III. Relationships between students* (support between students, problematic behaviors of students); *IV. Perception of school safety* (forms of violence between students, violence suffered by the respondent, the place where the violence takes place, the forms of help that the respondents use); *V. Endowments that influence the school climate and learning* (school facilities and family facilities); *VI. Expectations towards school and the desire to change students to improve the school climate*.

## **2.7 Consulting students and piloting questionnaires**

As I described, among the procedures for building the questionnaire we included consulting students. The scales included in the proposed instrument for a certain level were discussed by a group of students from that level. Thus, initially, the scales were offered for completion and later discussed by groups of students from all three levels.<sup>2</sup> The students' observations were to check the translations of some English expressions, according to the original tools, to make the questions easier to understand for the different age groups and to bring them closer to the specific situation of educational functioning during the Coronavirus pandemic. As a result, the questions of some scales validated in the specialized literature came to undergo some changes depending on the school level, according to the children's recommendations, and required a piloting for a group of students of each level, which would allow the calculation of internal consistency (Cronbach alpha). The piloting was carried out on a group of 126 students from the primary cycle, 190 students from the gymnasium cycle and 179 students from the high school cycle, after which some items and some scales were eliminated from certain school levels.

## **2.8 Presentation of the scales with their psychometric data resulting from the research**

The aspects covered by the scales recommended by us are the following: school satisfaction, attractiveness and attachment to school; involvement of students in school life and decisions; the inclusive character of the school and the perception of equal opportunities; the educational climate of the school and the centering of education on the student; student support from teachers and conflicts with teachers; student support from peers and student relationships; students' maladaptive behaviors and students' involvement in violent behaviors; bullying, those who commit aggression, the place where violence takes place and the ways in which students use it to seek help; adult violence and how students use it to seek help; school facilities and family facilities; attitude towards online school.

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<sup>2</sup> We would like to thank the director of the National College "Radu Negru" Făgăraș, and her students, the director of the Art College "Ciprian Porumbescu" from Suceava and his students, as well as the director of the Vocational School from Târlisua and his students for their involvement in testing, adapting and piloting the questionnaire.



## I. Attitude towards school:

**The scale of school satisfaction.** The scale was taken from the "School Success Profile" questionnaire (SSP, Bowen & Richman, 2005, adapted and validated in Romania (Hărăguș et al., 2014). The initial scale has 7 items that capture the general satisfaction of students with the school, with the knowledge transmitted through school education and with relationships with classmates and teachers. In order to reduce the dimensions of the questionnaire, in the one dedicated to the high school level, 5 items were kept, and in the gymnasium cycle, 6 items. In the gymnasium cycle, the questions also include items on the school's attractiveness, which probes the students' general satisfaction with the school, the extent to which the school is perceived as pleasant and able to arouse students' knowledge interests (curiosity). Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much"). At the high school level the maximum score is 15, and at the gymnasium level it is 18, scores that indicate that the student is very satisfied with the school he attends. Psychometric indicators show a good internal consistency: in the primary  $M=10.99$ ;  $DS=1.39$  and  $C\alpha=0.70$ , at the gymnasium  $M=16.79$ ;  $DS=1.81$ ,  $C\alpha=0.82$ , and in high school  $M=13.3$ ,  $DS=1.94$  and  $C\alpha=0.77$ .

At the level of primary school classes we used the **scale of school attractiveness and school satisfaction**, taken from the doctoral thesis developed by Orzea (2016) on school climate, which probes the extent to which school is perceived as pleasant, arouses knowledge interests (curiosity) of children and general satisfaction with school. The scale has four questions. The answer categories are: 1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much". The psychometric data from these researches indicate, at the primary level where the scale was used, a fairly good internal consistency, despite the low number of items:  $C\alpha=0.70$ ;  $M=10.99$ ;  $DS=1.39$ .

**The scale of attachment to school.** This scale includes items relevant to the emotions experienced by students in relation to school. It is based on the scale of Affiliation to school of students in the Questionnaire for school climate - students (Cocoradă et al., 2018). The initial scale consists of 12 items, of which 4 have been kept in this questionnaire to reduce the load of the questionnaire. Also, the items have been adapted to the situation of online education and reflect the students' desire to meet with classmates, with teachers. A high score obtained for this scale expresses the feeling of pride towards the school and positive emotions experienced within the school, attachment to the school (Orzea, 2016). Items are positively coded, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="not at all", 2="little", 3="a lot"). The maximum score is 12, which indicates that the respondent is very attached to the school. The psychometric data at primary level indicate a lower but acceptable internal consistency, to which the modification of some items depending on the situation of online education probably contributed, but at secondary and high school level the Cronbach alpha coefficient is high. Thus, at the primary level we have  $M=8.40$ ;  $DS=1.08$  and  $C\alpha=0.66$ , at gymnasium level  $M=10.0$ ;  $DS=2.09$  and  $C\alpha=0.83$ ; and at high school level  $M=8.94$ ;  $DS=2.31$  and  $C\alpha=0.84$ .

**The scale of students' involvement in school life.** Given the importance of students taking on roles and responsibilities in the school environment, in SSP, School Success Profile (Bowen & Richman, 2005; Hărăguș et al., 2014) we took questions that probe students' perceptions of the opportunities they have, those of **actively participate in school life**. These opportunities refer to the involvement of students in choosing the head of the class / representatives in the student council, the

involvement in discussing the problems of the class and the school, conducting classes at their proposal and consulting them on the options offered by the school. The scale has 3 Likert steps and contains the following answer categories: 1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much". By summing up the answers of the 4 items that make up the scale, a total score of the scale was generated, the high scores meaning an involvement of students in the higher (good) school life. Psychometric data indicate at primary level  $M=8.40$ ;  $DS=1.74$  and  $C\alpha=0.66$ , at the gymnasium:  $M=9.54$ ;  $DS=1.54$ ,  $C\alpha=0.54$  and at high school level  $M=9.76$ ;  $DS=0.43$  and the internal consistency expressed by the coefficient  $C\alpha=0.66$ . The scale has been maintained in the gymnasium, although it will have to be revised through future applications, due to the importance of the topic of involving students in school life. One explanation for the lower consistency is that the vast majority of students are involved in choosing the head of the class and an equally high percentage do not feel involved in school issues: they are two totally different things in current school practice, and all this in the students' view. It is not related to the involvement of the parents, which in our country means the meetings with the parents, and about the administrative council in which the parents' representatives participate, many students are not aware. For questions that are considered important, it is proposed to apply them as stand-alone questions. In a future test of the questionnaire on a national sample, this scale will have to be rethought, especially for the gymnasium level.

***The scale of inclusive culture in school.*** The scale was taken from the Inclusion Index (Booth and Ainscow, 2005) and was used to survey the opinions of high school students on aspects of school culture that value diversity: how newcomers are received in school, if parents are involved in school life, if students are helped to adapt, if teachers consider all students equally important (without favoritism) and if they collaborate with each other. For the primary level, the scale focused more on supporting students' adaptation to the requirements of the school curriculum, through questions aimed at clarity of school assignments and clarity of assessment criteria. The scale consists of 7 items. Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much"). The maximum score is 21, corresponding to the respondent's perception that the school is characterized by a high degree of inclusion. Given the complexity of the aspect to which it refers, this scale was applied only in high school with a good internal consistency, with  $M=17.74$ ;  $DS=2.91$  and  $C\alpha=0.81$ . The scale should be tested at the level of middle school classes, as it assesses the perception of the school's openness to all students, including newcomers and parents of students. At the primary school level, the scale was adapted and renamed, as the ***School Integration Scale***, to test children's adaptation to the school curriculum and their integration into the school. Psychometric indicators are also promising at the primary level:  $M=11.36$ ;  $DS=1.23$ ;  $C\alpha=0.70$ .

***The scale of inclusive school practices.*** The scale is based on the questionnaire for high school students in the Inclusion Index (Booth and Ainscow, 2005) and was chosen to find out about educational practices that ensure school inclusion of students, and that can eliminate learning barriers for students with different characteristics and needs, through questions such as: teachers manage to teach lessons that everyone can understand; teachers know how to respond in cases where students have behavior problems; the school's concern for respecting people from different backgrounds and cultures and encouraging students to help each other. The scale contains 9 items. Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="total disagreement", 2="disagree", 3="agree", 4="total agreement"). The maximum score is 36,

which means that the respondent considers that inclusive educational practices are used to a great extent in school. The psychometric characteristics of the scale are:  $M=25.80$ ;  $DS=4.81$  and  $C\alpha=0.85$ , which urges us to trust the scale's ability to gather information about how teachers manage the diversity of individual characteristics of students in the classroom and in the school, respectively.

***The educational climate of the school (student-centered).*** To assess the perception of the educational climate of the school and its focus on the needs of high school students we took the scale *Educational climate* in school of the SSP questionnaire (Bowen and Richman, 2005), which includes 6 items on the quality of education received through their school. Scale items measure students' perceptions of how teachers and school leaders appreciate and value students' interests and success, rate them according to their performance, and note their progress. The initial scale is composed of 8 items, of which for the purpose of this questionnaire 2 items were eliminated, reaching a scale consisting of 6 items, the scale remaining with very good internal consistency:  $M=15.80$ ;  $DS=2.53$  and  $C\alpha=0.84$ . Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much"). The maximum score is 18, which indicates that the respondent sees the educational climate in the school in a positive way. The good internal consistency of the scale recommends the further use of the scale and its testing at gymnasium level.

***The scale of participation in online school.*** Given the context in which the study was conducted - the COVID-19 pandemic - two scales were introduced regarding online education. The scale measures students' views on the organization of the school during a pandemic and their involvement in online education. The scale of online school participation has been taken from the Pandemic School Climate Questionnaire (Youthtruth, 2020), on school logistics and involvement in school activities, and surveys the extent to which students feel that if they learn online they can focus and are motivated to learn, i.e. if this form of learning helps them to develop and if their grading system is clear. At the gymnasium level, a scale of 5 items was used. For the questionnaire administered at high school level, the Relationship dimension of the above mentioned questionnaire was taken over, reaching 7 items. Additional items relate to the extent to which students perceive teachers' interest in students' lives outside of school and their willingness to provide additional support as needed. Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much"). The maximum score is 15 for middle school and 21 for high school, meaning a very good adaptation to online education from school and students. For high school, psychometric data indicate  $M=16.41$ ;  $DS=3.06$ ;  $C\alpha=0.79$ , and in high school:  $M=12.70$ ;  $DS=1.84$ ;  $C\alpha=0.66$ .

***The scale of difficulties in online school.*** The questions on this scale survey students' opinions about the difficulties encountered in this form of device-assisted learning, the preference for the location of the educational process (home versus the educational unit) and the support from parents. The scale totals 5 items (4 in the primary cycle) regarding the difficulties that students may have in connection with the online school, difficulties related to both the technical aspects themselves and those resulting from the living conditions of the students. To calculate the score, all items are rated positively, the overall score is obtained by summing the scores of the items (1="usually yes", 2="sometimes", 3="usually no"). The maximum score is 12, which means that the respondent did not create difficulties in conducting online courses. In the group of primary classes, where the scale

aimed to gather information about the ability of students in grades III and IV to adapt to online education, including the help received and their difficulties, it was found to have a low consistency,  $M=10.00$ ;  $DS=1.74$ ;  $C\alpha=0.62$ , actually comprising items from originally different scales. Psychometric data indicate for the gymnasium:  $M=9.68$ ;  $DS=0.99$ ;  $C\alpha=0.59$ , and in high school:  $M=6.36$ ;  $DS=1.69$  and  $C\alpha=0.61$ . This scale has a weaker internal consistency, so in the future, if the interest in evaluating online education is maintained, it is advisable to make changes to make the scale more consistent.

## **II. To evaluate the field of students' relationships with teachers, we used the following scales:**

***The scale of teacher support(including primary school).*** The scale is taken from the SSP questionnaire (Bowen and Richman, 2005) and captures the extent to which students perceive their teachers as supportive, who care about students and their academic success. The scale highlights the extent to which students perceive understanding, respect, encouragement, listening, interest from the teacher. The initial scale consists of 8 items, but to reduce the magnitude of the instrument, some items have been removed so that the internal consistency of the scale does not change. Thus, a number of 6 items was reached in the case of the gymnasium cycle. In the high school questionnaire, the 6 items from SSP were completed with two items from the "Academic rigor" scale of the same questionnaire. Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much"). At the high school level the maximum score is 24, and at the gymnasium level it is 18, scores that indicate that the student feels very supported by the teachers. Psychometric data indicate an acceptable internal consistency for the primary level of  $M=22.52$ ;  $DS=1.92$ ;  $C\alpha=0.66$ , for the gymnasium it is very good:  $M=15.80$ ;  $DS=2.24$ ;  $C\alpha=0.78$  and excellent for high school:  $M=19.58$ ;  $DS=3.78$  and  $C\alpha=0.88$ .

***Academic support from teachers (only for high school).*** The scale was taken from the SSP questionnaire (Bowen and Richman, 2005) where it is called academic rigor and refers to the extent to which students believe that teachers help them perform well in school and stimulate them through additional support from teachers, such as in which students are challenged to think, if their tasks are explained and they are helped to learn. The initial scale consists of 10 items, but after discussions with students, who considered that some questions of this scale are repeated in other scales, we came to a short version, consisting of 4 items. Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much"). The maximum score is 12, which indicates that respondents feel very stimulated and helped by teachers to have good learning outcomes. Psychometric data at the gymnasium level (where the scale was applied) indicate  $M=10.73$ ;  $DS=1.53$  and  $C\alpha=0.69$ .

***The scale of conflicts with teachers.*** At the base of the scale are items related to conflicts between students and teachers of the scale *Relational climate students teachers in the Questionnaire for School Climate students* (Orzea, 2016) to which were added - following focus groups with students and discussions with experts in the consortium - items related to teachers' behaviors that are considered problematic from the students' perspective. The scale highlights the possible emotional reactions and inappropriate attitudes of teachers towards students, such as: nervousness, quarrel, insult, humiliation or hitting students, as well as the feeling of fear of students towards teachers. The

resulting scale consists of 7 items and measures the behaviors perceived as violence by teachers. The rating of the items is done positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores (1="never", 2="sometimes", 3="often"). The maximum score is 21, which indicates a large number of conflicts between students and teachers. Being a scale recomposed following the students' observations, we notice a very good internal consistency at all school levels: primary level:  $M=8.47$ ;  $DS=1.89$ ;  $\alpha=0.80$ ; at the gymnasium:  $M=9.61$ ;  $DS=2.49$ ;  $\alpha=0.82$ , as well as in high school:  $M=10.41$ ;  $DS=2.53$  and  $\alpha=0.81$ .

**The equal opportunities scale.** The scale is based on the SSP equal opportunity scale (Richman and Bowen, 2005). To the 4 items that the initial scale has, following the discussions with the students and the specialists from the consortium, items were added regarding the principle of evaluation by the teachers, the extent to which the students consider that the grading is preferential, depending on the students' affiliation to demographic categories, which are not related to their power to change (e.g. ethnicity, gender, background, socio-economic level, etc.) and which may disadvantage them. The scale consists of 8 items. Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="usually no", 2="sometimes", 3="usually yes"), the maximum score being 24, which indicates a very high degree of preferential (discriminatory) attitudes experienced by some categories of students in a school. Although the scale was used experimentally in this research, it has a good internal consistency, both in middle school and high school, as follows: for high school  $M=12.08$ ;  $DS=3.49$  and  $\alpha=0.79$ ; for high school:  $M=14.88$ ;  $DS=3.03$  and  $\alpha=0.79$ .

### III. Relationships with classmates:

**The scale of relationships with classmates.** The scale was adapted starting from the scale *Intercollegiate relational climate - students of the Questionnaire for school climate students* (Cocoradă et al., 2018). The initial scale consists of 10 items, some of which have been removed for the present study, which are repeated or found in other scales. In this way, 6 items were reached for the primary classes, 7 items for the gymnasium cycle, respectively 8 for the high school cycle. The scale highlights students' perceptions of understanding, listening, empathy, encouragement, support, respect that their peers receive and offer each other, the pleasure of working in a team, and a sense of belonging to a united class. Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much"). The maximum score for the mayor is 18, for the gymnasium cycle it is 21, and for the high school cycle it is 24, in case the respondent has very good relations with classmates. Psychometric data indicate for primary classes  $M=15.42$ ;  $DS=2.85$ ;  $\alpha=0.85$  in middle school classes:  $M=18.29$ ;  $DS=2.94$  and  $\alpha=0.83$ , and for high school,  $M=20.13$ ;  $DS=3.66$  and  $\alpha=0.86$ .

**The scale for problem behaviors (middle school)/safety (high school).** In the construction of the scale, we used a scale taken from SSP (Bowen and Richman, 2005) where it is called **Safety in school**. The scale we use in the middle school cycle is composed of 12 items that describe students' behaviors that can affect their sense of security. In the case of the scale used in the high school cycle after testing the questionnaire in the focus groups of students, the items related to alcohol and smoking - which are repeated in another scale - were eliminated and 4 items were introduced that refer to adult violence in school (teachers, auxiliary staff) to students. Items are rated positively, and

the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="never", 2="sometimes", 3="often"). The maximum score for the middle school cycle is 36, and for the high school cycle it is 42, which indicates that the respondent sees their school as a totally unsafe space due to the problematic behaviors of students (and school adults in the case of high school students). Psychometric indicators show a very good consistency, both in the primary:  $M=7.25$ ;  $DS=2.07$  and  $C\alpha=0.80$ , at the gymnasium  $M=16.30$ ;  $DS=3.79$  and  $C\alpha=0.86$ , as well as in high school:  $M=18.76$ ;  $DS=4.03$ , and in high school  $C\alpha=0.87$ .

***The scale on peer problems (high school).*** It is based on the Behavior of Young People in the Community scale in the SSP questionnaire (Richman and Bowen 2005) and refers to students' perceptions of the risk behaviors of their peers. At the suggestion of the students, the scale was completed with two items that explicitly refer to behaviors related to the school environment: "I have classmates who are skipping class" and "I have classmates who get into trouble at school". The scale consists of 9 statements and measures students' perceptions of their classmates' risk behaviors: problems with the police, alcohol/tobacco/drug use, poor school performance, absenteeism, students who are members of gangs, who do not learn, and who will not pass the baccalaureate exam. Items are rated positively, and the overall score is obtained by summing the scores for each answer (1="not at all", 2="little", 3="much"). The maximum score is 27, which indicates that the respondent generally considers that their classmates have many problems. The scale has a good internal consistency:  $M=13.91$ ;  $DS=3.16$  and  $C\alpha=0.82$ .

#### IV. Scales on violence

The scales listed above were supplemented with questions about **school violence**, taken from the *Olweus Bully / Victim Questionnaire* (Olweus, 1996). These questions referred to the forms of violence suffered by respondents from their respective classmates at the place/places in the school (or on the way to/from school) where acts of violence take place. The questions are multiple-choice, with the respondent being asked to mark each form of violence he or she has experienced. Two other questions in the questionnaire relate to student support people in situations where they have suffered acts of violence at school by classmates or staff. These questions are also multiple-choice and were taken from the *P4P Questionnaire on Student Violence* (the project *Participation for Protection*, Siobhan et al., 2018).

#### V. Facilities

***The scale of the family endowments and of the school endowments respectively in the case of high school students.*** In order to form an image of the technical possibilities of the students from the schools included in the study in the conditions of online education, questions were included in the questionnaire regarding the devices that the respondents had at **home** to participate in the courses, as well as the possibility of connecting the internet and the existence of a quiet space available to the student for this purpose. In addition, the high school questionnaire contained a scale on **school facilities** and the students' satisfaction with these facilities. The facilities of the school refer to the existence of an educational infrastructure (library/cabinets/laboratories/classrooms/toilets/schoolyard) equipped with teaching materials (interactive whiteboards, video projector, projection screen, laptop/computer, audio system and video surveillance, Wi-Fi access, e-Catalog), etc.

**Final question:** At all 3 levels of pre-university education, the questionnaire ended with an open-ended question, through which students can express in their own words, the needs to improve the school climate: What changes would you like in your school so that you can learn with pleasure?

After applying the questionnaire to the whole group, the psychometric data were recalculated, and they are being presented below, at each scale, by the mean (M), the standard deviation (DS) and the internal consistency coefficient Cronbach alpha (abbreviated C $\alpha$ ). Following the information received as a result of the application of the scales, we subsequently restructured some of the scales, regrouping some items, in order to ensure a greater consistency for future applications. The questions of the questionnaires are presented in Annexes 3.1, 4.1 and 5.1. The scales were organized here by domains. Given the internal consistency of the scales, in future studies the scales will be able to be used independently or grouped according to the aspects of the school climate that are to be investigated.

*Table 2.2 Psychometric values of the scales used in the three school cycles*

NAME OF SCALES	Primary school: SCP-P	Gymnasium: SCP-G	High school: SCP-L
Satisfaction with the school and the attractiveness of the school – from primary	M=10.99 SD=1.39 C $\alpha$ =0.70	M=16.79 DS=1.81 C $\alpha$ =0.82	M=13.30 DS=1.94 C $\alpha$ =0.77
Attachment to school	M=8.40, SD=1.08 C $\alpha$ =0.66	M=10.0 SD=2.09 C $\alpha$ =0.83	M=8.94 DS=2.31 C $\alpha$ =0.84
Involvement in school life	M=8.40 SD=1.74 C $\alpha$ =0.66	M=9.53 SD=1.54 C $\alpha$ =0.54	M=9.76 DS=1.74 C $\alpha$ =0.66
Integration in the school curriculum	M=11.36 SD=1.23 C $\alpha$ =0.70	-	-
Inclusive culture in school	-	-	M=17.74 SD=2.91 C $\alpha$ =0.81
Student-centered educational climate	-	-	M=15.80 SD=2.53 C $\alpha$ =0.84
Teacher support	M=22.52 SD=1.92 C $\alpha$ =0.66	M=15.80 DS=2.24 C $\alpha$ =0.78	M=19.58 SD=3.78 C $\alpha$ =0.88
Conflicts with teachers	M=8.47 SD=1.89 C $\alpha$ =0.80	M=9.61 DS=2.49 C $\alpha$ =0.82	M=10.41 SD=2.53 C $\alpha$ =0.81
Equal opportunities issues		M=12.08 DS=3.49 C $\alpha$ =0.79	M=14.88 DS=3.03 C $\alpha$ =0.79
The scale of support between students and relationships with classmates	M=15.42 SD=2.85 C $\alpha$ =0.85	M=18.29 DS=2.94 C $\alpha$ =0.83	M=20.13 DS=3.66 C $\alpha$ =0.86
Problematic behaviors/safety		M=16.30 DS=3.79 C $\alpha$ =0.86	M=18.76 DS=4.03 C $\alpha$ =0.87
Classmates' problems			M=13.91 SD=3.16 C $\alpha$ =0.82
Forms of violence suffered	M=8.38 SD=1.93 C $\alpha$ =0.77	No rating	No rating



Where acts of violence take place	-	No rating	No rating
Bullies and their gender	No rating	No rating	No rating
Request for help	-	No rating	No rating
The school's response to violence	-	No rating	No rating
Desired changes at school	open question	open question	open question

**Legend:** M – average scale values; SD - standard deviation;  $\alpha$  – internal consistency coefficient Cronbach alpha.

### 3 ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOOL CLIMATE AT PRIMARY LEVEL

#### 3.1 School climate profile for the primary level

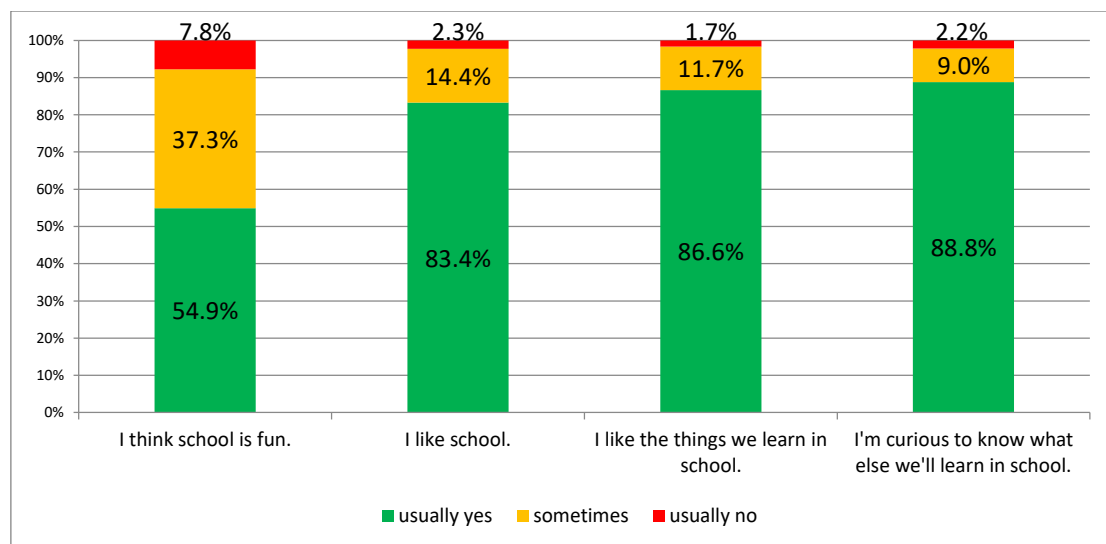
Considering the importance of the school climate for all levels of the pre-university system, we aimed to include in the research also students from the third and fourth grades of the primary cycle from the partner schools in the project. Starting from their age characteristics regarding the understanding of the questions in the first stage, we resorted to checking the questionnaires using focus groups, by co-opting groups of students from such classes. The completion of the questionnaire was done online for most respondents at the primary level; for students without internet access and/or without digital skills, we kept the option of completing the paper questionnaire (see the *Questionnaire applied to the primary education cycle in Annex 3.1*). Only one school used this option, for which the researchers entered the answers in the database. Based on the results obtained, we analyzed each scale and each item of the scales on the entire group of students at the primary education level, obtaining the results in this chapter. We also created the profiles of those schools participating in the research, from which we obtained at least 30 completed questionnaires at primary level. In these profiles we have identified the coordinates that may present risks, those that attract attention, but also those that represent resources of each school. These individualized profiles by schools were transmitted to the principals of the schools participating in the research, to be discussed by the school management, the teaching staff and the students in the classes that participated in the research, to identify the directions that could be acted upon, improving the school climate.

According to the study on the socio-educational risk index (IRSE) (Human Catalyst, 2020: 2-14) all general schools included in the project are among those analyzed in IRSE research, being schools where the educational process is affected by social and material deprivation of the localities where these schools and the students' families are located (*see Annex 3.2*).

To these are added the other three schools recruited by the research team, to pilot the instruments developed within the project, but which are not listed as disadvantaged schools in terms of socio-economic risk conditions: "Radu Negru" National College Făgăraș, Brașov County, „Ciprian Porumbescu” Art College Suceava and Târlăuș Vocational School, Bistrița-Năsăud County.

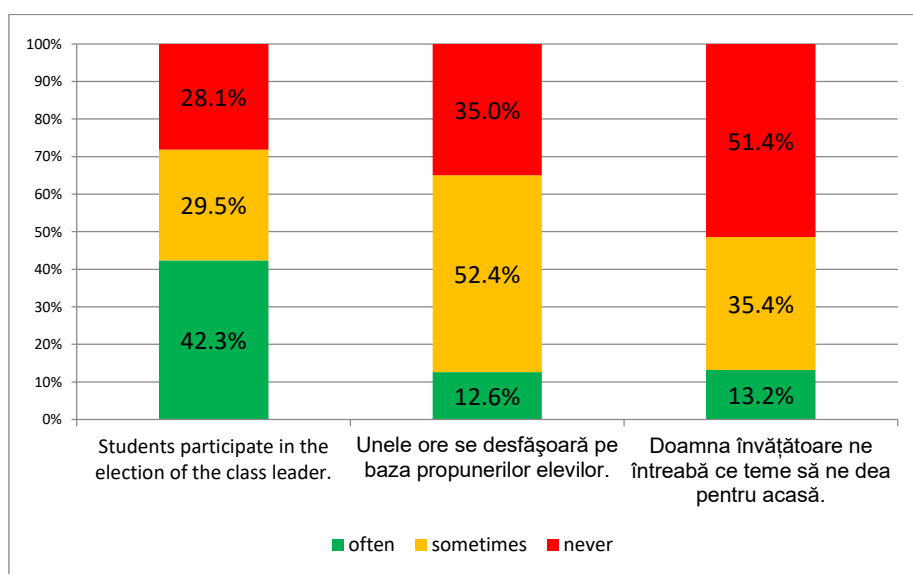
The research group for the primary level includes 364 students, of which 173 boys, 179 girls, and 12 did not declare gender. The distribution of the students included in the sample, from the 3rd and 4th grades, is balanced, 181 students being from the 3rd grades, and 183 students are from the 4th grades.

The results of the group of primary school students are presented below separately on scales, and then through the relationships between the scales of the questionnaire.



*Chart 3.1. Evaluating the attractiveness and satisfaction with the school in the primary cycle*

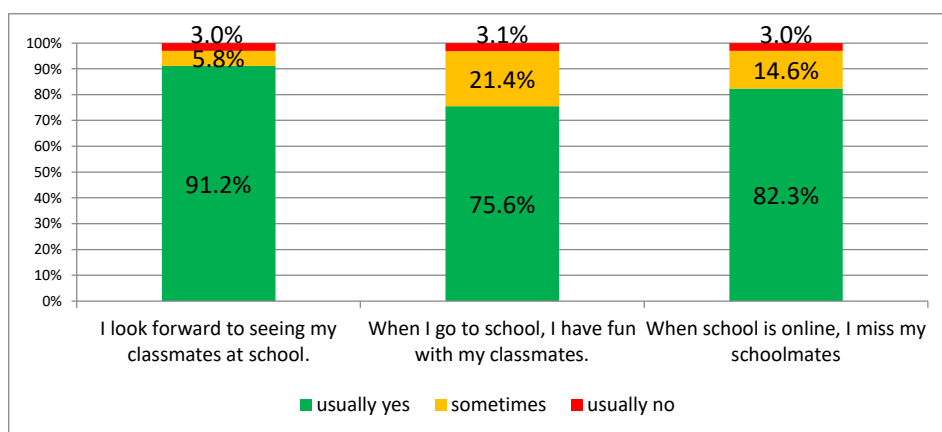
**School attractiveness and school satisfaction.** A positive school environment promotes students' confidence in their own abilities, a sense of self-efficacy, high aspirations, but also the strength of will, perseverance and involvement in school tasks, all contributing to school success. For the school satisfaction scale, we notice the high percentages of students who show their curiosity, the pleasure of going to school and the pleasure of learning at school. For 16.7% of students, however, it is not always a pleasure to attend school, which could be a risk for this category. 11.2% of the students in the whole group are not always curious to find out what they will learn at school. About half of the students (54.9%) consider school to be fun, for 37.3% it is fun "sometimes", and 7.8% of them consider that "usually not" is fun school (Chart 3.1).



*Chart 3.2. Involvement of students in school life in primary school*

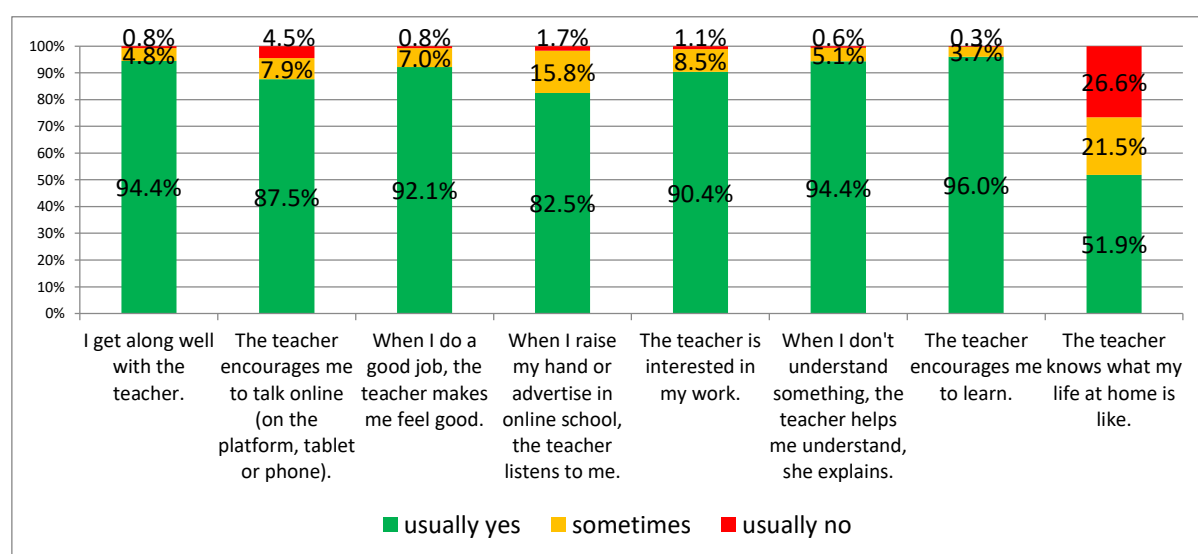
Schools that promote students' school involvement, try to develop their sense of belonging by personalizing training and creating a supportive social environment, in which adults show interest in students and their experiences in school and outside of school.

In terms of the **involvement of students in school life**, the answers showed that students feel little consulted on issues related to their school life in the whole group of primary school. Half of the students (51.4%) state that they are not consulted on homework, 28.1% of them “never” participate in the election of the class leader and only 12.6% of the students claim that “often” the classes take place on based on students' proposals. The participation of students in decisions at the classroom and school level, by consulting them on the issues mentioned in the educational process, are important issues both for the responsibility of students and for developing a sense of belonging to the school community and to maintain control over situations and events that affect their lives (chart 3.2).



*Chart 3.3 Attachment to school in primary school*

For the size of attachment to school, the percentages of students who express a desire to see their schoolmates are high in the whole group (Chart 3.3). However, a quarter of students do not usually have a good time with their peers (21.4% of them sometimes and 3.1% usually). 3% of students usually and 5.8% sometimes are not willing to see their classmates and also 3% choose to answer that usually not, and 14.6% that sometimes they do not feel that they would miss their classmates. There are percentages that need attention, these being probably the percentage margin for students who are not integrated in the group of classes investigated (Chart 3.3).



*Chart 3.4 Support from primary school teachers*

Even if learning involves individual cognitive and emotional processes, students' motivation to learn is significantly influenced by the help of others. Students' motivation and school involvement increase to the extent that the teacher is seen as supportive. **The support that students receive from the teacher** is generally high, the percentages of those who support this being between 82.5% and 96%, for the various statements, which is an advantage (Chart 3.4). The risk is visible for the 5.6% of students who say they do not get along with the teacher "sometimes" (4.8%) or "usually" (0.8%), but also those who do not usually feel appreciated by the teacher when they do a good job (7.8%) or who feel that the teacher is not always interested in their work (9.6%). Encouragement, interest in student work at this age, are important for involving students in the learning process. Also, 0.6% of students state that "usually not" they are helped by the teacher when they do not understand something, and 5.1% of them appreciate this help only "sometimes". In addition, a greater involvement of teachers in aspects related to the life of students at home, would be welcome, given that 26.6% of them say that the teacher does not know what their life at home is like. Connecting with students' lives outside of school, especially for disadvantaged groups, is important for children's adherence to school values and for their involvement in learning. (Chart 3.4)

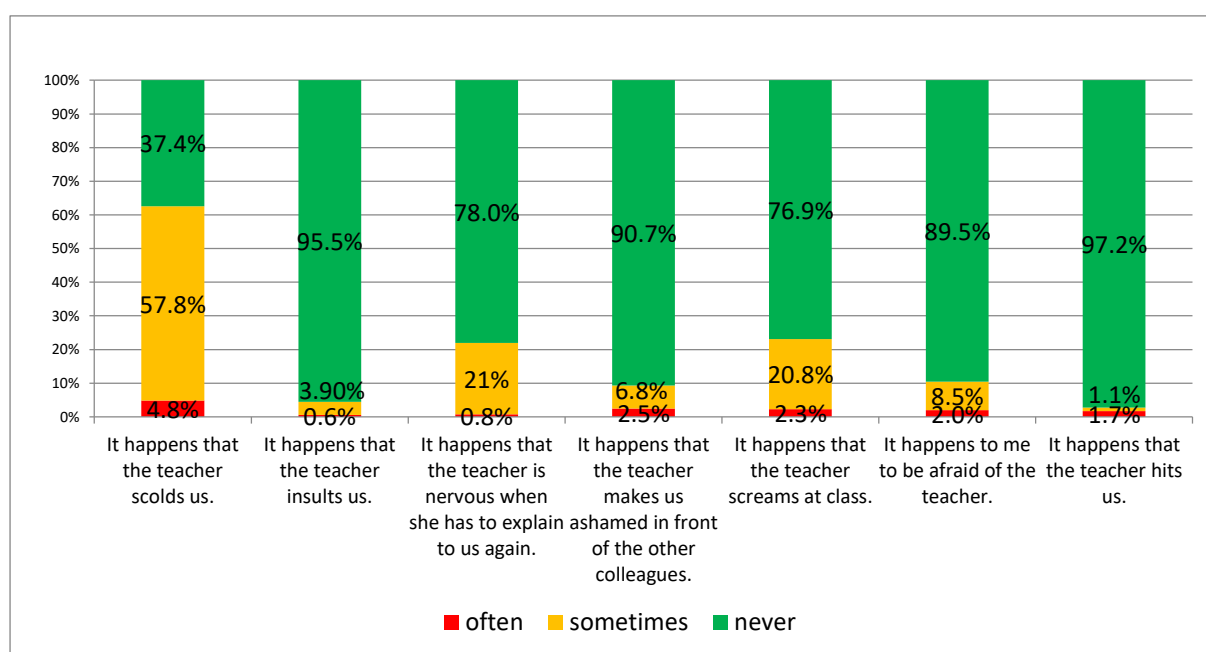
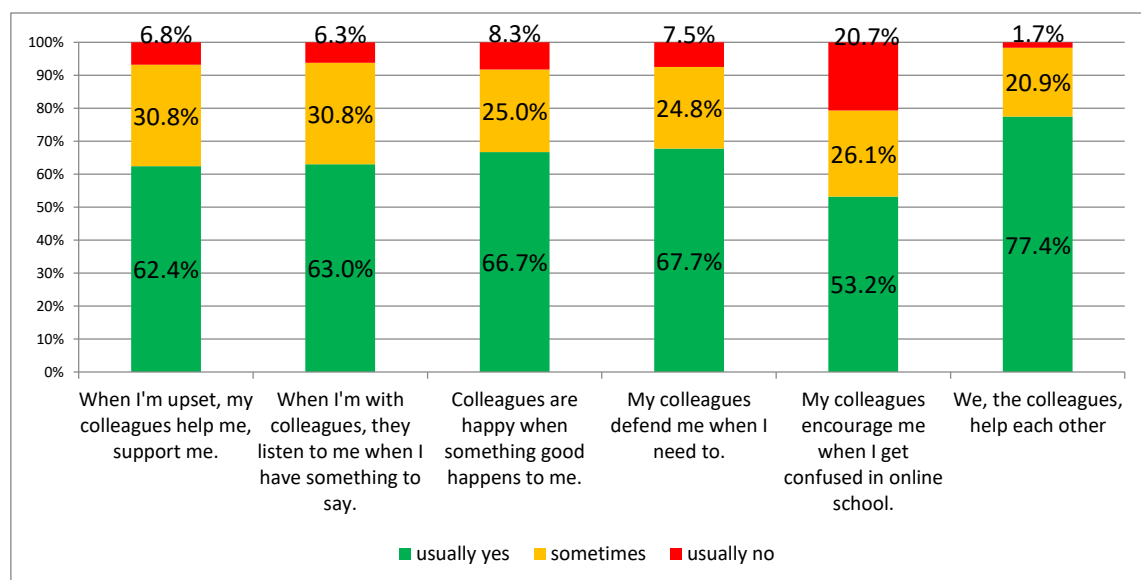


Chart 3.5 Conflicts with the primary school teacher

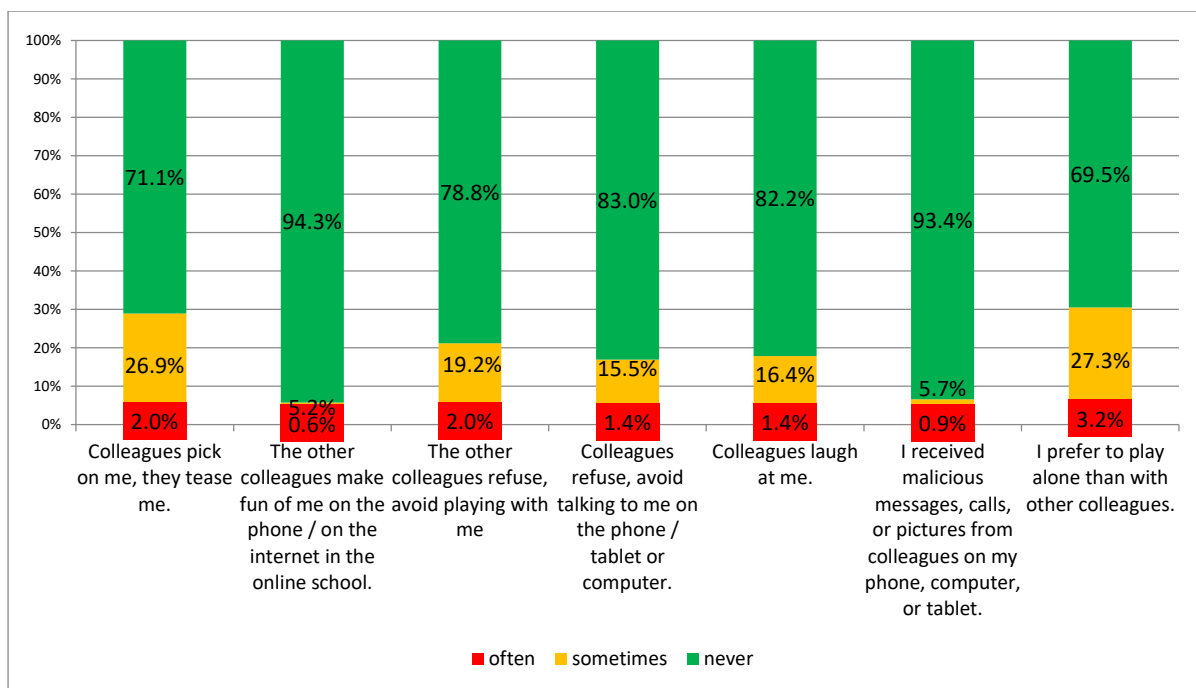
The teaching and learning process is fundamentally relational. The teacher-student relationship is not limited only to teaching and learning the subject studied. There is an affective dimension in this relationship that proves to be important because it can initiate the student's relationship with knowledge. In other words, when the student develops a trusting relationship with his teacher, learning will be easier than in the case of a conflicting relationship. **The relationship (conflicts) with the teacher** is marked by both positive aspects and aspects that need improvement. Thus, the percentage of students who say they are "never" offended or hit by teachers is very high, 95.5% and 97.2%, respectively (Chart 3.5). However, 2.8% of students say that they are at least sometimes hit by the teacher, and 10.5% of primary school students say that they are at least sometimes afraid of the teacher. 9.3% of them were, at least "sometimes", ashamed in front of the other classmates, and 4.5% of them claim that at least sometimes they were offended by the teacher. The percentage of those who say that the teacher screams at least sometimes in class, is

even higher, 23.1%, and for those who say that it happens at least sometimes to be scolded by the teacher is 62.6%. All these values indicate risk factors, given that, at this age, the relationship with the teacher is significant for children, contributing to the formation of the attitude towards school and to shaping the future relationships of children with teachers. At the same time, the teacher is a model of self-control for children, a model of managing relationships with others.



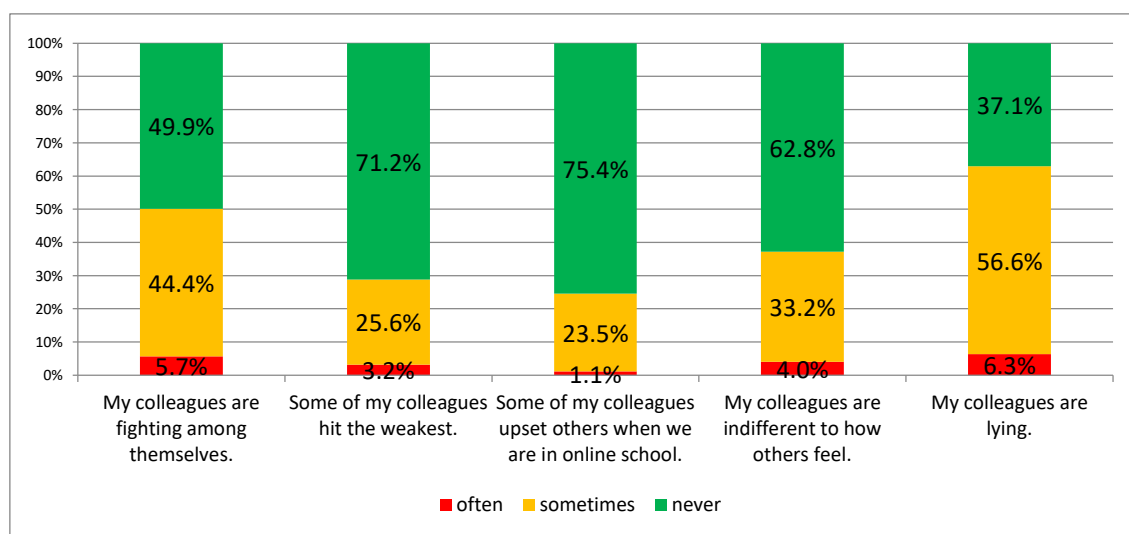
*Chart 3.6 Relationships with classmates. Support from classmates in primary school*

Children are interested in their peers and are emotionally attached to them at all ages. In general, when children have friends, they are involved in positive interactions, resolve more conflicts, and perform their tasks more successfully than when they have no friends. In terms of **peer support**, although the percentages of those who feel peer support are between 53.2% and 77.4%, they are not very high, because in childhood there has not yet been a strong peer orientation, specific to preadolescence. Acceptance among classmates, the support offered by them, the feeling of self-help present among classmates influences the feeling of security in the school environment with a direct impact on school satisfaction and involvement in school activities. In this context, 20.7% do not usually feel encouraged by their peers when they are confused at online school, and between 6.3% and 8.3% do not feel the support of their peers at all in other respects. The percentage of students who say they only feel “sometimes” the support of their peers is between 24.8% and 30.8% (Chart 3.6).



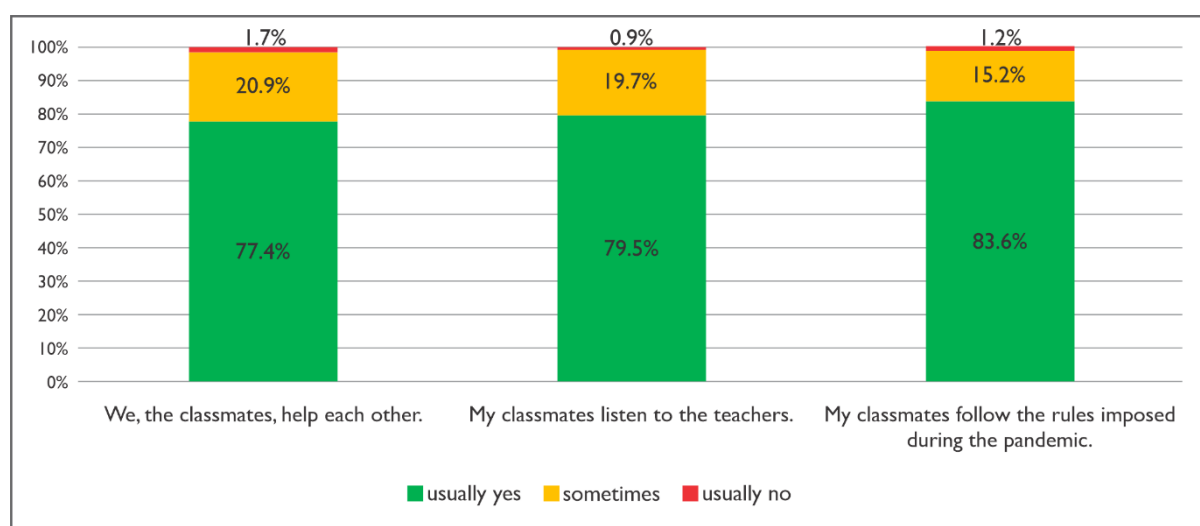
*Chart 3.7 Bullying – victimization in the primary cycle*

Feelings of security from a physical, emotional, intellectual and social point of view are fundamental human needs. High-quality relationships with classmates were associated with aggression, victimization, and reduced behavioral problems. For the bullying dimension, the percentages of those who feel victims in different situations are between 0.6% and 3.2% (chart 3.7). If we take into account the percentages of those who sometimes feel victims, in different contexts, then we reach about 30% for those who claim to be teased by classmates. 21.2% say that at least "sometimes", classmates refuse or avoid playing with them, and therefore, 30.5% of students say they prefer, at least "sometimes", to play alone. Intercollegiate relationships, attachment to peers are important for the classroom climate, for the well-being of students at school, while marginalization, teasing are risk factors for students' health, involvement in learning and a positive attitude towards school.



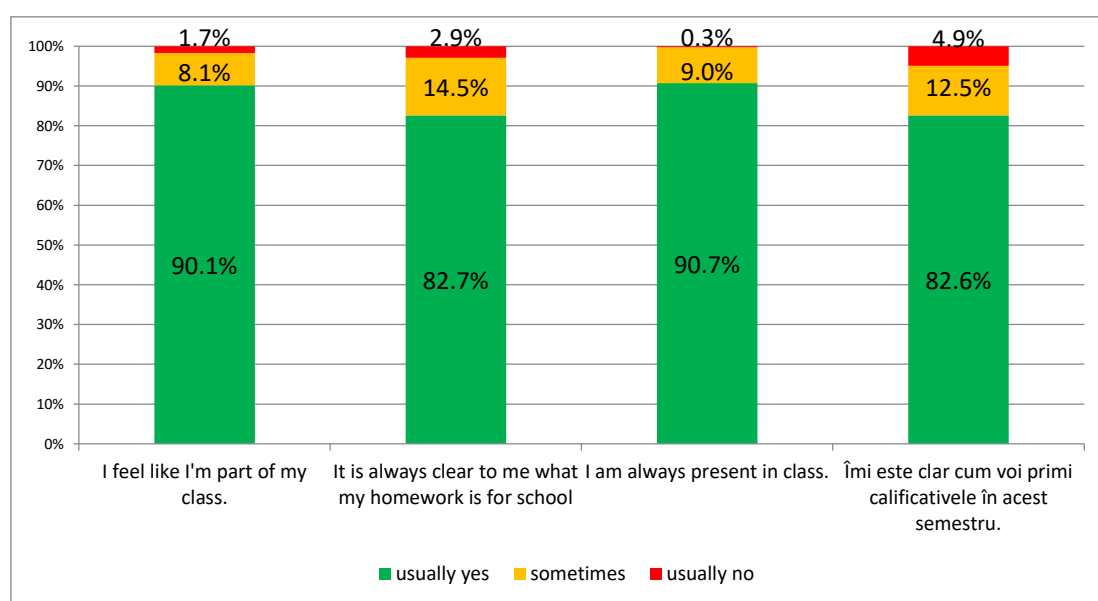
*Chart 3.8 Problematic behaviors. Safety in the primary cycle*

**The safety** of students in school is important for their emotional health, but also for their involvement in learning. The percentage of those who claim that the weakest are not hit by their classmates is high, respectively 71.2%, and 62.8% appreciate that other classmates are not indifferent to what their peers feel. On the other hand, over half of the students claim that “sometimes” (44.4%) or often (5.7%) their classmates fight among themselves, about a third of them hit the weakest, and over a third among them, they state that, at least “sometimes”, classmates are indifferent to what others feel (chart 3.8).



*Chart 3.9 Adaptive behavior of students in primary school*

**Adaptive behavior of students** towards teachers or towards each other, although it is a positive overall, still needs improvement, given that 22.6% feel the support of classmates only sometimes, and 19.7% say that only sometimes classmates listen to teachers (Chart 3.9).



*Chart 3.10 Integration in the school curriculum at primary school*



Regarding the integration in the school curriculum, the percentages are high, being between 82.6% and 90.7%. Attention is needed to the 9.8% who say they do not always feel part of their class (chart 3.10).

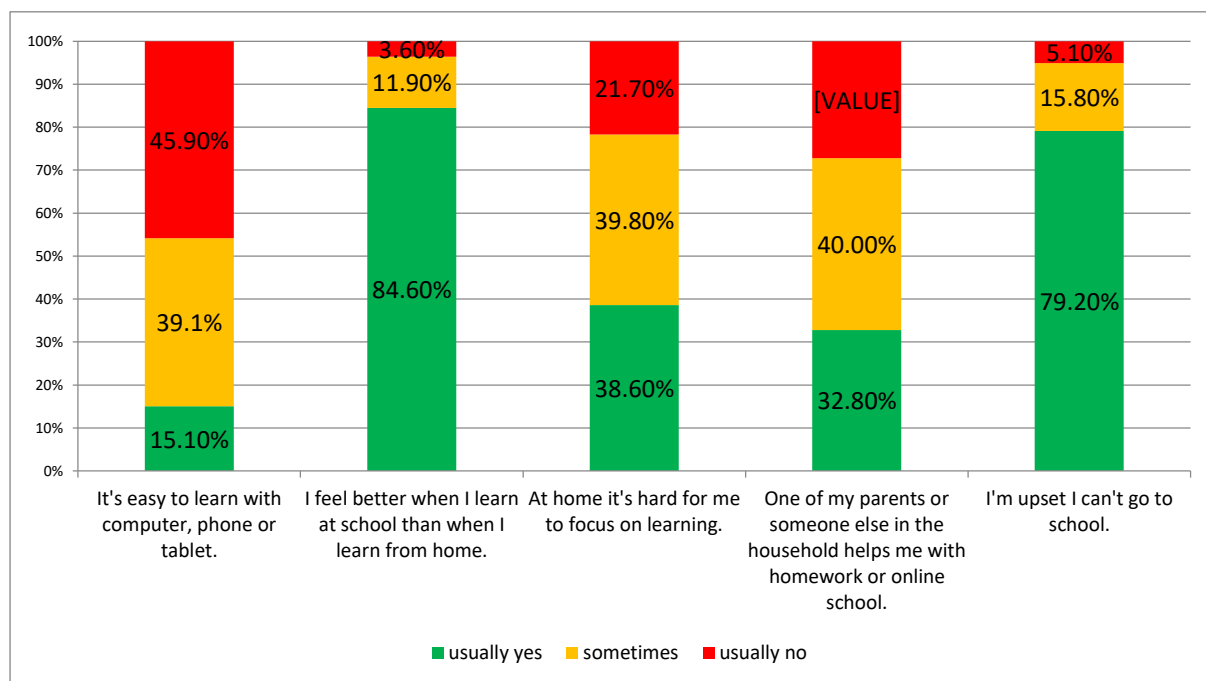


Chart 3.11 Online school in primary school

In terms of **online schooling**, there are difficulties declared by primary school students in learning with a computer, phone or tablet, but also the percentage of those who say that it is difficult for them to focus on learning at home (Chart 3.11). Also, 27.2% of the students included in the group of this study state that they do not have an adult at home to support them in homework or online school, and 79.2% are upset that they cannot go to school. Therefore, for this category of students, it is necessary for the school to take place face to face, within the school.

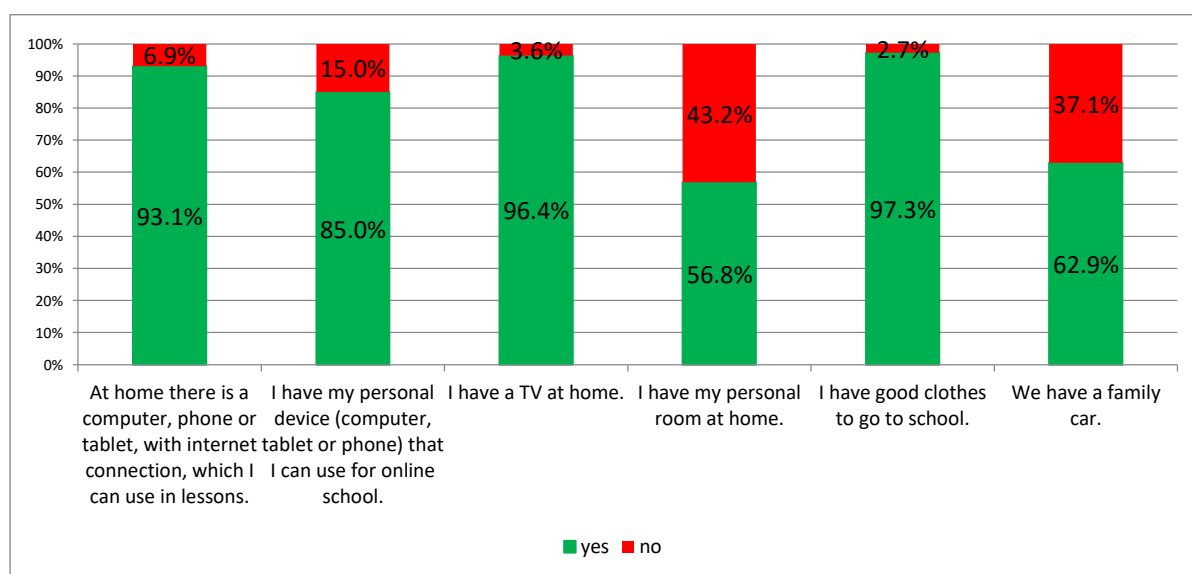


Chart 3.12 Home equipment for primary school

The problems encountered with the online school are probably also influenced by the existing facilities at home. Thus, 15% of the students in this group say that they do not have their personal device to use at the online school, and 43% of them do not have their personal room, which can be a disadvantage in concentrating the students at the online school (chart 3.12).

### 3.2 Discussing the results of the study at the primary level

Numerous studies show that there are gender differences in the perception of the school climate: girls are more satisfied with school, and boys perceive a higher level of misunderstandings in school. The explanation lies in the juxtaposition of gender and student roles. The prescriptions of the role of student consist in being calm, attentive, adult-oriented, master in using verbal skills to expose knowledge, which is more in line with the social role of the girl than the boy.

The results of this study support the thesis that girls are more satisfied with the school climate than boys. As it can be seen, for the attachment and attractiveness of the school there is a significant difference between the averages registered at the level of the group of girls and that of the boys, the girls being more attached to the school and perceive the attractiveness of the school more favorably than the boys. These results may be due to the earlier maturation of girls compared to boys, which is probably felt throughout the primary level and leads to more school-appropriate behavior and greater self-satisfaction with school life. These aspects also affect the perception of victimization. Being more attached to the school, perceiving the school as more attractive than the boys, the girls integrate better with the rules and values of the school, being less often found in the position of quarrelsome students or victims of some form of school violence. There are also differences between boys and girls regarding online schooling (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Gender differences in the scales of the questionnaire applied to primary school students

Variables of the school climate	Gender	M	DS	t(df)
The attractiveness of the school	Male	2.64	0.41	t(272,690)=-4.835 ***
	Female	2.82	0.24	
Involvement of students in school life	Male	1.80	0.54	NS.
	Female	1.81	0.53	
School attachment	Male	2.73	0.43	t(285,568) =-2.965 **
	Female	2.84	0.27	
Teacher support	Male	2.80	0.26	NS.
	Female	2.82	0.21	
The relationship with the teacher	Male	1.22	0.31	NS.
	Female	1.21	0.26	
Support of the classmates	Male	2.51	0.51	NS.
	Female	2.51	0.52	
Peer violence/victimization	Male	1.24	0.31	t(305,809)=2.786 *
	Female	1.16	0.23	
Behavior of classmates/witness to violence	Male	1.47	0.40	NS.
	Female	1.45	0.42	
Positive attitude of classmates	Male	2.78	0.32	NS.
	Female	2.77	0.33	

Integration in the school curriculum	Male	2.81	0.31	NS.
	Female	2.85	0.30	
Online school	Male	2.36	0.33	t(314,403)=-2.704 *
	Female	2.46	0.29	

**Legend:** \* the difference is significant at the 0.05 threshold, \*\* the difference is significant at the threshold of 0.01;  
\*\*\* the difference is significant at the threshold of 0.001.

*Table 3.2 Table - Differences between grades III and IV for the scales of the questionnaire applied to primary school students*

Variables of the school climate	Grade	M	DS	t(df)
The attractiveness of the school	Grade III	2.76	0.32	NS.
	Grade IV	2.72	0.37	
Involvement of students in school life	Grade III	1.71	0.53	t(353,592)=-4.248 ***
	Grade IV	1.96	0.56	
School attachment	Grade III	2.82	0.36	NS.
	Grade IV	2.77	0.35	
Teacher support	Grade III	2.83	0.20	NS.
	Grade IV	2.79	0.26	
The relationship with the teacher	Grade III	1.21	0.26	NS.
	Grade IV	1.21	0.30	
Support of the classmates	Grade III	2.57	0.49	NS.
	Grade IV	2.47	0.55	
Peer violence/victimization	Grade III	1.16	0.23	t(323,977)=-2.547 *
	Grade IV	1.23	0.30	
Behavior of classmates/witness to violence	Grade III	1.37	0.35	t(330,235)=-3.152 **
	Grade IV	1.51	0.45	
Positive attitude of classmates	Grade III	2.82	0.27	t(324,426)=2.299 **
	Grade IV	2.74	0.36	
Integration in the school curriculum	Grade III	2.86	0.29	NS.
	Grade IV	2.81	0.32	
Online school	Grade III	2.42	0.33	NS.
	Grade IV	2.43	0.29	

**Legend:** \* the difference is significant at the 0.05 threshold, \*\* the difference is significant at the threshold of 0.01;  
\*\*\* the difference is significant at the threshold of 0.001.

As can be seen in Table 3.2, for the attachment to the school, the school's attractiveness, the support received from the teacher, the teacher's relationship, the support of classmates, the integration in the school curriculum and the online school, there are no significant differences between the averages of the 3rd and 4th grade students. On the other hand, for the involvement of students in school life, peer violence/victimization, peer/adult behavior in violence, the positive attitude of peers there is a significant difference between the averages recorded at the level of the group of third grade students and that of fourth grade students, girls are more attached to school and perceive the attractiveness of school more favorably than boys. Thus, fourth grade students feel more involved in school life than third grade students, which means that the former are more often involved in decisions at the grade level. Also, peer violence/victimization is perceived as higher by fourth graders, as well as peer violent behavior. The positive attitude of the classmates is appreciated more favorably by the younger students, respectively those of the third grade.

## **The relationship between students' perception of the support provided by the teacher in primary school**

Starting from the importance of the relations with the teachers and the students, we analyzed their influence on the attractiveness of the school and the students' attachment to it. The answers were grouped, in the case of each variable, into 2 categories: those who answered with "usually no" or "sometimes" constituted a category, and those who answered with the statement "usually yes" constitute the second category. The existence of significant differences between categories was calculated with the statistical test "t". The questions were used: "When I don't understand something, the teacher helps me, explains to me" and "I get along well with the teacher". For the questions "It happens to me to be afraid of the teacher", "It happens that the teacher makes us ashamed in front of the other classmates", "It happens that the teacher is nervous when he/she still has to explain once", "It happens that the teacher screams in class" the answers were grouped in a similar way: those with the answer "never" constituting a group, and all the others, the other group.

The data in Table 3.3 show that those who feel helped and explained when they do not understand something, perceive the school as more attractive and more attached to it. There are significant differences ( $t=-3.42$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) between the perception of school attractiveness of those who consider themselves helped and explained to by the teacher when they do not understand something ( $M=2.76$ ;  $DS=0.34$ ) and those who consider that they are not usually explained to or are only explained to sometimes ( $M=2.47$ ;  $DS=0.37$ ). Similarly, the school attachment of those who consider themselves to be helped and explained to them by the teacher when they do not understand something ( $M=2.81$ ;  $DS=0.33$ ) is significantly higher ( $t=-2.64$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) than that of students who consider that they are not usually explained to them or are only explained to them sometimes ( $M=2.53$ ;  $DS=0.47$ ).

The fear of teachers, the feeling of being humiliated and offended reduces the school's attractiveness and attachment to it. Students who are never afraid of a teacher ( $M=2.76$ ;  $DS=0.33$ ) perceive school as more attractive ( $t=2.72$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) than their peers who are at least sometimes afraid ( $M=2.56$ ;  $DS=0.44$ ) and they ( $M=2.83$ ;  $DS=0.32$ ) are more attached ( $t=2.99$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) than their experienced classmates to a greater negative extent ( $M=2.57$ ;  $DS=0.50$ ). Students who claim that the teacher never raises their voice in class ( $M=2.79$ ;  $DS=0.31$ ) perceive the school as significantly more attractive ( $t=3.77$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) than those who say that the less often the teacher screams ( $M=2.60$ ;  $DS=0.42$ ). We also find significant differences between these categories in terms of attachment to school ( $t=2.96$ ;  $p<0.05$ ): those who claim that the teacher never shouts in class ( $M=2.84$ ;  $DS=0.30$ ) are significantly more attached to the school than those who state that the teacher screams at least sometimes in class ( $M=2.67$ ;  $DS=0.46$ ).

*Table 3.3. Differences between students regarding the attractiveness of the school and the attachment to it depending on their relationship with the teacher in primary school*

Categories of students	The attractiveness of the school	School attachment
When I don't understand something, the teacher helps me/doesn't help me, explains/doesn't explain to me	$t(21,072)=3.42; p<0.05$	$t(21,072)=2.64; p<0.05$
I get along well/I don't get along well with the teacher.	NS	NS
It happens to me to be/not to be afraid of a teacher.	$t(39,868)=2.72; p<0.05$	$t(38,405)=2.99; p<0.05$
It happens/does not happen that the teacher makes us ashamed in front of the other classmates.	$t(36,058)=3.45; p<0.05$	$t(34,668)=2.42; p<0.05$
It happens/does not happen that the teacher is nervous when he has to explain to us again.	$t(106,239)=3.07; p<0.05$	$t(109,383)=2.3; p<0.05$
It happens/does not happen that the teacher raises his voice (shouts at class).	$t(108,422)=3.77; p<0.001$	$t(101,272)=2.96; p<0.05$

The differences are significant in terms of the attractiveness of the school ( $t=3.07; p<0.05$ ) between students who say that the teacher is never nervous when he/she has to explain them again ( $M=2.78; DS=0.33$ ) and those who consider that the teacher is at least sometimes nervous when he/she has to explain them again ( $M=2.62; DS=0.39$ ). Significant differences are maintained between these categories and in terms of attachment to school ( $t=2.33; p<0.05$ ): those who say that the teacher is never nervous when they have to explain them again ( $M=2.82; DS=0.33$ ) are more attached to the school than those who consider that the teacher is at least sometimes nervous when he/she has to explain them again ( $M=2.71; DS=0.39$ ) (Table 3.3).

Humiliation in front of the class has the same effect on the perception of the attractiveness of the school: those who have never been ashamed in front of other classmates ( $M=2.76; DS=0.34$ ) perceive the school more attractive ( $t=3.45; p<0.05$ ) than their classmates who, at least sometimes, were ashamed in front of classmates ( $M=2.58; DS=0.38$ ). Differences between the attachment of those who were ashamed in front of classmates ( $M=2.62; DS=0.44$ ) and those who never felt this way ( $M=2.82; DS=0.33$ ) are significant ( $t=2.42; p<0.05$ ) (Table 3.3)

### **The relationship between students' perceptions of peer support in primary school**

Regarding the effect of relationships with classmates, we find similar results. The data in the table in 3.3 show that students who usually feel helped, supported by classmates when they are upset ( $M=2.82; DS=0.27$ ) perceive the school as significantly more attractive ( $t=-4.86; p<0.001$ ) than those who feel this support only occasionally or do not feel it at all ( $M=2.62; DS=0.42$ ). Also, the first category of students (those who usually feel helped, supported by classmates when they are upset) feel more attached to school than the latter, the differences being significant ( $t=-5.34; p<0.001$ ).

*Table 3.4. Differences regarding the attractiveness of the school and the attachment to the school, depending on the students' relationship with classmates, at primary level*

Categories of students	The attractiveness of the school	School attachment
When I'm angry, my classmates help/don't help me, they support me/they don't support me	$t(192,980)=4.86; p<0.001$	$t(181,508)=-5.34; p<0.001$
Classmates "pick on"/"don't pick on" me, they tease me/they don't tease me	$t(133,925)=2.84; p<0.05$	$t(142,566)=1.94; p<0.05$
The other classmates refuse/do not refuse, avoid/do not avoid playing with me.	$t(82,936)=4.64; p<0.001$	$t(87,129)=5.15; p<0.001$
Classmates laugh/don't laugh at me.	$t(74,740)=4.02; p<0.001$	$t(71,980)=3.91; p<0.001$
Classmates refuse/do not refuse, avoid/ do not avoid talking to me on the phone/tablet or computer.	$t(71,141)=4.06; p<0.001$	$t(68,729)=4.58; p<0.001$

Students who have never experienced teasing, the refusal of other classmates to play with them or talk to them on the phone/tablet or computer, but also those who say they have never laughed at them perceive school as more attractive and are more attached to it than those who have had - at least sometimes - such negative experiences. Thus, students who consider that their other classmates "pick on" them, tease them at least sometimes ( $M=2.65$ ;  $DS=0.45$ ) perceive the school as less attractive ( $t=2.84$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) than those who have never gone through such an experience ( $M=2.79$ ;  $DS=0.29$ ). The differences between the two categories of students are also significant in terms of attachment to school ( $t=1.94$ ;  $p<0.05$ ): those who consider that other classmates "pick on" them, tease them at least sometimes ( $M=2.73$ ;  $DS=0.43$ ) feel less attached to school than those who have never been through such an experience ( $M=2.83$ ;  $DS=0.30$ ). Students who are rejected by other peers, avoided in peer games - at least sometimes ( $M=2.53$ ;  $DS=0.50$ ) - perceive the school as less attractive than students who are not usually rejected or shunned by other peers at play ( $M=2.81$ ;  $DS=0.26$ ), the differences being significant between the two categories ( $t=4.64$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). The differences between these categories of students are also significant in terms of attachment to school ( $t=5.15$ ;  $p<0.001$ ): students who are rejected by other peers, avoided in peer games, at least sometimes ( $M=2.58$ ;  $DS=0.45$ ) are less attached to the school than students who are not usually rejected or avoided by other classmates when playing ( $M=2.87$ ;  $DS=0.26$ ). Students who feel that their other classmates laugh at them, at least sometimes ( $M=2.55$ ;  $DS=0.44$ ) - perceive the school as less attractive than those who have not gone through such an experience ( $M=2.79$ ;  $DS=0.31$ ), the differences being significant ( $t=4.02$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Attachment to school is lower for those who feel that other classmates laugh at them at least sometimes ( $M=2.60$ ;  $DS=0.47$ ) compared to those who have not gone through such an experience ( $M=2.84$ ;  $DS=0.30$ ), the differences being also significant in this case ( $t=3.91$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). (Table 3.4).

As it appears from these data, the support/aid of the teacher, but also of the students significantly influences the attachment to the school, its attractiveness and the perception regarding the behavior of the classmates. Those who perceive these forms of support as reduced, are less attached to the school than their peers, see their school less attractive, consider that they receive less support from classmates they see as more violent than their peers who consider themselves supported by the teacher.

## The relationship between students' perception of the support provided by parents and the school climate in primary school

Using the *t-test*, we analyzed how the perception of the support received from one of the parents/someone else in the household for homework or online school influences the perception of the school climate. From these analyzes, it results that those students who usually feel supported by one of the parents or someone else in the household for homework or online school perceive the school as more attractive than children who do not usually receive this support or than those who perceive it as being occasional ("sometimes").

*Table 3.5. Differences in the perception of school attractiveness and the attitude of acceptance of classmates between students who feel and those who do not feel supported by parents in homework in primary school*

Item in the primary level questionnaire	The attractiveness of the school	Attitude of classmates
I usually feel supported in my homework/online school ... by my parents	$t=3.38; p<0.05$	$t=-2.40; p<0.05$

A statistically significant difference was between the average of the students in the subgroup who claim that they are usually not supported by their parents and that of the students who consider themselves "usually" supported for the attractiveness of the school ( $t=3.38; p<0.05$ ). Also, students who usually feel supported in homework or online school by parents or someone else in the household, perceive the attitude of classmates towards them as more favorable compared to students who perceive that support only occasionally ( $t=-2.40; p<0.05$ ). We can say that these students are more agreeable in the group of classmates (table 3.5).

*Table 3.6. Correlations between factors: teacher support, conflicts with the teacher, support from classmates, violence between children, supportive attitude from classmates*

Variables of the school climate - primary level	Teacher support	Negative relationship (fear, humiliation, etc.) with the teacher	Classmate support	Child violence / Victimization	Behavior of classmates / Witness to violence	Positive attitude of classmates
Teacher support	1					
Negative relationship (fear, humiliation, etc.) with the teacher	-.310**	1				
Classmate support	.490**	-.354**	1			
Child violence / Victimization	-.299**	.405**	-.395**	1		
Behavior of classmates / Witness to violence	-.251**	.428**	-.457**	.592**	1	
Positive attitude of classmates	.301**	-.321**	.544**	-.373**	-.571**	1

**Legend:** \* significant correlations at the 0.05 threshold; \*\* significant correlations at the threshold of 0.01. N=342

Between most dimensions of the school climate (such as peer support, peer attitude and teacher support, peer behavior and the teacher's relationship), the perception of being accepted by and receiving support from classmates significantly correlates with positive (conflictless) relationships with teachers. This indicates that those who have more conflicted relationships with the teacher, perceive less support and acceptance from classmates, and the positive correlation between conflicted relationship with the teacher and perceived violence suggest that those students who are in conflicted relationships with the teacher, perceive more violence from children (table 3.5).



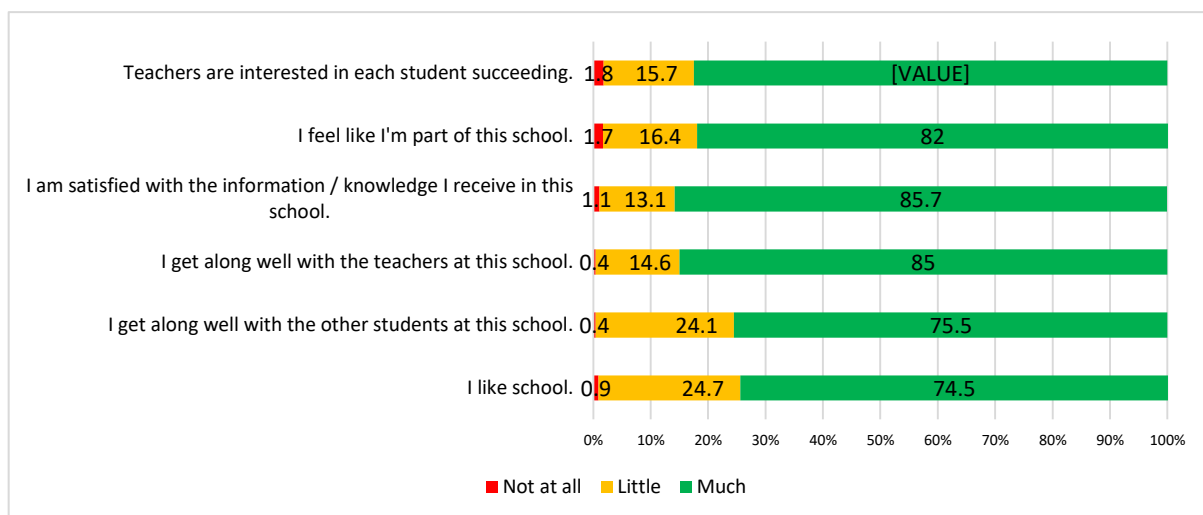
## 4 ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOOL CLIMATE AT THE GYMNASIUM LEVEL

### 4.1 *The profile of the school climate in the gymnasium level*

The analysis of the school climate in the gymnasium classes included in the research group followed the same methodology as the one already described previously, using the following 10 scales and 6 questions regarding violence: School satisfaction; Involvement of students in school life; Online school; Difficulties in online school; Attachment to school; Academic support from teachers; Teacher support; Conflicts with teachers; Equal opportunities; Relationship with classmates - support from classmates; Problematic behaviors of safety classmates; Forms of violence suffered; The place where the violence takes place; Who intervenes in case of aggression in school; Behavior requesting help; Students' attitude towards violence; The students' family endowments (*see the questionnaire applied to the lower secondary education cycle in Annex 4.1*).

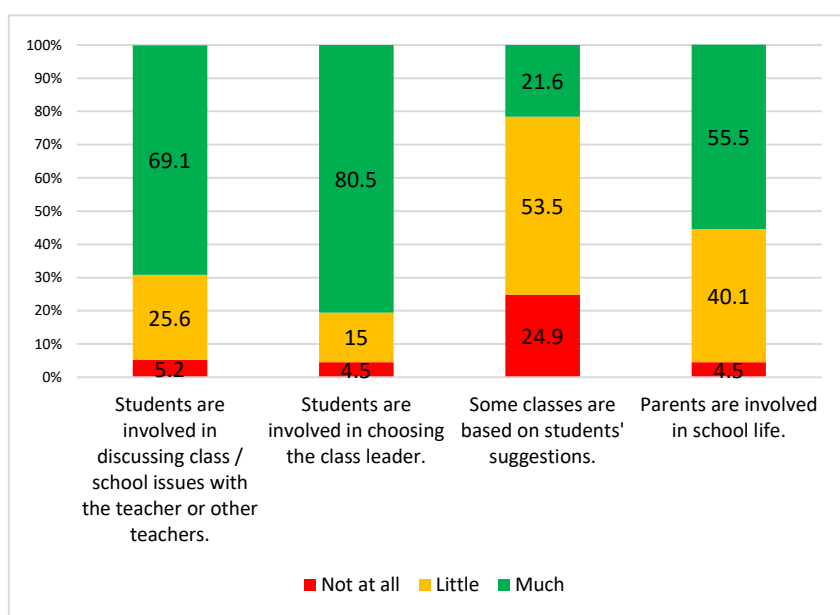
We aimed to know the school climate in the group of gymnasium classes of schools in the pilot project of the Joining Forces consortium and to identify the aspects that in the school context can affect the development of the educational process. Based on the results obtained, we analyzed each scale and each item of the scales on the entire sample, at the level of the group of high school students. We also created the profile of each school participating in the research, in which we identified the coordinates that may present risks, those that are in the area of attention and those that represent resources of each school, individualized profiles by schools being transmitted to the principals of schools participating in research to be discussed by the school management, the teaching staff and the students, to identify the directions that could be taken to improve the school climate.

According to the study on socio-educational risk (Human Catalyst, 2020: 12-14) all secondary schools included in the project are among those analyzed, being schools in which the educational process is affected by social and material deprivation of localities where they are found, and students' families (Annex 3.2). For the drawing of the school climate, the processing of the questionnaires at gymnasium level was based on the data of 873 questionnaires, out of which 20.3% from the 5th grade, 29.4% from the 6th grade, 33.8% from the 7th grade and 16.5% of the 8th grade. The gender distribution shows that 39.8% of the respondents are boys and 60.2% are girls.



*Chart 4.1 Satisfaction with school in middle school*

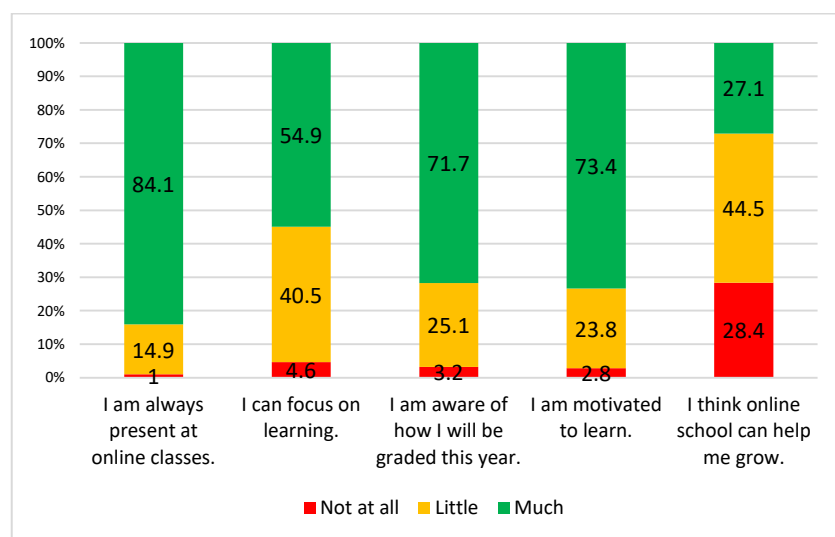
The data presented in Chart 4.1 "School Satisfaction" suggest that students in the schools analyzed are generally satisfied with their school, especially the relationships with teachers, 82.5% believe that teachers are interested in students succeeding, and 85 % claim that they get along well with teachers. The percentage of those who say they are satisfied with the information and knowledge they receive in their school is also 85.7%. Regarding the relations between the students of the school, almost a quarter of the students appreciate that they do not get along very well with the others (24.1% understand each other to a small extent and 0.4% do not understand each other at all), which is an important indicator that can strain school climate. Also about a quarter of the respondent students claim that they like school to a small extent(24.7%) or not at all (0.9%), this being another source of tension that can negatively influence the learning process in schools (classes, schools).



*Chart 4.2 Involvement in school life in high school*

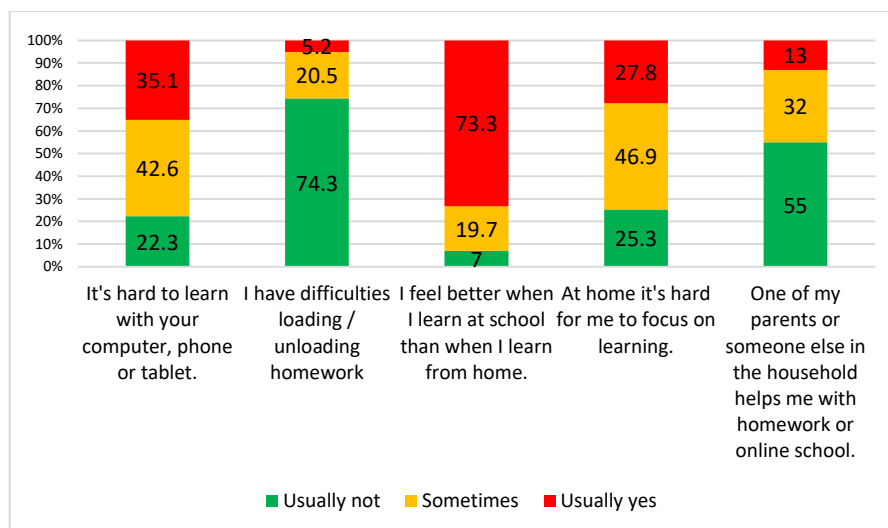
The vast majority of students (over 80.5%) feel involved in choosing the head of the class, but 25.6% of students consider themselves "little" and another 5.2% do not consider themselves "at all" involved in discussing school issues. Regarding the conduct of some classes, only a quarter consider that students' proposals are taken into account in their conduct, although the involvement of students in the design and conduct of classes is seen in the literature as an aspect that increases students' motivation for the subject. Just over half of the students claim that their parents are very involved in school life, and another 40.1% are not very involved. Even if the 4.5% who are not involved at all can be considered difficult to approach, those in the yellow zone could be a good resource for schools in the group, given that greater parental involvement could strengthen satisfaction with school, the characteristics of the interaction between the family and the school influencing the school success of the students (chart 4.2).

The online school was a specific situation for the period in which the data collection took place, so some questions related to this situation were included in the questionnaire.



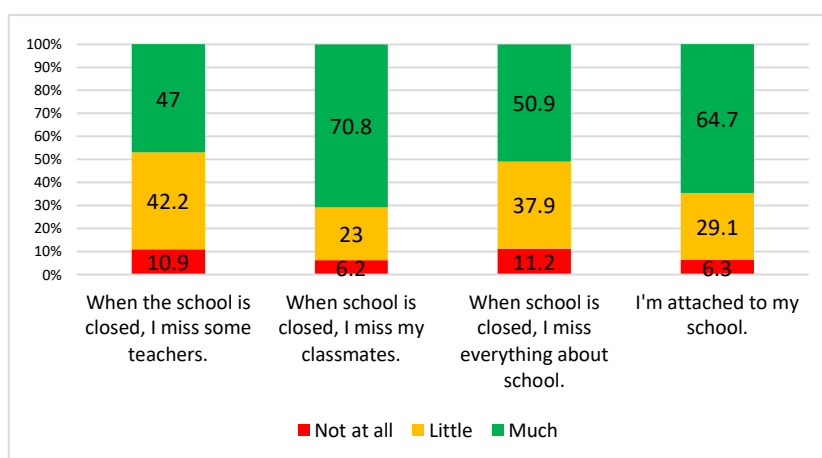
*Chart 4.3. Online school for middle school*

Students indicate an online attendance of 84.1%. Even if the percentage of those who participate in online classes is high, more than half of the respondents mention that, in the online environment, the ability to concentrate is low (45%), and about a quarter of them do not feel motivated at all (2.8%) or they feel only slightly motivated (23.8%) to learn. Moreover, more than a quarter of the respondent students (28.4%) consider that online school does not help them to develop at all, and a percentage of 44.5% consider that in these conditions they evolve to a small extent. Therefore, the conduct of online classes for middle school students does not lead to the development expected by them, and the motivation and concentration of students are reduced in these conditions (chart 4.3).



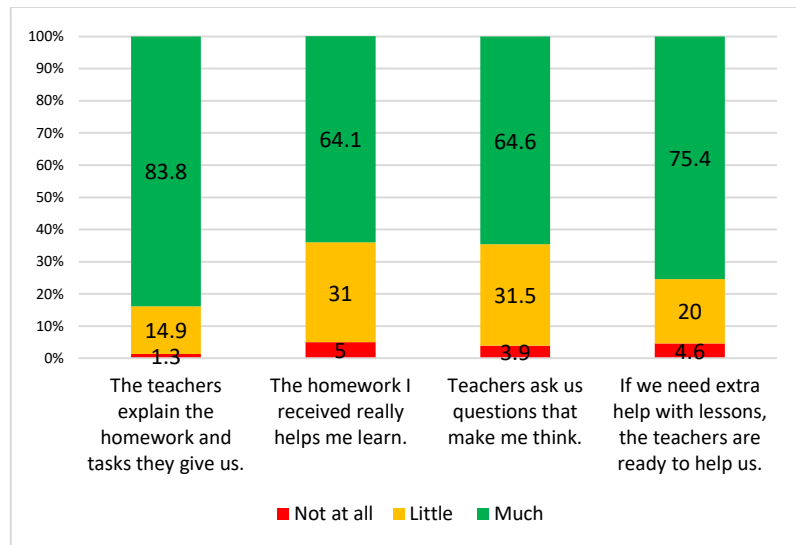
*Graph 4.4 Difficulties in online school in middle school*

The difficulties in the online school complete the data presented above, related to the motivation for learning and concentration, but also the development of students in these conditions. Thus, 46.9% of students find it difficult to focus "sometimes" on learning and 27.8% "usually", these categories together reaching 74.7%. Over 70% of students feel better when they study at school, and over 75% say that it is difficult at least sometimes to learn with their computer, tablet or phone. In these conditions, we understand the low motivation of students to learn, but also the feeling that online school does not contribute to their development(Chart 4.4).



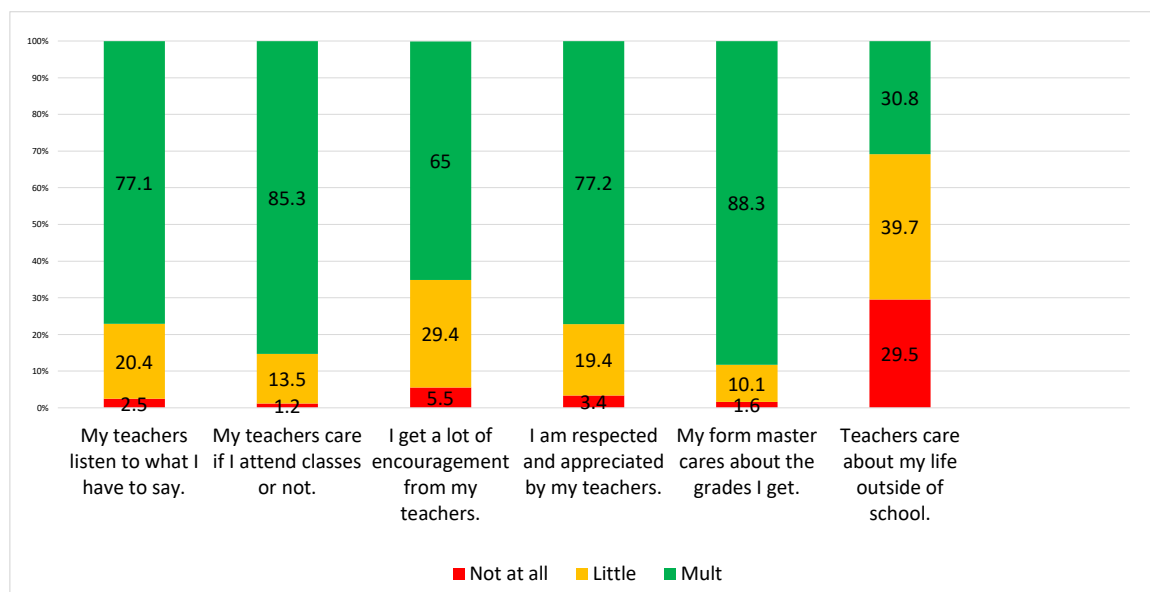
*Chart 4.5. Attachment to school in high school*

Attachment to school is an important component of the school climate, and in the group studied over a third of students feel little or no feeling at all towards this affiliation (red and yellow area). About half of them say that they do not miss school as much (or they do miss it a little), and 53.1% say that they do not miss teachers at all or they only miss them a little. Among the students, 29.2% state that they do not miss their classmates at all or they only miss them a little when the school is closed. Therefore, the desire to participate in the life of the student, along with other classmates and teachers, in schools, is generally quite low, not only in the online period, depriving many students of the necessary stimulation for a sustained school activity and good school performance (chart 4.5).



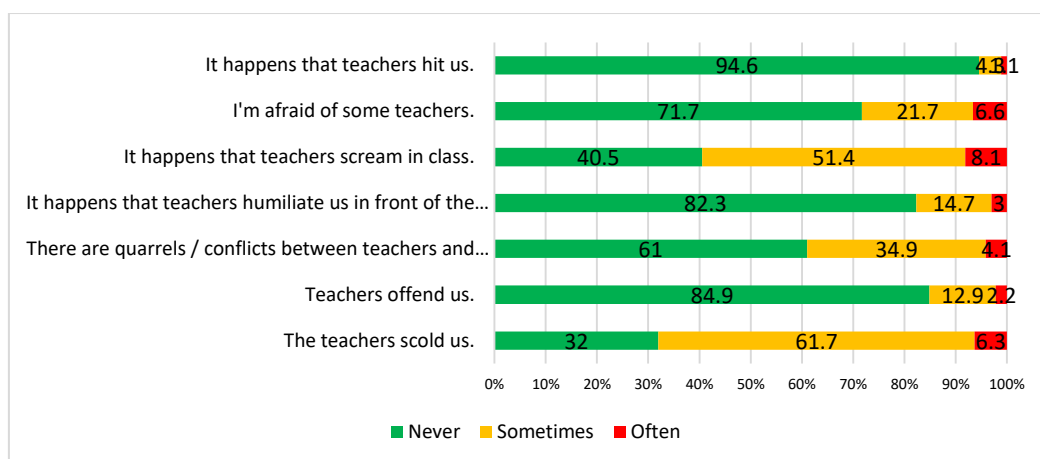
*Chart 4.6 Academic support from teachers in the gymnasium level*

Academic support from teachers is viewed favorably by most students, with 83.8% of them stating that teachers explain their homework and tasks. Three-quarters of students say they receive extra help from teachers if they need it. However, over a third of students find that homework does not really help them learn, and the percentage of those who think that questions received from teachers do not generally help them develop their thinking is similar (chart 4.6).



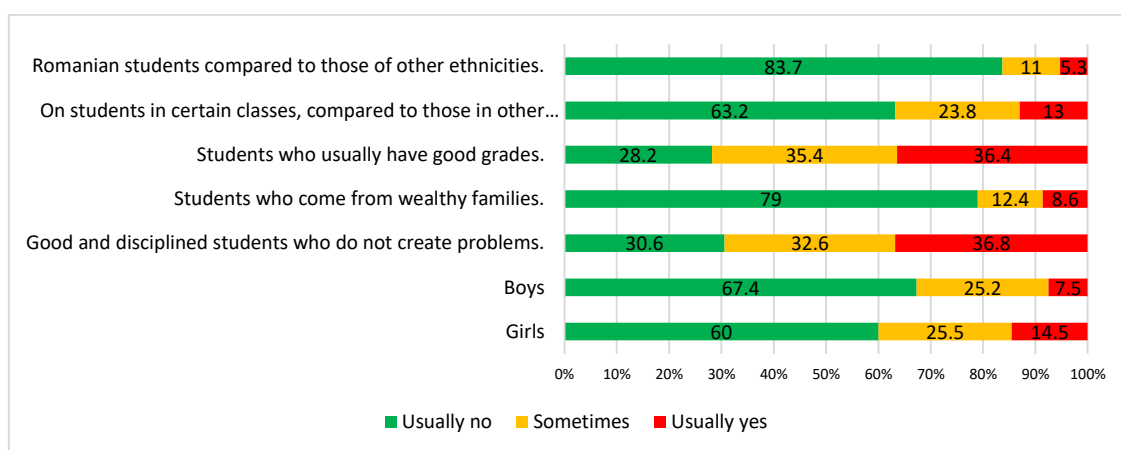
*Chart 4.7 The support from the teachers at the gymnasium level*

The data presented in the graph above reflect the fact that the vast majority of responding students consider themselves listened to and respected by teachers (over 77.2%). However, a percentage of over 20% of students do not feel appreciated (3.4% not at all and 19.4% just a little) by teachers, and over a third do not receive much or no encouragement from them. The data reflect that the vast majority of students feel that the teacher is following their school situation (88.3%), but only less than a third of them (30.8%) believe that teachers want to know and understand their life outside school (Chart 4.7). All this suggests that there is a significant percentage of students who do not feel truly connected to teachers, which reduces the motivation for the subjects taught.



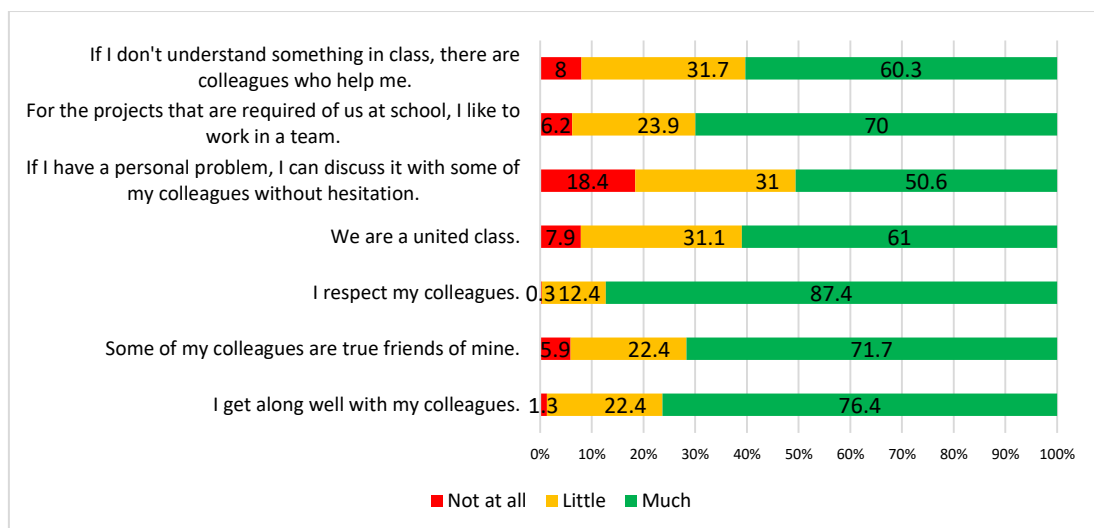
*Chart 4.8. Conflicts with teachers in high school*

As reflected in the data in the graph above, students are generally not hit by teachers (over 94% say so). However, over 14.7% of respondents say they are sometimes offended and humiliated, and 3% often feel in this position, and a quarter of students say they are afraid of teachers from time to time. More than half of the students (59%) say that teachers raise their voices (scream) at least sometimes in class, and more than a third of them (39%) say that there are conflicts between students and teachers (34.9% say that “sometimes” and 4.1% say “often”). Therefore, the perception of relationships with teachers indicates the placement of a significant percentage of students in the area of warning or risk regarding the relationship with teachers, with repercussions on the school climate. Conflicting relationships with teachers, insults, student-teacher quarrels can lead to students' lack of attachment to school values, teachers' values, lack of involvement in learning and increased risk of violence (chart 4.8).



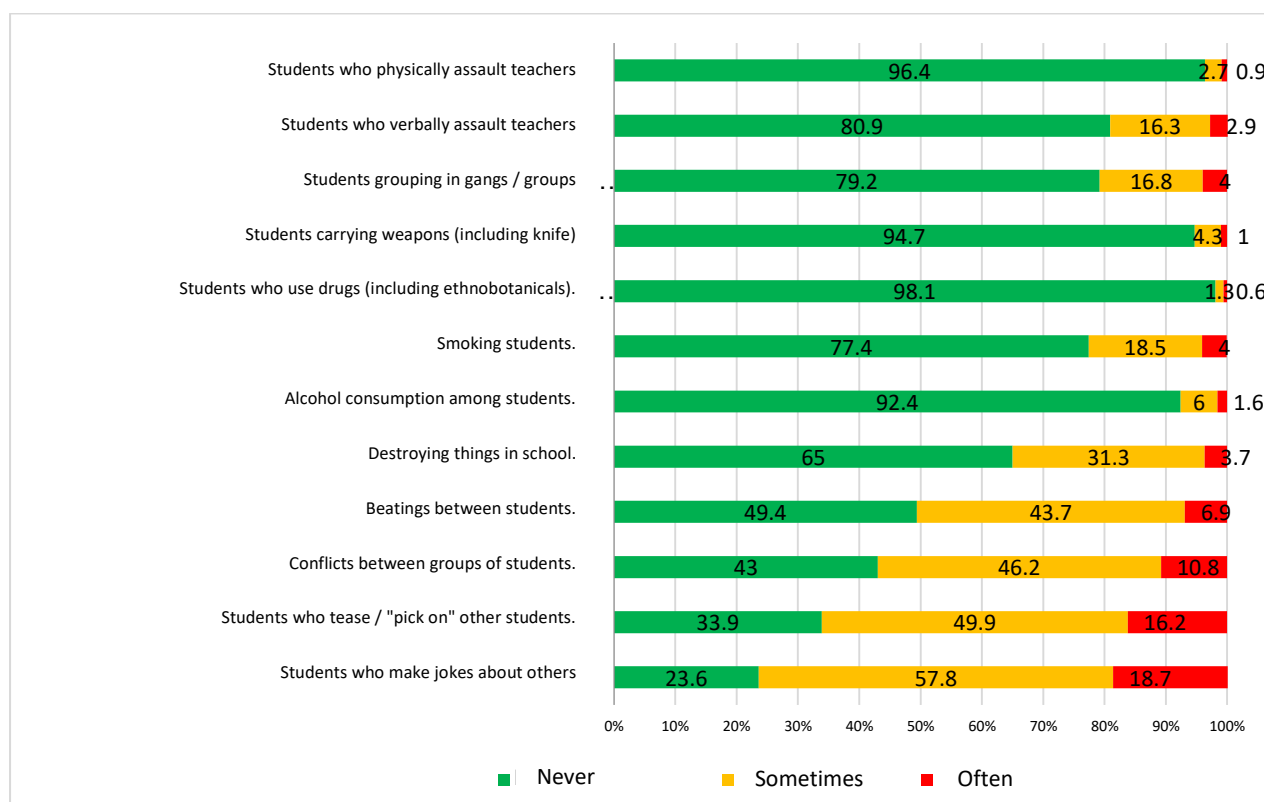
*Chart 4.9 Equal opportunities in the gymnasium level*

In the opinion of the respondents, the teachers prefer, at least sometimes, the students who have good grades (71.8%) and the disciplined and good ones (69.4%). Over a third of the respondents have the impression that students from certain classes are sometimes or usually favored compared to those from other classes (36.8%) and 16.3% appreciate that Romanian students are sometimes or usually favored compared to other ethnicities. Opinions regarding the favoring of boys and girls respectively are divided, but still the opinion that girls usually benefit from a preferential treatment is 7% more common in the group (14.5% compared to 7.5%) (chart 4.9).



*Chart 4.10 Relationship with classmates in high school*

In this group of students, 76.4% say they get along well with their classmates, 71.7% say they have friends among classmates, over 70% say they like to work in a team, and 87.4% respect classmates. However, more than a third of middle school students do not perceive their class as united and only half would discuss personal issues with their classmates. In terms of data from the graph, the relationships between students are generally good, but only for 50.6% of respondents classmates are a real source of support to which they would turn in case of personal problems. Given the multitude of problems faced by families during this period, the size of the risk area and attention to this item indicates the need to improve cohesion between students, in order to stimulate mutual help between them (chart 4.10).



*Chart 4. 11. Problematic behaviors (Safety) in high school*

Regarding the problematic behaviors at the gymnasium level, it is noted that the high-risk areas have a low share. Thus, over 90% of the responding students stated that it is not a problem for students who carry a knife (94.7%), those who use drugs or alcohol (98.1% and 92.4%, respectively), nor students who could physically assault teachers (96.4%). The percentage of those who see a problem in the verbal aggression of teachers is 19.2%. The biggest problems are around the phenomenon of bullying: there are students who at least sometimes make jokes about others (76.4%) and students who at least sometimes tease others (66.1%). Aggression between students also results from the percentage of 50.6% who see a problem in the fights that take place between groups of students (6.9% often and 43.7% sometimes), in conflicts between groups of students (57%) and in the destruction of school property (35%). These problematic issues can undermine the school climate by reducing students' sense of comfort(chart 4.11).

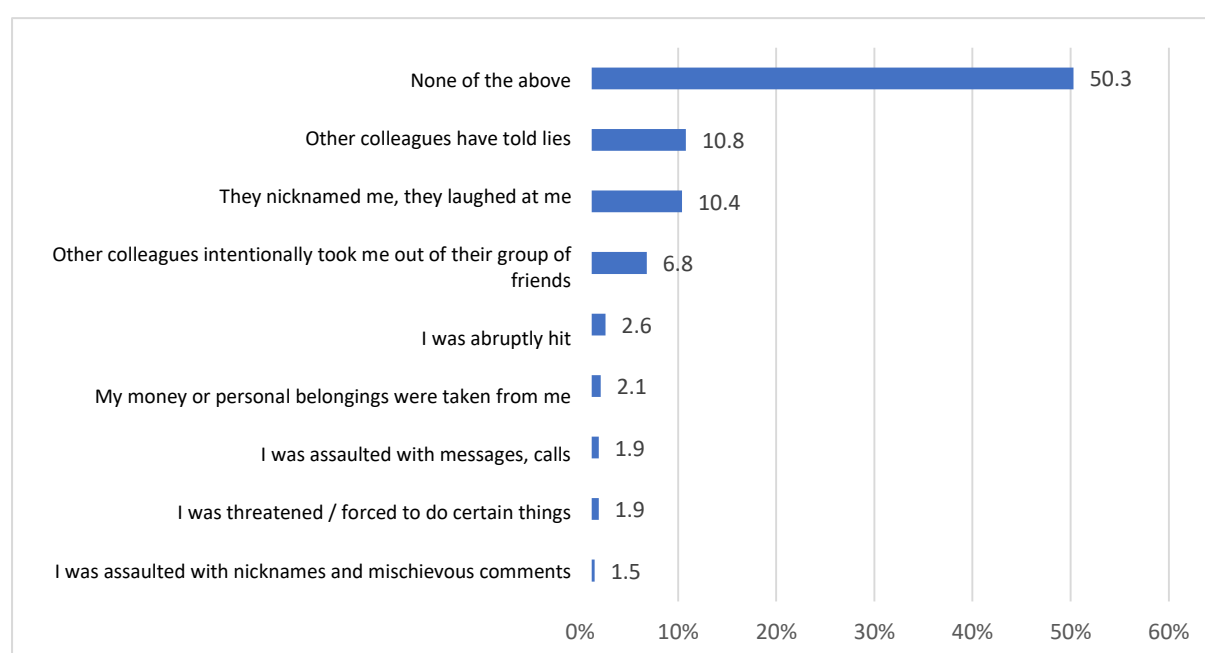
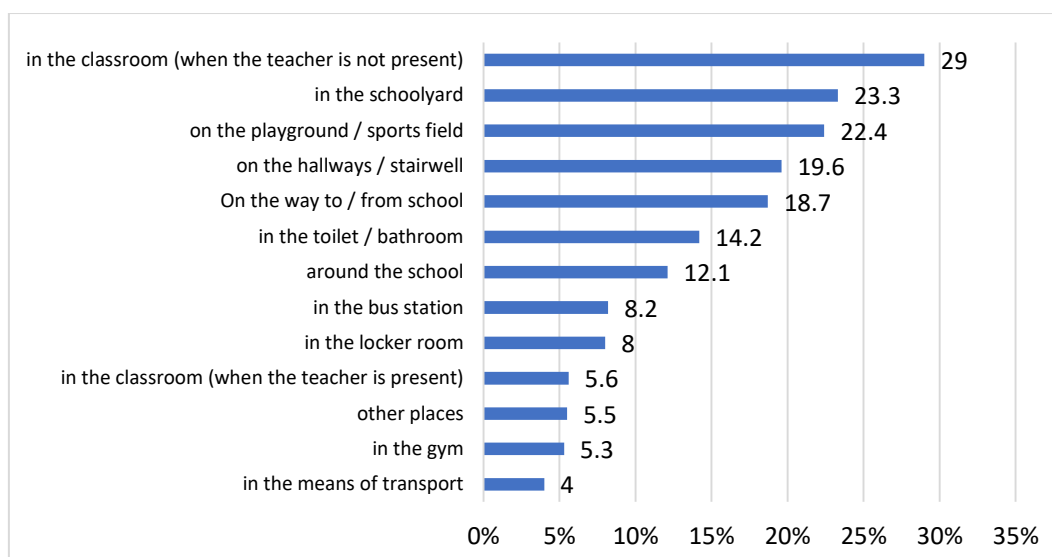


Chart 4.12. *Forms of violence suffered in high school*

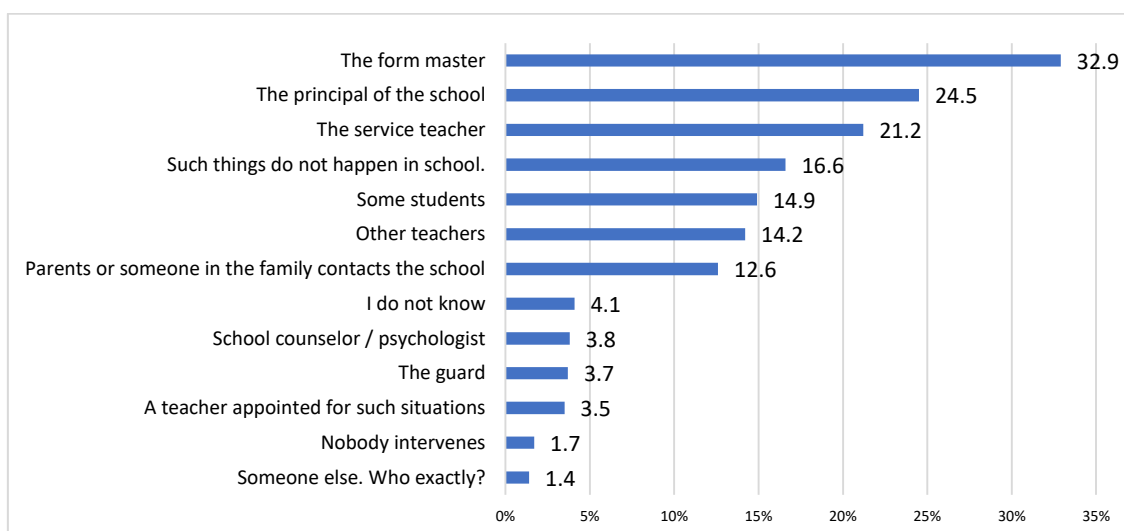
Studies show that school safety is a predictive element for students' school attendance and grades, facilitating students' learning and healthy development. Half of the respondents stated that they did not suffer any form of violence, but lower percentages indicated various forms of bullying: lies, false rumors are mentioned by 10.8% of students, 10% of them were victims of nicknames, teasing, and 6.8% were intentionally removed from social groups. At the same time, there are more serious forms of violence, such as hitting, taking money or personal property, racist comments and forms of violence in the digital space, suffered by a smaller but important percentage of students (up to 10%) (chart 4.12).





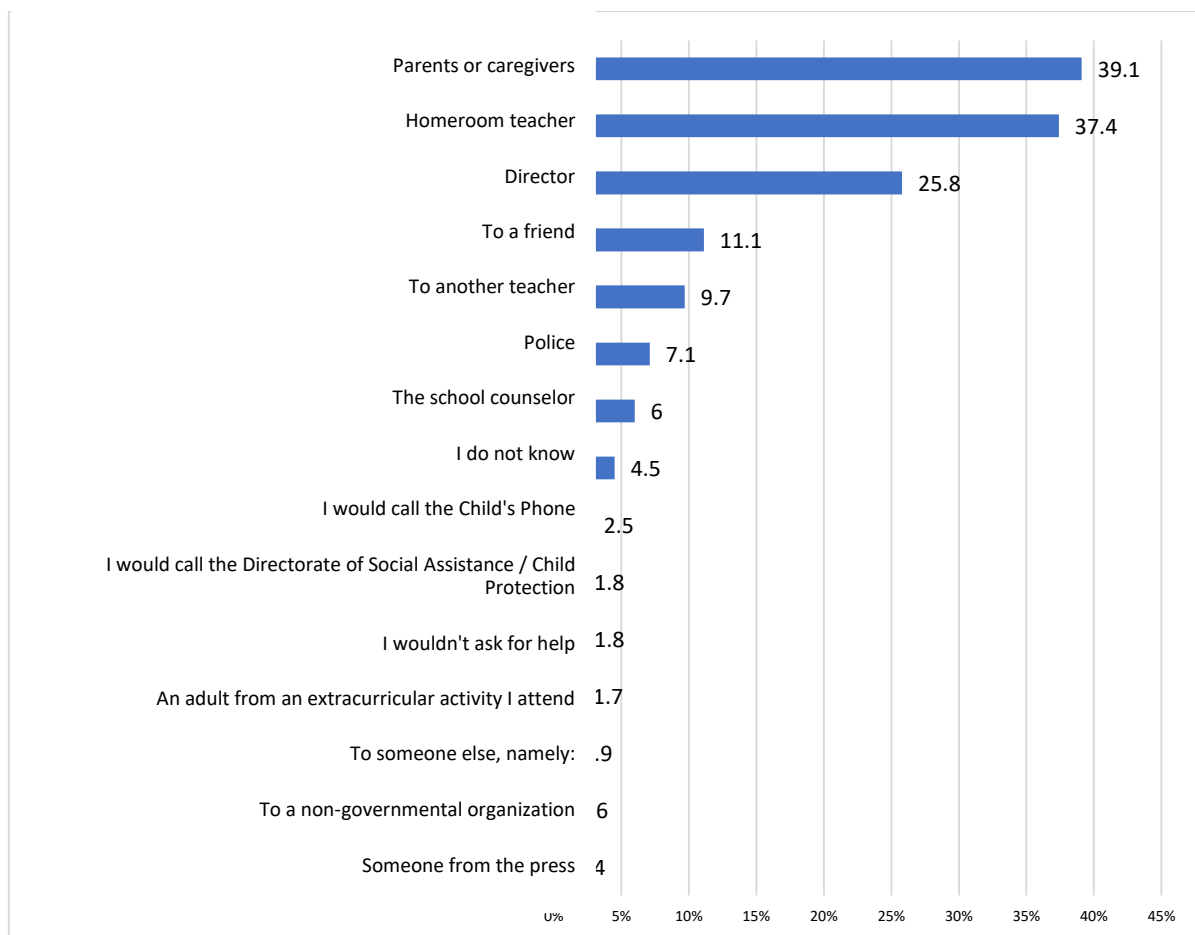
*Chart 4.13. The place where acts of violence occur in high school*

The classroom (when the teacher is not present) is the main area of violence (29%), followed by the schoolyard (23.3%), the playground/sports field (22.4%), the halls and the stairwell (19.6%) and toilets (14.2%). It is noteworthy that acts of violence between students also occur outside the school, generally on the way to/from school (18.7%), near the school (12.1%) and in the bus station (8,2%) (chart 4.13).



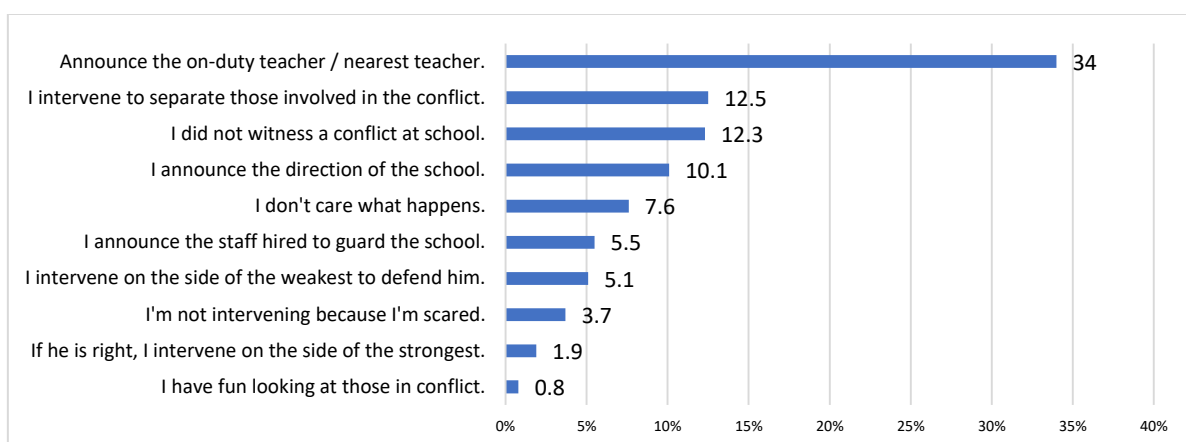
*Chart 4. 14. Who intervenes in case of aggression in school in the gymnasium level*

In the perception of the students who completed the questionnaire, the teacher intervenes most often in situations of violence (32.9%), followed by the principal of the school (24.5%) and the teacher on duty (21.2%). A similar percentage of students consider that some teachers and some students are the ones who try to solve the situations of violence between students (14%). The fact that there is a relatively high percentage of students involved in resolving acts of violence can be considered a resource, used to effectively detect and resolve these situations (chart 4.14).



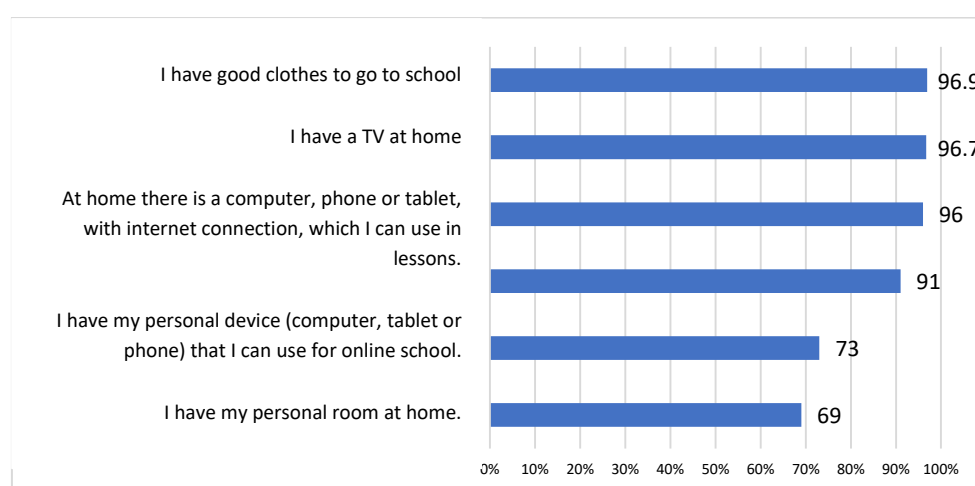
*Chart 4.15. The behavior of asking for help in the middle school level*

If the aggressor is an adult in school, most students would ask for help from parents (39.1%) and teachers (37.4%). In this situation, the principal is seen as a support person by 25.8%, and 11.1% would go to a friend and 9.7% to another teacher (chart 4.15). Although parents are the preferred sources of support for students, it should be noted that teachers, especially homeroom teachers and principals, but also some teachers are seen by students as possible sources of support if they are assaulted by an adult in school.



*Chart 4.16. Students' attitude towards violence in the gymnasium level*

When asked about their own attitude towards violence, most of the students said that they were announcing the teacher on duty (34%). More than 10% of respondents say they would intervene personally to separate those in conflict, and 10% would announce the direction (chart 4.16). In terms of data, the management of the schools in the group is an important resource for students in resolving violent acts, which suggests a good starting point for the institutional adoption of clear procedures in situations of violence. However, neither the percentage of 7.6% of students who answer that they are not interested in what is happening nor the 3.7% who do not intervene out of fear (chart 4.16).



*Chart 4.17. Home equipment for the gymnasium level*

Regarding the facilities required for the online school, the vast majority of students say that they have the necessary devices, with internet connection (96%), and 91% say that they have a personal device that they can use, but a quarter do not have their personal room, which in the case of online school can affect their ability to concentrate on lessons (chart 4.17).

## **4.2 Discussing the results of the study at gymnasium level**

At the gymnasium level there are no significant differences between girls and boys in the aspects studied, so satisfaction with school, attachment to school, involvement in school life, relationships with teachers and classmates, perception of equal opportunities and problematic behaviors are not perceived significantly different by girls and boys. Likewise, students' experiences of violence do not differ significantly depending on the two genders. It results that at the pre-adolescent and early adolescence the students' perception regarding the aspects of the school climate, but also the behavior in relation to the school violence is similar in the investigated schools. This will have to be checked in case of subsequent application of the questionnaire.

The analyzes show significant differences regarding the perception of the school climate depending on the level of the classes within the gymnasium level. Fifth graders are the ones who differ the most from the rest of the levels. In their case, school satisfaction is significantly higher than the rest of the levels ( $t(364,356)=2.219$ ,  $p<0.05$  compared to the sixth grade,  $t(4010,014)=4.467$ ,  $p<0.001$  compared with seventh grade and  $t(276,938)=20.010$ ,  $p<0.05$  compared to eight grade). Students in the seventh grade are the least satisfied with school, the differences

being significant in addition to the fifth grade and compared to the sixth grade ( $t(495,688)=-2.442$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), respectively to VIII ( $t(331,828)=-2.225$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) (see Annex 4.2).

The perception of those in the fifth grade regarding the involvement of students in school problems differs significantly only from those in the sixth grade ( $t(388)=1.983$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), those in the fifth grade feeling less involved than their older classmates. Regarding online education, those in the fifth grade were more satisfied than their older classmates, the differences being significant ( $t(387)=2.136$ ,  $p<0.05$  compared to the sixth grade,  $t(416)=4.675$ ,  $p<0.001$  compared to seventh grade and  $t(284)=4.346$ ,  $p<0.001$  compared to eighth grade) (see Annex 4.2).

Relationships with teachers are perceived as more positive by students in the fifth grade ( $t(366,850)=20.097$ ,  $p<0.05$  compared to the sixth grade,  $t(397)=4.154$ ,  $p<0.001$  compared to seventh grade and  $t(219.444)=20.012$ ,  $p<0.05$  compared to eighth grade) (Annex 4.2).

Also the students of the 5th grade perceive the highest level of support from the teachers ( $t(373)=3.634$ ,  $p<0.001$ , compared to the 6th grade,  $t(396)=3.736$ ,  $p<0.001$  compared to the 7th grade and  $t(273)=2.935$ ,  $p<0.01$  compared to 8th grade, but also the fewest conflicts, although in this respect their perception does not differ significantly from that of 8th grade students ( $t(372)=-2.450$ ,  $p<0.05$  compared to sixth grade and  $t(397)=-3.137$ ,  $p<0.01$  compared to seventh grade) (Annex 4.2).

Relationships with teachers are perceived as dysfunctional to a greater extent by students in the seventh grade, the difference being significant not only compared to the fifth grade, but also compared to those in the sixth grade ( $t(471)=2.303$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). At the same time, those in the seventh grade report the most conflicts with teachers, significantly more than those in the fifth grade, as seen, but also more than those in the eighth grade ( $t(351,382)=2.594$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) (Annex 4.2).

It should be noted that there are no significant differences in the way students see the preferential attitudes of teachers according to gender, material situation of the family or ethnicity (Annex 4.2).

Regarding the problematic behaviors of classmates, all those in fifth grade are those who perceive less than others ( $t(340)=-2.032$ ,  $p<0.05$  compared to sixth grade,  $t(379)=-3.905$ ,  $p<0.001$  compared to seventh grade,  $t(253)=-3.675$ ,  $p<0.001$  compared to eighth grade), followed by those in sixth grade, who perceive significantly fewer problems than those in seventh grade ( $t(440,720)=2.419$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and eighth grade ( $t(315)=-2.196$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) (Annex 4.2).

Those in the 8th grade see to a greater extent as dysfunctional the relationships with classmates, the differences being significant compared to those in the 5th grade ( $t(254)=2.441$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and the 6th ( $t(319)=2.348$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Attachment to school is also highest among students in the fifth grade, the differences being significant compared to the seventh grade ( $t(2730,097)=3.423$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and the eighth ( $t(223)=2.597$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

In conclusion, the data show that school satisfaction and school attachment decrease with the advancement of students in the levels of the gymnasium level. It seems that the little ones receive more support from teachers and have fewer conflicts. Most conflicts are perceived in the case of students in the seventh grade, who have the least attachment and satisfaction. The relationship with classmates is perceived more and more critically with the advancement to the upper levels of the gymnasium level and at the same time with the variation and complication of the behaviors during the transition from puberty to adolescence (Annex 4.2).

## Analysis of school satisfaction and school attachment from the perspective of students' perception of relationships with teachers

Starting from the importance of the relations with the teachers, we analyzed their influence on the satisfaction with the school and the students' attachment to it. For this purpose, we compared the satisfaction and attachment of students with good and conflicting relationships with teachers, as follows: in the case of each variable 2 groups were formed: those who responded with "little" or "not at all" formed a group, and those who responded with the statement "much" constitute the second group. The questions were used: "I get a lot of encouragement from teachers", "I'm afraid of some teachers", "some teachers offend us", "some teachers humiliate us in front of the class", to which the answers were grouped similarly: those with the answer "never" constituting a group, and everyone else, another group (Table 4.1).

The data in the table below shows that students who feel encouraged and listened to are more satisfied with the school and feel more attached to it. There are significant differences ( $t=-11.67$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) between the school satisfaction of those who consider that they receive a lot of encouragement from teachers ( $M=2.90$ ;  $DS=0.18$ ) and those who consider that they receive little encouragement or do not receive at all ( $M=2.63$ ;  $DS=0.38$ ). Similarly, the school attachment of those who receive a lot of encouragement ( $M=2.65$ ;  $DS=0.43$ ) is significantly higher ( $t=-10.424$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) than that of students with little encouragement ( $M=2.21$ ;  $DS=0.55$ ). The fact that a student feels listened to by teachers has similar effects on satisfaction and attachment. Students who feel "listened to" a lot by their teachers ( $M=2.89$ ;  $DS=0.18$ ) are significantly more satisfied with school ( $t=12.54$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) than their peers who feel less or not listened to at all ( $M=2.53$ ;  $DS=0.40$ ), a trend that is repeated in the case of attachment to school: those who consider themselves listened to ( $M=2.60$ ;  $DS=0.47$ ) are more attached of school ( $t=-10.45$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) than those who consider themselves listened to little or not at all ( $M=2.13$ ;  $DS=0.51$ ) (Table 4.1)

*Table 4.1 Differences regarding school satisfaction and attachment to school, depending on the good relationship or not with teachers, high school classes*

Categories of students	School satisfaction	School attachment
I get/don't get a lot of encouragement from teachers	$t(402,785)=-11.675$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(399,899)=-10.424$ ; $p<0.001$
Teachers listen/don't listen to what I have to say	$t(2510,068)=-12.547$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(643)=-10.455$ ; $p<0.001$
I'm afraid/I'm not afraid of some teachers	$t(396,445)=6.151$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(643)=6.539$ ; $p<0.001$
Some teachers offend us/do not offend us	$t(190,848)=6.661$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(132,563)=6.176$ ; $p<0.001$
Some teachers humiliate/do not humiliate us in front of the class	$t(215,643)=7.405$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(643)=6.467$ ; $p<0.001$

Likewise, the fear of teachers, the feeling of being humiliated and offended reduces the satisfaction with the school and the attachment to it. Students who are never afraid of teachers ( $M=2.84$ ;  $DS=0.26$ ) are significantly more satisfied with school ( $t=6.15$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) than their peers who are at least sometimes afraid. ( $M=2.69$ ;  $DS=0.36$ ) and they ( $M=2.58$ ;  $DS=0.49$ ) are more attached ( $t=6.53$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) than their classmates with negative experiences in to a greater extent ( $M=2.29$ ;  $DS=0.55$ ). Likewise, those who have never felt offended ( $M=2.84$ ;  $DS=0.25$ ) are more satisfied with school ( $t=6.61$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) than those who have felt offended at least sometimes ( $M=2.61$ ;  $DS=0.41$ ).

Humiliation in front of the class has the same effect on school satisfaction: those who have never felt humiliated ( $M=2.85$ ;  $DS=0.24$ ) are more satisfied with school ( $t=7.40$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) than their classmates who, at least sometimes, felt humiliated ( $M=2.61$ ;  $DS=0.42$ ). Differences between the attachment of those who felt offended at least sometimes ( $M=2.17$ ;  $DS=0.60$ ) and those who never felt this way ( $M=2.55$ ;  $DS=0.48$ ) are significant ( $t=6.17$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), as is the difference between the attachment of those who have never felt humiliated ( $M=2.55$ ;  $DS=0.49$ ) and those who have been they feel humiliated ( $M=2.22$ ;  $DS=0.57$ ), in this case  $t=6.46$ ;  $p<0.001$  (Table 4.1).

*Table 4.2. Differences regarding school satisfaction and attachment to school, depending on the perception of the situation in the group of students, middle school classes*

Categories of students	School satisfaction	School attachment
With and without good relationships with classmates	$t(402,785)=-11.675$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(220,385)=-11.68$ ; $p<0.001$
United class perception / lack of cohesion	$t(569,790)=-10.320$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(458,667)=-11.297$ ; $p<0.001$
Mutual support classmates / lack of mutual support	$t(583,680)=-90.068$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(463,120)=-10.073$ ; $p<0.001$
With and without experiences of violence	$t(444,344)=6.27$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(2660,055)=4.754$ ; $p<0.001$
Excluded from students / included	$t(291,308)=11.11$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(327,366)=13.47$ ; $p<0.001$
Marginalized by students and teachers / lack of marginalization	$t(209,750)=10.253$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(229,444)=12.463$ ; $p<0.001$

In turn, **relationships with classmates also influence students' school satisfaction and school attachment**(Table 4.2). School attachment also differs depending on the students' perception of the classroom atmosphere: those who consider it united are more attached ( $M=2.67$ ;  $DS=0.43$ ) than those who consider it little or not at all united ( $M=2.22$ ;  $DS=0.53$ ),  $t=-11.29$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Students who consider that if they need help in clarifying school content would receive it from classmates, they are more satisfied with school ( $M=2.89$ ;  $SD=0.21$ ) than those who do not consider themselves supported ( $M=2.69$ ;  $DS=0.36$ ),  $t=90.06$ ,  $p<0.001$ . School attachment also differs between those who believe they can get help from peers and those who do not, those who perceive their peers as a source of help are more attached ( $M=2.65$ ;  $DS=0.44$ ) than those who don't think they would be helped by classmates if they didn't understand something ( $M=2.24$ ;  $DS=0.54$ ),  $t=10.07$ ,  $p<0.001$  (Tabelul 4.2).

Students' experience of violence influences their satisfaction with school, those without such experience being more satisfied ( $M=2.85$ ;  $DS=0.26$ ) than those who suffered acts of violence from classmates ( $M=2.69$ ;  $DS=0.36$ ),  $t=6.27$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Likewise, students without experience of violence are more attached to school ( $M=2.65$ ;  $DS=0.44$ ) than those who have experienced different types of violence ( $M=2.32$ ;  $DS=0.56$ ),  $t=4.75$ ,  $p<0.001$  (Table 4.2).

The importance of relationships with peers on school satisfaction and attachment is also emphasized by the fact that excluded students (the 25% with the lowest scores on the Peer Relationship scale) have lower school satisfaction ( $M=2.58$ ;  $DS=0.37$ ) than the others ( $M=2.88$ ;  $DS=0.22$ ),  $t=11.11$ ,  $p<0.001$ . Also, those excluded are less attached to the school ( $M=2.10$ ;  $DS=0.52$ ) than those better integrated in the collective ( $M=2.52$ ;  $DS=0.42$ ),  $t=13.47$ ,  $p<0.001$  (Table 4.2).

The integration of students in the group has a protective effect against violence, those excluded reporting significantly more experience of violence than those integrated (67.5% compared to 35.9% in the case of those integrated,  $\chi^2=12.08$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

We built the category called "marginalized students" comprising here the 25% with the lowest scores both on the scale "Relationships with classmates" and on the scale "Support from teachers". Thus, in this category were grouped 168 students who met these characteristics. They were less satisfied with school ( $M=2.55$ ;  $SD=0.37$ ) than the others ( $M=2.86$ ;  $SD=0.25$ ),  $t=10.25$ ,  $p<0.001$ , and less attached to school ( $M=20.05$ ;  $DS=0.51$ ) than their peers who feel more supported by classmates and teachers ( $M=2.63$ ;  $DS=0.48$ ),  $t=12.46$ ,  $p<0.001$ . In the light of the above, it is observed that the lack of support from both teachers and classmates has negative effects on school satisfaction and attachment. Therefore, once again, there is a need for teachers to support students who have difficulties in school integration, both directly, in the learning process and indirectly, by stimulating the cohesion of classes and groups of students, including those with integration difficulties in the group of students.

*Table. 4.3. Correlations between the factors of the SCP-G questionnaire, gymnasium classes*

Dimensions of the school climate - gymnasium level	School satisfaction	Conflicts with teachers	Equal opportunities	Teacher support	Problematic behaviors	School attachment	Relationship with classmates	School involvement	Online school	Difficulties in online school
School satisfaction	1	-0.485**	-0.240**	0.611**	-0.457**	0.613**	0.558**	0.402**	0.468**	0.034
Conflicts with teachers		1	0.389**	-0.408**	0.635**	-0.422**	-0.361**	-0.302**	-0.238**	-0.068
Equal opportunity			1	-0.214**	0.377**	-0.177**	-0.221**	-0.217**	-0.148**	0.116**
Teachers' support				1	-0.342**	0.458**	0.439**	0.365**	0.367**	0.064
Problematic behaviour (safety)					1	-0.381**	-0.419**	-0.261**	-0.260**	-0.021
School attachment						1	0.572**	0.302**	0.283**	0.196**
Relation with classmates							1	0.224**	0.299**	0.075*
Involvement in school								1	0.293**	0.104**
Online school									1	0.318**
Difficulties with online school										1

**Legend:** \* significant correlations at the 0.05 threshold; \*\* significant correlations at the threshold of 0.01.

The scales included in the analyzes correlate significantly with each other (Table 3.3). "School satisfaction" is the scale that shows the strongest correlations with the other scales: strong significant correlation coefficients were found with "School attachment" ( $r(641)=0.613$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and "Teacher support" ( $r(741)=0.611$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), which suggests that students who are more satisfied with the school are more attached to it and those who receive more support from teachers are more satisfied with the school (Table 4.3). The third variable that shows a strong significant correlation coefficient with "School Satisfaction" is the scale "Relationship with classmates" ( $r(698)=0.55$ ,

$p < 0.01$ ), so students who have good relationships with classmates are more satisfied with school. The relationship between the scale "Conflicts with teachers" and "School satisfaction" is also quite strong, negative ( $r(742) = -0.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), so students with many conflicts with teachers are less satisfied with school. The "Problem Behaviors" scale of school students correlates negatively with "School Satisfaction" ( $r(694) = -0.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The "Conflict with teachers" scale correlates most strongly with the "Problem behaviors" scale ( $r(694) = 0.63$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and there is a negative correlation between "Conflicts with teachers" and "School attachment" ( $r(639) = -0.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). "Teacher support" correlates most strongly with "School attachment" ( $r(639) = 0.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and with "Relationships with classmates" ( $r(697) = 0.43$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), which emphasizes once again the importance of the relationships between the actors of school life for the climate of a school. "Problematic behaviors" correlate negatively with "Peer relationships" ( $r(697) = -0.41$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that where student relationships are better, they perceive less student behavior as problematic; at the same time, "Peer Relations" also correlates with "Attachment to School" ( $r(641) = 0.572$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Table 4.3). In conclusion, we can say that the relations between students and the student-teacher relations are the key points of the school climate.



## 5 SCHOOL CLIMATE ANALYSIS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

### 5.1 The profile of the school climate at the level of the high school classes in the project

In order to achieve the profile of the school climate at high school level, the data processing was performed based on 792 responses of students from 5 schools. Depending on the participating high school, the highest number of answers came from the high school in Negrești (Vaslui County), where the school management and teachers, as well as students, were very involved in research.

Analyzing the composition of the group, 68.4% of the total answers come from girls, 30.8% of the answers are from boys, and 0.8% of high school students said they belong to another gender (6 people).

Depending on the level of the class followed by the students, at the high school level the group includes students from the following grades: 21% students from the ninth grade, 31.3% students from the 10th grade, 23.2% from the 11th grade and 24.5% of the 12th grade.

The school climate at the level of the high school group was measured by a questionnaire that includes 12 scales: School satisfaction; School attachment; Inclusive school culture; Involvement of students in school life; Student-centered educational climate; Online school; Difficulties in online school; Teacher support; Conflicts with teachers; Inclusive school practices; Equal opportunities; Relationship with classmates - support from classmates; two questions on family and school facilities and 8 questions on school violence (see Annex 5.1).

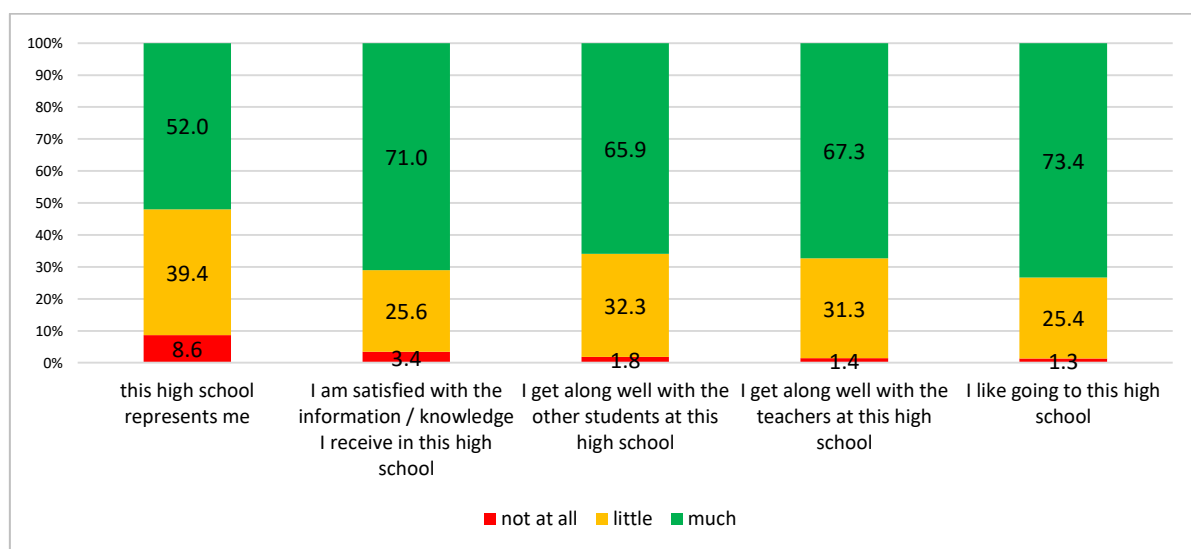
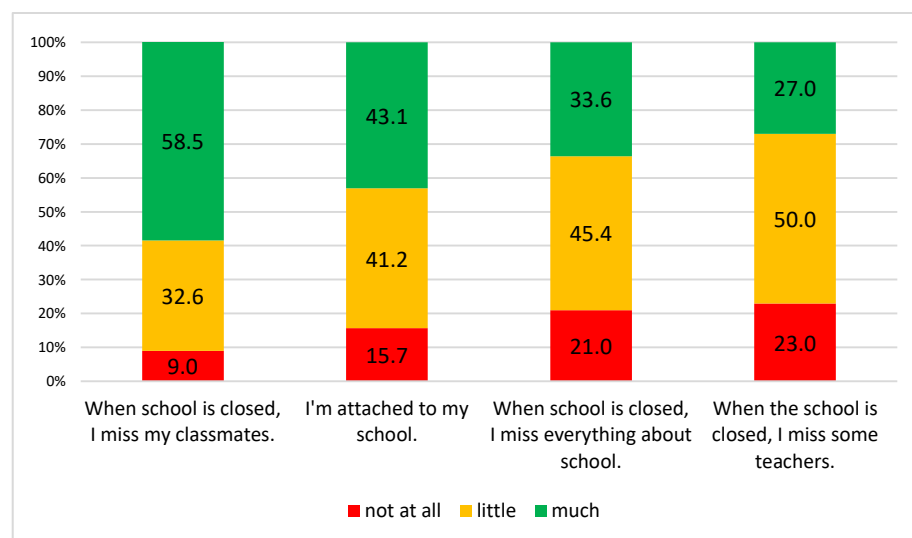


Chart 5.1. Satisfaction with school in high school

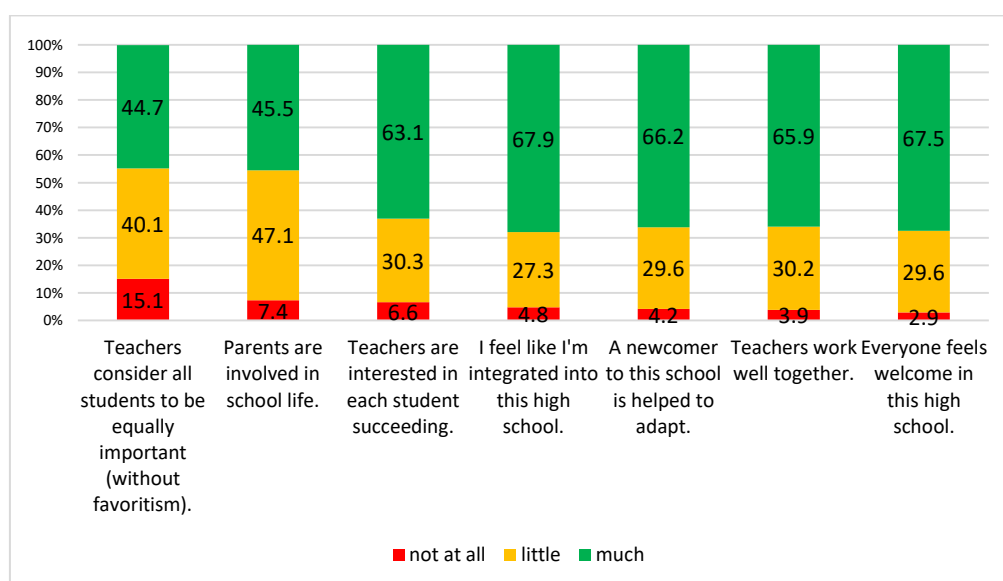
Three quarters of the high school students in the group say 73.4% say they like going to the high school where they study, but there are also 8.6% who say that high school does not represent

them at all and almost 40% say that it represents "little". 71% of high school students say they are satisfied with the information/knowledge they receive. Regarding the relationships between high school students, 32.3% state that they do not get along well with others, which is an aspect that can affect the school climate, as well as the fact that 31.3% are not satisfied with the relationships with teachers. Both boys and girls are equally satisfied with their school (chart 5.1).



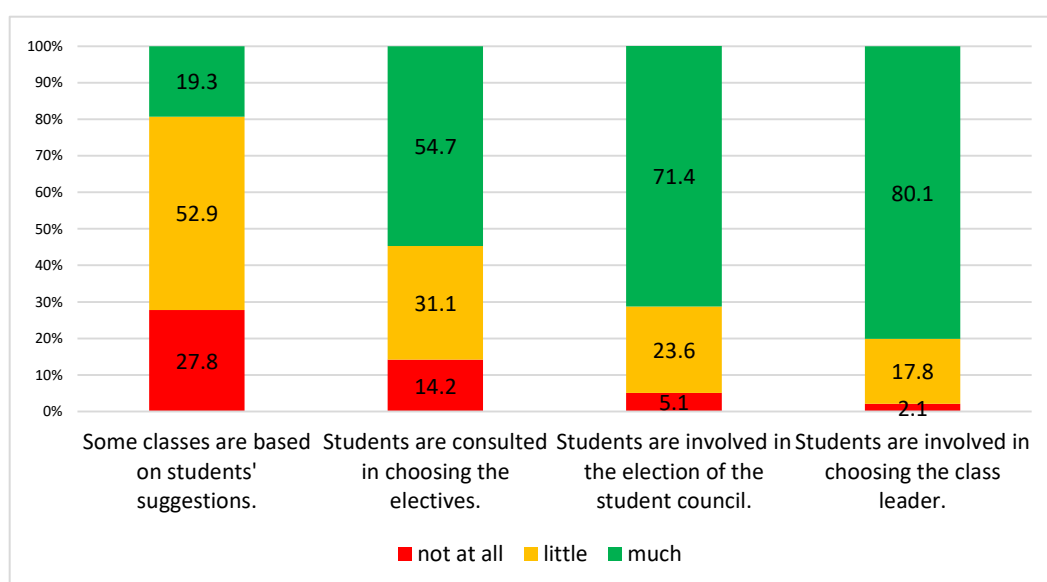
*Chart 5.2. Attachment to school in high school*

Attachment to school is an important component of the school climate, and at the level of the high school group, 73% say that when the school is closed, they do not lack teachers (for 23% not at all, for 50% a little), 66.4% say that when the school is closed they do not lack everything related to school (for 21% not at all, and 45.4% little), 56.9% of high school students say that they are not attached to their school (15.7% not at all, 41.2% a little), and 41.6% say that when the school is closed they do not lack classmates (9% not at all, 32.6% a little). Therefore, the motivation to participate in the life of the student, together with other classmates and teachers, within the school is generally reduced, being thus, through its effects on the motivation for learning, a factor for school performance (chart 5.2).



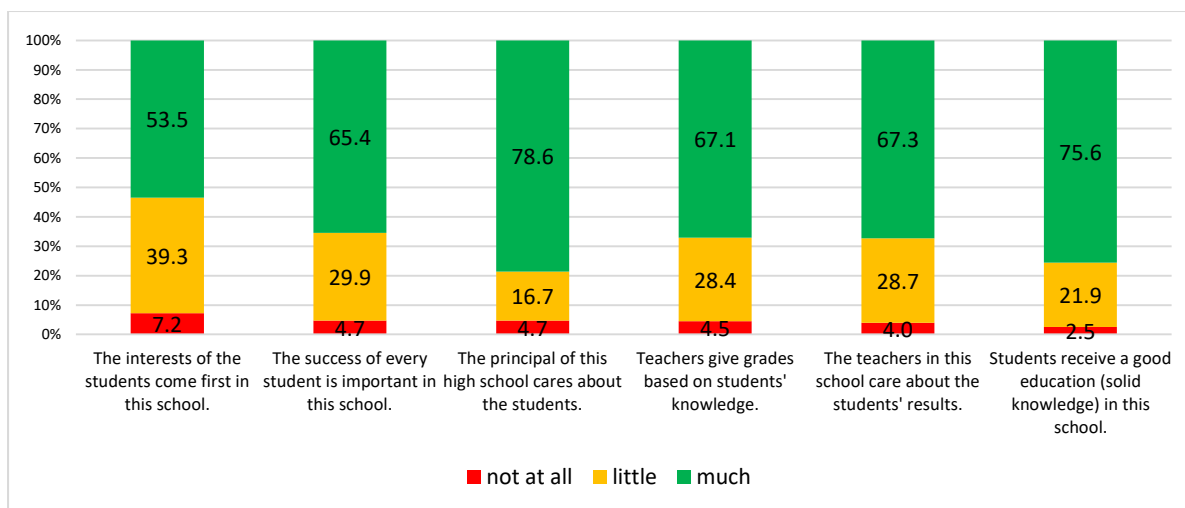
*Chart 5.3. Inclusive culture in high school*

Regarding the inclusive culture of high school students, although most high school students are in the green zone, in all statements related to this dimension the proportion of high school students who say they feel "little" included in high school reaches 30%, and in some respects exceeds 40%. Among high school students, 66-67% say that everyone feels welcome in high school and when a new student is enrolled in school, they are helped to adapt, but there are also 29.6% of high school students who say that these things happen in small measure or little. Regarding teachers, more than half of high school students say that they practice favoritism in school (15.1% say this categorically, and 40.1% say that they practice little). Attention is also drawn to the 30.2% of high school students who say that teachers collaborate well with each other to a small extent or the 30.3% of high school students who say that teachers are less interested in each student to succeed. The involvement of parents in school life is perceived by 47.1% of students as small, and 7.4% of students believe that parents are not involved at all in school life. Although almost 70% of students say they feel integrated in high school, for 27.3% of high school students this happens little (chart 5.3).



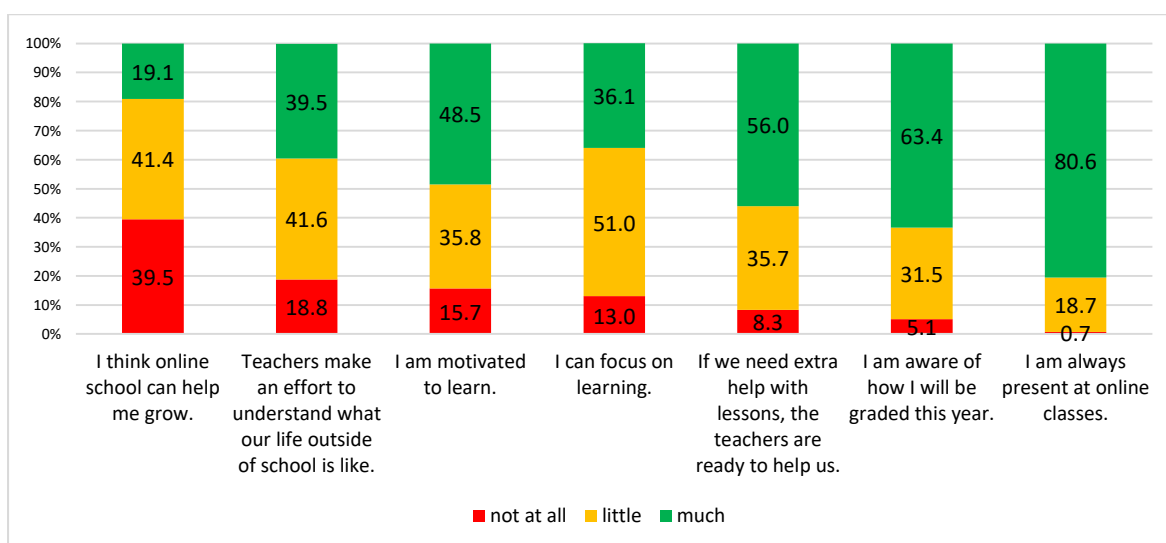
*Chart 5.4. Involvement of students in school life in high school*

The vast majority of high school students, 80.1% feel involved in choosing the class leader, and 71.4% say they are also involved in choosing the student council. Most high school students, 80.7% say they can not choose which subjects to study: 52.9% say that to a small extent there are some hours based on their proposals, and 27.8% say that there are no subjects to study based on the proposal from high school students. In addition to the compulsory school curriculum, high school students have the right to choose which subjects to study, but more than half of them say that they are not consulted in choosing the electives. Of these, 31.1% say that they were consulted to a small extent, and 14.2% say that they were not consulted at all (chart 5.4). Girls say they are more involved in school life than boys.



*Chart 5.5. Student-centered educational climate in high school*

The data show that in the high school environment there is an educational climate focused on students. Students perceive that both teachers (67.3%) and those in the management of schools (78.6%) care about students. Three quarters of students, 75.6%, believe that they receive a good education (solid knowledge) after attending school. But almost half of the students, 46.5%, say that their interests are not always in the first place in high school (7.2% say never). Almost 30% of students say that their success is not very important in school, and 28.4% feel a little unjustified due to the grades given by teachers based on students' knowledge (Figure 5.5). Girls have a perception of the educational climate as being more student-centered than boys.



*Chart 5.6. High school online school*

Although over 80.6% of high school students say that they have always been present in online classes, 41.4% of them say that online school helps them a little to develop, and 39.5% believe that the experience of online classes is not it will not help to develop at all. A quarter of high school students, 15.7% did not feel motivated to learn online, and 13% could not concentrate at all. If we take into account those who stated that they feel little motivated to learn online (35.8%) then more than half of the students did not feel motivated to learn online and 64% could not concentrate on online learning (if we take into account the 51% who said they could concentrate a little). It is

important for students that teachers take into account aspects of their life outside of school. More than half of the students say that teachers do not make an effort to understand what their life is like outside of school. 41.6% of students say that teachers make little effort, and 18.8% say that teachers make no effort at all to understand what life is like outside of school. There are also high school students who feel the need for additional help in lessons. 35.7% of high school students say that if they need additional lessons, teachers are less willing to help them, and 8.3% say they do not benefit at all from the support of teachers (chart 5.6). Girls are more satisfied with online schooling than boys.

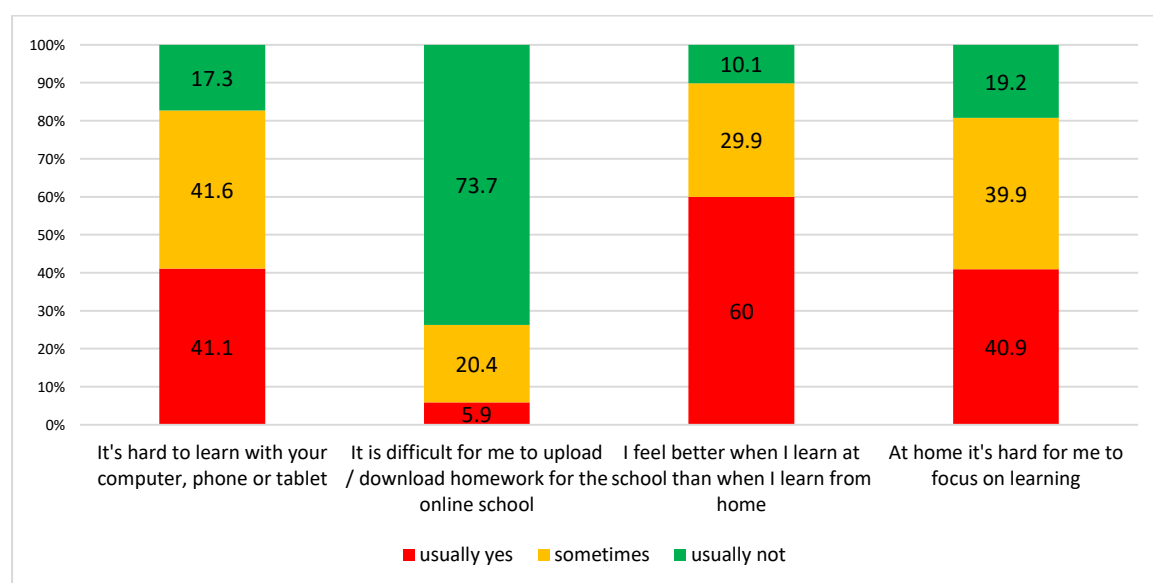


Chart 5.7. Difficulties in online school in high school

The difficulties with online schooling experienced by high school students during the Covid-19 pandemic show that 40.9% of them found it difficult to concentrate on learning and 41.1% say that it is difficult for them to learn from the computer, phone or tablet. More than half of high school students, 60% believe that attending physical classes in the school makes them feel better than attending online courses at home (chart 5.7).

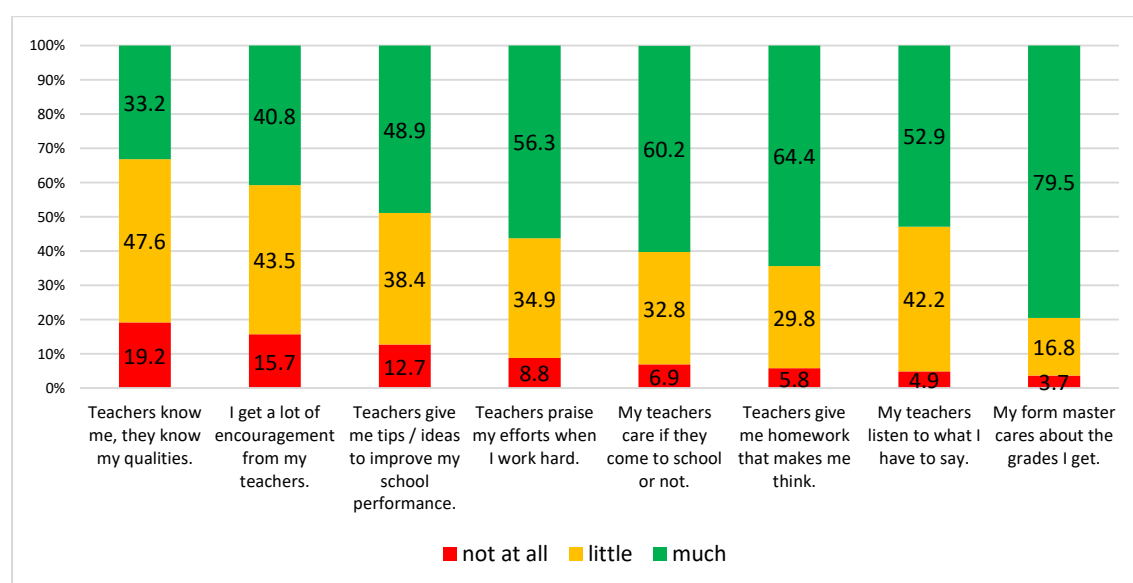
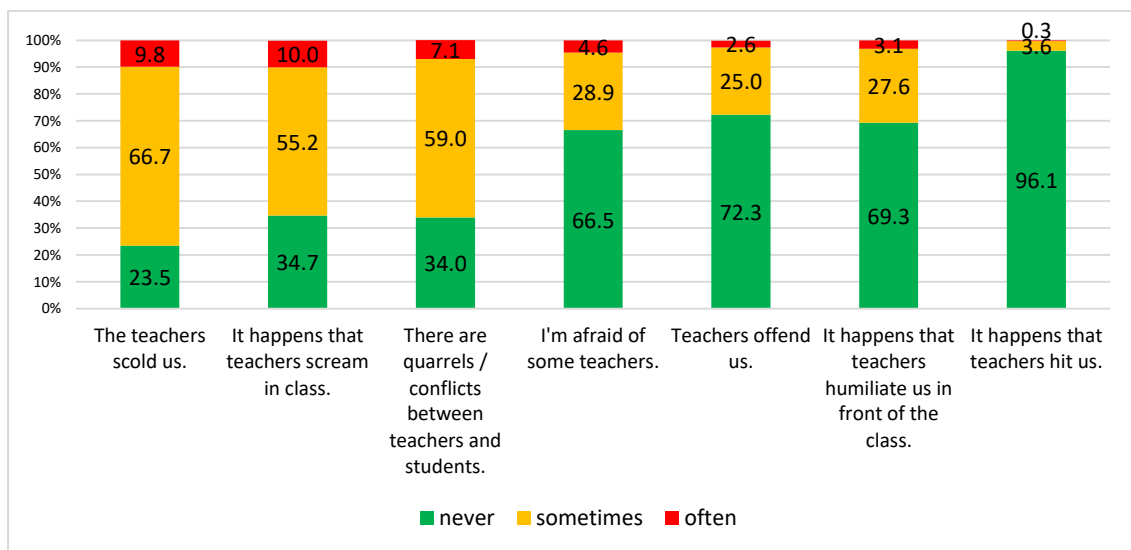


Chart 5.8 Support from high school teachers

The homeroom teacher is the person in the school who motivates the students to have good school performance. Almost 80% of high school students say that the teacher cares about the grades they receive and 60.2% say that teachers care if students come to school. However, less than half of the students, 40.8% feel encouraged by teachers and 48.9% say that teachers give them tips/ideas to improve their school performance. Only 33.2% of high school students say that teachers know their qualities and just over half of students, 52.9% say that teachers listen to what they have to say (chart 5.8). These are reasons for concern about school motivation, one of the factors that increases students' motivation is the connection they have with those teachers. Girls report greater support from teachers compared to boys.



*Chart 5.9 Conflicts with high school teachers*

Most high school students, 96.1% say they are never hit by teachers, 72.3% say they are never offended. However, over three quarters of students, 76.5%, admit that teachers quarrel with them, 66.7% say that sometimes, and 9.8% say that often. Also, more than half of the students, 55.2%, say that it happens that teachers scream during classes sometimes, and 10% say that such behaviors often occur. Almost 60% of students admit that sometimes there are quarrels/conflicts between teachers and students. All this explains the 33.5% of high school students who are afraid of teachers, of which 28.9% sometimes and 4.6% often (chart 5.9). Students' perceptions of conflicts with teachers are the same for boys and girls.

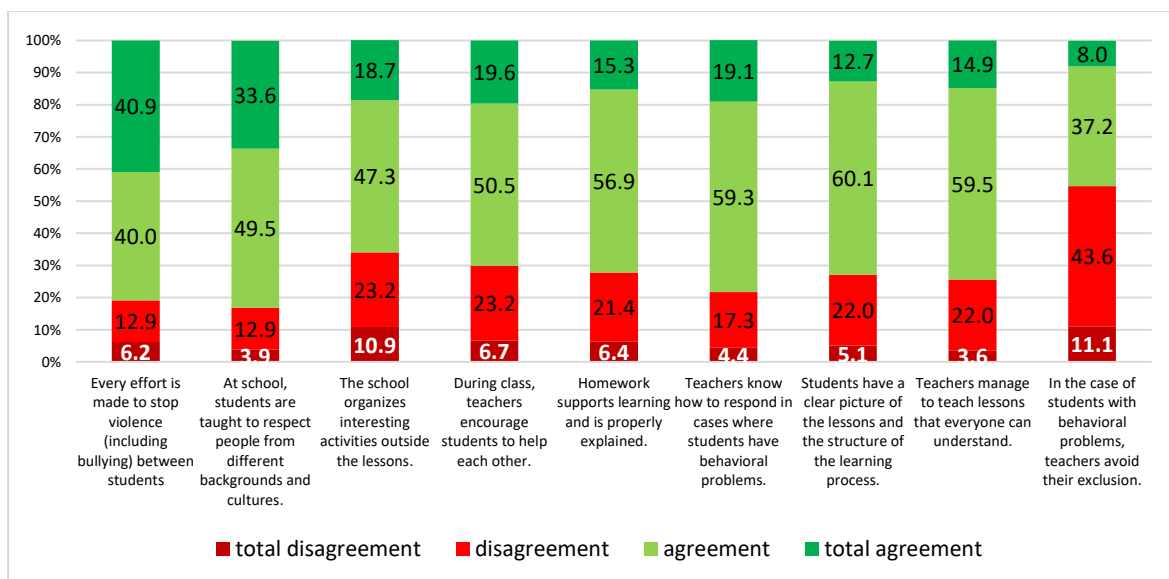


Chart 5.10. Inclusive school practices in the high school cycle

Between 45.2% and 83.1% of high school students say that in their high school inclusive school practices are implemented, such as “they are taught to respect people from different backgrounds and cultures” (81.1%), everything is being done in order to stop the violence (80.9%) or say that teachers know how to respond in cases where students have behavioral problems (78.4%), but they agree less to the fact that the school organizes interesting activities outside of lessons (only 66% agree with this) or that in the case of students with behavioral problems, teachers avoid their exclusion (only 45.2% say that this is what happens). Also, 27.1% of students say they would like to have a clearer picture of the lessons and the structure of the learning process and almost 30% of high school students would like to be encouraged by teachers during classes as between them, classmates to help each other (chart 5.10).

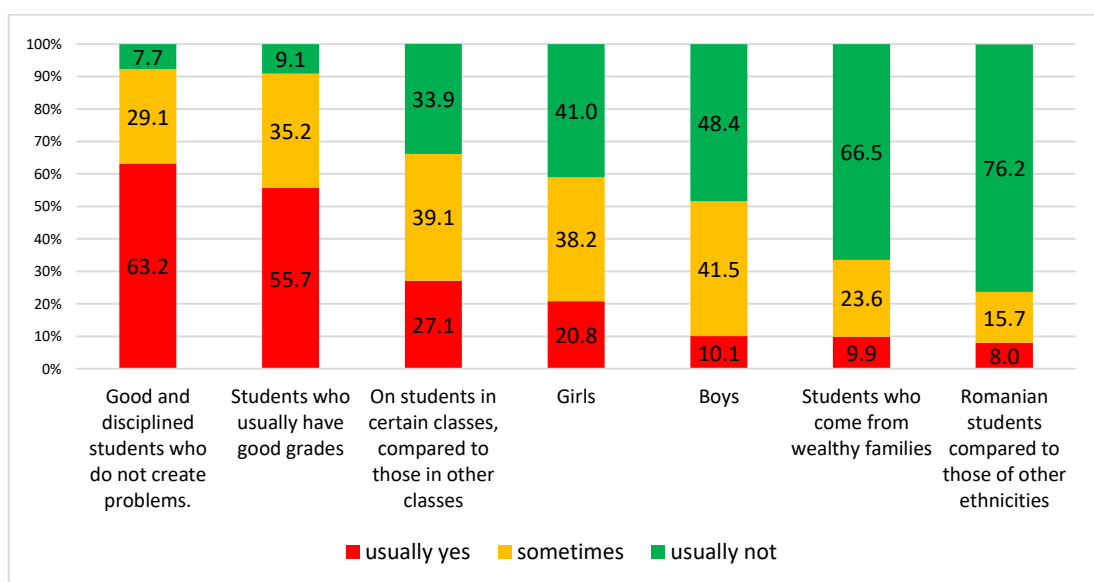
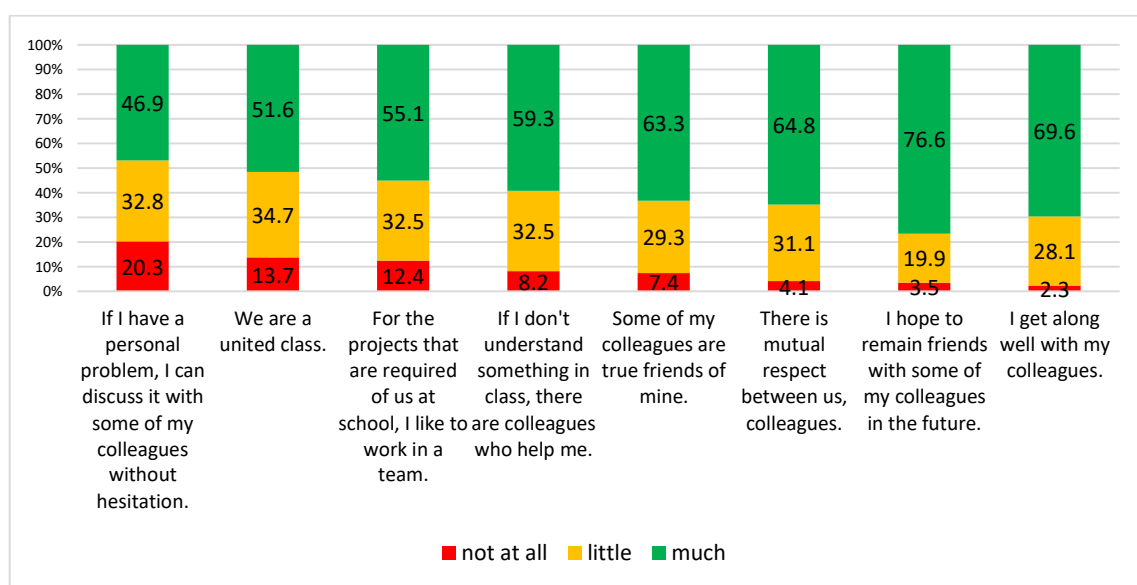


Chart 5.11 Equal opportunities in the high school cycle

Regarding the **perception of equal opportunities**, in the opinion of 63.2% of high school students, teachers usually prefer good and disciplined students who do not create problems. Over 55.7% of high school students say that students with good grades are usually favored. 27.1% of

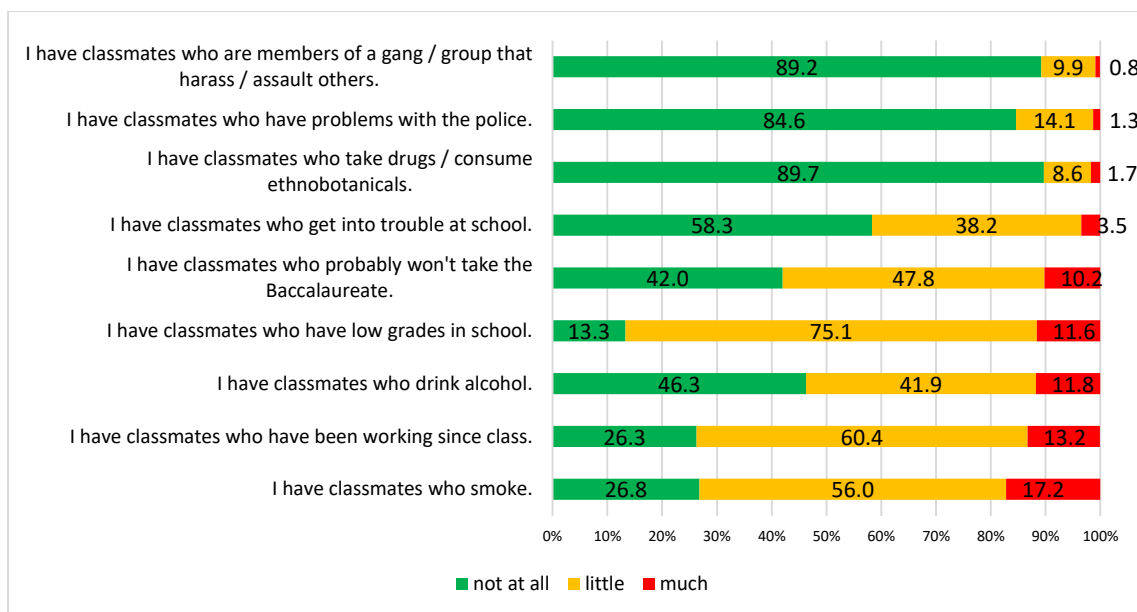
respondents have the impression that students in certain classes are favored compared to students in other classes. High school students believe that girls are also favored at the expense of boys. Over 10% of high school students believe that students in urban areas (13.1%), but also boys are advantaged (10.1% of high school students say that) (chart 5.11). Differences in teachers' attitudes perceived by high school students reduce school motivation and create tensions and sources of conflict, which influences the school climate. Girls perceive these forms of discrimination as taking place to a greater extent compared to how boys perceive them.



*Chart 5.12 Relationship with high school classmates*

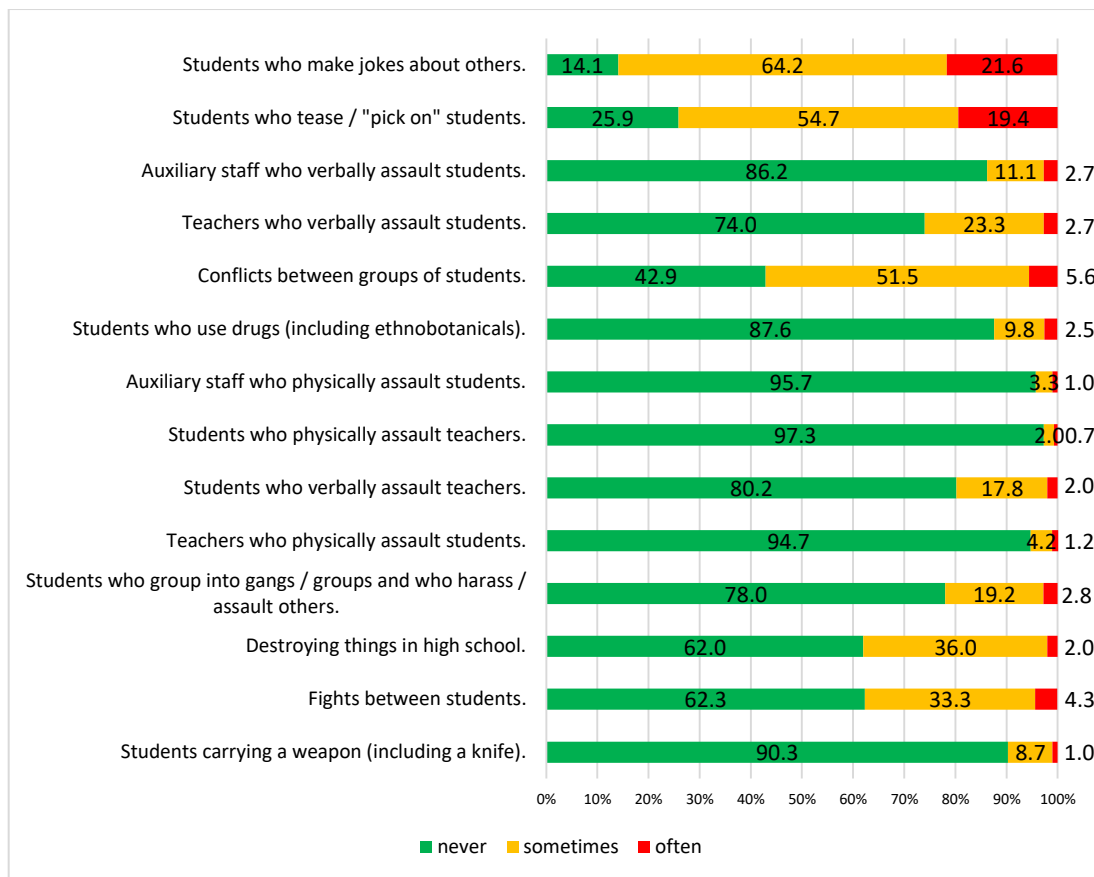
Boys on average report a closer relationship, greater support from classmates compared to girls. Regarding the particular aspects of the dimension of the relationship with classmates, the data show an average level of support among high school students. 69.6% of high school students say they get along well with classmates and 64.8% say there is mutual respect between classmates, but say more than 76.6% say they hope to remain friends with some of their classmates in the future. Half of the high school students, 53.1%, would be reluctant to discuss a personal issue with some of their classmates: 32.8% would discuss to a small extent, and 20.3% would not discuss at all with some classmates about certain personal issues. Almost half of the students, 48.4% who consider that they are not fully a united class, also attract attention. Young people do not like to work in a team, 32.5% say that they do not like to work in a small team, and 12.4% do not like to work in a team at all for the projects required of them at school (chart 5.12).





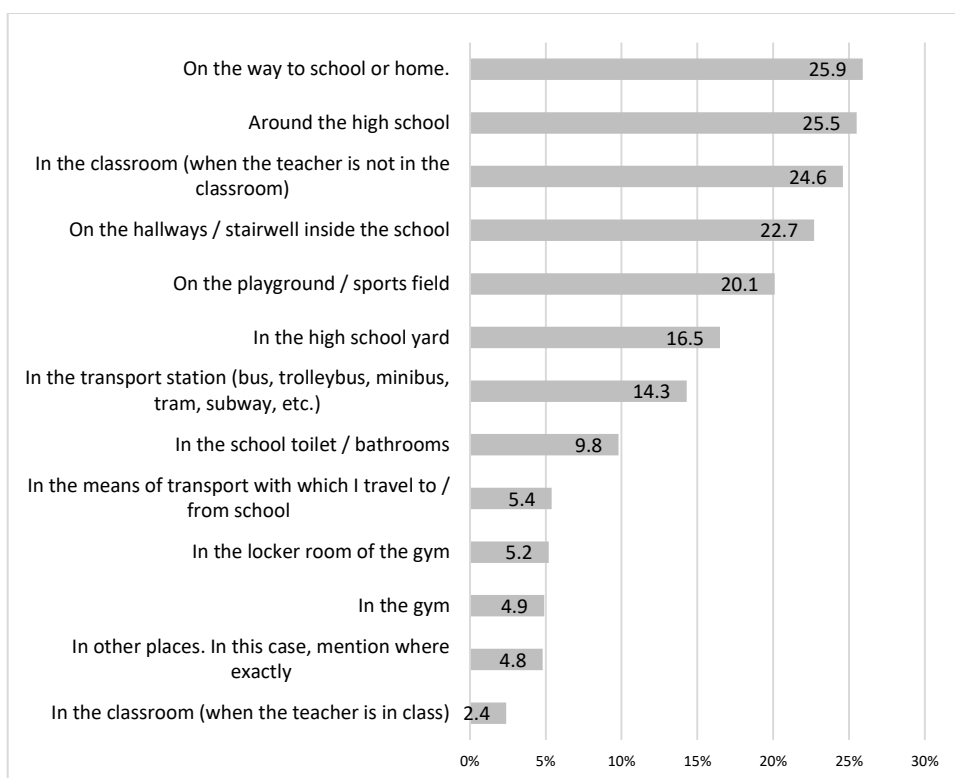
*Chart 5.13. Behavioral problems of high school classmates*

Regarding the problematic behaviors at the high school level, it is noted that over 80% of high school students stated that it is not a problem for students who take drugs/consume ethnobotanicals (89.7%), those who have problems with the police (84.6%) or those who are members of a gang that harass/assault others (89.2%). More than half of the students, 58.3% consider that it is not a problem for students who could get into trouble at school. 17.2% are those who see that it could be a problem for classmates who smoke, 13.2% say that it could be a problem for students who quit at class or the 11.8% who see a big problem in classmates who consume 11.6% who see a problem in classmates who have low grades at school and 10.2% who say they have classmates who probably will not take the baccalaureate (chart 5.13). Boys see this as a problem to a greater extent compared to girls.



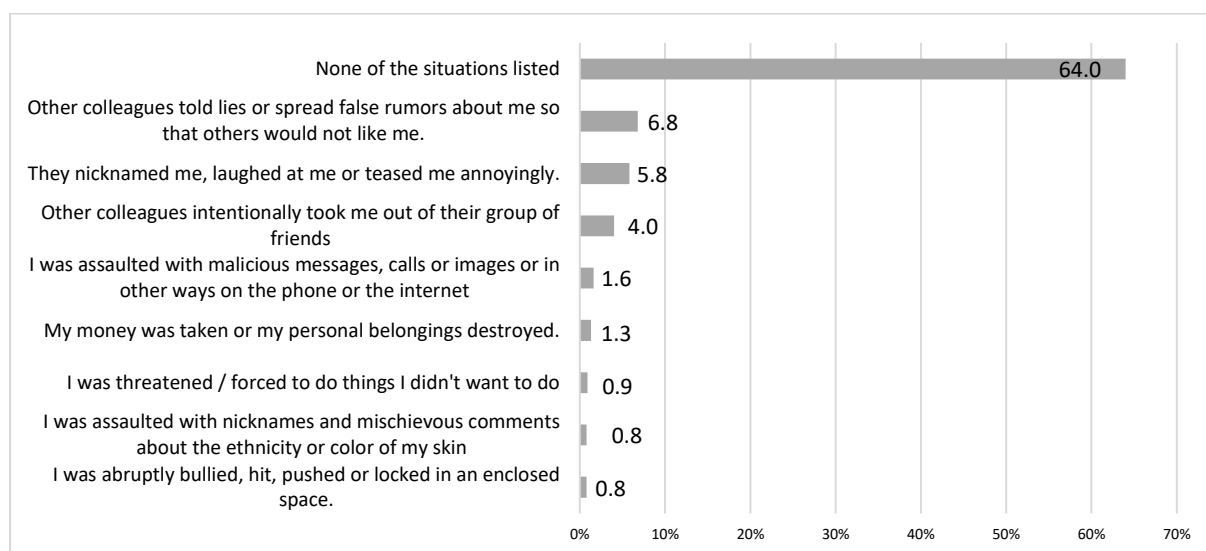
*Chart 5. 14. Problematic behaviors (safety) in high school*

The most common form of violence reported by high school students is verbal harassment. 21.6% of students say that it often happens that students make jokes about others, and 9.4% say that it often happens that students tease, pick on others. But 5.6% also mentioned conflicts that often occur between groups of students, as well as fights between students that often occur, say 4.3% of high school students. Boys report more violent behaviors in school compared to girls. Physical aggression from both teachers to students and students to teachers are least mentioned by high school students (chart 5.14).



*Chart 5.15. The space where high school bullying takes place*

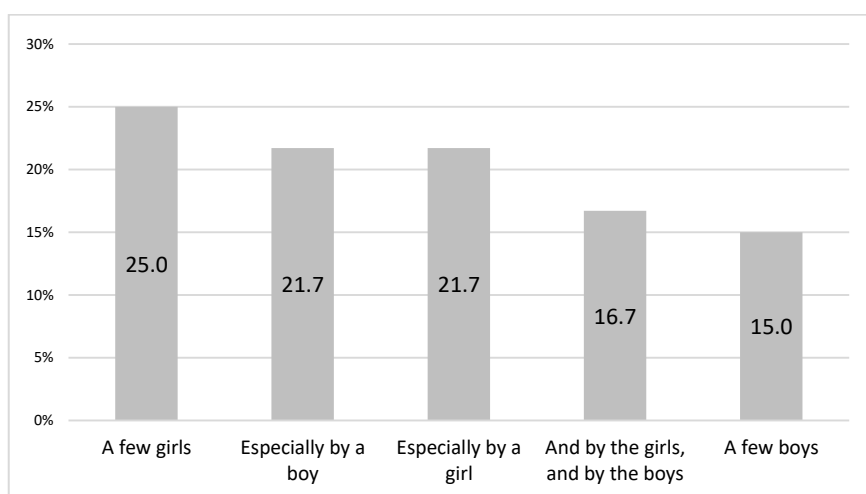
On the way to school or home (25.9%), or near high school (25.5%) are the most common places where aggression occurs between students. Almost a quarter of high school students still mention the classroom as a space where bullying takes place, when the teacher is not in class (chart 5.15).



*Chart 5.16. Forms of violence suffered in high school*

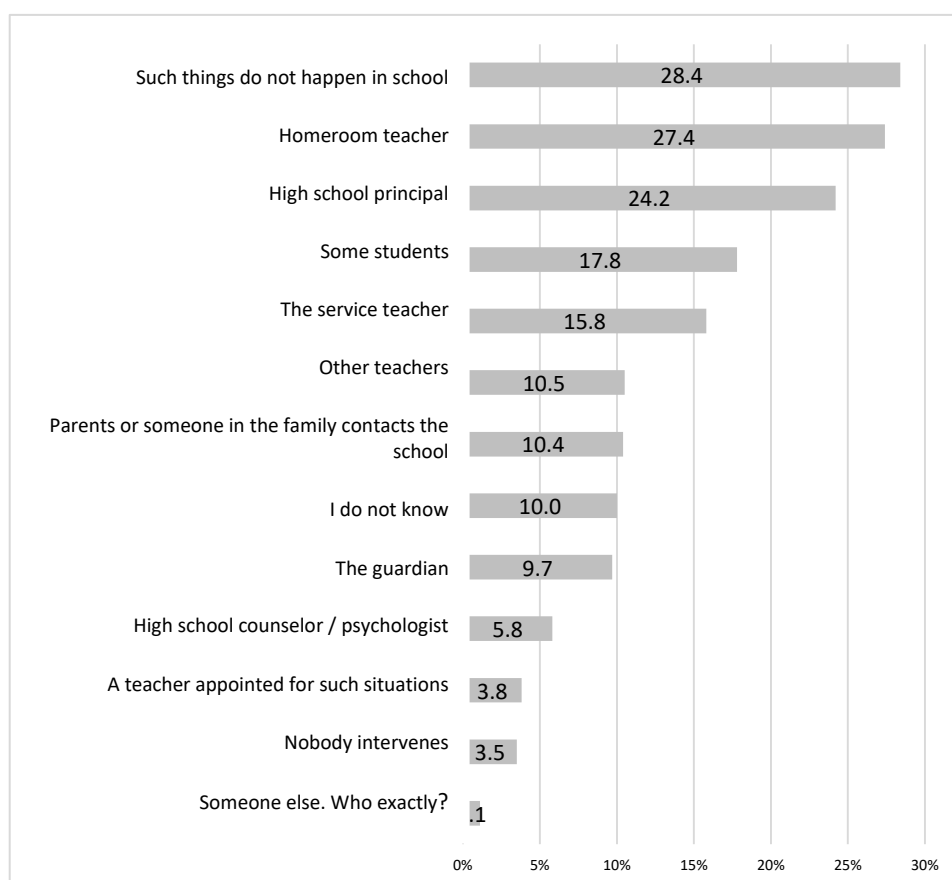
Most high school students, 64% say they have not experienced any form of bullying. However, of those who report forms of aggression, 6.8% say that other classmates have told lies or spread false rumors about them so that others do not like them. 5.8% say they have been nicknamed,

laughed at or teased, and 4% say other classmates have taken them out of their group of friends (chart 5.16).



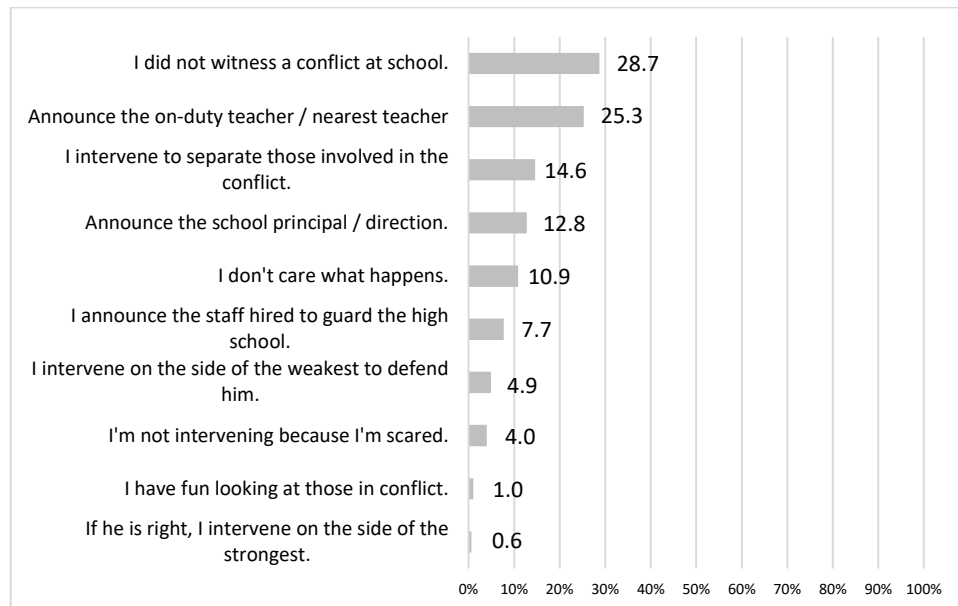
*Chart 5.17. Bullies in situations of violence between high school students*

As aggressors, an equal number of respondents mention “especially a boy” and “especially a girl” (21.7%), and the highest frequency is answered by “a few girls” (25%), compared to a group of boys mentioned 15% of those who experienced on their own skin forms of bullying (chart 5.17).



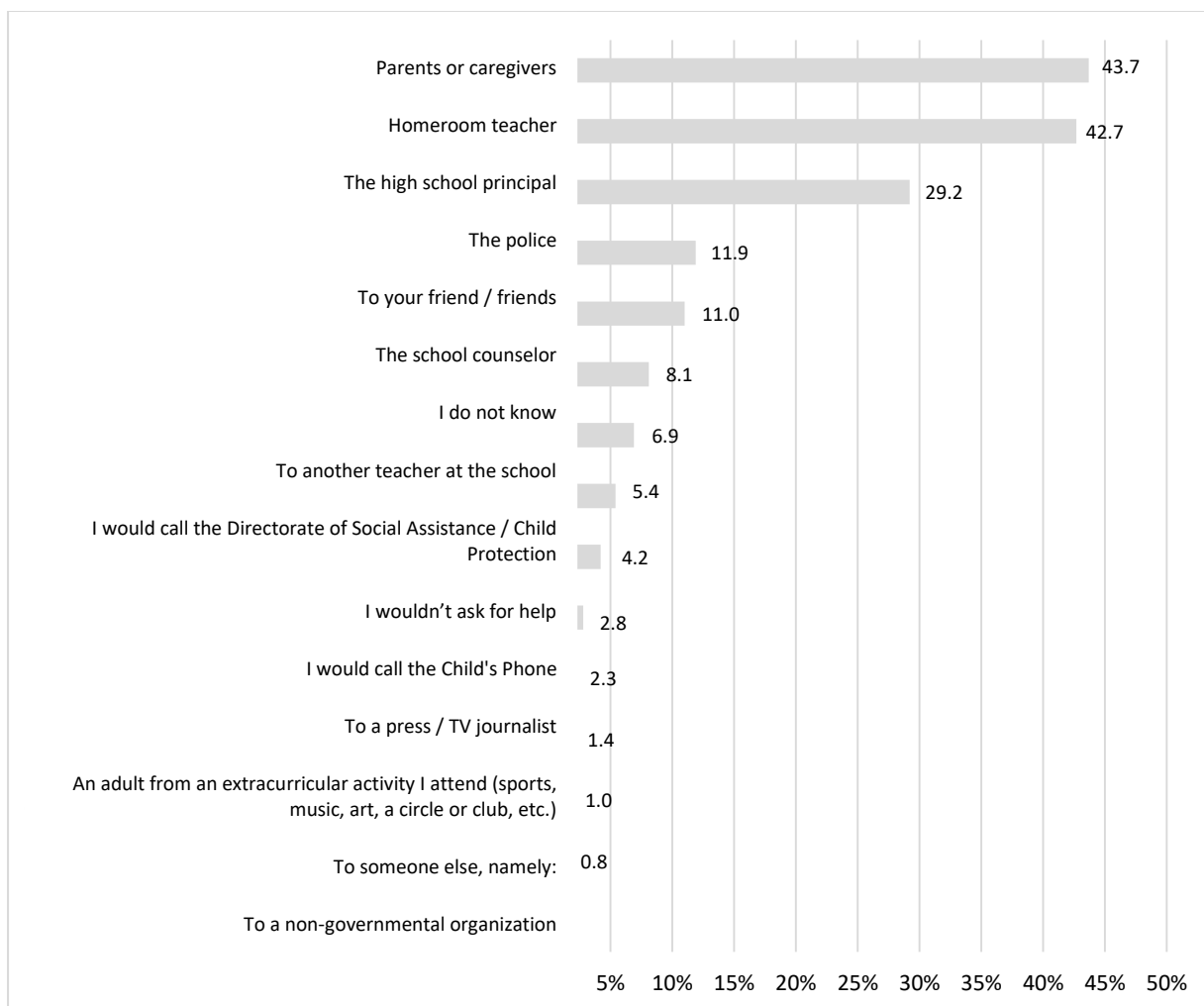
*Chart 5.18. The person who intervenes in case of an aggression by a student, the high school cycle*

The teacher is the one who intervenes in case of an aggression by a student that takes place in school according to 27.4% of the respondents. It is followed by a person from the high school management(principal), say 24.2% then other students are mentioned 17.8%, the teacher on duty 15.8%, other teachers 10.5%, parents or someone in the family of 10.4%. To a lesser extent, the guard (9.7%), the counselor/psychologist(5.8%), the teacher appointed for such situations (3.8%) are mentioned, and 3.5% of the high school students say that no one intervenes (chart 5.18).



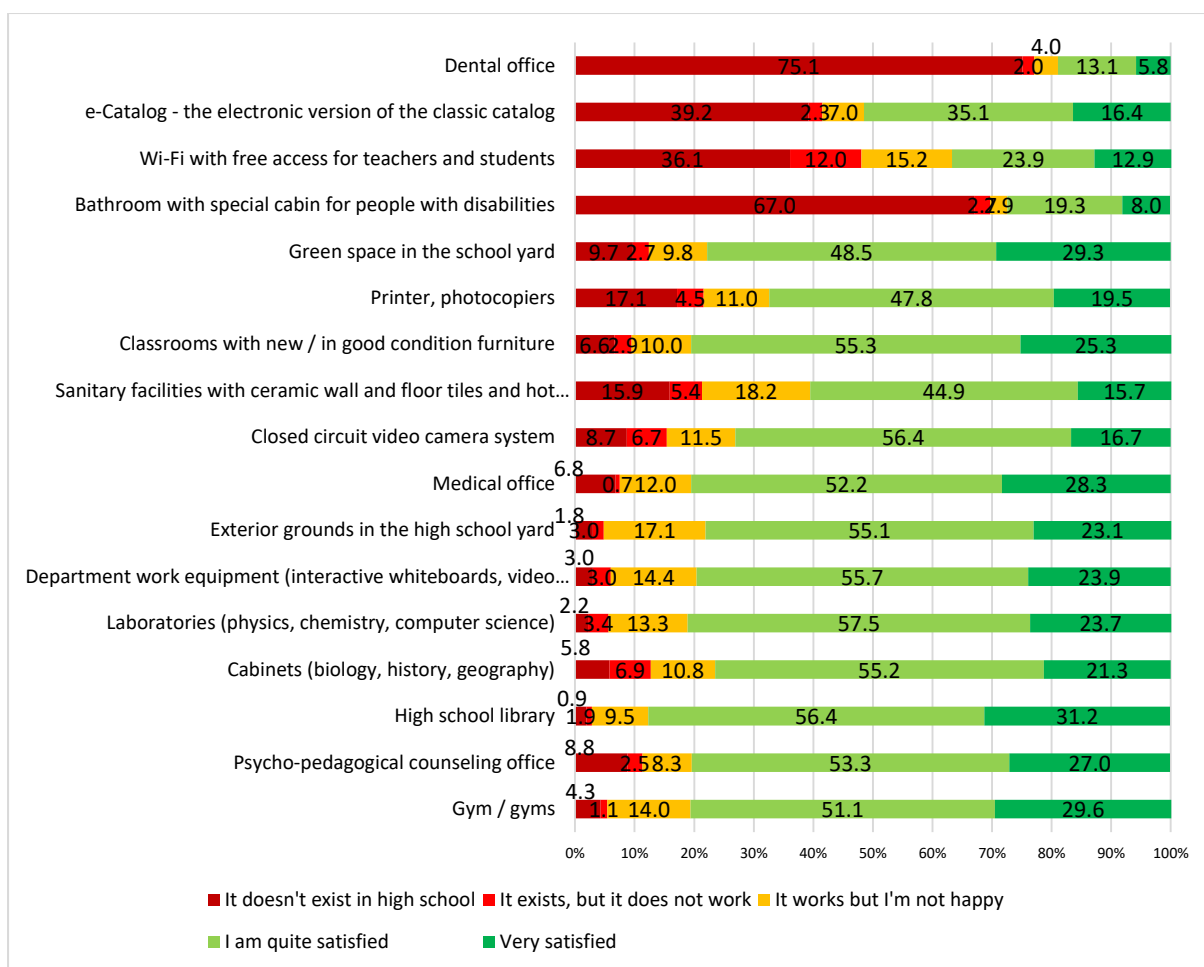
*Chart 5.19. Conflict witness behavior in the high school cycle.*

A quarter of high school students, 25.3% say that when they witness a conflict in school, they announce the on-duty teacher or the closest teacher. 14.6% say they intervene to separate those involved in the conflict, 12.8% say they notify the school principal/director, 10.9% say they are not interested in what is happening. 7.7% of high school students say that they announce the staff employed to guard the high school, and 4.9% say that they intervene on the side of the weakest, to defend them. 4% of high school students say that they do not intervene because they are afraid, 1% say that they have fun looking at those in conflict, and 0.6% say that if the aggressor is right, he intervenes on the side of the strongest(chart 5.19).



*Chart 5.20 Probably helpful behavior in the case of adult victimization, in school, high school*

Among the respondents, 43.7% choose to answer that if an adult in high school hurt them, they would ask for help from their parents or caregivers; 42.7% say they would ask for the teacher's help; 29.2% would ask for the support of those in charge of the school unit; 11.9% of the police; 11% to friends; 8.1% to the school counselor; 6.9% say they do not know; 5.4% to another teacher in the school; 2.8% to the Social Assistance/Child Protection Directorate; 2.3% would call the Child's Phone; and 1.4% to a journalist from the press/TV. (chart 5.20).



*Chart 5.21. School facilities, the perception of high school students*

Dental offices (75.1%), toilets for people with disabilities (67%), the electronic version of the classic catalog (39.2%) and Wi-Fi with free access for students (36.1%) are the most mentioned aspects by students and that do not exist in high school. The toilets (18.2%) and the outdoor grounds of the schoolyard (17.1%) are aspects mentioned by students as functioning, but they are not satisfied with them. 14.4% of students would like to renew the work equipment in the classroom (interactive whiteboards, video projector, projection screen, laptop/computer and speakers), gyms, laboratories and the doctor's office are other aspects that although they exist, the students say they are not satisfied with them (chart 5.21).

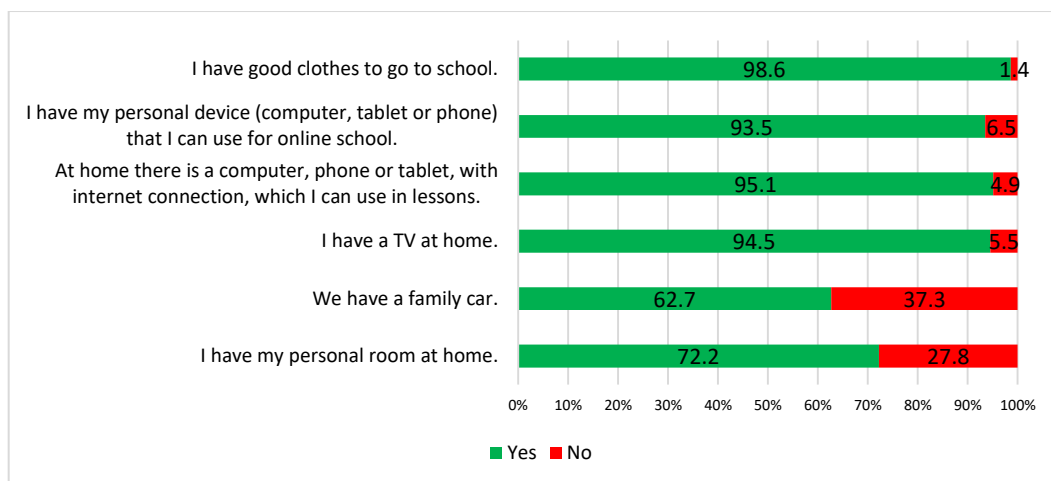


Chart 5.22 Home equipment in the perception of high school students

Given that only 27.8% of respondents say they have a personal room, high school students confirm that they come mostly from families with a modest financial situation. Instead, 37.3% say that the family owns a car to transport its members. Good school clothes (98.6%) and devices with internet connection to be used for online courses (95.1%), as well as the personal device they can use online (93.5%) they do not seem to be a problem for the vast majority of respondents in the high school group. Girls report better facilities at home compared to boys (chart 5.22).

## 5.2 Discussing the results of the study at high school level

To mark the general trends regarding the relationship between the aspects of the school climate analyzed in this study, we performed statistical analyzes to calculate the correlations between the factors of the studied scales, the t-test to calculate the differences between the averages of scales by gender and class, and analysis of variance to establish relationships between the variables studied.

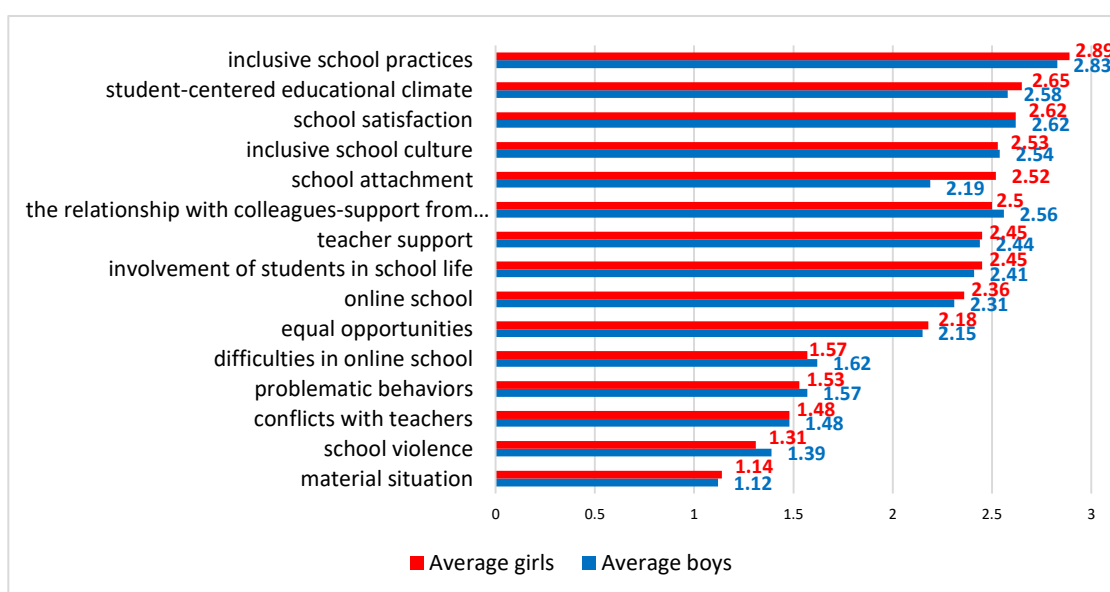


Chart 5.23. Differences between boys and girls at high school questionnaire scales



**Gender differences at the questionnaire scales, at high school.** At the high school level there are significant differences between girls and boys in the aspects of the school climate related to the involvement in school life and the student-centered educational climate. Girls ( $M=2.45$ ;  $DS=0.40$ ) feel more involved in school life ( $t(355.967)=-1.271$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) compared to boys ( $M=2.41$ ;  $DS=0.48$ ). Girls ( $M=2.65$ ;  $DS=0.39$ ) perceive a student-centered educational climate to a greater extent ( $t(359.635)=-2.053$ ;  $p<0.005$ ) compared to boys ( $M=2.58$ ;  $DS=0.47$ ). Boys ( $M=1.39$ ;  $DS=0.36$ ) perceive higher school violence compared ( $t(239.368)=2.444$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) with girls ( $M=1.31$ ;  $DS=0.25$ ) (chart 5.23 and Annex 5.2).

The analyzes show significant differences regarding the perception of the school climate depending on the level of the classes within the high school level (Annex 5.3), most often in favor of the ninth grade, but there are also variations.

9th grade students are more **satisfied with school** compared to 11th and 12th grade students. In their case, school satisfaction is significantly higher ( $t(304,711)=2.988$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) compared to eleventh grade and compared to twelfth grade ( $t(320,341)=4.077$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). And the 10th grade students are more satisfied with the school compared to the students from the high school final grades, compared to the 11th grade ( $t(389)=-2.180$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and those of twelfth grade ( $t(355.026)=3.282$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) (Annex 5.3).

9th grade students perceive a higher **inclusive school culture** compared to those in the high school final grades, 11th grade ( $t(306)=3.660$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and 12th ( $t=4.546$  (320.842),  $p<0.001$ ). The same is true for 10th grade students, who feel a greater inclusive culture compared to 11th grade students ( $t(390)=-2.319$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and 12th ( $t(405)=3.192$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) (Annex 5.3).

High school graduate students are significantly more involved in school life compared to 10th grade students ( $t(394,825)=-2.894$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and compared to 11th grade students where ( $t(336)=-1.978$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

9th grade students perceive a significantly higher student-centered **educational climate** compared to 10th grade students ( $t(316,691)=4.086$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and compared to 11th grade students ( $t(294,265)=4.19$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). And 10th grade students feel a more student-centered educational climate compared to 11th grade students ( $t(288,010)=-3.243$ ;  $p=0.001$ ) and 12th grade ( $t(330,180)=3.086$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

9th grade students ( $t(319)=4.639$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and the 10th grade ( $t(353,446)=3.856$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) are more satisfied with **online education** compared to the 12th grade students maybe also because they do not feel such high pressure compared to the 12th grade students to pass the tests of the Baccalaureate exam in which they must demonstrate their knowledge in several disciplines.

As expected, those in the first year of high school, perceive **greater difficulties in online education** compared to high school students in the final year, 12th grade ( $t(319)=2.584$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and those in the 10th grade feel the difficulties of online education to a greater extent compared to those in the 12th grade ( $t(405)=3.918$ ;  $p<0.001$ ).

In terms of **teacher support**, 9th grade students report higher teacher support compared to 12th grade students ( $t(296)=2.689$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Also, the 10th grade high school students perceive a greater support from the teachers compared to their 11th grade classmates ( $t(350)=-2.966$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and 12th grade classmates ( $t(370)=3.933$ ;  $p<0.001$ ).

Students in the final grades say they have **conflicts with teachers** to a greater extent compared to students in the ninth and tenth grades. Thus, the 11th graders say that they have conflicts with the teachers to a greater extent than the 10th graders  $t(349)=2.912$ ;  $p<0.05$ , and those in the 12th grade have conflicts with the teachers to a greater extent compared to the students in the 9th grade  $t(295)=-2.076$ ;  $p<0.05$  and 10th grade students  $t(369)=-2.772$ ;  $p<0.05$ .

Those entering high school more recently, ninth and tenth graders perceive that the school implements **inclusive school practices** to a greater extent compared to high school students in their older years of school. Thus, the 9th grade students are that in their high school there are inclusive school practices to a greater extent than the 11th grade students say  $t(273)=2.569$ ;  $p<0.05$  and 12th grade students  $t(291)=3.924$ ;  $p<0.001$ . And the 10th grade students perceive inclusive school practices to a greater extent compared to the 11th grade students  $t(350)=-2.527$ ;  $p<0.05$  and 12th grade students  $t(368)=4.089$ ;  $p=0.001$ .

The 10th grade students perceive an **equal opportunity** to a greater extent compared to the 11th grade students  $t(345)=-2.238$ ;  $p<0.05$ . 10th grade students report a better relationship with their peers compared to 9th grade students  $t(208,530)=-2.545$ ;  $p=0.05$ , to a greater extent than 11th grade classmates  $t(222,058)=-3.850$ ;  $p<0.001$  and those of the 12th grade  $t(266,248)=3.875$ ;  $p<0.001$ .

Twelfth grade students perceive **problematic behaviors** of their peers to a greater extent compared to ninth grade students  $t(271)=-5.385$ ;  $p<0.001$  and 11th graders to a greater extent compared to their 10th graders  $t(235,161)=5.255$ ;  $p<0.001$ .

**The violence suffered in school** is perceived as higher in the opinion of the 12th grade students compared to the students in the first year of high school, those in the ninth grade  $t(270)=-2.973$ ;  $p<0.05$  and the 10th  $t(296,737)=-5.804$ ;  $p<0.001$ , and 11th grade students to a greater extent compared to 10th  $t(327)=3.332$ ;  $p<0.05$  and 12th grade students  $t(278)=2.175$ ;  $p<0.05$ .

10th grade students report a higher **attachment to school** compared to 9th grade students  $t(304)=-2.745$ ;  $p<0.05$ , than those of the 11th class  $t(306)=-2.283$ ;  $p<0.05$  and than those of the 12th grade  $t(334)=3.379$ ;  $p<0.001$ .

#### ***Analysis of school satisfaction and school attachment from the perspective of the importance of relationships with teachers***

Starting from the importance of relationships with teachers, we analyzed the differences between two categories of high school students: those who responded to different items by "not at all" or "little" formed a group, and those who responded by saying "much" were the second group. Thus, we analyzed the difference between the two categories from the perspective of school satisfaction and students' school attachment to the items of the support scale from the teacher. Thus, for items: „My teachers listen to what I have to say” and „I get a lot of encouragement from my teachers” those who answered by "not at all" or "little" formed a group, and those who answered by saying "much" constitute the second group; for the items “Teachers offend us”, “It happens that teachers humiliate us in front of the class” and “I am afraid of some teachers” those who answered with “never” formed a group, and those who responded with statements "Sometimes" and "often" formed a second group.

*Table 5.1. Differences between students regarding school satisfaction and attachment to school, depending on the perception of their relationships with teachers in high school*

Categories of students	School satisfaction	School attachment
I get/don't get a lot of encouragement from teachers	$t(644,272)=-12.016$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(566)=-9.638$ ; $p<0.001$
Teachers listen/don't listen to what I have to say	$t(537,650)=-11.131$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(567)=-7.860$ ; $p<0.001$
I'm afraid/I'm not afraid of some teachers	$t(324,805)=6.546$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(567)=5.130$ ; $p<0.001$
Some teachers offend us/do not offend us	$t(259,650)=9.681$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(566)=7.330$ ; $p<0.001$
Some teachers humiliate/do not humiliate us in front of the class	$t(298,216)=7.141$ ; $p<0.001$	$t(567)=5.458$ ; $p<0.001$

The encouragement received from teachers has a significant effect on the school satisfaction of high school students ( $t(644,272)=-12.016$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Students who consider that they receive a lot of encouragement from teachers ( $M=2.81$ ;  $SD=0.26$ ) feel more satisfied with school compared to students who report that they do not receive at all or receive little encouragement from teachers ( $M=2.49$ ;  $DS=0.40$ ). Those who receive more encouragement ( $M=2.49$ ;  $DS=0.50$ ) feel even more attached to school ( $t(566)=-9.638$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) compared to students who do not receive at all or receive little encouragement from teachers ( $M=2.05$ ;  $DS=0.55$ ) (Table 5.1).

Also, the feeling of being offended and humiliated, as well as the fear of teachers significantly reduce satisfaction with school. High school students who have never felt offended ( $M=2.72$ ;  $DS=0.32$ ) are more satisfied with school ( $t(259,650)=9.681$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) compared to high school students who have felt at least sometimes or often offended by teachers ( $M=2.37$ ;  $DS=0.43$ ). School attachment is higher ( $t(566)=7.330$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and in the case of students who were never offended by teachers ( $M=2.33$ ;  $DS=0.54$ ) compared to students who felt offended sometimes/often by teachers ( $M=1.94$ ;  $DS=0.56$ ) (Table 5.1).

Humiliation in front of the class has significant repercussions on the school satisfaction of high school students ( $t(298,216)=7.141$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), in the sense that those who felt humiliated sometimes or often ( $M=2.45$ ;  $DS=0.44$ ) reported lower school satisfaction compared to high school students who never felt humiliated ( $M=2.70$ ;  $DS=0.33$ ). Students who have never been humiliated in front of the class ( $M=2.32$ ;  $DS=0.55$ ) feel even more attached to the school ( $t(567)=5.458$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) compared to their classmates who sometimes/often felt humiliated by the teachers in front of the class ( $M=2.04$ ;  $DS=0.59$ ) (Table 5.1).

High school students who are not afraid of teachers ( $M=2.70$ ;  $DS=0.32$ ) are significantly more satisfied with school ( $t(324,805)=6.546$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) compared to their peers who are sometimes afraid or even often by teachers ( $M=2.47$ ;  $DS=0.45$ ). School attachment is also reflected to a greater extent in the case of high school students who are not afraid of teachers ( $M=2.31$ ;  $DS=0.56$ ) compared to those who are sometimes/often afraid of teachers ( $M=2.06$ ;  $DS=0.56$ ), the difference being statistically significant ( $t(567)=5.130$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) (Table 5.1).

## Analysis of differences in school satisfaction and attachment to school, depending on the relationship with classmates

Given the importance of student relationships, we analyzed the differences between two categories of high school students: those who responded to different items by "not at all" or "little" formed a group, and those who responded by saying "much" were the second group. Thus, we analyzed the difference between the two categories from the perspective of school satisfaction and students' school attachment to the items of the scales: *Good relationships with classmates*, *United Class*, *Experiences of violence*, *Perception of exclusion from the class* (category "excluded students" includes the 25 % of students, with the lowest values on the scale *Relationships with classmates*) and *Perception of marginalization* (the category "marginalized students" comprises the 25% with the lowest scores both on the scale "Relationships with classmates" and on the scale "Support from on the part of teachers").

Table 5.2. Differences between students regarding school satisfaction and attachment to school, depending on their relationship with classmates, in high school

Categories of students	School satisfaction	School attachment
With and without good relationships with classmates	t(270,187)= 12.295; p<0.001	t(566)=12.28; p<0.001
United class perception/lack of cohesion	t(533,758)=9.968; p<0.001	t(564)=9.79; p<0.001
With and without experiences of violence	t(325,960)=4.486; p<0.001	t(568)=3.03; p<0.05
Excluded/included from students	t(284,551)= 9.307; p<0.001	t(588)=11.83; p<0.001
Marginalized by students and teachers/lack of marginalization	t(209,373)=9.882; p<0.001	t(205,822) =8.293; p<0.05

Relationships with classmates also have an effect on school satisfaction and school attachment of high school students. In the case of students who get along well with classmates, school satisfaction (M=2.76; DS=0.29) is significantly higher than that of high school students who say they do not get along at all or do not get along well with classmates (M=2.35; DS=0.40), t=12.295; p<0.001. Regarding the good relationship with classmates, it has a significant influence on the school attachment of high school students who say they have a good relationship with classmates (M=2.40; DS=0.49) feel more satisfied with school compared with their classmates who say they do not have a good relationship at all or only to a small extent they get along with classmates (M=1.83; DS=0.56), t(566)=12.289; p<0.001 (Table 5.2).

High school students who perceive their class as united are more satisfied with school (M=2.77; DS=0.30) compared to high school students who do not consider their class to be at all or less united (M=2.48; DS=0.39) t=9.968; p<0.001. The feeling of belonging to the school class they belong to also has an effect on school attachment: those who perceive their class as united (M=2.44; DS=0.50) feel more attached to school compared to those who do not they perceive the united class or perceive it as being to a small extent united (M=2.00; DS=0.56), t(564)=9.795; p<0.001 (Table 5.2).

The high school students' experience of violence influences their satisfaction with school t(325,960)=4.486; p<0.001, those without such experience being more satisfied with school (M=2.67; DS=0.35) than those who suffered acts of violence from classmates (M=2.51; DS=0.44). Whether or not high school students experience violence significantly Influences t(568)=3.035; p<0.05 and the attachment to school of high school students, those who did not have experiences of

violence (M=2.26; DS=0.57) have a higher attachment to school compared to those who passed through experiences of violence (M=2.07; DS=0.58) (Table 5.2).

The importance of relationships with classmates on school satisfaction is underlined by the analysis of the category of students who feel excluded compared to those who feel included (we named excluded students the 25% with the lowest values on the scale *Relationships with classmates*). High school students who do not feel excluded feel significantly more satisfied with school (M=2.70; DS=0.34) compared to their classmates who feel excluded (M=2.39; DS=0.42)  $t=9.307$ ;  $p<0.001$ . The exclusion of students also significantly influences their attachment to school  $t(588)=11.83$ ;  $p<0.001$ . High school students who did not feel excluded from the circle of classmates/friends (M=2.40; DS=0.49) feel more attached to school compared to high school students who felt excluded from the group of friends (M=1.85; DS=0.56), the difference being significant  $t(205,822)=8.293$ ;  $p<0.05$  (Table 5.2).

Integration in the group of friends protects students from violence, those integrated have significantly fewer experiences of violence than those excluded (13.1% compared to 26.3%,  $\chi^2=15.93$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) (table 5.2). Marginalized high school students, i.e. those who do not receive at all or receive little encouragement from teachers, those who do not get along at all well or get along well with their peers, students whose teachers do not praise at all or praise their efforts at all then when they work hard and those who say they have no or little classmates who are true friends have lower school satisfaction (M=2.33; DS=0.43) compared to their classmates who do not feel marginalized (M=2.70; DS=0.33),  $t=9.882$ ;  $p<0.001$ . Also, marginalized high school students are less attached to school (M=1.87; DS=0.59) compared to better integrated high school students (M=2.34; DS=0.52),  $t=8.293$ ;  $p<0.05$  (Table 5.2).

Table 5.3. Correlations between SCP-High School questionnaire scales

Dimensions of the school climate - high school level	School satisfaction	Inclusive culture in school	Involvement of students in school life	Student-centered educational climate	Online school	Difficulties in online school	Teacher support	Conflicts with teachers	Inclusive school practices	Equal opportunities	Relationship with classmates	Problematic behaviors	Violence in school	School attachment
School satisfaction	1	0.714**	0.358**	0.607**	0.465**	-0.111**	0.563**	-0.449**	0.552**	0.214**	0.534**	-0.355**	-0.392**	0.580**
Inclusive culture in school		1	0.464**	0.776**	0.566**	-0.035**	0.700**	-0.584**	0.686**	0.295**	0.479**	-0.389**	-0.479**	0.506**
Involvement of students in school life			1	0.469**	0.362**	0.008**	0.429**	-0.337**	0.446**	0.167**	0.345**	-0.319**	-0.326**	0.286**
Student-centered educational climate				1	0.600**	0.003	0.698**	-0.573**	0.691**	0.307**	0.417**	-0.382**	-0.495**	0.437**
Online school					1	0.344**	0.547**	-0.412**	0.559**	0.193**	0.320**	-0.299**	-0.325**	0.266**
Difficulties in online school						1	-0.007	-0.008	0.035	0.033	-0.108**	-0.010	-0.041	-0.287**
Teacher support							1	-0.527**	0.678**	0.282**	0.483**	-0.307**	-0.409**	0.486**
Conflicts with teachers								1	-0.568**	-0.356**	-0.277**	0.451**	0.569**	-0.369**
Inclusive school practices									1	0.322**	0.428**	-0.413**	-0.502**	-0.499**
Equal opportunities										1	0.240**	-0.313**	-0.330**	0.139**
Relationship with classmates											1	-0.365**	-0.344**	0.568**
Problematic behaviors												1	0.628**	-0.263**
Violence in school													1	-0.295**
School attachment														1

Legend: \* significant correlations at the 0.05 threshold; \*\* significant correlations at the threshold of 0.01.

The scales introduced in the analyzes on the level of high school education correlate significantly with each other, which shows the relevance of the scales for the central theme of the research. "School Satisfaction" and "Inclusive School Culture" are the scales that show the strongest correlations with the other scales (Table 5.3).

Regarding school satisfaction, the strongly significant correlation coefficients are related to school attachment ( $r(714)=0.71$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and to the student-centered educational climate ( $r(707)=0.60$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), which suggests that high school students who are more satisfied with school are those who perceive a greater inclusive culture and those who feel a more student-centered educational climate. The high school attachment that high school students feel ( $r(569)=0.58$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), the support from teachers also have a great and significant influence on students' school satisfaction ( $r(648)=0.56$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), inclusive school practices ( $r(643)=0.55$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and good relationships with classmates ( $r(606)=0.53$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) (Table 5.3).

The scale "Inclusive culture in school" correlates most strongly with the scale "student-centered educational climate" ( $r(708)=0.77$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and with the scale "teacher support" ( $r(649)=0.70$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and correlates negatively with the scale "conflicts with teachers" ( $r(647)=-0.58$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), the scale "violence in school" ( $r(600)=-0.47$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and the "problem behaviors" scale ( $r(603)=-0.38$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) suggesting that where the emphasis is on the inclusion of all students, a positive school climate develops and students feel supported by teachers, and in this climate decreases violence in school and the frequency with which problematic behaviors occur among students (Table 5.3).

The involvement of students in school life correlates most strongly with the scale "student-centered educational climate" ( $r(706)=0.46$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and the scale "inclusive school practices" ( $r(642)=0.44$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) (Table 5.3).

The student-centered educational climate correlates most strongly with the scale of teacher support ( $r(647)=0.69$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), with the scale of "inclusive school practices" ( $r(642)=0.69$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and "online school" ( $r(708)=0.60$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) (Table 5.3).

The online school strongly correlates with the scale of "inclusive school practices" ( $r(644)=0.55$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and with the scale of teacher support ( $r(649)=0.54$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), and difficulties in online school correlate negatively with school attachment ( $r(570)=-0.28$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and with the "peer relationship" scale ( $r(607)=-0.10$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), so during the online school period, where teachers used inclusive practices, students had fewer problems with this form of education, and those who had greater difficulties, were less attached to the school and felt that they had had weaker relationships with classmates (Table 5.3).

Teacher support correlates with the "school attachment" scale ( $r(569)=0.48$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), so more supported students are more attached to the school (Table 5.3).

Equal opportunities correlate negatively with school violence ( $r(597)=-0.30$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and positively with the scale "relationship with classmates" ( $r(602)=0.24$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) suggesting that where teachers avoid favoring certain groups of students, violence between students decreases and collegial relationships between them improve, which in turn is associated with increased attachment (Table 5.3).

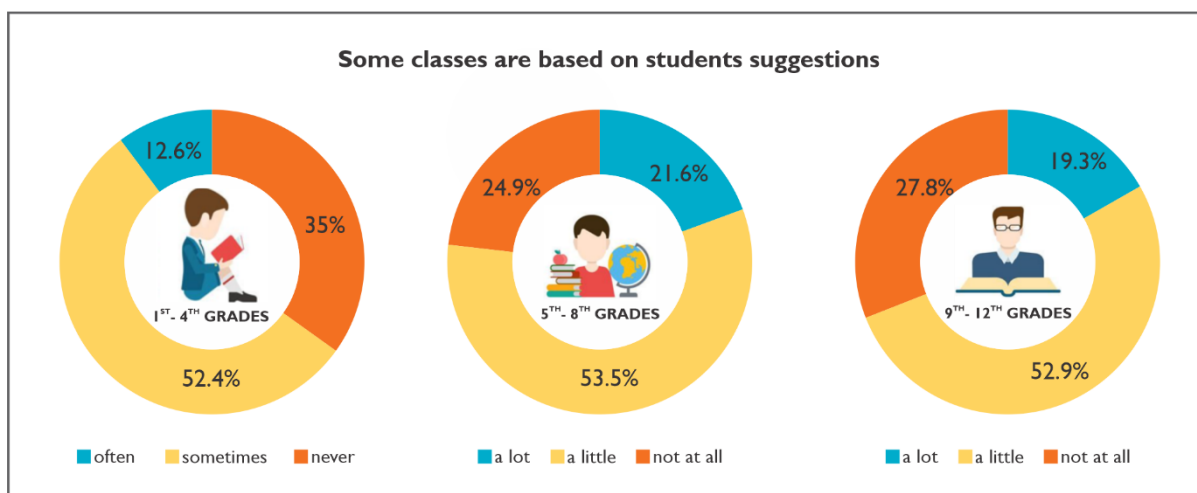
## 6 RESULTS BY DIMENSIONS AND COMPARISONS BETWEEN SCHOOL LEVELS

In addition to the profile of each school, the research outlined a series of characteristics of the school climate on the three school levels. The results of the research confirmed the interrelations between school satisfaction, involvement in school life, support from teachers, support relations between students, as well as the weakening of the school satisfaction in the case of the conflicting atmosphere between teachers and students, or those between students, due to risky behaviors, bullying or other forms of violence.

We shall present below some results on the main aspects studied, obtained from some questions, expressed as a percentage.

### 6.1 *Relation with the school*

- Although primary school students are much more drawn to school than the older ones, in primary school every sixth student (16.7%) already considers that school attendance is not always a pleasure, and 45.1% claim that at least sometimes they do not feel good at school. Among middle and high school students the percentage of those who do not like school is even higher: 25.6% of middle school students and 26.6% of high school students say that attending school is not pleasant "at all" or it's "a little" pleasant.
- Regarding the involvement of students in the decisions of school life, half of primary school students (51.4%) do not feel consulted about the choice of topics, 35% of them "never" participate in choosing the class representative, and only 12.6% of the students claim that the classes are "often" carried out based on the students' proposals. The percentages are quite similar in middle school, where 24.9% do not feel involved "at all" and 53.5% are "a little" involved in discussing school and class problems and only 21.6% state that there are hours which take place based on students' proposals. This percentage decreases to 19.3% in the case of high school students (chart 6.1).
- When asked if they were consulted for the establishment of optional materials, addressed only to high school students, only 54.7% of them choose the option that they were consulted.



*Chart 6.1. The involvement of students in school life in different cycles*

- If in primary school 83.4% of students state that they like school overall, in middle and high school this percentage decreases to 74.5% and 73.4%, respectively.
- A very similar percentage of students in middle school (36%) and high school (35.6%) say that homework makes them think too little or not think at all, and 27.1% of high school students say they would like to have a clearer image on the lessons and structure of the learning process.
- Students' attachment to school decreases as students progress in the educational levels: while 64.5% of middle school students are very attached to school, only 43% of high school students say the same; if 50.9% of middle school students claim that when the school is closed they miss it, in the case of high school students the percentage decreases to 33%.
- The school is seen as welcoming to everyone by 67.5% of high school students, and 83% believe that students in school are taught to respect the ones from different backgrounds and cultures.

## **6.2 Relationship with classmates**

- The results regarding the relations with classmates show that 24.5% of primary school students chose the answer that they sometimes (21.4%) or usually (3.1%) do not feel good about their classmates. The percentage is similar in middle school, where 23% declare that they get along a little or not at all with their classmates, and in high school this percentage reaches 30.4%. Although the percentage of students who get along well with their classmates is high (76.4% in middle school and 69.6% in high school), 49.4% of high school students are reluctant to discuss personal issues with their classmates, and among high school students this percentage increases to 53.1%.
- In terms of support from classmates, the percentages of those who feel supported are between 53.2% and 77.4% in primary school; similarly, 60.3% of middle school students



consider that they receive help from classmates if they have difficulties with school subjects, and in high school this percentage is 59.9%.

- Both middle school and high school students consider that jokes about others (18.7% in middle school and 21.6% in high school) and teasing (16.2% in middle school and 19.4% in high school) are the forms of school violence that most often create problems for students. Conflicts between groups of students become less common in high school than in middle school (10% of middle school students report that this is a common problem, compared to 5.6% of high school students). The percentages are small, but they should not be ignored, as these behaviors can lead to risks to the physical and mental health of students.
- Substance use creates problems more often in high school than in middle school, where only 1.9%, compared to 12.3% in high school, believe that at least sometimes there are problems with students consuming ethnobotanicals. If the question does not refer to problems created by these issues, but to the consumption itself, 53% of high school students say they have classmates who consume alcohol and 10.3% have classmates who use drugs, at least sometimes.

### **6.3 Relationship with teachers**

- The encouragement received from teachers shows a decreasing trend with the advancement to higher school levels: 96% of primary school students consider that they receive a lot of encouragement from the primary school teacher, compared to 65% of students in middle school and only 40.8% of high school students who mention they feel encouraged by their teachers.
- 5.6% of primary school students say that they do not get along well with their primary school teacher and 7.8% that they do not feel appreciated by them. Among middle school students, 34.9% say they receive little encouragement from teachers or do not receive them at all, and this percentage rises to 59.2% for high school students.
- Two thirds (66.8%) of high school students say that teachers know too little or do not know at all what are the qualities of students. Similarly percentage-wise, 69.2% of middle school students and 60.4% of high school students consider that teachers are not interested in their life outside of school.
- The percentage of students who say they are "never" offended or hit by the primary school teachers is very high, 95.5% and 97.2%, respectively. At the same time, 2.8% of students say that they are at least sometimes hit by the teacher, and 10.5% of primary school students say that they are at least sometimes afraid of the primary school teacher (chart 6.3). The fear of teachers increases to over a quarter in middle school (6.6% often and 21.7% sometimes) and to a third in high school (4.6% often and 28.9% sometimes).
- It is not often reported, but the feeling of humiliation from teachers was still mentioned: 9.3% of them were at least "sometimes" ashamed in front of other classmates. These

percentages increase for older students: 17% of middle school students and 29.7% of high school students say that it happens that students are humiliated in front of the class.

- A percentage of 13% of middle school students consider that teachers treat some students preferentially over others, there are preferred classes, compared to other classes; this percentage reaches 27% among high school students.

Fear of teachers, perception of the distance between them and students' families, who are sometimes in various difficult life situations, reduce motivation for studying and decrease students' confidence in the teacher's ability to understand and support them (Dweck, 2002).

## 6.4 School violence

- The spaces in and around the school can be the place to commit acts of violence between students. The least safe places in the opinion of the responding students were: the schoolyard (mentioned by 23.3% of those in the middle school and 16% of high school students as a place where acts of violence happen between students), the classroom when the teacher is not present (mentioned by 29% of middle school students and 24.6% of high school students), hallways and staircase (19.6% among middle school students and 22.7% of high school students) and the sports field (mentioned by 22.4% of middle school students and 20% of high school students). Not only the spaces inside the school, but also those around the school (indicated by 12.1% of middle school students and 25.5% of high school students), as well as the road to/from school (18.7% of middle school students and 25.9% of high school students) are mentioned as places where the most frequent acts of violence between students occur.
- The most common forms of violence between students were verbal: spreading false rumors and teasing others (both suffered by a proportion of 10% of the respondents in middle school and 5.8% and 6.8%, respectively among high school students).
- The percentages that indicate different forms of victimization are not high (in middle school: 2.6% - I was bullied, 6.8% - I was left out on purpose from the group of friends; 2.1% - my money was taken, in high school: 4% - I was left out on purpose from the group of friends, 1.3% - my money was taken, but they can have serious consequences and therefore they are warnings that must be taken seriously).
- The homeroom teacher of the class (mentioned by 32.9% of the respondents from middle school and 27.4% of the high school students), as well as those from the direction of the school (mentioned by almost a quarter of the respondents from middle school, but also in high school) are considered the people who intervene most frequently in case of an aggression that takes place in school, between students, the rest of the answers are more fragmented.

## 6.5 The effect of the student-teacher and student-student relations

- High school students who feel encouraged and listened to by teachers are significantly *more satisfied with school* compared to their peers who do not feel at all or only feel encouraged and listened to a small extent by teachers (chart 6.3), there are significant differences ( $t=11.67$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) (chart 6.3). Likewise, the *school attachment* of those who receive a lot of encouragement from teachers is significantly higher than that of students who feel little encouragement from teachers ( $t=10.42$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) (chart 6.5).

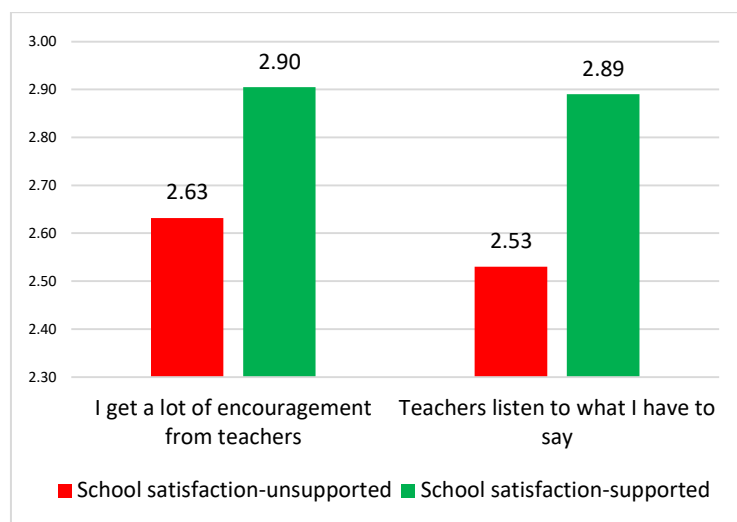


Chart 6.4. School satisfaction according to the perception of support from teachers in middle school

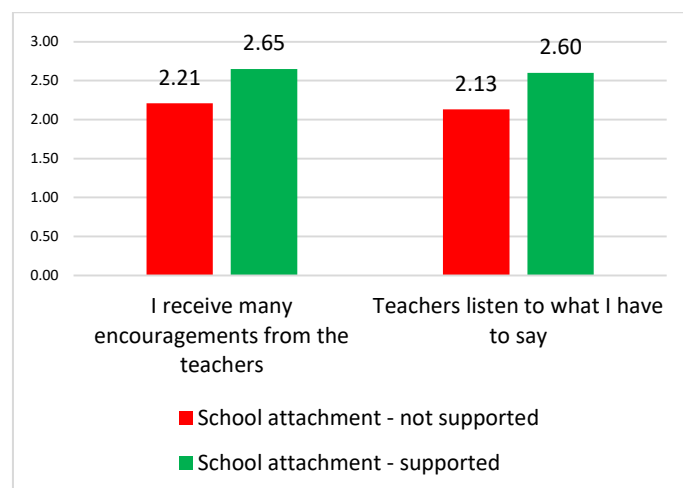
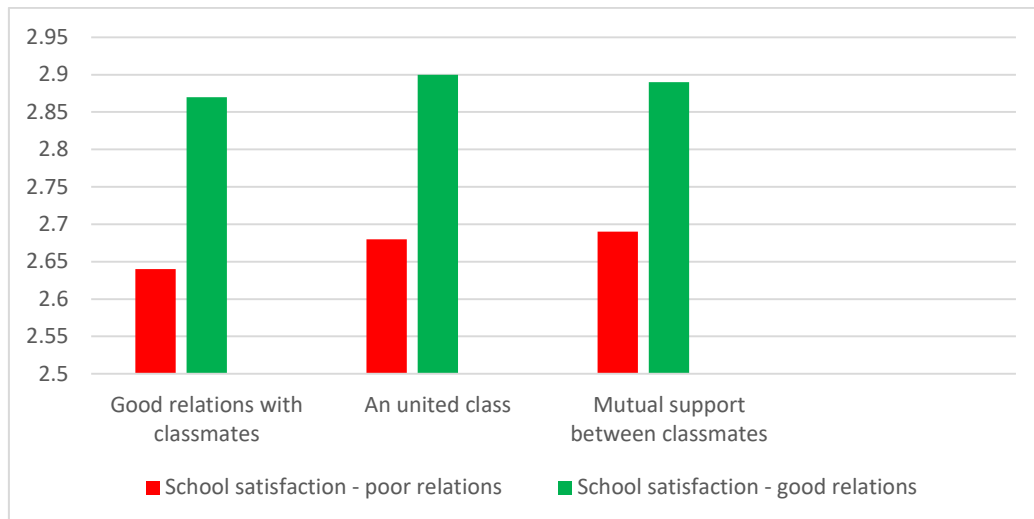


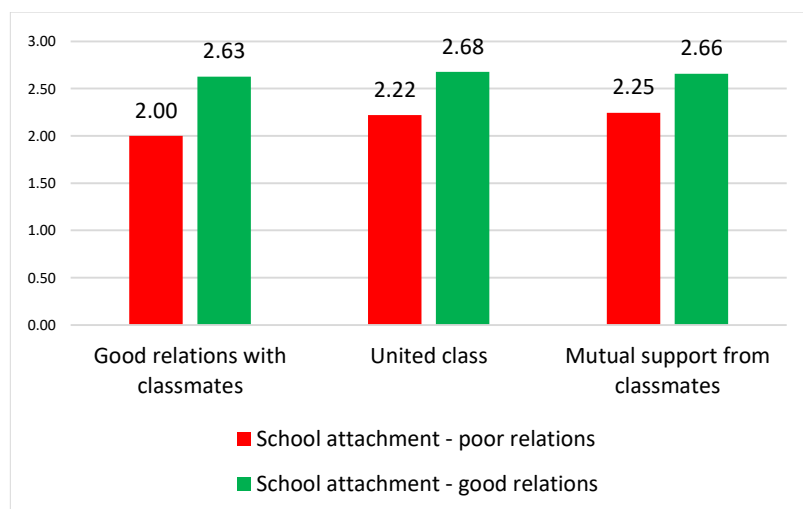
Chart 6.5. School attachment according to the perception of support from teachers in middle school

Relations with classmates also influence school satisfaction and attachment, in the sense that those who get along better with their classmates, who feel they have a united class, who have not had experiences of violence in school, those who do not feel excluded and those who do not feel marginalized have a greater satisfaction and attachment to school.

- Thus, cohesion between students is associated with school satisfaction. High school students who consider that they neither have at all nor have to a small extent classmates who are true friends, also claim that they have a significantly lower school satisfaction than their peers ( $t=9.88$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). In the same vein, marginalized high school students are less attached to school ( $t=8.29$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).
- In the case of students who perceive good relations with the other students, who feel that they are part of a united class and perceive mutual support, there is a higher degree of satisfaction of students with school compared to those dissatisfied with these relations (chart 6.6). The same observation appears for the attachment to school, presented in chart 6.7.



*Chart 6.6. Differences between the averages of students' satisfaction with school according to the perception of the degree of integration in the group of classmates, in middle school*



*Chart 6.7. Differences between the average percentages of students' school attachment depending on the perception of the degree of integration in the group of classmates*

The data indicates the need to systematically act on school inclusion and class cohesion as levers to maintain students' school motivation. The data on school violence, relations between students and teachers, as well as those between students indicate the need to act systematically on school inclusion and class cohesion, a process that can be mediated by teachers, as they are possible levers to maintain the students' school motivation.

## 7 THE EVALUATION OF SCHOOLS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

### 7.1 *School climate assessment - starting point for participatory student projects*

As we have shown in the introductory part, the national context of the present research bears the print of amending the national education law, which currently prohibits all forms of violence in schools, including bullying. The methodological rules, entered into force on 11 June 2020, set out the framework for a flexible intervention mechanism to prevent and combat bullying in schools. An anti-bullying group should be set up in each school, with the participation of all interested parts: the school principal, the school counselor, three teachers trained in terms of violence (including psychological violence-bullying), two or more student representatives, a representative of the parents, representatives of the local authority. The purpose of this anti-bullying group is to promote activities aimed at preventing and combating all forms of bullying (including cyberbullying) at the levels of primary and secondary education, in order to ensure the identification of bullying situations and appropriate intervention. In addition, the legislation forces schools to develop their own strategies and plans of action to ensure and maintain an appropriate school climate for quality education, as a precondition for preventing bullying.

Through this research, the Joining Forces Romania Alliance is committed to supporting efforts to reform the Romanian education system by strengthening the capacity of schools to encourage students to express their opinions on the school climate and to create a platform for them to participate, as agents of change, in projects that make the school climate positive in the directions they want and which are considered a priority. By considering school children as active participants in changes, the principles of listening and participating in children become central to their involvement in activities to improve the school climate. Also, the specificity of the topic (improving the school climate) offers to participants the opportunity to discuss the principle of school inclusion, non-discrimination and equal opportunities in order to reduce the inequalities of chances existing today in the Romanian education system.

Following the application of the SCP questionnaires, in addition to analyzing the data at the level of the three school cycles, we proceeded to the individual profiles of schools per school cycle (provided there are at least 30 questionnaires for the assessed level) and then to present the results to the school management. In these school profiles we have identified the coordinates that may present risks, those that fall into the category "warning" and those that represent advantages (resources) for each school. These individualized profiles by schools were sent to the principals of the schools participating in the research, to be discussed by the entire school management, the teaching staff and the students in the classes who participated in the research, in order to identify the directions that could be acted on to improve the school climate.

In the *Profile of each school and in the cycle profile within the group*, the percentage of students who declare themselves dissatisfied or who mention the high frequency of dangerous behaviors and which constitute a **risk category** is described; those who are undecided or who choose the middle answers enter **in the warning area**; the satisfied ones constitute the category of students who **perceive positive aspects, i.e. resources** (advantages) on the mentioned aspects. To illustrate these distributions we used the colors red, yellow and green. These percentage delimitations on different items are those that can be used as benchmarks for initiating changes. For example, in chart 7.1. (which presents the data of a small school, "Y", with a high socio-educational risk index), at the factor **relations with teachers**, we also presented a chart representing the position of this school compared to the average percentages of the schools in the research group. It can be seen that the school has indicators above the average of the schools included in the research, the difference being significant.

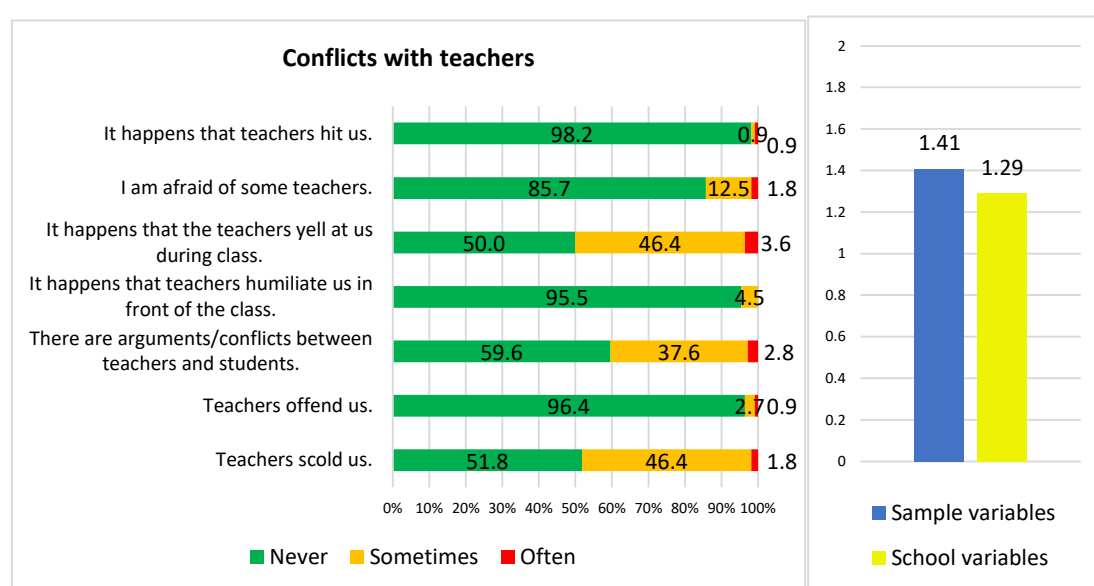
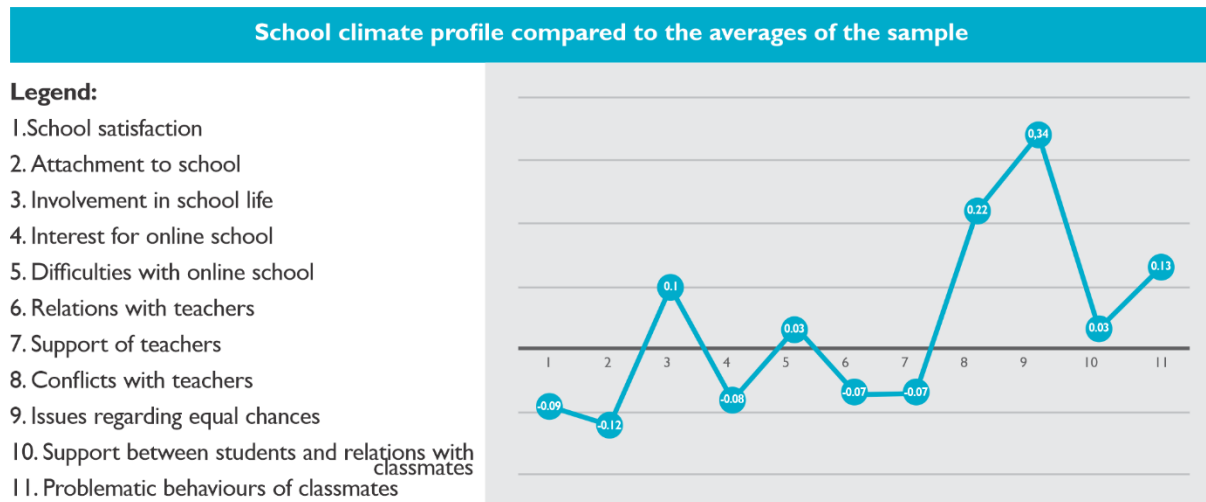


Chart 7.1. The results of School Y for the Student-Teacher Conflict Scale

As reflected in the data in the chart above regarding conflicting relations in school, with the exception of one or two students, all respondents stated that students are never hit, humiliated in front of the class or offended. However, over 46.4% admit that teachers scold them at least sometimes and the same number mention that teachers raise their voices to them, 1.8% say they are often scolded, and 3.6% say that teachers often raise their voices; according to the perception of 40.4% of the students, there are sometimes conflicts and quarrels between them and teachers, and at least 12% are sometimes afraid of some teachers. The students in this school have significantly less conflicts with the teachers than the average of the sample, which is a strong point of this middle school.

**Example of individual school profile.** To illustrate the way of working with this survey, the profile obtained by one of the schools in the group was compared with the axis representing the averages of the scales of the 15 schools in the sample, at the level of the school cycle from which the data were collected (in this case we refer to middle school classes). We illustrate below, the example

of a middle school, whose profile is built by relating the factors of the school climate to the axis of the average values of the group. The values represent the differences from the average of the group.



*Chart 7.2. The results of School Z (middle school) for the School Climate Profile: the scale averages of the school are compared to the averages of the sample*

Comparing the school profile in the chart above with the axis of the average scales obtained in the research group can provide information to the school management and to everyone interested in aspects of the school that could be improved, as well as the existing resources in that school. The profile in the example above (Chart 7.2) shows that in "School Z" students are significantly more involved in the school life than the sample average (3), which denotes student activism, representing an important resource of the school in the idea of change of the school climate. At the same time, the relations with teachers (6) and the perceived support from them (7) are slightly lower, instead there are significantly more conflicts between teachers and students (8) and more problematic behaviors from classmates (11) compared to the sample average. At the same time, the students in this school consider that there are many issues of equal opportunities (9), with certain categories of students being favored. These scores may explain the lower degree of school satisfaction (1) of the students and attachment to school (2) reported by the group average, and also the low interest in online school (4). The groups of students and teachers who analyze this profile will be able to outline their objectives around the organization of activities and events that will lead to the improvement of the relations between students and teachers through a better mutual knowledge, which would also reduce the problems related to the perception of the unequal treatment perceived by some students; improvements in these aspects could occur through pleasant joint activities, leading to an increased involvement of teachers in moderating conflicts between students and a prompt response to students' risky behaviors.



## 7.2 How to use the SCP instrument

If the school wants a complex, detailed assessment of the school climate, it is recommended to make full use of the proposed instrument. Given that the instrument is of a long duration and the completion requires a long time, which could lead to distorted data due to fatigue or boredom from students, more abbreviated forms can be used, adapted to the needs of the school.

For the evaluation of the school climate, we nevertheless recommend the application of scales that include its main dimensions:

- Primary level: scales - *School attachment, Relations with the primary school teacher, Behavior of the classmates, Student violence and help-seeking behavior*
- Secondary level: scales - *School satisfaction, Relations with teachers, Relations with classmates, Problematic behaviors, violence suffered by students and help-seeking behavior*
- High school level: scales - *School satisfaction, Relations with teachers, Relations with classmates, Problematic behaviors, Inclusive culture in school, violence suffered by students and help-seeking behavior*

### **Assessment focused on student-teacher relations**

- Primary level: *Support of the primary school teacher, relation with the primary school teacher*
- Middle school level: *Relation with teachers, Support of the teachers, Conflicts with teachers, Equal opportunities.*
- High school level: *Relations with teachers, Support of the teachers, Conflicts with the teacher, Student-centered educational climate, Inclusive school practices, Equal chances*

### **Assessment centered on student-student relations**

- Primary level: *Behavior of classmates, Support of classmates, Violence in groups of children*
- Middle school level: *Relation with classmates, Issues regarding students.*
- High school level: *Relation with classmates, Issues regarding students, School Violence*

### **Evaluation of the inclusive school climate**

- High school level: *Equal opportunities, Inclusive school culture, Inclusive school practices*

### **Assessing school safety, the phenomenon of school bullying**

- Primary level: *Violence in the group of children*
- Middle school level: *Problems concerning students, Form of violence suffered, Place of violence, Institutional response to situations of violence, Attitude towards violence*
- High school level: *Problems concerning students, School violence, Form of violence suffered, Place of violence, Institutional response to situations of violence, Attitude towards violence.*

### 7.3 *Proposals for capitalizing on the instrument*

The landmarks of the quality of education and the definition of a "good school" must necessarily include the aspects that students perceive as ensuring the development of the educational process in a pleasant school climate. Based on the socio-ecological model of education analysis (Hărăguș, Roth, Mezei, 2014; Cocoradă, Orzea, 2017) the school climate resulting from the interaction of social factors exerts a great influence on the equation of individual school success, respectively on the performances of schools as institutions.

The school climate refers to the quality of school life and is based on its patterns, reflecting the norms, values, interpersonal relations, teaching-learning practices and school management. A safe and supportive school environment, in which students have positive social relations and in which they are respected, involved in school work, where their sense of personal value is cultivated, becomes a climate that favorably affects their mental, social and school development. Therefore, the school climate must be understood systemically and multidimensionally, being a result of the complex interrelations between students, teachers, managers of the school institution and the organizational culture of the school, respectively of the community.

- Selection of shortened variants of the *School Climate Assessment (SCP)* questionnaire for each of the three levels: SCP-P (for the primary school), SCP-G (for the gymnasium cycle) and SCP-H (for the high school cycle).
- Application of the shortened forms of the SCP questionnaire on nationally representative groups, for the three school cycles. Recalculation of psychometric indices and establishment of standards for categories of schools at risk, warning and schools with resources at each scale included in the questionnaire.
- Starting from the indicators established based on the application in the national sample, it will be possible to create variants that can include scales for some or all areas now included in the SCP questionnaire, namely school satisfaction, relations with teachers, relations with classmates, violence in school and sources of help, school facilities, directions of change desired by students.
- Creating a software that automatically creates the profile of the school and compares it with the profile obtained on the nationally representative group (for all cycles and categories of schools, respectively for those in urban and rural areas).
- Creating a web page where the complete instrument and short variants are accessible for schools, to give the possibility of self-evaluation for schools or classes, conducting the study in order to plan participatory projects.

### 7.4 *Involvement of teachers in the analysis of results*

The reports with such charts for all scales to which the students responded were sent to both the initiating organizations of this study and the school principals, requesting their transmission to all teachers in order to be discussed in the teachers' councils, and for all children from the participating classes, especially those in the student advisory boards, but not limited to this.

During a webinar meeting, profile models for the three school cycles were presented to school principals involved in research: primary, secondary and high school, followed by discussions about the research results and the possible strategies for transmitting this information to school teachers, but also to the students participating in this study, being aware that all actors in the educational

environment are important in creating an atmosphere as favorable as possible for the harmonious development of students.

In the next stage, the results of the research, respectively the profile of each school, were discussed at the level of educational units, by principals, deputy principals (where appropriate), educational principals, they were presented and then discussed in the teachers' council, in small groups of teachers, at round tables, for each school level. Discussions with teachers focused on:

- The importance of the participation of teachers and students in such a study.
- The review of the questionnaire applied to students, a discussion followed by debates on the possible positive aspects and less favorable aspects that teachers assume that emerged after analyzing the research data, after the completion of the questionnaires by the students.
- The actual presentation of the results of the research, as transmitted by the consultancy team.
- Discussions related to the concordance or discrepancy between teachers' expectations related to the research results and what actually resulted from the analyses.

The reactions of school principals were different. Some understood the approach and appreciated the usefulness of this information from the study on the manner of work, sending us positive feedback, such as: "we try to capitalize on the results in the school activity", "we took this research as a starting point for promoting the educational offer", "your analysis corresponds to reality, we took note of what points we need to improve". Thus, teachers were able to understand that the data presented may signal new ways of intervention to change some aspects of the school: "Besides that noisy promotion of going through schools, we realized that the students promote us the best. Through non-formal discussions, outside the school space and if we do not know how the student feels, how he behaves, what are the dissatisfactions, it is clear that we cannot attract more students to high school. Others, on the contrary, considered that the research was not objective enough, focusing unilaterally on students' opinions, who exaggerated some aspects of the relations with teachers and even the risks of violence in school (e.g. "teachers monitor students during breaks and it cannot be said that in the hallways of our school there are situations of violence proper").

Discrepancies between teachers' expectations and students' assessments were mentioned by teachers as a turning point: "It is very difficult for a teacher to assume and realize that you are not really doing everything you need for your students in school. And then the research was a brainstorming for everyone".

„Until now, the educational offer started from the equipment, results at the Olympics, nationally awarded school magazines. We have a first place award magazine at national level. And we realized that we missed something, that we have to attract students through non-formal promotion as well, a promotion that other students do for us. Students will say, "Yes, we were dissatisfied, but we were listened to and something was done."

Discrepancies also arose between teachers' perceptions of their relations with students and how these were assessed by students. The equipment of schools was, in some educational units, a different point of view from that of students.

Beyond the types of reactions, it is important that principals and teachers discuss the aspects of the school climate and that students' opinions reach their knowledge, so that they can be less

neglected in the future. Among the issues mentioned by school teachers, which have been recognized as needing improvement are the following:

**For primary level:** improving the relations between students, developing empathy, mutual support, reducing the bullying phenomenon, involving teachers in order to better integrate all students in the school group (reducing marginalization).

**For the middle and high school level:** improving the relations between students, increasing the cohesion of the class group, the quality of student-teacher communication, improving the student-teacher relations, reducing discrimination against students on different criteria, involving students in class decisions, but also school decisions.

Discussions between teachers on *School climate profiles* led to the continuation of the analysis in the reports received for an exchange of good practices: teachers shared examples of practical ways to de-escalate classroom conflicts, aimed at improving relations between students, examples learned in the professional training workshops they participated in. The discussions also extended the analyses in order to identify the possible causes of the less favorable results and to outline possible intervention strategies to improve the aspects related to the school climate.

“I am a teacher, I believe the students, but the student-teacher relation is sometimes hindered by the subject you teach as well. If in the class where the BAC is not taken, in history class everyone loves me because I teach history as I want, in the classes where the BAC is taken in History I have to respect a rigorous structure, much more rigorous than I would like. And I do not know if everyone in that class loves me or... in addition it starts from grades. And we do not even want to put teachers down. It is clear that there are problems, but we do not want to put either side down. Let's create a balance. And even change something.” (H. M., History teacher, high school education).

There were also proposals to make these results known to parents. Because parents are involved in the education of their children and to ensure the functioning of the school-parents partnership, it was proposed to discuss issues related to this research in meetings with parents.

## **7.5 Involving students in changes at the levels of schools**

In order to put into practice the consortium's desideratum to encourage children to express their opinions and to propose solutions for the problems they face, the students were involved in all phases of the research. The methodology of the intervention for the improvement of the school climate has in its center the establishment at school level of an advisory group of children (GCE), who accompanied and informed the research team, becoming the promoters of the improvement of the school climate. The role of students in conceptualizing the school climate and the elaboration of questionnaires being described in the research chapter, here we will emphasize their contribution to the steps initiated after learning about the research results.

After transmitting the school climate profiles to the direction of each school, they were invited to transmit the results of the research to the students and to discuss them with the students. The results of the research were transmitted either to the President of the Student Council, who in turn

informed all student representatives, or to the Advisory Council set up specifically to support the improvement of the school climate, which in turn disseminated information in their classrooms.

In some schools, homeroom teachers and teachers, as well as primary school teachers, discussed the results of the research with the students during homeroom classes, identifying the positive aspects and those that students would like to improve in their school, related to the classroom and school climate. In the discussions, tendentious, accusatory statements must be avoided, the emphasis being both on recognizing the responsibility of each partner in achieving a pleasant, safe atmosphere, and on the students' desire to change compared to those presented. At Cămărașu Secondary School, for example, "the results of this analysis were debated by each teacher/homeroom teacher together with his/her group/class, and the children identified the strengths and weaknesses of our school; The students were challenged to find possible causes that determined the appearance of some conflicts in the relations between them or of some barriers in the communication they have with their teacher/s".

**Observations of primary school students:** In general, primary school students are very happy with their school, in terms of positive relations with the teacher, so some of them were surprised by the negative aspects of the research data, claiming that "some behaviors of their classmates determine the primary school/middle school teacher/s to raise their voices to them". They believe that small conflicts between students can be alleviated through more open communication between them.

At Cămărașu Secondary School, during the face-to-face discussions with the primary school and secondary school teachers, "students seemed slightly surprised by the results of this study, especially regarding the negative aspects. They mentioned that some behaviors of their classmates determines the primary school teacher/middle school teachers to raise their voices, but do not consider the statement about emotional support in school activities as relevant, considering that they have always been encouraged to express their emotions, opinions and bring ideas about examples of extracurricular activities that teachers can carry out with them when the time allows it".

**Observations of some middle school students:** The students consider that the results of the research are in accordance with their reality and expectations, not being surprised by the content of the data. Aspects that they believe should be improved are:

- Relations between students: trust between them, increasing cohesion in the class group, the reduction of bullying.
- Relations between students and teachers: students' opinions being listened to by teachers, more trust in students from the teachers, closer relations between students and teachers, more support from teachers.

The activities on the evaluation of the SCP were appreciated as beneficial by those who sent us feedback. Thus, from Cămărașu Gymnasium School we were informed about the establishment of an advisory group of children which: „was heterogeneous in all middle school classes, so that the answers and ideas offered by them are as diverse and representative as possible for the community of children and teenagers that they belong to; the children were very open in the activities, had good answers and ideas, being supported throughout them by an NGO representative, who is not a teacher, but also by a coordinating teacher of school and extracurricular educational programs and projects from this educational unit, which, moreover, is not part of any NGO. The children came up

*with several ideas, but they stopped on organizing group activities, carried out in open air, with the objectives of improving the relations between them."*

At the Coțofenii din Dos Middle School, students chose a project that would reduce violence between children, *"A safer world for children"*, due to the realities existing in the current period. They want to present what they have achieved, both in front of teachers and students both from schools and from the country. They would like to know how other children feel in their school and to hear/see what other children from other counties have worked on in this project. Children want to continue with other projects, e.g. *"A clean community - greening and beautifying the community"* and *"Journey into the world of books"* (see Appendix 7).

**Observations of some high school students:** At one of the schools, the students felt that, for the most part, the answers were sincere. They were surprised by the high satisfaction rates of classmates related to the equipment of laboratories or the library, they mentioned the students' lack of sincerity in completing the questionnaire regarding the aspects related to alcohol, tobacco and drugs. They mentioned the difficulty of completing the questionnaire in terms of the time required, offering suggestions in this regard: for it to be applied in chapters, so that the time required to complete is shorter. Among the aspects that need to be improved, mentioned by the students: verbal bullying between students, equipment of laboratories and library, consideration of students' opinions, lack of motivation of students to get involved in activities, more support from teachers, equity towards students and the possibility of choosing optional subjects.

## 8 THE METHODOLOGY OF FACILITATING PARTICIPATION IN PROJECTS

### 8.1 *Phases of participatory activities*

In order for the students' proposals to take shape and become applicable, the experts of the Joining Forces consortium and the researchers provided the participating schools with methodological assistance for carrying out participatory projects in order to improve the school climate.

In order to carry out the meetings with the students from the student advisory groups (SAG), we propose that the activities have the following phases:

- a. Presentation of the topic and the proposal for collaboration with students (prior information). Analysis of the needs for change of students regarding the school climate, starting from the reports of the School Climate Profile. The description of the purpose of the activities for which we invite students to a consultancy group (SAG), through which they will be able to participate in discussions on the school climate and in the elaboration of projects. The awareness of the needs of children regarding the safe, non-aggressive climate in school. Establishing group rules.
- b. Formation of the SAG group and the empowerment of SAG students. Establishing the role of the group in relation to other children in the school. The empowerment of the group to express needs and desires for change. Discussions on the role of SAG to mobilize school classmates to complete the questionnaire, to think about the climate school aspects and to mobilize for focus on groups. Establishing group rules.
- c. Information on the results of the questionnaire completed by students. Comparison of students' results in the school with the research sample. Discussion of the results according to the expectations of students and teachers.
- d. Sketching some directions of change. Brainstorming, to sketch possible directions of change. Choosing modalities to consult with a larger group of classmates.
- e. Choosing a change project and planning the approach. Decision making and planning a project for which as many students as possible are interested. Planning some human resources and other resources depending on the needs of the project. Sharing plans with classmates outside of GCE. Incorporation of observations.
- f. Carrying out the project and dealing with obstacles. Finding allies among teachers and eventually community experts. Negotiation with partners. Finding alternative solutions, if needed.
- g. Project monitoring and evaluation. Transmitting the results to other students and teachers. Organizing presentations. Presentation of the project in front of teachers and joint discussions with them on the proposed project for change. Discussing the need for human resources and other resources depending on the needs of the project. Dissemination of the result of the discussions. In this phase, the presentation of the project will be monitored in front of the parents and joint discussions will be organized with the parents and teachers on the proposed

project for change. The periodic communication with contact people from the project partners. Completing evaluation questionnaires or resorting to other ways of evaluation of the results.

A possible representation of these steps is in the adjacent chart, called **7 STEPS**.

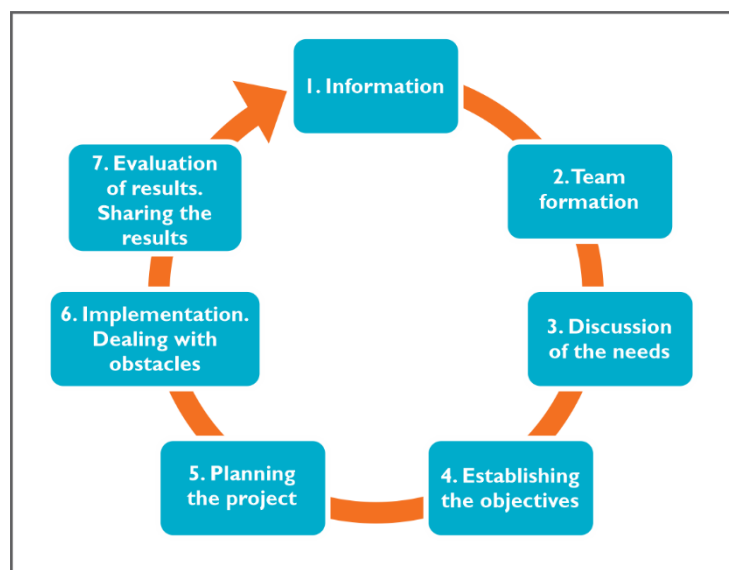


Chart 8.1 Stages of participatory actions<sup>3</sup>

## 8.2 Conducting participatory sessions with students

Author: Simona Mihai, World Vision România

### Session no.1 Communication of the results of the School Climate Assessment project.

The purpose of the first work session with the children from the Students' School Council will be to clarify the context in which this project appeared, what are its aims, how long it will be implemented and what will be the role that the children will have in this consultative structure. The session will last a maximum of 2 hours!

This first meeting will also be used to strengthen group relationships, activate children and set a set of group rules for all meetings within the project.

The agenda for this first meeting may look in the following manner:

- Introductory word/welcome**, addressed by the teacher who facilitates the session (2 min).
- Context presentation** - presentation of the teacher/facilitator, exposition of the context in which the meeting takes place and how long it is estimated to last. The partnership of Joining Forces Romania and the NGOs that are part of this approach, the topic approached, the steps followed so far and the role that this group will have (10 min) are highlighted.

<sup>3</sup> Adaptare după metoda de lucru participativ Magic 6, proiectul *Peer Youth - România*, [http://www.peeryouth.eu/ctrl/Home/romania/PEER\\_Manual\\_Magic\\_6\\_ian%202017.pdf](http://www.peeryouth.eu/ctrl/Home/romania/PEER_Manual_Magic_6_ian%202017.pdf), accesat la 28.03.2021



- c. **Introducing children** - Children are asked to introduce themselves individually, also pointing out an expectation related to this project and to this first session on this topic. The expectations are noted and will be recalled at the end of the session/approach (10-15 min).
- d. **Introducing guests** - If other adults are present at the meeting (UBB representatives, WVR staff) they will also be invited to attend. The facilitator introduces them, mentioning their role in the approach and the fact that they can be a resource for children in this context(5 min).
- e. **Establishing the group rules** - The facilitator encourages the children to get involved in a brainstorming process to record group rules, which all participants in the meeting agree to follow. All rules are recorded, and at the beginning of each session they are recalled/completed, if necessary (10 min).
- f. **Presentation of the analysis of the data** - Starting from the purpose of the meeting, the facilitator brings into discussion and presents the analysis of some data generated after the children's answers to the questionnaire, scoring each item separately. Some charts will be used, accompanied by explanations. The following will be discussed in turn, aspects related to the relations between students and teachers, the relations between students and aspects related to school safety (30 min).
- g. The process itself will NOT be a simple presentation of data, but an opportunity for discussions and debates with children, who are encouraged to express their views on what is presented. They will be asked questions such as: *What is your opinion about this? Do you think this information reflects reality? Did the children feel/did you feel comfortable answering the questions? Were there any more questions we might have had to ask? What could these have been? Are there issues discussed now (items) that are more important to you and would you like to especially discuss them?*
- h. This moment is one of the most important moments of the approach with the children and should not be rushed in any way. Children will be constantly encouraged to speak, to express themselves freely and they will always be reminded that all opinions are extremely important and that we are there to listen to and support them in identifying solutions and implementing a project that they desire. It would be recommended for another adult in the session to record the issues that the children are discussing and the directions that they are aiming for at the moment. Another option would be for the discussion to be recorded, with the consent of the children. It can be helpful when discussing the initiative they wish to implement.
- i. **Break.** Children will be asked to return from the break with a pencil and a sheet of paper. If the activity takes place online, you can play children's favorite songs during the play. Remind them to come back to complete the session (5-10 min).
- j. **Individual analysis and reflection exercise** - Children will be asked to individually make a top 3 problems related to the school climate/items from the analysis of the data you discussed before the break and to write them on the sheet of paper. The most important 3 aspects they want to address in the project(5 min).
- k. **Individual group presentations** - The facilitator asks the children to show the sheets to the camera and to name, in turn, the 3 problems mentioned on the sheet of paper. You can also take photos at the time, to be able to illustrate the process! (10 min)
- l. **Small group analysis and reflection exercise** - The children are divided into 2 groups, each group having the task to discuss and decide 1-2 directions/problems related to the school climate, which they want to address in their school, even starting from the top 3 individually

identified issues in the previous exercise. In this stage, the facilitator will remind them of those items that attracted attention during the discussion and show the children's dissatisfaction. A child will be assigned as a group leader ("I need a volunteer") and the child will record the group's decision on a piece of paper or in *Word*. If the activity is carried out online, on the *Zoom* platform 2 *breakout rooms* can be created, and the facilitator can enter, in turn, each room to ensure that discussions and decisions are made (15 min).

- m. **Exposure in the extended group** - The children return to the extended group and each group presents what was discussed and agreed in the group (10 min).
- n. **Closing the session** - The meeting is closed by the facilitator who asks the children to express in one word the feeling/state they had during the session/to mention a word describing the session they have just attended. He thanks the children for their involvement, summarizes the information discussed and reminds them when the next meeting will take place. The children will be asked to think and consult with other classmates, regarding the discussions in this session and the few directions established in the groups (5 min).

At the end of the first session we will have the following results:

- Children informed about the process;
- The commitment of children to the process;
- The children's perspective on the results of the analysis performed at the level of the school;
- Top 3 specific aspects related to the school climate that pose problems in their school and; which they want to address, with priority, in this approach.

## Session no. 2

The purpose of this session is to provide the opportunity for children in the CE to analyze in-depth the problems related to the school climate in their school and starting from them, to identify solutions that contribute to solving/mitigating them through the direct involvement of children and through an active student-teacher partnership. The session lasts a maximum of 2 hours!

The agenda of the second session may look in the following manner:

- a. **Introduction** - Word of welcome from the facilitator/teacher addressed to the children present in the session and the presentation of the adult guests, if necessary and if they are people other than those in the first session (5 min).
- b. **Summary of the first session** - The facilitator briefly resumes, with the help of the children, the information discussed in the previous session and the main conclusions resulting at the end of the first work session, ensuring a good understanding of the process by the children. Also, the aspects/items from the analysis of the school climate that attracted more attention and children's interest, in the first session (10 min) will be scored.
- c. **Presentation of the agenda of the meeting and the recalling of the group rules** - the children will find out what is the time allocated for discussions, what are the objectives of this session and how they will be involved in achieving them. The group rules will be resumed and the importance of their observance will be pointed out (10 min).
- d. **Practical exercise** - So that the atmosphere in the group is a pleasant one and children feel involved in a friendly manner, the facilitator will ask them to name in as short a time as possible as many words that can be associated to the notion of positive school climate. In

this way, we remind them through the game that this concept is one that can include any aspect related to the atmosphere in school and we can see how they relate to/how they understand a positive school climate. The words are recorded and they will return to them in the moment in which decisions will be made on the initiative of the children (10 min).

- e. **Introduction to the problem prioritization instrument** - The facilitator brings into discussion the directions/the problems that the children considered to be the most important and on which they decided, at the end of the first session, that they wish to center as an activity within the project. These are written on a flipchart, if the activity is carried out in class or in *Word* and viewed with share screen if online. Visualizing them, will help the children make an informed decision and approach the project from different perspectives. The exercise itself is described in the document attached in Appendix 8.1 *The decision tree* and can be contextualized for the topic of our discussion and for the online environment. (30 min)
- f. **Break** - Children are invited to take a break for a few minutes specifying that will return in the group to complete the activity. The background music is recommended here as well and can help children relax (5-10 min).
- g. **Introduction of the instrument of analysis of the needs of the project** - The facilitator resumes the discussions pointing out the aspects previously discussed and inviting children to analyze the problem from the perspective of the solutions they find at the time. Questions of the following type may be asked: *How do you see resolving this problem? What activities could you carry out, as children, to answer this problem? Who could be your partners in this approach? What resources would be necessary for its implementation? What is the time that you can allocate to the implementation of the project? What are the responsibilities that you have and how do you want to divide them? What are the aspects of your implementation activities for which you need support from the facilitator/adults involved/partners mentioned? What should be the name of your project?* The discussion is recorded with the consent of the children and/or a flipchart will be used to record all the ideas and the proposals of the children (20-30 min.).
- h. The tool proposed in Appendix 8.2 - *Kite*, can be easily contextualized and adapted for the online environment as well.
- i. **Concluding the session** - The facilitator asks the children to express in a word the feelings they have, at this moment, regarding the activities proposed and the mode in which they will be implemented. The agreement and the openness of the children for the implementation and the involvement in the activities discussed is checked. As homework, children are encouraged to make a drawing/painting/collage or any graphic representation, which reflects the mode in which their school will look like at the end of the implementation of the project (10 min).

At the end of this session we will have the following results:

- The children's perspective on a positive school climate;
- The decision of the children regarding the aspect of the problem/problems they will address through this project;
- The children will understand what their specific needs are in the context of initiating and implementing their own project;
- Children develop skills of analysis, teamwork, negotiation, critical thinking and the prioritization of issues.

### Session no. 3.

The purpose of this session is to discuss and establish, in detail, the manner in which the project/activities discussed by the children in the previous meeting will be implemented. The session will not last more than 2 hours.

The agenda of the third meeting may look in the following manner:

- a. **Beginning the session/word of welcome** - The facilitator thanks the children for their presence and commitment in this project, mentions the purpose of the meeting and brings back into discussion the group rules and the importance of their observance (10 min).
- b. **Summary of the first session** - The facilitator briefly resumes, with the help of the children, the information discussed in the previous session and the main conclusions resulting at the end of the second work session, ensuring a good understanding of the process by the children. Also, the aspects of the social climate on which the children wish to focus and the ideas of activities discussed in the previous meeting will be recalled (15 min).
- c. **Homework** - The facilitator asks the children to show the drawing/graphic representation of their school, as it looks from the point of view of the school climate, at the end of the project/activities implemented by them, as they imagine it/they want it at the moment. Each child shows their drawing and says what he/she wanted to express through it, at the camera (online activity) or in front of their classmates (face-to-face activity). The facilitator thanks the children and appreciates their involvement and creativity. To illustrate the process, it would be a good idea for these drawings to be photographed/kept by the facilitator (20 min).
- d. **Outlining the project of the children** - Starting from discussions with the children in the first two work sessions, the facilitator will propose a model of project from a group of children, a model of WVR for the children to analyse and complete. The instrument will greatly support the process of detailing the project in itself, of the activities, of the necessary resources for each activity, the times of the activities, etc. More than that, the children will see, some even for the first time, what is the structure of a project and they will practice skills of analysis, critical thinking and project management (40 min).
- e. **Break** - Depending on the mode in which the discussions are carried out at the previous point, and how involved the children are, the break can occur at the end of the completion of the application for funding or whenever the facilitator feels that the children need a few free minutes (5-10 min) (*see a funding application template in Appendix 8.3*).
- f. **Developing a work plan** - Starting from the children's project, discussed in detail in the previous point, the children are engaged in a brainstorming process and asked to answer the following questions, as specifically and detailed as possible (30 min):
  - What are the steps that must be followed for this project to be implemented?
  - Who do you consider that must see this project - to whom do we present it, when, in what context, to whom in the group?
  - How do we obtain the commitment of the partners about whom you discussed in the second session? Whom do we approach, how and who will do that?
  - How do we ensure the involvement of as large a number as possible of students in the project activities? What methods do we use? Who is the person in charge?
  - How do we promote the project? Who is the person in charge for this?
  - How do we report the results of the project? Who is the person in charge?

- What is my role as a facilitator in these steps? (punctual on each step)
- How do we ensure that the information circulates to all group members, regardless of the responsibilities assumed?
- Other questions depending on local context.

Most of the questions here concern issues already discussed in the second meeting. Now, however, it will focus on each of them and the children will assume specific responsibilities, individual or group ones, depending on the interest or skills demonstrated during the process.

g. **Completing the session** - The facilitator thanks the children for their involvement, ideas and contribution to the initiative and asks them to create in the group a story of the session that has just come to an end. It will be proceeded in the following manner: The first child will start the story: *Today's session was...*, the second child continues and completes what the first child said and so on until the last child who will conclude and end the story.

The basic rule of the exercise is that the interventions must be naturally linked and complement each other, thus contributing to the formation of the story of the group session, from the children's perspective (10 min).

At the end of this session we will have the following results:

- A clearly defined project proposed by the children;
- Work plan, with deadlines and people in charge from the group;
- *Timeline* of proposed activities.

#### **Session no. 4**

These will be a session of reflection and *debriefing* on how the project is implemented (identification of solutions to problems, support in establishing promotional materials, evaluation of the project, facilitating dialogue with project partners, etc.) and they will be completed by permanent *mentoring* on behalf of the facilitator and a child from the WVR Children's Advisory Board on the children's online working group.

For the sessions of reflection on the process, at the end or during it, we attach an instrument that can be used in the dialogue with the children and which facilitates the process. The instrument can be adapted to our context and the work of the children can generate the course of the project, with challenges and successes as the children see it.

Finally, we mention that the number of sessions is indicative, the project activities can go a longer or shorter way, depending on the type of project and the characteristics of the group of students. The worksheet *Riverworld- Appendix 8.4* can be used as a work agenda.

#### **Mentions:**

- The work agendas presented are indicative and can be adapted depending on the local context, the experience of the facilitator, the group of children with whom they work, etc.
- The activities were designed in such a way that they can be taken over regardless of how the activities with the children will be organized - online and/or face-to-face;

- Recommended work instruments have been successfully used in similar work processes with children, these being suitable both for middle school and high school children. Discussions will be adapted depending on the mode in which the children answer, the time dedicated to the activity, the limits given by the context, etc.
- Depending on how the children answer to the proposed agendas, the sessions can be "broken" in 2 sessions. It is important to we bend to the rhythm of the children and to ensure their real participation in the process;
- The role of the facilitator is to support the children in their approach, he will NOT manipulate or control the process itself;
- The facilitator is careful and ensures the involvement of all children in the group in discussions, offering each of them the chance to make their voices heard and opinions shared;
- The facilitator will mediate the meetings/discussions between the children in the group and the representatives of the school.

### **8.3    *The evaluation of the involvement in participatory projects***

The elements mentioned by the students that favored their involvement in the project activities in their school were the following: the topic, the methods used in the project, the work atmosphere, the involvement of both students and coordinating teachers to generate a change for the better in their school, the existence of an efficient, active team, but also the importance given to the students' opinions:

"I was drawn, first of all, to the idea of an environment in which students' opinions about their school environment are taken into account and we can be directly involved in the decisions that are made in our high school." (student participating in the consulting group)

The difficulties encountered by the students during the project were generated by the context of the pandemic in which the activities took place, these being online, and the internet connection sometimes created communication problems. Other obstacles - insurmountable in fact - were the contradictory discussions between students, the identification of the most effective solutions to improve the school climate, which would satisfy categories of students as varied as possible, and some of the students could not attend all meetings.

The aspects that the students liked the most in this project and which worked, were related to the free expression of opinions, without fear that they will be judged for them, the valorization of their ideas at the level of the project: „ I was listened to, my advice was taken into account", "our opinions were listened to with interest", "freedom of opinion, active involvement, trying to make a more conducive and appealing school environment", "we expressed our opinions and ideas without being judged, we were even encouraged", "the opinion of each student was listened to and taken into account, we could tell our life experiences related to the topic of the project and measures were taken to remedy the reported problems". In fact, the changes generated by this project on the students participating in the consulting groups were, first of all, those of awareness of the importance of expressing the opinion by each of them: "By being involved in this project I realized how important the opinion and the life experience of each person is in making a decision related to

improving a system and it helped me develop my ability to formulate a more efficient point of view and support it with arguments relevant to the idea presented. " Other beneficial effects of the students' participation in this project, with a direct impact on them, were the following: the development of thinking, creativity, awareness of different perspectives from which the school atmosphere can be seen, but also any other aspect, respect for diversity of points of view, developing the ability of argumentation, awareness of the beneficial effects of teamwork and desire for action, involvement in creating an atmosphere conducive to all actors in the educational act, in a school: "I realized that with a smart and determined team everything is possible".

The positive aspects of the students' involvement in this project were also mentioned by the principals or coordinating teachers within the schools: „... the children had the chance to work in a team, to communicate more and to be more united, thus increasing their self-esteem as well by taking responsibility in writing the project and to communicate the interests of their classmates from different classes that these students represent”.

The teachers from Cămărașu Secondary School participating in the project say that „I consider that the children's involvement in this project was beneficial both for them and for me, because it supported me in learning activities aimed at cultivating a civic sense, of tolerance, the development of the organizational culture, of the critical, creative thinking and of the imagination, as well as of the entrepreneurial spirit by writing together the application for financing the project chosen by the students”.

As recommendations for the students of other schools who would like to get involved in such projects, the students of the “Radu Negru” College from Făgăraș, Brașov county, participants in the consulting groups, mentioned: to be bold, to express their opinions openly and, very importantly, to outline a holistic image of the climate in their school: “to integrate in as many groups of children as possible, in order to have a broad perspective on the events in their school”.

## 9 INTERPRETATIONS, DIRECTIONS OF ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 9.1 *Interpretation of research results and directions of action*

The benefits of positive student-teacher relations and taking care of such a good relation are valid both for high school students and for primary or secondary school students. Knowing that students' motivation to study decreases with the advancement in school cycles, a positive student-teacher relation can be an extra motivation in learning. The results of the research prove, however, a decline in the quality of teacher-student relations as they progress along the school route. Thus, with the transition from elementary to middle school, students' perceptions of the emotional support provided by teachers become negative (Dweck, 2002). Therefore, the motivational increase in learning is not supplemented by teacher-student relations at this school level. As for young students, they are emotionally affected in a negative way when the relation with the teachers is negative. Thus, in the case of young students, it is very important to avoid negative relations. Research shows that students, especially those from disadvantaged groups, learn more and have fewer disciplinary issues when there are strong emotional ties with their teachers (Dweck, 2002; Orzea, 2016). Through these positive relations, common channels of communication and mediation of learning are opened, and at the same time prosocial behaviors are modeled.

The research items and scales confirm the expectations of the research team, finely reflecting the attitudes of the students who completed the questionnaires. The scales and items used confirmed the results already known in the literature regarding the relations between school climate factors and the relations between them, which justifies the use of school climate as diagnostic tools.

It is clear that the results of completing the questionnaire can guide the intervention activities within the school, designating concrete directions for action. If we consider school violence and bullying, the research shows that in addition to direct actions to stop and restore the relation between victims and the aggressor, we can act on these phenomena indirectly, facilitating the improvement of factors such as the cohesion of students, support and reduce the marginalization of students through the support of teachers. Thus, given that inclusive school practices and the perception of inequality of opportunity respectively correlate negatively with school violence, improving the indicators on the risks of school climate inclusivity, and teachers' increased attention to the objectivity of grading respectively (avoiding preferential assessment) can reduce the risks of school violence.

The student-centered educational climate, so important for ensuring a quality education and for ensuring good school performances of students, is strongly correlated with inclusive school practices and the involvement of students in school life. As a result, a way to improve can be to involve wider categories of students - boys and girls, from different socio-economic backgrounds, from different ethnicities, with different levels of academic performance - in common school and extracurricular activities, with the aim of personal development or in scientific, cultural, artistic or voluntary projects.



As the "School Satisfaction" and "Inclusive School Culture" scales are strongly correlated with "teacher/educator support", teachers need to take on the role and responsibility of ensuring a non-conflicting, supportive, group and individual climate for students. This factor of support from teachers is defining in order to give students a sense of school satisfaction and of belonging to a school. The role of teachers is also essential in reducing the marginalization of some students, they have the levers of inclusion, i.e. facilitating the acceptance of new students with special characteristics and needs. The association of positive relations between teachers and students with reduced behavioral problems among children and adolescents is mentioned in literature (Wang et al., 2010). The positive social climate between students and teachers has beneficial effects on the risky behaviors of teenagers.

Often, **the large number of students in a school** affects the school climate through the lack of individualization of the relations between students, and between students and teachers respectively. In schools with a small staff, with less than 400 students, teachers' expectations are more specifically associated with the students' school situation. Teachers are more involved in the learning process of students, which is associated with better results in school subjects. In the present study we noticed that at the level of small schools, despite the high index of socio-educational deprivation, students expressed a school satisfaction slightly above the average level of the group, demonstrating the validity of the statement that small schools can increase teacher involvement in student relations, involvement noticed and appreciated by students. The advantages of this order of small schools are visible when the teaching staff knows how to capitalize on them, by creating opportunities for students to participate in the school life, through extracurricular activities (Weiss et al., 2010).

Among the characteristics that influence the perception of the school climate and that often appear as expectations among the wishes expressed by students, are **school architecture and equipment**. Following the students' answers, it turned out that the aspirations of the consulted students are very concrete, the toilets (18.2%) and the outdoor grounds in the schoolyard (17.1%) being the aspects mentioned by the students, of which they are not satisfied; 14.4% of students would like to renew the work equipment in the classroom (interactive boards, video projector, projection screen, laptop/computer and speakers), gyms, laboratories and the doctor's office are other aspects that although exist, the students say that they are not satisfied with them. They also reported the absence of dental offices (75.1%), toilets for people with disabilities (67%), the electronic catalog (39.2%), but also Wi-Fi with free access for students (36.1%), which would be so necessary to carry out classes that use digital resources. As a construction, students and teachers usually prefer a more intimate and personalized environment depending on the groups that use it, and not the large, impersonal classrooms. Some researchers find a positive correlation between architecture and the students' academic achievement. Elements such as the age of the building, the lack of air conditioning, overcrowding, lack of recreation spaces, and the non-adaptation of architecture to the needs of students and teachers respectively negatively influence students' performance through the impact on the quality of the learning environment. The way schools are decorated, the care for it, but also for the classrooms are positively associated with the students' school success (Orzea, 2016). Among the students' proposals are the ones aimed at arranging such intimate spaces, in the school building and in the schoolyard, in which small groups of students can relax and recover after intense activities.

Another aspect that can change the school climate is related to the inequalities perceived by students in assessing them. **The perception of preferential attitudes** by students leads to their demobilization. Although teachers' preference for good and hard-working students is easy to understand, the clarity of assessment criteria - in all school learning situations, either face-to-face or online - is a precondition for school satisfaction and an important direction for improving the school climate. In grades 5-8, most students feel that teachers favor, at least sometimes, students who have good grades (71.8%) and those who are disciplined and good (69.4%) and 36.8% sometimes or usually feel that there are favored classes. In high school these percentages are slightly lower, 63.2% of high school respondents considering that teachers usually prefer good students and 55.7% that students with good grades are usually favored, and 27.1% perceive unequal attitudes of teachers to different classes. Differentiation on ethnic criteria in favor of Romanian students are often perceived and at least sometimes by 16.3% of middle school respondents and 23.7% of high school students. Opinions regarding the favoring of boys and girls respectively are divided, but however, the opinion that girls usually benefit from a preferential treatment is more common both in the group of middle school students (14.5% compared to 7.5%) and among high school students (20%, compared to 10%).

Attitudes towards school, the relations between teachers and students, those between classmates, as well as those that describe the perception of different forms of violence are often described in the literature as depending on the gender of the respondents. Unlike the findings of the literature, gender differences are not significant in grades 5-8. On the other hand, in high school students it is similar to those described by other authors, girls feeling more involved in school life and appreciating the student-centered educational climate more, compared to boys, who find more violence in their schools. There are also significant differences for the responses of the group of girls and boys in grades 3 and 4, the girls being more satisfied with the school climate than the boys, more attached to school and perceiving the appeal of school more favorably than boys. These results may be due to the earlier maturation of girls compared to boys, which is probably felt at the level of primary school and leads to a more school-friendly behavior and greater self-satisfaction with the school life. These aspects also affect the perception of violence and victimization. As a result, it is necessary to be aware of gender differences in education and the need to stimulate both genders, especially in association with age and some cultural characteristics.

**Positive relations between teachers and students** are constantly associated with reduced behavioral problems among teenagers (Wang et al., 2010). The positive social climate between students and teachers has beneficial effects on the risky behaviors of teenagers. According to research, teenagers who perceive the support of teachers, but also their esteem, consideration, attention as high, tend to appreciate the climate of their school as being a largely healthy one, associated with a low level of drug use. The support perceived by students from teachers is not limited only to the academic aspect, but also has an emotional aspect (Orzea, 2016) that mediates the student's relation with the learning effort. According to the theory of self-determination (Ryan and Deci, 2000), students are much more likely to internalize the values and recommendations of people they feel attached to. This behavior of students is favored by the warm, supportive attitude of teachers towards students.

In our group, **students who felt listened to and supported by teachers**, at the level of all three school cycles, were more satisfied with school and more attached to it, both in middle school and high school (Table 3.3, 4.1 and 5.1). Relations with teachers also have a directive value for

relations with equals: students who do not receive at all or receive little *encouragement from primary or middle school teachers* are rather exposed to violence by their classmates, as it results from those, the change of attitudes of exclusion can start with support activities from teachers. Students who believe that their efforts are not supported when they work hard and those who say they do not have at all or have to a small extent classmates who are true friends have a lower school satisfaction and this can significantly reduce their school participation and increase the risk of abandonment. Thus, high school students who are not praised at all or have their efforts praised to a small extent when they work hard and those who say they do not have at all or have to a small extent classmates who are true friends have significantly lower school satisfaction, than their high school classmates ( $t=9.882$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) (Table 5.1). Also, marginalized high school students are less attached to school ( $t=8.293$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Such data are also found at the middle school level between the school satisfaction of those who consider that they receive much encouragement and those who receive little encouragement from teachers ( $t=-11.67$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). At the primary school level, the good relation with the primary school teacher, the lack of fear, the perception of respectful treatment are aspects that give significant differences in the attachment of students to school, but also in terms of the appeal to school (Table 3.3). Although we know from studies on motivation for school learning that it tends to decrease over the school years, especially in children and teenagers in socio-economic risk categories - see data on increasing the dropout rate with advancing age (MEC, 2020) - a good relation between student and teacher remains a key factor of school satisfaction, for students in primary, secondary and high school. The importance of the teacher-student relation is highlighted by this study in establishing a teacher-student relation climate conducive to support learning, a climate through which students feel listened to, understood, valued, especially in pre-adolescence and adolescence, when the existence of nonfamilial models among adults prove to be necessary.

Children are concerned about their **relations with their peers** and they are emotionally attached to them at all ages. With the transition to adolescence, interest in equality increases, and psychological and emotional dependence also increases. As school success studies show, students who are supported, popular, and accepted in peer groups are more likely to achieve school success, while those who are rejected or have a low level of acceptance in the peer group face academic difficulties (Hărăguș et al., 2014). Exclusion from the peer group, isolation of students, but also their teasing lead to alienation from the school and the adoption of maladaptive behaviors. At the same time, the dissatisfaction with the school increases, the climate being appreciated as a negative one, at which point the school involvement of students is reduced, and the consequence is, most often, school failure (Cohen and Smerdon, 2009). In line with these observations, our study showed that students who had positive relations with their peers and felt less excluded, were more satisfied with school and more attached to it, and exposure to violence of those who feel excluded is almost double, both in middle school and high school (Chart 1.7). Also, primary school students who have never experienced teasing, the refusal of other classmates to play with them or talk to them on the phone/tablet or computer, and those who say they have never been laughed at perceive the school as more appealing and more attached to it than those who have had - at least sometimes - such negative experiences (Table 3.3). Also *school satisfaction and school attachment of students* in middle and high school classes differ significantly depending on their perception of the classroom atmosphere: those who consider it united, those who feel positive relations with their peers and

who are not victims of bullying, and do not feel excluded and marginalized are more attached and like school more (tables 4.2 and 5.2).

The data showed that the social and emotional dimensions of the school climate are important for maintaining school satisfaction and attachment to school. That is why we believe that in teacher training the curriculum should be updated to put more emphasis on knowing the emotional, relational needs and age characteristics of students, cultural differences, but also school climate management. The Ministry of Education, ISJs, principals can be encouraged in the use of school climate assessment instruments and in learning the various ways in which data obtained from school climate assessment can be used to develop a school community, to promote the involvement/participation of students, parents and the community in developing a positive institutional climate.

The usefulness and need for counseling services from school counselors, school mediators and social workers to mediate the relation between teachers and students, respectively between students to reduce the exclusion and marginalization of students (often with disabilities, or from minority families, or from the poorest social categories) are indirectly supported by this analysis. The recommendations may refer to the organization of activities that increase the cohesion between students and facilitate the understanding of the differences between those with certain characteristics due to disabilities or belonging to different cultures. As shown in *The Educated Romania Report*, the development of a national program to support socio-emotional skills among students would be welcomed as a measure (România Educată, 2021, p. 111).

Other recommendations concern **introducing changes in the behavior of teachers and school principals**. Teachers and principals need to understand their own role in creating the school climate. Understanding the importance of social and emotional dimensions and the interaction between cognitive, emotional and social skills by teachers and their application would be useful in creating a positive and healthy school climate. The recommendation that emerges from this research, for principals, is to get involved in leadership activities, especially in relation to young teachers without professional experience. Attention given to the school climate, to improving communication with teachers and students, is absolutely necessary.

Considering the unfavorable comparisons of Romania regarding the PISA results, the situation of school abandonment, the big quality differences of the rural institutions from the urban ones, the accentuated level of poverty of a wide category of children who have reduced access to educational resources, as well as the data regarding the high frequency of bullying among students, there were numerous recommendations to decision makers to reform the education system. The research items and scales confirm the expectations of the research team, finely reflecting the attitudes of the students who completed the questionnaires. Among the recommendations, we noted that of the OECD (2013) which considers that it would be very appropriate **to carry out "soft self-assessments"** of schools, based on research-based assessment tools, to obtain data on the situation of education from the perspective actors involved (including students), but also to mobilize them to achieve change. The present research is part of this approach, considering on the one hand the usefulness of the school climate assessment tool (SCP), as well as the concern to develop intervention projects based on it that take into account the climate profile of co-opted schools in the project.

The scales and items used confirmed the already known results from the literature on the relations of school climate factors and the relations between them, which justifies the use of school

climate as diagnostic tools. The aims of this research were not only to develop a school climate assessment tool (SCP), but also to draw attention to possible levers of action to respond to students' exposure to a conflict climate, marginalization and school violence through options that increase inclusion and involving students in solving school problems, as well as increasing cohesion at school level. The recommendations of the project team are based on the dimensions of the school climate, the risks and the resources that the questionnaire makes visible with its scales.

Our proposals for involving students through participatory projects are in line with democratic educational practices, for student participation in the development of action projects that will empower the actors involved (students and teachers) for the desired changes and create opportunities of collaboration for them.

Studies on the school climate emphasize the importance of **the safety of the educational environment**. Feeling safe physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially is a fundamental human need. Therefore, one of the most important and challenging missions for today's school, where gangs of young people, drugs, alcohol and violence in the digital and physical world invade the world of students, is to provide children with safe schools. The development of procedures for maintaining safety and monitoring their compliance, associated with a climate characterized by interpersonal relations of mutual support are fundamental elements of the nonviolent school climate. The safety climate of the school therefore refers to ensuring a sense of physical and emotional security from the school institution by developing a set of rules of order and discipline (regulations) (Orzea, 2016). Procedures for preventing violence and maintaining students' physical and emotional safety are all the more effective as students contribute to a bigger extent to their development, exercise and monitoring. Procedures for the prevention and monitoring of bullying and school violence involve the presence of caring and encouraging educational staff, who are available to listen to students and offer them support and counseling; security also means stopping any forms of violence and bullying (Swearer et al., 2012). Students in a school with an emotionally safe environment will interact and communicate effectively and express their opinions without fear of being treated in a hostile manner. Order and discipline depend by the extent to which students obey the rules of the school. The degree to which students believe in school rules and whether they consider them correct and consistent are indicators of the quality of the school climate, and increasing this confidence in such rules can be done by involving children in their development (Olweus, 1993).

The study data allow the comparison of marginalized students, circumscribed as those who do not feel encouraged by teachers, who do not get along well with their classmates, students whose teachers do not praise their efforts when working and those who do not have many friends, those who feel humiliated by teachers have significantly lower school satisfaction than their primary, middle school or high school classmates.

Educational policies should also refer to research on the school climate, taking into account the importance of a positive school climate in promoting the emotional health of students and teachers, but also in obtaining the best possible school results. Our main recommendation is to diagnose the school climate from the perspective of students and teachers, a very common practice in other cultural environments in the USA and Europe, made by authorities at different levels, with the help of school counselors. In the USA, but also in other European countries, there are national centers for school climate research, which would be useful in Romania, at the same time as expanding the research on the evaluation and improvement of the school climate at the national

level. Psychosocial interventions and changes in the educational system - local educational policies must be supported by diagnoses of the school climate, the instruments resulting from researches being useful in this approach.

## 9.2 Conclusions and recommendations

1. The research results highlighted the close correlations between school climate factors (support from the teacher, respect for equal chances, inclusive school culture, support from students, the involvement in decisions and projects), school satisfaction and attachment to school. Taking into account the importance of a positive school climate in promoting the emotional health of students and teachers, and the lack of such an approach in educational policies so far, we recommend the following:

- 
- *Inclusion of the concern for the evaluation of the school climate among the guidelines of the educational policies in Romania in order to promote inclusive school practices, applied in a positive relational school climate.*
  - *Establishment of evaluation and concern for improving the school climate as a systematic practice in all types of schools.*
- 

2. The SCP instrument proved to be a useful and valid tool **for diagnosing aspects** favorable to maintaining students' motivation and school safety, as well as problematic aspects, which affect the school climate. To generalize this approach, we recommend the following:

- 
- *Reduction of SCP scales, while maintaining its essential aspects for the school climate: school attachment scales, school satisfaction, students' involvement in the school life and decisions, the inclusive nature of the school; the educational climate of the school and the focus of education on the student; support of the student from teachers; conflicts with teachers; support of the students from their classmates; students' risk behaviors; bullying, the place where the violence takes place and the modalities in which students turn for help.*
  - *The continuation of the research by extending it to a representative sample of schools and elaboration of national standards of the questionnaire, on educational cycles.*
  - *Establishment of national standards for different types of schools and use of the instrument in digital format.*
  - *The creation of a software that automatically creates the profile of the school and compares it with the profile obtained on the national representative group (for all levels and categories of schools, respectively for those in urban and rural areas).*
  - *The creation of a web page where the complete instrument and the short variants are accessible for schools, in order to give the possibility of self-evaluation of schools or classes, realization of the study in order to plan participatory projects.*
-

3. The knowledge of the SCP results by the teachers and students involved proved to be a good instrument for ***orientation towards actions that would improve the school climate***. The targeted directions of action are the following:

- a. Intensifying the efforts of school management and teachers to rethink together with other relevant actors of the school the levers that can create a positive social and emotional climate in the classroom and in school. Therefore, the following is recommended:

- 
- *Analysis of SCP data in the teachers' council and stimulation of collaboration between teachers in order to provide mutual emotional support in order to manage the stress inherent in the profession of teacher, as well as to develop transdisciplinary approaches to schooling.*
  - *Organizing joint activities between the students' representatives (the students' school council) and the teachers' council, respectively the parents' representatives, in order to define the main ways to improve the school climate.*
- 

- b. *Preventing the loss or decrease of students' attachment to school values, appeal to school and motivation to learn.* Given the important percentage of students in the area of warning or risk regarding the relations with teachers (especially at middle and high school level) and the need to *improve SCP indicators regarding teacher support and conflict reduction*, we recommend the following:

- 
- *Providing positive feedback to students when they make an effort and offering advice to improve their school performance based on their strengths, showing interest in their attendance and participation in class.*
  - *Inclusion of activities in the daily or at least weekly routine that offer teachers the opportunity to get to know their students as complex people, with their lives outside the school, which is the basis of a real connection.*
  - *Avoiding any form of preferential assessment, encouraging and supporting all students in an equitable manner; teachers often have to deal with the cultural, religious and ethnic sensibilities of students and their parents, but also with the varied life and work experiences of students, all of which must be valued so that students feel equal and non-discriminated.*
  - *Teachers should continue to constantly adapt not only their information, but also how to transmit it by stimulating thinking in particular; inviting students to ask questions, to gather information for academic projects, to encourage mutual help between classmates and to use cooperative learning practices, so that students feel that they have an active role in the learning process.*
  - *Maintaining and developing the skills of students and teachers and using the benefits of digital technologies even outside the COVID-19 protection measures, for the benefit of teaching and learning. Schools should ensure that all students have digital tools, access to digital knowledge and digital skills.*
-

- c. Given that the SCP highlights various aspects related to school violence, it can serve as an evaluation basis for a series of interventions aimed at *reducing violence* in schools. Involving students in the process of creating regulations and decisions based on them increases the chance of complying with the regulations. That is why we recommend the following:

- 
- *Improving the cohesion between students and reducing conflicts between them and teachers, as well as increasing participation in school life.*
  - *Ensuring a safe climate in the school by developing clear regulations and action protocols for situations of violence, including the system of consequences of violating them.*
  - *Increasing the involvement of teachers in reducing conflicts between students and in prompt responses in cases of bullying or any kind of violence.*
  - *Clear communication to parents of the procedure followed in case of violation of the rules.*
  - *Inclusion of students in the elaboration of the regulation and in its periodic re-evaluation.*
  - *The introduction of prevention programs in schools, which should leave room for the expression and closeness of students who are in different positions of the school hierarchy and the attitude towards violence to leave room for the expression of frustrations related to the school environment.*
- 

- d. Starting from the small percentage of activities through which students are involved in participatory projects and decisions regarding the school life, we recommend the following:

- 
- *The involvement of students in class and school decisions, especially in relation to student-teacher relations and violence between students.*
  - *Organizing sports, cultural, artistic or scientific events, but also encouraging projects of change at the school level, proposed by students, to help gain a sense of belonging to the school.*
  - *For the subjects in the curriculum in the package decided by the school, teachers can continue to involve students more and more in choosing subjects, as this can lead to increased motivation to learn the subjects of their choice.*
  - *Involvement of students in choosing aspects related to the educational instructional process, such as: choosing homework; choosing teaching techniques (e.g. by frontal or group methods); negotiating the time allocated to some contents; choosing ways to assess knowledge.*
- 

- e. Given the significant number of students at risk of social exclusion, in shaping the school climate, schools will need to find resources to reduce students' feelings of exclusion and marginalization.



- 
- *We recommend programs in schools to support socio-emotional skills among students, in which school counseling offices would continue to play an important role.*
  - *As resources, we also recommend increasing the role of school social workers (existing in special schools), school mediators (existing in schools with the participation of children from Roma communities), but also experts in restorative techniques, as well as volunteers, respectively of non-governmental organizations.*
  - *Individual and group activities are recommended, of the supportive, restorative and/or therapeutic type, but also - especially - participatory for the ventilation of the frustrations due to school stress and the improvement of the school climate.*
- 

4. Students' responses to the school climate highlighted the importance they give to how teachers manage to relate to them, as individuals, and how they manage the entire classroom. Along with other reports on the education system, but also the recent report *Educated Romania* (2021, p. 112) which indicates the need for teachers to know concrete ways to provide support for students with various characteristics and behaviors, we consider important empowering teachers with methods of resolving conflicts, respectively focusing on the needs of the student. Such methods and techniques must be known and applied by teachers, i.e. to be part of their professional repertoire. Thus, teachers and primary school teachers will feel more effective even in difficult situations, without resorting to punitive methods or methods that have the effect of lowering the student's self-esteem and marginalizing him within the group of students.

As such, we recommend the following:

- 
- *Introduction of training modules for teachers aimed at: the ability to provide support and resolve conflicts, self-control skills, stress management, but also classroom management.*
  - *Clarification of the importance of the principles of focusing on students, of their individualized approach and inclusion as principles that ensure the maintenance of students in school, their effective participation in the educational instructional process.*
-

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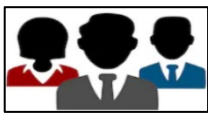
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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1. The educational units included in the pilot study

Crt. no.	Educational establishment	The organization that recommends the school	Educational unit located in the environment
1.	Amărăștii de Jos Theoretical High School, Dolj County	Terre des hommes	Rural
2.	"Constantin Filipescu" Technological High School, Caracal, Olt County		Urban
3.	Polovragi Gymnasium School No. 1, Gorj County		Rural
4.	Cărnăuș Secondary School, Cluj County		Rural
5.	"Nicolae Iorga" Technological High School, Negrești, Vaslui County	World Vision România 	Urban
6.	Coțofenii Gymnasium School from Dos, Dolj County		Rural
7.	"Dimitrie Brandza" Gymnasium School Vișoara, Botoșani County		Rural
8.	Viștea de Jos Secondary School, Brașov County	Save the Children Romania 	Rural
9.	181 Secondary School, sector 1, Bucharest		Urban
10.	"Grigore Ghica Voievod" Gymnasium School Suceava		Urban
11.	"Grigore Tăbăcaru" School, Hemeiș, Bacău County	SOS Children's Villages 	Rural
12.	Chirpăr Secondary School, Sibiu County		Rural
13.	"Radu Negru" National College Făgăraș, Brașov County	The team of consultants 	Urban
14.	"Ciprian Porumbescu" National College of Art, Suceava		Urban
15.	Târlîșua Vocational School, Bistrița-Năsăud County		Rural

### Introduction:

**Presentation of the focus group leader(s)**, where they come from, who they usually work with.

- **Presentation of the purpose:** In the following I invite you to a discussion about the environment in which you learn. We are interested in your opinions, they are important to us. All your answers are useful to find out your opinion. No answer is wrong. Those present here have stated that they want to participate in this group and for that we thank you very much. If at any time during the discussion you think you do not want to answer a question or want to withdraw, you can do so without any problem.
- **Procedures:** The discussion is recorded so as not to lose sight of anything you say, so we are handing you some agreement forms upon registration.
- We will each say our opinions one by one, so as not to overlap the voices on the recording.

Feel comfortable, it's just a discussion, interesting and pleasant, we hope.

**Warm-up questions. Exercise suggestions, which can be found online. You can use any other heating set.**

Faces are shown showing different emotions. When students discover a happy face, we ask them to exemplify when they feel happy at school and what makes them so; when they feel upset at school and what makes them feel that way; when they feel proud at school and what makes them feel that way; when they feel like thinkers, what makes them feel that way...

If students do not know each other, then you can use the online game: *Spin the Wheel* (Ioana Orzea)  
<https://wordwall.net/resource/1938938/s%c4%83-afl%c4%83m-mai-multe-despre-noi-ioana-orzea>,  
<http://www.marinpredapitesti.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Cartea-mare-a-jocurilor.pdf>

### Focus group questions

1. If a friend wanted to move from another school to your school, how would you introduce him to the school? What about your class?
2. What do you like most about this school? Tell us about a situation when you felt really good.
3. What don't you like about school? Tell us about a situation when you didn't feel well.
4. What would you change at school, if it were up to you, to make students feel better at school?
5. Suppose one of the classmates is offended, hit, the other classmates laugh at him/her or he/she is not received in the play group. How do you proceed? What are you doing? What you say? Who do you ask for help? How do you solve the problem during the break, during class, after school?
6. If you had a conflict with another student, what would you do? Who would you talk to about this? From whom would you ask for help at school? Would it be different if it were from your class, or if it was from another class?
7. What are the rules at school? What would you change to these rules (what would you take out, what would you add)?

**Concluding**

- Is there anything left to say?
- If you were the teacher of the class and you wanted the students to feel very good in class, what would you do??
- Tell us a word about how you're leaving now.



## Annex 2.2 FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> classes

### Introduction:

- Presentation of the focus group leader(s), where they come from, who they usually work with.
- In the following, I invite you to a discussion about the environment in which you learn. I am interested in your opinion in this situation, they are important and therefore the answers are not judged as good or bad, right or wrong. Those of you here have stated that you would like to participate in this group, and we thank you for that. If at any time during the discussion you think you do not want to answer a question or want to withdraw, you can do so without any problem.
- The discussion is recorded so as not to lose sight of anything you say, so we have distributed some agreement forms for you to record.
- We will each say our opinions one by one, so as not to overlap the voices on the recording. Feel comfortable, it's just a discussion, interesting and enjoyable, I hope.

### Warm-up questions

1. For starters, I would like to introduce you to the name you want to use in the group, what class you are in and how many years you have been a student at this school. Then pass the baton to a classmate you know, saying and trusting him or her. for example. I'm Maria, I've never been to this school before, I give the relay to Ioana, whom I trust, because I know how much soul she puts into what she does.

### Questions about school

2. If you think about your school, what is the first word or the first short sentence that comes to mind. You pass the baton on, saying I'm curious what Ioana thinks, for example.
3. If a very good friend wanted to move from another school to your school, how would you introduce him to the school? Include in the presentation something you like the most at your school and something you don't like (dislike).
4. Is there something in class/school that makes you calm/happy /in good spirits? Tell us!
5. When you have to make a decision, to do something together, you are asked by the teacher what do you think about what you have to do or are going to do.
6. Can you give us an example of a decision made at the school level in which you participated? Can you tell us about the procedure?

### Classmates

7. Now, I would invite you to think about your classmates. How are your classmates?  
*The discussion could be completed in 3 rounds.*  
How do they behave during class? But during breaks? How would you like your classmates to be?

Cardboards with predefined characteristics can be prepared (good/disobedient, friendly/unfriendly, patient/impatient, happy/angry, interested/disinterested, active-passive, etc.) and blank cards, from which the children can choose and place them in the center of the table or room, or the screen, and blank cards for them to write down how their classmates are, and they can turn them upside down, and then the researcher makes them visible.

8. Some children feel that they are accepted and good friends with classmates, others claim that they are classmates who offend or hit them or who do not let them play with them. In your class, how are things? Tell us!
9. If a student at your school were to cause you trouble, it would bother you at some point, what would you do? Who would you talk to about this? Who would you ask for help from? What if he was an out-of-school student? Explain how to proceed? Would it be different if it were from your class, or if it was from another class?
10. Suppose one of your classmates is offended, hit, the other classmates laugh at him/her or he/she is not received in the play group. How do you proceed? What are you doing? What do you say? Who do you ask for help? How do you solve the problem during the break, during class, after school?

#### **Teachers**

11. I would like you to think about teachers, how are your teachers? Think of a teacher you appreciate without naming him/her. What exactly do you appreciate him/her for? What does that teacher do in class? How does he/she motivate you? How does he teach? How does he evaluate? Write on cards/stickers.
12. Suppose you are in class, and one of your classmates is offended, hit or laughed at by other classmates. Suppose the teacher is there, what do you think they are going to do? What do you think they would do? What do you think they would say? How would you solve the problem?

#### **Rules**

13. If you had problems with a teacher, how would you proceed? In every school there are rules that children follow and that they do not follow, with which they agree and with which they do not agree.
14. Do you know the rules you have to follow in class/school? Can you give us examples of rules you follow? But which of the rules do you think are usually broken in your school?

#### **Conclusion**

15. If you met a goldfish and it told you that you could change 1 thing in your class/school, what would be the thing you would change?
16. Are there any important issues left that you would like to mention?
17. How did you like the discussion here and how do you feel now before you leave?

**Completion, additional questions for students in the counseling group**

1. In the following, I will give you a list of words. Please read them carefully and choose the first 3 that suit your class: smiles, friendship, cleverness, help, love, care, noise, quarrel, beating, good manners, anger, fear, curiosity, ...  
What else would you add to this list?
2. Suppose you went to another school, what would you like to know about that school? Ask 1-2 questions that you would ask.
3. Regarding the phrase *violence in school*, what do you understand by it? What about *bullying*? But of *cyberbullying*:
  - a. Bullying means mocking/ harassing a child, or ridiculing them by humiliating names or spreading lies about them, excluding or marginalizing them, hitting, pushing, throwing lures, and so on. Have you heard of such cases? Can you give us examples? How were they resolved?
  - b. Cyberbullying means online harassment. How are things in your school regarding these issues? Have you heard of such cases? Can you give us examples? How were they resolved?
  - c. What other forms of violence exist in your school? We are also interested in violence between children and teachers and possibly other adults in the school. Can you give us some examples from your school?
  - d. What do you think should be done to avoid situations of violence?
4. What do you think about the connection between the school climate and children's desire to learn?

## Annex 2.3 FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

### Introduction:

**Presentation.** In the following, I invite you to a discussion about the environment in which you learn. We are interested in your opinions in this situation, they are important and therefore the answers are not judged as good or bad, right or wrong. The conversation is recorded so as not to lose sight of anything you say. We will each say our opinions one by one, so as not to overlap the voices on the recording. Feel comfortable, it's just a discussion, interesting and enjoyable, I hope.

1. For a start, I would like each of you to describe, in one word, the atmosphere of this school. What about your class?
2. How would you describe the relationship with your teachers?
3. I would like you to think of a teacher you appreciate, without naming him/her. What exactly do you appreciate him/her for? What does that class teacher do? How does it motivate you? How do you teach? How do you evaluate?
4. Now I would like you to think of a teacher you don't appreciate. What are the reasons why you don't appreciate him/her? How does it motivate you? How do you teach? How to evaluate?
5. How are students with learning difficulties treated in your school? But those who face integration problems? How do teachers treat them? What about classmates? Give us examples!
6. Do you know the rules you have to follow in class/school? Can you give us examples of rules you follow? But which of the rules do you think are usually broken in your school?
7. Some students claim that they have real friends among classmates, others claim that they are marginalized, teased, offended by classmates. How are things in your case? But in your class? Tell us!
8. I would like you to think about an altercation that took place between classmates. Please describe the situation and how it was resolved. How are conflicts between students usually resolved? What about those between students and teachers? Who gives you support and guidance in resolving conflicts?
9. Cyberbullying means online harassment and involves ridiculing a child by creating a profile in which false or offensive information appears, photos transformed with an offensive character, abusive and offensive use of a name (tag), mocking words, humiliating images transmitted through the internet, publishing private movies or photos without the person's consent, stealing passwords, etc. How are things in your school, in your class regarding these issues? Have you heard of such cases? Can you give us examples? How were they resolved?
10. Regarding participation in school decisions, what are the ways in which your opinions are taken into account at the school level? In what ways were you involved when a decision was made within the school, in participating in the school's decisions?
11. How do you appreciate the facilities in your school (laboratories, gym, hygienic-sanitary conditions)? What should be improved in this regard?
12. In the following, I will give you a list of features. Please read them carefully and tell us what would characterize this school: involvement, competition, cooperation, fairness, respect, justice, empathy, understanding, success, team, creativity, safety, excellence, care, involvement, fairness, lack of cooperation, lack of transparency, lack of respect, injustice,

lack of empathy, lack of understanding, disinterest, insecurity, aggression, attitude of superiority, rejection.

13. What would you add to this list?
14. What do you think are the strengths of this school?
15. What would you like to change in this school? What could be improved?
16. Suppose you went to another school, what would you like to know about that school? Ask 1-2 questions that you would ask.

## **Annex 2.4 FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

### **Introduction:**

**Presentation.** In the following, I invite you to a discussion about the environment in which you work. I am interested in your opinions, I consider them important; the answers are not judged as good or bad, right or wrong. The conversation is recorded so as not to lose sight of anything you say. Please say your opinions one at a time so as not to overlap the voices on the recording. Feel comfortable, it's just a discussion, interesting and enjoyable, I hope.

### **Questions:**

1. For starters, I would like each of you to tell us since since you have been here in school, what subject you teach, and a word to describe the atmosphere in this school.
2. When was the last time you participated in a school decision? What was it about and what was the procedure?
3. How would you describe the relationships between the teachers in this school in terms of the professional relationship? What about the human one? Give examples, describe situations you face frequently.
4. How would you describe students in general? What about your students?
5. What is the teacher-student relationship in this school based on? How would you describe this relationship?
6. If there are some altercations/conflicts between students, how do you proceed? Describe to us a situation in which an altercation took place between the students and the way in which you intervened.
7. How does the relationship with parents work? What are the good aspects and what are the difficulties in the relationship with them?
8. If you had a disagreement with a parent, how would you proceed?
9. What are the school's relations with the community (NGOs, associations, etc.)?
10. What do you think about the way decisions are made in your school? How do you contribute to the decisions that are made in this school? What would you change in this regard?
11. Some teachers say that they feel comfortable at school, that they are satisfied with what they do. Instead, others say they feel unwell when they think of school. How do you feel at school?
12. How do you appreciate the facilities in your school (laboratories, gym, hygienic-sanitary conditions)? What should be improved in this regard?
13. What are the difficulties you encounter in practicing your profession? If you face professional difficulties, from whom do you receive support?
14. What are the strengths of the school-teacher management relationship? What should be improved in the relationship between school management and teachers?
15. What do you think are the strengths of this school?
16. What would you like to change in this school? What could be improved?
17. In the following, we present a list of values. Please read them carefully and tell us which ones are specific to the school? List: Transparency, equity, solidarity, leadership, respect, justice, empathy, understanding, success, team, creativity, safety, integrity, excellence, care, support, appreciation, appreciation. Where do these values come from?  
If you were to add something to this list, what would you add?

18. Suppose you went to another school, what would you like to know about that school? Ask 1-2 questions that you would ask.
19. Would there be anything important to say that I didn't ask you about?

*Thank you for your time and interest!*

## Annex 2.5. FOCUS GROUP GRID FOR PARENTS

### Introduction:

**Presentation.** In the following, I invite you to a discussion about the environment in which your child learns and is educated. We are interested in your opinions in this situation, they are important and therefore the answers are not judged as good or bad, right or wrong. The conversation is recorded so as not to lose sight of anything you say. We will each say our opinions one by one, so as not to overlap the voices on the recording. Feel comfortable, it's just a discussion, interesting and pleasant, we hope.

1. For starters, I would like each of you to tell us a word that you associate with the school. How would you describe this school? / How would you describe the atmosphere in your child's classroom?
2. Think of a situation when you wanted to solve something about your child. How did you manage to solve it? What were the difficulties you encountered? From whom did you receive support?
3. How would you characterize communication with teachers? What are the difficulties you encounter in communicating with them? Can you give us an example? What aspects work in communicating with teachers?
4. What do you think about the teacher-student relationship? About their involvement in the educational process? What would you change?
5. If there are conflicts between teachers and students at school, how are they resolved? Who supports the students, if they need it?
6. If one of the children encounters difficulties in one or more subjects, how do the teachers proceed? Who is he supported by?
7. How would you describe the relationship with the class leader? What are the difficulties you encounter in communicating with him? Can you give us an example? What aspects work in communicating with the class leader?
8. How would you describe the relationship with the direction? What are the difficulties you encounter in communicating with them? Can you give us an example? What aspects are good in communicating with management?
9. When you have a school problem, who do you refer to? Can you present us with a situation and how exactly it was solved? Who helped you at school, how exactly?
10. What are the reasons you come to school? In your last school year, what were your reasons for coming to school? Tell us!
11. To what extent are you asked/invited to participate in school activities? Give examples of such activities in which you have participated.
12. To what extent does the opinion of parents matter in the decisions taken within the school? Please detail this. What are the ways in which parents participate in decision making?
13. What should be improved in school-parent communication?
14. All parents want their child's learning environment to be safe. From this point of view, of the safety of the child in the school environment, how would you characterize this school? What are the measures taken for the safety of children?



15. If the child is offended or hit by another classmate, if he is marginalized or labeled, if he is threatened, how to proceed? If you have had such a problem, can you tell us the situation and how it was solved? Tell us!
16. How do you appreciate the facilities in your school (laboratories, gym, hygienic-sanitary conditions)? What should be improved in this regard?
17. Mention three positive aspects that you appreciate in your relationship with the school.
18. Mention three obstacles you face in your relationship with the school.
19. In the following, we present a list of features. Please read them carefully and tell us what would characterize this school. List: Transparency, fairness, cooperation, respect, justice, empathy, understanding, success, team, creativity, safety, integrity, excellence, care, involvement, fairness, inequity, lack of cooperation, lack of transparency, lack of respect, injustice, lack of empathy, lack of understanding, disinterest, insecurity, aggression, attitude of superiority, rejection.  
Give us examples of these traits! What would you add to this list?
20. Suppose you went to another school, what would you like to know about that school? Ask 1-2 questions that you would ask.
21. Please think of a situation when you participated in a school decision. What was it referring to? How did you participate in the decision making process?

#### **Concluding questions**

22. If it was up to you, what would you improve at this school?
23. What would you add to this series of questions?
24. What suggestions do you have for improving your relationship with the school?

*Thank you for your time and interest!*

## *Annex 2.6. Information and consent form for parents*

### **REGARDING THE CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN COMPLETING THE SCHOOL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**The purpose of the consortium:** Please allow your child/children to participate in the pre-testing of an instrument(questionnaire), part of a research to be conducted in 15 schools in Romania by the consortium of organizations Terre des hommes, Save the Children Romania, SOS Children's Villages and World Vision Romania, which forms the Joining Forces Romania Alliance.

This consortium wants to find out the children's opinion about how students feel at school: the relationship between students, the collaboration between them and teachers, school safety and the learning atmosphere, and will later propose recommendations to improve the school climate.

We hereby inform you that:

- the participation of your child/children is in accordance with Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Law 272 which stipulates that every child has the right to an opinion on matters relating to his or her life. For your child/children, participating in the research activities within this project is an opportunity to express their opinion on school life;
- children under 16 need your consent to participate in the research;
- the personal data regime (GDPR) provided by the EU Regulation 679/2016 will be observed and the identity data such as the personal numerical code of the child or of the parent will not be requested;
- the information provided by participating in completing the questionnaire will be treated confidentially and anonymously;
- no filming will be done;
- the non-transmission of the refusal to the teacher will be considered as acceptance of the research and your child/children will be able to complete the questionnaire if they wish;
- children's participation will be voluntary, they will be able to participate in research if they wish and will be able to interrupt participation if they no longer want to participate, without any consequences.

If you agree with the participation of your child/children in completing the school climate questionnaire, it means that:

- you understand that the child's participation is voluntary;
- you have understood that the child's participation respects the child's right to an opinion;

If you do not agree with the child's participation in the research, please **report this to the teacher from whom you received this document and tell your child/children not to complete the questionnaire; there is no need to complete anything**, or take any other steps.

For more information on this study you can contact us at:

Contact 1: e-mail....., Tel. ....

Contact 2: e-mail....., Tel. ....

Gratefully,

*Joining Forces Romania Alliance and the research team.*



**PARENTS' AGREEMENT**  
**for students' participation in the School Climate**  
**research project**

Dear parents,

**INFORMATION**

We are a group of non-governmental organizations in Romania (Terre des hommes Foundation, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages and World Vision) that aim to know and improve the climate in the schools where your child/children study.

We want to find out the opinion of the child/children about their relationship with classmates, teachers and safety in the school.

**AGREEMENT**

Please allow your son/daughter to complete a questionnaire that takes approx. 30 minutes and then participate in a group discussion with other students.

The activity does not involve any risk for your son/daughter, the name of the child/children will not be written on the questionnaire. Participation in the study is voluntary for the child/children, each student can withdraw at any time, without being sanctioned in any way.

**YES, I agree** for my son/daughter to participate in this research project.

**I do NOT agree** for my son/daughter to participate in this research project.

Parent signature:.....

Date .....

If you have any questions, please contact us:

Phone

The name of the researcher

**Thank you!**

## *Annex 2.7 Consent sheet for students who participated in focus groups*

### **INFORMATION SHEET AND AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN CHILDREN'S CONSULTATION GROUP FOR THE SCHOOL CLIMATE ASSESSMENT**

#### **A. INFORMATION SHEET**

We invite you to be part of the Children's Consultation Group, which takes place within the Joining Forces initiative "Assessment of the school climate". Together with other children you will be invited to participate in ... the meetings of this group.

#### ***Frequency of meetings***

The meetings will take place during ..., once or twice a month.

Your participation in this activity gives you the opportunity to express your opinion about the school climate: the relationship between students, the relationship between students and teachers, school safety and the learning atmosphere. Subsequently, your group will make recommendations to improve the school climate.

Your opinion is very important for our consortium of four organizations in Romania: Terre des hommes, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages and World Vision, which forms the Joining Forces Romania Alliance. This consortium wants to know the opinion of children, teachers and parents about how students feel at school:

#### ***Your responsibilities***

The project provides for several consultation meetings for:

- supporting the research team by participating in online or offline discussions, depending on the pandemic situation, on the topic of approaching the school climate issue;
- participation in the elaboration of research tools and the way of working with them;
- participation in meetings in which the conclusions of the research will be discussed and action plans for the improvement of the school climate will be elaborated; contribution with ideas to the realization of action plans, projects, guides for students and teachers with information on how to assess the school climate, on assessment tools, with examples and recommendations for the implementation of action plans at school level.

As it is very important for us to make sure that you really want to attend these meetings, we have developed this document, entitled "Participation Agreement", which is addressed directly to you.

#### ***What we intend:***

- Listen and respect your opinions, ideas and experience;
- Listen and respect the opinions, ideas and experience of others;
- Respect each of the people participating in the discussion, from all points of view;
- Give the possibility of an active participation to everyone;
- Organize the meetings so that they are interesting and the participants can enjoy the experience offered by these meetings and consultations.

***What can you expect?***

- To be respected as a person;
- Your ideas, opinions, experiences will be listened to and respected;
- Your beliefs and culture be accepted;
- To be supported to participate;
- Have a great time with the other children during the consultations and other activities of the project .

***We ask you to:***

- Accept that some people at the consultations will have different ideas and thoughts. Some of these beliefs will be different from yours. It is important to accept the differences, as they make us unique;
- Take the floor and actively participate, share your ideas, opinions and experiences. Please respect the right of every person to have their own ideas, even if they are different from yours;
- Accept that there are cultural differences between us and appreciate the opportunity to learn about other cultures through this project;
- We invite you to take an active role during the consultation and to meet other people, their culture and hopefully make friends with other children.

It is very important for us, that each participant feels safe, that there is no feeling of discomfort. Please always be sensitive to the feelings of others.

***To feel comfortable, it is not fair or acceptable as an adult or child:***

- To touch you if you don't want to, or to hit you in some way;
- To irritate or offend you;
- To ignore what you said, including not answering questions or requests;
- To insult you or make you feel bad or ashamed;
- Treat one child or group of children better (or worse) than others - everyone should be treated equally;
- To refuse to believe what you say or to appreciate that you are not telling the truth;
- Try to make you say things you don't want to say;
- To try to get you to do things you don't want to do;
- To force yourself or try to persuade you to do things you shouldn't do.

***If you feel uncomfortable, if you do not feel respected or if you do not feel safe, you are fully entitled to seek the help of an adult, responsible for the protection of the child.***

This person responsible for the safety and protection of the child is available at any time, day or night, to advise you. He will listen to whatever you want to say to him and will not tell anyone else what you told him without your permission.

Researcher/coordinator/advisor ..... **Contacts:** .....

This adult will do this to make sure that the person you complained about will change their behavior. If you are in real danger, that person could, in order to protect you, describe to another person the situation you are going through, but only after they would talk to you. You can complain to this adult about a situation you are experiencing or about something that happened to another child.

**Emergency situations**

In case of any emergency, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.  
In addition, the relevant emergency authority will be contacted.

**Medical emergency**

In the event of a medical emergency, urgent medical help must be provided. The health and safety of children are always the most important and all measures to ensure them must be taken. The organizers of the consultative meetings are asked to always keep the copies with them according to the agreements signed by the children.

**B. STUDENT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT:**

The undersigned, student(name, in capital letters)

....., age .....  
of the school....., class.....

I have read, understood and agree with everything written in this document regarding my agreement to voluntarily participate in these activities.

I understand that if I do not comply with this agreement, I will not be able to continue to participate in the Group's activities.

I understood that if I do not want to participate in these meetings, I will be able to do it at any time, informing the group in advance.

Signature:

Date:

### **Annex 3.1 Questionnaire applied to the primary education cycle**

#### **SCHOOL CLIMATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

(3rd and 4th grades)

#### **STUDY INFORMATION**

Dear student,

#### **Who are we?**

We are a team of researchers who want to know your opinion on how students feel at school.

#### **Purpose:**

we want to find out what the problems are in your school, in the relationship between you and the other students and the relationship with the teachers. We want to make suggestions about how you want the school to be so that you feel better when you learn.

#### **Progress:**

The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes.

All answers are important to us, there are no right or wrong answers.

You don't have to give your name. No one will know who is completing the questionnaire. Only researchers will see your answers.

#### **Participation agreement:**

We would be happy if you would agree to work with us, but if you do not want to respond, you do not have to. You can withdraw from completing the questionnaire at any time. If you don't want to answer a question, you can skip it.

Please check and check if your parents/guardians have given your consent for you to complete the questionnaire.

Then tick if you agree to participate in this study.

*Thank you!*

#### **\* Your parents/tutors agree that you complete the questionnaire?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

#### **PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT**

#### **\* Do you agree to complete the questionnaire?**

- ☐ I agree to complete the questionnaire
- ☐ I do not want to fill in the questionnaire (if you tick this field you do not need to fill in the questionnaire)

#### **Choose your school from the list below:**

- ☐ Amărăștii de Jos Theoretical High School, Dolj County
- ☐ "Constantin Filipescu" Technological High School, Caracal, Olt County
- ☐ Polovragi Gymnasium School No. 1, Gorj County
- ☐ Cămărașu Secondary School, Cluj County
- ☐ "Dimitrie Brandza" Gymnasium School Viișoara, Botoșani County
- ☐ Unirea Gymnasium School No.1, Călărași County
- ☐ Viștea de Jos Secondary School, Brașov County
- ☐ Gymnasium School 181 Sector 1, Bucharest
- ☐ "Grigore Tăbăcaru" School, Hemeiș, Bacău County
- ☐ Chirpăr Secondary School, Sibiu County
- ☐ 13th Secondary School, Sector 1, Bucharest
- ☐ Târlisua Vocational School, Bistrița Năsăud County
- ☐ "Radu Negru" National College Făgăraș, Brașov County



- ✓ "Grigore Ghica Voievod" Gymnasium School, Suceava County
- ✓ Another school. Please mention the name of the school, the town and the county.

**You live in the locality:**

**\* I'm in:**

3rd grade

4th grade

**\* I am:**

Boy

Girl

## **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. Do you agree with the sentences below?**

	<b>Usually, not</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Usually, yes</b>
I think school is fun.			
I like school.			
I like the things we learn in school.			
I'm curious to know what else we'll learn in school.			

### **2. Do the following things happen in your school...?**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>
Students participate in the election of the class leader.			
Some classes are based on students' suggestions.			
The teacher asks us what homework to give us.			

### **3. Do you agree with the sentences below?**

	<b>Usually, not</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Usually, yes</b>
I look forward to seeing my classmates at school.			
When I go to school, I have fun with my classmates.			
When school is online, I miss my schoolmates.			

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TEACHER\***

### **4. Do you agree with the sentences below?**

	<b>Usually, not</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Usually, yes</b>
I get along well with the teacher.			
The teacher encourages me to talk online (on the platform, tablet, phone).			
When I do a good job, the teacher makes me feel good.			
When I raise my hand or announce myself at the online school, the teacher listens to me.			
The teacher is interested in my work.			
When I don't understand something, the teacher helps me to understand, he/she explains to me.			
The teacher encourages me to learn.			
The teacher knows what my life at home is like.			

**5. Are the following things happening in your class?**

	Never	Sometimes	Often
It happens that the teacher argues with us.			
It happens that the teacher offends us.			
It happens that the teacher is nervous when he has to explain to us again.			
It happens that the teacher shames us in front of the other classmates.			
It happens that the teacher screams in class.			
It happens to me to be afraid of a teacher.			
It happens that the teacher hits us.			

**RELATIONSHIP WITH CLASSMATES**

**6. Regarding the relationship with your classmates, do you agree with the sentences below?**

	Usually, not	Sometimes	Usually, yes
When I'm upset, my classmates help me, support me.			
When I'm with classmates, they listen to me when I have something to say.			
Classmates are happy when something good happens to me.			
My classmates defend me when I need to.			
My classmates encourage me when I get confused during online classes.			

**7. How often does each of the following things happen to you?**

	Never	Sometimes	Often
Classmates "pick on" me, they tease me.			
The other classmates make fun of me on the phone/on the internet during online classes.			
The other classmates refuse, avoid playing with me.			
Classmates refuse, avoid talking to me on the phone/tablet or computer.			
Classmates laugh at me.			
I received malicious messages, calls, or pictures from classmates on my phone, computer, or tablet.			
I prefer to play alone than with other classmates.			

**8. Are the following things happening in your school?**

	Never	Sometimes	Often
My classmates are fighting among themselves.			
Some of my classmates hit the weakest.			
Some of my classmates upset others when during our online classes.			
My classmates are indifferent to how others feel.			
My classmates are lying.			

**RELATIONSHIP WITH CLASSMATES (II)9. Do you agree with the sentences below?**

	Usually, not	Sometimes	Usually, yes
We classmates help each other.			
My classmates listen to the teachers.			
My classmates follow the rules imposed during the pandemic.			

**10. During this period, do you agree with the sentences below?**

	Usually, not	Sometimes	Usually, yes
I feel like I'm part of my class.			
It is always clear to me what my homework is for school.			
I am always present in class.			
It is clear to me how I will receive the grades this semester.			

**ONLINE SCHOOL (FROM HOME)****11. Do you agree with the sentences below?**

	Usually, not	Sometimes	Usually, yes
It's hard to learn with your computer, phone or tablet.			
I manage to upload/download homework for the online school.			
I feel better when I learn at school than when I learn from home.			
At home it's hard for me to focus on learning.			
One of my parents or someone else in the household helps me with homework or online school.			
I'm upset I can't go to school.			
I am scared of the COVID-19 virus.			

**12. Which of the following sentences suits you?**

	Yes	No
At home there is a computer, phone or tablet, with internet connection, which I can use in lessons.		
I have my personal device (computer, tablet or phone) that I can use for online school.		
I have a TV at home.		
I have my personal room at home.		
I have good clothes to go to school.		
We have a family car.		

**13. What changes would you like in your school so that you can enjoy learning?**

--

**Thank you very much for participating in completing the questionnaire!**

For more information about this study you can ask your teacher.

*The research team!*

### Annex 3.2 Socio-educational risk indicators of the schools in the project

Name of the school	Total number of students 2018-2019	Risk of Abandonment, Repetead years, Expulsion, Unfinished Situation (%) 2018-19	Total Students enrolled in the National Assessment 2018-2019	% Students that are not enrolled in the National Assessment 2018-2019	Average in the National Evaluation 2018-2019	Degree of UAT Marginali zation	IRSE AVERAGE 2015-2019
Amărăștii de Jos Theoretical High School, Dolj County	490	4%	47	8%	4.09	3	3.13
Polovragi Gymnasium School No. 1, Gorj County	202	11%	29	0%	5.75	3	2.71
Cămărașu Secondary School, Cluj County	289	11%	12	37%	5.7	3	5.97
Coțofenii din Dos Gymnasium School, Dolj County	152	2%	14	26%	5.72	0	2.86
"Dimitrie Brandza" Gymnasium School Viișoara, Botoșani County	133	2%	22	0%	5.93	3	3.59
Unirea Gymnasium School No.1, Călărași County	156	4%	10	38%	5	0	3.16
Viștea de Jos Secondary School, Brașov County	149	18%	12	0%	4.58	0	5.53
181 Secondary School, sector 1, Bucharest	362	2%	36	0%	4.64	1	2.74
"Grigore Ghica Voievod" Gymnasium School Suceava	253	2%	28	18%	6.33	1	2.62
"Grigore Tăbăcaru" School, Hemeiș, Bacău County	318	3%	21	34%	6.08	0	2.78
Chirpăr Secondary School, Sibiu County	142	10%	13	7%	2.34	2	6.4

Source: Human Catalyst, <https://hartairse.humancatalyst.ro/storage/app/public/docs/ierarhia.pdf>, accessed at 12.01.2021

#### **Annex 4.1. Questionnaire applied to the gymnasium education cycle**

##### **SCHOOL CLIMATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

##### **(GYMNASIUM)**

##### **STUDY INFORMATION**

Dear student,

Who are we?

We are a team of researchers who want to know your opinion on how students feel at school.

Purpose:

we want to find out what the problems are in your school, in the relationship between you and the other students and the relationship with the teachers. We want to make suggestions about how you want the school to be so that you feel better when you learn.

Progress:

The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes.

All answers are important to us, there are no right or wrong answers.

You don't have to give your name. No one will know who is completing the questionnaire. Only researchers will see your answers.

Participation agreement:

We would be happy if you would agree to work with us, but if you do not want to respond, you do not have to.

You can withdraw from completing the questionnaire at any time. If you don't want to answer a question, you can skip it.

Please check and check if your parents/guardians have given your consent for you to complete the questionnaire.

Then tick if you agree to participate in this study.

*Thank you!*

##### **\* Your parents/tutors agree that you complete the questionnaire?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

##### **PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT**

##### **\* Do you agree to complete the questionnaire?**

- ☐ I agree to complete the questionnaire
- ☐ I do not want to fill in the questionnaire (if you tick this field you do not need to fill in the questionnaire)

##### **Choose your school from the list below:**

- ☐ Amărăștii de Jos Theoretical High School, Dolj County
- ☐ "Constantin Filipescu" Technological High School, Caracal, Olt County
- ☐ Polovragi Gymnasium School No. 1, Gorj County
- ☐ Cărnărașu Secondary School, Cluj County
- ☐ "Dimitrie Brandza" Gymnasium School Vișoara, Botoșani County
- ☐ Unirea Gymnasium School No.1, Călărași County
- ☐ Viștea de Jos Secondary School, Brașov County
- ☐ Gymnasium School 181 Sector 1, Bucharest
- ☐ "Grigore Tăbăcaru" School, Hemeiș, Bacău County
- ☐ Chirpăr Secondary School, Sibiu County
- ☐ 13th Secondary School, Sector 1, Bucharest

- ✓ Târlisua Vocational School, Bistrița Năsăud County
- ✓ "Radu Negru" National College Făgăraș, Brașov County
- ✓ "Grigore Ghica Voievod" Gymnasium School, Suceava County
- ✓ Another school. Please mention the name of the school, the town and the county.

**You live in the locality:**

\* I'm in:

5th grade

6th grade

7th grade

8th grade

\* I am:

Boy

Girl

## SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

### 1. How much do the following statements suit you?

	Not at all	Little	Much
I like school.			
I get along well with the other students at this school.			
I get along well with the teachers at this school.			
I am satisfied with the information/knowledge I receive in this school.			
I feel like I'm part of this school.			
Teachers are interested in each student succeeding.			

### 2. To what extent do the following things happen in your school...?

	Not at all	Little	Much
Students are involved in discussing class/school issues with the teacher or other teachers.			
Students are involved in choosing the class leader.			
Some classes are based on students' suggestions.			
Parents are involved in school life.			

### 3A. In the case of the online school, how much do the statements below suit you?

	Not at all	Little	Much
I am always present at online classes.			
I can focus on learning.			
I am aware of how I will be graded this year.			
I am motivated to learn.			
I think online school can help me grow.			

**3B. In the case of the online school, do you agree with the statements below?**

	Usually, not	Sometimes	Usually, yes
It's hard to learn with your computer, phone or tablet.			
I manage to upload/download homework for the online school.			
I feel better when I learn at school than when I learn from home.			
At home it's hard for me to focus on learning.			
One of my parents or someone else in the household helps me with homework or online school.			
I am scared of the COVID-19 virus.			

**RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS****4A. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your teachers?**

	Not at all	Little	Much
The teachers explain the homework and tasks they give us.			
The homework I received really helps me learn.			
Teachers ask us questions that make me think.			
If we need extra help with lessons, the teachers are ready to help us.			

**4B. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your teachers?**

	Not at all	Little	Much
My teachers listen to what I have to say.			
My teachers care if I attend classes or not.			
I get a lot of encouragement from my teachers.			
I am respected and appreciated by my teachers.			
My homeroom teacher cares about the grades I get.			
Teachers care about my life outside of school.			

**5. How often do the following things happen in your school?**

	Never	Sometimes	Often
The teachers scold us.			
Teachers offend us.			
There are quarrels/conflicts between teachers and students.			
It happens that teachers humiliate us in front of the class.			
It happens that teachers scream in class.			
I'm afraid of some teachers.			
It happens that teachers hit us.			

**6. Teachers prefer more:**

	Usually, not	Sometimes	Usually, yes
Girls			

Boys			
Good and disciplined students who do not create problems			
Students who come from wealthy families			
Students who usually have good grades			
On students in certain classes, compared to those in other classes			
Urban students			
Romanian students compared to those of other ethnicities			
Appreciate/benefit other categories of students (please mention):			

## RELATIONSHIP WITH CLASSMATES

### 7. How much do the following statements suit you?

	Not at all	Little	Much
I get along well with my classmates.			
Some of my classmates are true friends of mine.			
I respect my classmates.			
We are a united class.			
If I have a personal problem, I can discuss it with some of my classmates without hesitation.			
For the projects that are required of us at school, I like to work in a team.			
If I don't understand something during class, some classmates offer me their help.			

### 8. How often are the following situations found in your school?

	Never	Sometimes	Often
Students who make jokes about others.			
Students who tease/"pick on" other students.			
Conflicts between groups of students.			
Fights between students.			
Destroying things in school.			
Alcohol consumption among students.			
Students who smoke.			
Students who use drugs (including ethnobotanicals).			
Students carrying weapons (including knife).			
Students who group into gangs/groups and who harass/assault others.			
Students who verbally assault teachers.			
Students who physically assault teachers.			

### 9. Thinking about your school, usually where harassment, aggression between children take place? (you can select multiple answers)

- On the playground/sports field;
- On the hallways/stairwell inside the school;
- In the classroom (when the teacher is in class);
- In the classroom (when the teacher is not in the classroom);



In the school toilet/toilets;  
In the gym;  
In the locker room of the gym;  
On the way to school or home;  
In the means of transport station (bus, trolleybus, minibus, tram, subway);  
In the means of transport with which I travel to/from school;  
In the schoolyard;  
Around the school;  
In other places. In this case, mention where exactly:

--

**\* 10. In your relationship with your classmates in recent months, have you gone through one or more of the following situations? (you can select multiple answers)**

They nicknamed me, laughed at me or teased me annoyingly;  
Other classmates intentionally took me out of their group of friends;  
I was suddenly, hit, pushed or locked in closed spaces;  
Other classmates told lies or spread false rumors about me so that others would not like me;  
My money was taken or my personal belongings destroyed;  
I was threatened/forced to do things I didn't want to do;  
I was assaulted with nicknames and mischievous comments about my ethnicity or skin color;  
I have been assaulted with malicious messages, calls or images or in other ways on the phone or the internet;  
None of the above.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH CLASSMATES (II)**

*11. The situations you selected in the previous question (nicknames, teasing, malicious comments, hitting, threatening, etc.) are examples of harassment or aggression.*

**Have you been harassed/assaulted by boys or girls in recent months?**

Especially by a boy;  
A few boys;  
Especially a girl;  
A few girls;  
Both by the girls and by the boys.

**12. In what class is the student/are the students who harassed/assaulted you? (you can select multiple answers)**

In my class;  
In a different class, but in the same year of study as me;  
In a larger class;  
In a smaller class;  
Someone outside of school;  
I do not know.

**13. Who did you ask for help when you were harassed or assaulted by other students? (you can select multiple answers)**

I didn't ask for help;

The homeroom teacher;  
 To the school counselor or a teacher appointed for such situations;  
 The principal or the person with the highest position present in the school;  
 To an adult in school (a teacher, or another adult in school);  
 To your parents/tutors;  
 Your brothers and/or sisters;  
 Someone from the extended family;  
 To your friends;  
 I called the Child Helpline;  
 Police;  
 To a journalist from the press or TV;  
 To another. In this case write to whom:

--

#### INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

**14. Usually, who intervenes in the case of an aggression by a student, which takes place in school? (you can select multiple answers)**

Such things do not happen in school;  
 Nobody intervenes;  
 Parents or someone in the family contacts the school;  
 The homeroom teacher;  
 The principal of the school;  
 The service teacher;  
 A teacher appointed for such situations;  
 Other teachers;  
 School counselor/psychologist;  
 The guard;  
 Some students;  
 I do not know;  
 Someone else. Who exactly?

--

**15. In general, what do you do when you witness a conflict at school? (you can select multiple answers)**

I don't care what happens;  
 Announce the on-duty teacher/nearest teacher;  
 I announce the direction of the school;  
 I announce the staff hired to guard the school;  
 I intervene to separate those involved in the conflict;  
 I intervene on the side of the weakest to defend him;  
 If he is right, I intervene on the side of the strongest;  
 I'm not intervening because I'm scared;  
 I have fun looking at those in conflict;  
 I did not witness a conflict at school.

**16. If an adult in your high school (teacher, support staff, etc.) hurts you, who would you most likely ask for help? (you can select multiple answers)**

I wouldn't ask for help;  
 Parents or caregivers;  
 Friend(s);

The homeroom teacher;  
 Director;  
 To another teacher at the school;  
 The school counselor;  
 To another adult from an extracurricular activity I attend (sports, music, a circle or club, etc.);  
 To a non-governmental organization;  
 I would call the Child Helpline;  
 I would call the Directorate of Social Assistance/Child Protection;  
 The police;  
 To a journalist from the press or TV;  
 I do not know;  
 Someone else, namely:

--

**17. How well do each of the following sentences describe you?**

	Not at all	Little	Much
When the school is closed, I miss some teachers.			
When school is closed, I miss my classmates			
When school is closed, I miss everything about school.			
I am attached to my school.			

**19. Which of the following statements suits you?**

	Yes	No
At home there is a computer, phone or tablet, with internet connection, which I can use in lessons.		
I have my personal device (computer, tablet or phone) that I can use for online school.		
I have a TV at home.		
I have my personal room at home.		
I have good clothes to go to school.		
We have a family car.		

**20. What changes would you like in your school?**

--

**Thank you very much for participating in completing the questionnaire!**

*The results of the research will be transmitted to the students for discussion as soon as the data are centralized.  
 Until then, you can contact the teacher for more information about this study.*

The research team

#### Annex 4.2. Differences between middle school classes on scale values

School climate dimension	Study class level	M	DS	Comparisons with the 5th grade t(df)	Comparisons with the 6th grade t(df)	Comparisons with the 7th grade t(df)
School satisfaction	5th grade	2.87	0.26			
	6th grade	2.80	0.29	2.219 (364,356); p<0.05		
	7th grade	2.73	0.35	4.467 (4010,014); p<0.001	-2.442 (495,688); p<0.05	
	8th grade	2.80	0.27	20.010 (276,938); p<0.05	-0.002 (366)	-2.225 (331, 828); p<0.05
School involvement	5th grade	2.51	0.38			
	6th grade	2.43	0.39	1.983 (388); p<0.05		
	7th grade	2.46	0.38	1.501 (416)	0.619 (492)	
	8th grade	2.48	0.35	0.675 (286)	-1.258 (296,529)	-0.719 (390)
Online school	5th grade	2.65	0.29			
	6th grade	2.58	0.32	2.136 (387); p<0.05		
	7th grade	2.47	0.40	4.675 (416); p<0.001	-3.149 (491, 459); p<0.01	
	8th grade	2.47	0.40	4.346 (284); p<0.001	2.660 (2250, 052); p<0.01	0.169 (392)
Difficulties with online school	5th grade	1.94	0.38			
	6th grade	1.95	0.39	-0.223 (387)		
	7th grade	1.91	0.42	0.663 (415)	-0.990 (496)	
	8th grade	1.96	0.36	-0.418 (283)	-0.227 (364)	-10.063 (392)
Academic support from teachers	5th grade	2.77	0.29			
	6th grade	2.69	0.38	20.097 (366,850); p<0.05		
	7th grade	2.61	0.40	4.154 (397)	-2.303 (471); p<0.05	
	8th grade	2.68	0.40	20.012 (219,444); p<0.05	0.299 (346)	-1.601 (371)
Teacher support	5th grade	2.77	0.53			
	6th grade	2.60	0.36	3.634 (373); p<0.001		
	7th grade	2.60	0.40	3.736 (396); p<0.001	-0.203 (469)	
	8th grade	2.61	0.35	2.935 (273); p<0.05	-0.117 (346)	-0.282 (369)
Conflicts with teachers	5th grade	1.34	0.40			
	6th grade	1.45	0.41	-2.450 (372); p<0.05		
	7th grade	1.48	0.42	-3.137 (397); p<0.01	0.753 (469)	
	8th grade	1.38	0.26	-0.981 (273)	1.758 (337,589)	2.59(351,382); p<0.01
Equal opportunities	5th grade	1.52	0.51			
	6th grade	1.54	0.44	-0.490 (360)		
	7th grade	1.54	0.44	-0.407 (387)	-0.118 (451)	
	8th grade	1.57	0.41	-0.844 (268,901)	-0.453 (333)	-0.569 (360)
Problematic behaviors (safety)	5th grade	1.27	0.31			
	6th grade	1.33	0.29	-20.032 (340); p<0.05		
	7th grade	1.41	0.35	-3.905 (379); p<0.001	2.419 (440,720)	
	8th grade	1.41	0.30	-3.675 (253); p<0.001	-2.196 (315); p<0.05	-0.045 (354)
Attachment to school	5th grade	2.62	0.49			
	6th grade	2.52	0.50	1.767 (316)		
	7th grade	2.42	0.55	3.423 (2730.09); p<0.01	-1.885 (417,767)	
	8th grade	2.44	0.52	2.597 (223); p<0.05	1.206 (299)	-0.350 (325)
Relationship with classmates	5th grade	2.66	0.39			
	6th grade	2.64	0.38	0.362 (343)		
	7th grade	2.58	0.44	1.692 (321.404)	-1.490 (444,747)	
	8th grade	2.53	0.42	2.441 (254); p<0.05	2.348 (319); p<0.05	10.024 (356)

## **Annex 5.1 Questionnaire applied to the high school education cycle**

### **SCHOOL CLIMATE (HIGH SCHOOL) QUESTIONNAIRE STUDY INFORMATION**

#### **Dear student,**

We are a team of organizations and researchers who want to know your opinion on how students feel at school: the relationship between students, the collaboration between students and teachers, school safety and the learning atmosphere.

The questionnaire will take about 15-30 minutes.

All answers are important to us, there are no right or wrong answers.

#### **Privacy**

No one will know who is completing the questionnaire, you do not have to enter your name. Only the research team will see your answers, and the analyzes are done without anyone knowing your name and that of your classmates.

#### **Participation agreement**

We have informed teachers and parents about the invitation to you and your classmates to complete the questionnaire. We would be glad if you would agree to cooperate with us. But if you don't want to answer, you don't have to. If you are under 16, please talk to your parents/guardians before answering questions.

Please try to answer all the questions in the questionnaire. If you do not want to answer a question, or you do not know how to answer it, you can skip it and you can also withdraw at any time from completing the questionnaire.

Please check below if your parents/guardians have given their consent and then if you agree to participate in this study.

#### **Thank you!**

#### **\* Do your parents/tutors agree for you to complete the questionnaire?**

I am already 16 years old (no need to talk to your parents/tutors)

Yes

No

#### **PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT**

#### **\* Do you agree to complete the questionnaire?**

I agree to complete the questionnaire

I do not want to fill in the questionnaire (if you tick this field you do not need to fill in the questionnaire)

#### **The first questions are about you and your school.**

\* Select your high school from the list below:

Amărăștii de Jos Theoretical High School, Dolj County

"Constantin Filipescu" Technological High School, Caracal, Olt County

"Nicolae Iorga" Technological High School, Negrești, Vaslui County

Târlîșua Vocational School, Bistrița Năsăud County

"Radu Negru" National College Făgăraș, Brașov County

"Ciprian Porumbescu" National College of Art, Suceava County

Another high school. Please mention the name of the high school, the town and the county.

#### **You live in the locality:**

**\* I am in:**

9th grade

10th grade

11th grade

12th grade

**\* Gender:**

Boy

Girl

Another gender

## **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. How much do the following statements suit you?**

	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Much</b>
I like going to this high school.			
I get along well with the other students at this high school.			
I get along well with the teachers at this high school.			
I am satisfied with the information/knowledge I receive in this high school.			
This high school represents me.			

### **2. How well do the following statements fit your school?**

	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Much</b>
Everyone feels welcome in this high school.			
A newcomer to this school is helped to adapt.			
Parents are involved in school life.			
Teachers consider all students to be equally important(without favoritism).			
Teachers are interested in each student succeeding.			
Teachers work well together.			
I feel like I'm integrated into this high school.			

### **3. To what extent do the following things happen in your high school...?**

	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Much</b>
Students are involved in choosing the class leader.			
Students are involved in the election of the student council.			
Some classes are based on students' suggestions.			
Students are consulted in choosing the electives.			
Anything else (Please mention):			

### **4. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements about your high school?**

	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Much</b>
The interests of the students come first in this school.			
The success of every student is important in this school.			
Students receive a good education (solid knowledge) in this school.			
The teachers in this school care about the students' results.			
Teachers give grades based on students' knowledge.			
The principal of this high school cares about the students.			

**5A. In the case of the online school, how much do the statements below suit you?**

	Not at all	Little	Much
I am always present at online classes.			
I can focus on learning.			
I am aware of how I will be graded this year.			
I am motivated to learn.			
I think online school can help me grow.			
Teachers make an effort to understand what our life outside of school is like.			
If we need extra help with lessons, the teachers are ready to help us.			

**5B. In the case of the online school, do you agree with the statements below?**

	Usually, yes	Sometimes	Usually, not
It's hard to learn with your computer, phone or tablet.			
I manage to upload/download homework for the online school.			
I feel better when I learn at school than when I learn from home.			
At home it's hard for me to focus on learning.			
I am scared of the COVID-19 virus.			

**RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS**

**6. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your teachers?**

	Not at all	Little	Much
My teachers listen to what I have to say.			
My teachers care if they come to school or not.			
I get a lot of encouragement from my teachers.			
Teachers give me homework that makes me think.			
Teachers know me, I know my qualities.			
Teachers praise my efforts when I work hard.			
Teachers give me tips/ideas to improve my school performance.			
My homeroom teacher cares about the grades I get.			

**7. How often do the following things happen in your high school?**

	Never	Sometimes	Often
There are quarrels/conflicts between teachers and students.			
The teachers scold us.			
Teachers offend us.			
It happens that teachers humiliate us in front of the class.			
It happens that teachers scream in class.			
It happens that teachers hit us.			
I'm afraid of some teachers.			

**8. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

	Total disagreement	Disagreement	Agreement	Total agreement
Teachers manage to teach lessons that everyone can understand.				

Teachers know how to respond in cases where students have behavioral problems.				
In the case of students with behavioral problems, teachers prefer to exclude them.				
At school, students are taught to respect people from different backgrounds and cultures.				
Every effort is made to stop violence (including bullying) between students.				
Students have a clear picture of the lessons and the structure of the learning process.				
During class, teachers encourage students to help each other.				
Homework supports learning and is properly explained.				
The school organizes interesting activities outside the lessons.				

**9. There are more favored by teachers:**

	Usually YES	Sometimes	Usually NOT
Girls			
Boys			
Good and disciplined students who do not create problems			
Students who come from wealthy families			
Students who usually have good grades			
Students in certain classes, compared to those in other classes			
Urban students			
Romanian students compared to those of other ethnicities			
Appreciate other categories of students (please mention):			

**RELATIONSHIP WITH CLASSMATES**

**10. How much do the following statements suit you?**

	Not at all	Little	Much
I get along well with my classmates.			
Some of my classmates are true friends of mine.			
There is mutual respect between us, classmates.			
If I have a personal problem, I can discuss it with some of my classmates without hesitation.			
I hope to remain friends with some of my classmates in the future.			
We are a united class.			
For the projects that are required of us at school, I like to work in a team.			
If I don't understand something in class, there are classmates who help me.			



**11. Do you have classmates who are in the following situations?**

	Not at all	Little	Much
I have classmates who have problems with the police.			
I have classmates who take drugs/consume ethnobotanicals.			
I have classmates who are members of a gang/group that harass/assault others.			
I have classmates who drink alcohol.			
I have classmates who smoke.			
I have classmates who skip classes.			
I have classmates who have low grades in school.			
I have classmates who get into trouble at school.			
I have classmates who probably won't take the Baccalaureate.			
Other problematic behaviors in your school (please mention):			

**12. How often are the following situations found in your high school?**

	Never	Sometimes	Often
Students who make jokes about others.			
Students who tease/"pick on" other students.			
Students carrying a weapon (including a knife).			
Conflicts between groups of students.			
Fights between students.			
Destroying things in high school.			
Students who use drugs (including ethnobotanicals).			
Students who group into gangs/groups and who harass/assault others.			
Students who verbally assault teachers.			
Students who physically assault teachers.			
Teachers who verbally assault students.			
Teachers who physically assault students.			
Auxiliary staff (maid, porter, administrator, guard, etc.) who verbally assault students.			

**13. Usually, where do harassment/aggression take place between students?**

On the playground/sports field;

On the hallways/stairwell inside the school;

In the classroom (when the teacher is in class);

In the classroom (when the teacher is not in the classroom);

In the school toilet/sanitary groups;

In the gym;

In the locker room of the gym;

On the way to school or home;

In the transport station (bus, trolleybus, minibus, tram, subway, etc.);

In the means of transport with which I travel to/from school;

In the high schoolyard;

Near high school;

In other places. In this case, indicate where:

--

**\* 14. In your relationship with your classmates in recent months, have you gone through one or more of the following situations? (you can select multiple answers)**

They nicknamed me, laughed at me or teased me annoyingly;

Other classmates intentionally took me out of their group of friends;

I was suddenly, hit, pushed or locked in closed spaces;

Other classmates told lies or spread false rumors about me so that others would not like me;

My money was taken or my personal belongings destroyed;

I was threatened/forced to do things I didn't want to do;

I was assaulted with nicknames and mischievous comments about my ethnicity or skin color;

I have been assaulted with malicious messages, calls or images or in other ways on the phone or the internet;

None of the above.

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH CLASSMATES (II)**

*The situations mentioned above (nicknames, teasing, malicious comments, hitting, threatening, etc.) are examples of harassment or aggression.*

**15. Have you been harassed/assaulted by boys or girls in recent months?**

Especially by a boy;

A few boys;

Especially a girl;

A few girls;

Both by the girls, and by the boys.

**16. In what class is the student/are the students who harassed/assaulted you? (you can select multiple answers)**

In my class;

In a different class, but in the same year of study as me;

In a larger class;

In a smaller class;

Someone outside of school;

I do not know.

**17. Who did you ask for help when you were harassed or assaulted by other students? (you can select multiple answers)**

I didn't ask for help;

To the homeroom teacher;

To the school counselor or a teacher appointed for such situations;

The principal or the person with the highest position present in the school;

A high school adult(a teacher, or another high school adult);

To your parents/tutors;

Your brothers and/or sisters;

Someone from the extended family;

To your friends;

I called the Child Helpline;

Police;

To a journalist from the press or TV;

To another. In this case write to whom:

--

## **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**

**18. Usually, who intervenes in the case of an aggression by a student, which takes place in school? (you can select multiple answers)**

Such things do not happen in school;  
Nobody intervenes;  
Parents or someone in the family contacts the school;  
Homeroom teacher;  
High school principal;  
The service teacher;  
A teacher appointed for such situations;  
Other teachers;  
High school counselor/psychologist;  
The guard;  
Some students;  
I do not know;  
Someone else. Who exactly?

--

**19. In general, what do you do when you witness a conflict at school? (you can select multiple answers)**

I don't care what happens;  
Announce the on-duty teacher / nearest teacher;  
Announce the school principal/direction;  
I announce the staff hired to guard the high school;  
I intervene to separate those involved in the conflict;  
I intervene on the side of the weakest to defend them;  
If he is right, I intervene on the side of the strongest;  
I'm not intervening because I'm scared;  
I have fun looking at those in conflict;  
I did not witness a conflict at school.

**20. If an adult in your high school (teacher, support staff, etc.) hurt you, who would you most likely ask for help? (you can select multiple answers)**

I wouldn't ask for help;  
Parents or caregivers;  
To your friend/friends;  
The principal of the high school;  
The homeroom teacher;  
To another teacher at the school;  
The school counselor;  
Another adult from an extracurricular activity I attend (sports, music, art, a circle or club, etc.);  
To a non-governmental organization;  
I would call the Child Helpline;  
I would call the Directorate of Social Assistance / Child Protection;  
To the police;  
To a press / TV journalist;  
I do not know;  
To someone else, namely:

--

**21. How well do each of the following sentences describe you?**

	Not at all	Little	Much
When the school is closed, I miss some teachers.			
When school is closed, I miss my classmates.			
When school is closed, I miss everything about school.			
I'm attached to my school.			

**22. To what extent are you satisfied with the following endowments in high school?**

	It doesn't exist in high school	It exists, but it does not work	It works but I'm not satisfied	I'm pretty satisfied	Very satisfied
High school library					
Cabinets (biology, history, geography)					
Laboratories (physics, chemistry, computer science)					
Gym/gyms					
Exterior grounds in the high schoolyard					
Department work equipment(interactive whiteboards, video projector, projection screen, laptop/computer, speakers)					
Classrooms with new furniture/in good condition					
Wi-Fi with free access for teachers and students					
e-Catalog – the electronic version of the classic catalog					
Closed circuit video camera system					
Green space in the schoolyard					
Psycho-pedagogical counseling office					
Medical office					
Dental office					
Sanitary facilities with ceramic wall and floor tiles and hot water in the school					
Bathroom with special cabin for people with disabilities					
Printer, photocopiers					
Other facilities:					

**23. Which of the following statements suits you?**

	Yes	No
At home there is a computer, phone or tablet, with internet connection, which I can use in lessons.		
I have my personal device (computer, tablet or phone) that I can use for online school.		
I have a TV at home.		
I have my personal room at home.		
I have good clothes to go to school.		
We have a family car.		

**24. What changes would you like in your high school?**

--

**Thank you very much for participating in completing the questionnaire!**

*The results of the research will be transmitted to the students for discussion as soon as the data are centralized.  
Until then, you can contact the homeroom teacher for more information about this study. The research team*

**Annex 5.2. Differences between boys and girls at high school questionnaire scales**

<b>School climate dimensions</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Comparisons by gender t(df)</b>
School satisfaction	Boy	2.62	0.42	t(370,541)=0.038; p=0.97
	Girl	2.62	0.37	
Inclusive culture in school	Boy	2.54	0.44	t(387,561)=0.080; p=0.93
	Girl	2.53	0.40	
Involvement of students in school life	Boy	2.41	0.48	t(355,967)=-1.271; p=0.20
	Girl	2.45	0.40	
Student-centered educational climate	Boy	2.58	0.47	t(359,635)=-2.053; p<0.05
	Girl	2.65	0.39	
Online school	Boy	2.31	0.46	t(706)=-1.410; p=0.15
	Girl	2.36	0.41	
Difficulties in online school	Boy	1.62	0.43	t(706)=1.386; p=0.16
	Girl	1.57	0.42	
Teacher support	Boy	2.44	0.51	t(644)=-0.032; p=0.97
	Girl	2.45	0.45	
Conflicts with teachers	Boy	1.48	0.38	t(642)=-0.183; p=0.85
	Girl	1.48	0.35	
Inclusive school practices	Boy	2.83	0.58	t(639)=-1.218; p=0.22
	Girl	2.89	0.50	
Equal opportunities	Boy	2.10	0.44	t(630)=-0.936; p=0.35
	Girl	2.13	0.42	
Relationship with classmates	Boy	2.56	0.45	t(603)=1.587; p=0.11
	Girl	2.50	0.45	
Problematic behaviors	Boy	1.57	0.39	t(598)=1.244; p=0.21
	Girl	1.53	0.33	
School violence	Boy	1.39	0.36	t(239,368)=2.444; p<0.05
	Girl	1.31	0.25	
School attachment	Boy	2.19	0.57	t(564)=-1.262; p=0.20
	Girl	2.25	0.57	

### Annex 5.3 Differences regarding school climate factors according to high school grades

School climate dimension	Study class level	M	SD	Comparisons with the 9th grade t(df)	Comparisons with the 10th grade t(df)	Comparisons with the 11th grade t(df)
School satisfaction	9th grade	2.71	0.35		t(373)=1.170; p=0.24	t(304,711)=2.988; p<0.05
	10th grade	2.66	0.36			
	11th grade	2.58	0.41		t(389)=-2.180; p<0.05	
	12th grade	2.54	0.40	t(320,341)=4.077; p<0.001	t(355,026)=3.282; p<0.05	t(337)=0.924; p=0.35
Inclusive culture in school	9th grade	2.64	0.36		t(374)=1.703; p=0.89	t(306)=3.660; p<0.001
	10th grade	2.57	0.39			
	11th grade	2.40	0.43		t(390)=-2.319; p<0.05	
	12th grade	2.44	0.43	t(320,842)=4.546; p<0.001	t(405)=3.192; p<0.05	t(337)=0.719; p=0.47
Involvement of students in school life	9th grade	2.45	0.43		t(369)=1.400; p=0.16	t(303)=0.686; p=0.49
	10th grade	2.38	0.44			
	11th grade	2.42	0.44		t(386)=0.679; p=0.49	
	12th grade	2.51	0.39	t(294,852)=-1.201; p=0.23	t(394,825)=-2.894; p<0.05	t(336)=-1.978; p<0.05
Student-centered educational climate	9th grade	2.74	0.36		t(370)=1.456; p=0.14	t(294,265)=4.19; p<0.001
	10th grade	2.68	0.37			
	11th grade	2.54	0.47		t(288,010)=-3.243; p=0.001	
	12th grade	2.55	0.45	t(316,691)=4.086; p<0.001	t(330,180)=3.086; p<0.05	t(334)=-0.272; p=0.78
Online school	9th grade	2.45	0.42		t(372)=1.41; p=0.15	t(303)=2.859; p=0.005
	10th grade	2.39	0.40			
	11th grade	2.31	0.44		t(389)=-1.846; p=0.06	
	12th grade	2.22	0.45	t(319)=4.639; p<0.001	t(353,446)=3.856; p<0.001	t(336)=1.798; p=0.07
Difficulties in online school	9th grade	1.66	0.46		t(372)=1.419; p=0.15	t(265,719)=1.114; p=0.26
	10th grade	1.58	0.42			
	11th grade	1.61	0.35		t(389)=0.673; p=0.50	
	12th grade	1.53	0.44	t(319)=2.584; p<0.05	t(405)=3.918; p<0.001	t(336)=1.790; p=0.07
Teacher support	9th grade	2.49	0.45		t(340)=-0.792; p=0.42	t(276)=1.898; p=0.05
	10th grade	2.53	0.42			
	11th grade	2.38	0.51		t(350)=-2.966; p<0.05	
	12th grade	2.34	0.48	t(296)=2.689; p<0.05	t(370)=3.933; p<0.001	t(306)=0.647; p=0.51
Conflicts with teachers	9th grade	1.44	0.34		t(340)=0.39; p=0.69	t(275)=-2.223; p=0.02
	10th grade	1.43	0.33			
	11th grade	1.54	0.38		t(349)=2.912; p<0.05	
	12th grade	1.53	0.37	t(295)=-2.076; p<0.05	t(369)=-2.772; p<0.05	t(304)=0.220; p=0.82;
Inclusive school practices	9th grade	2.97	0.52		t(337)=0.300; p=0.76	t(273)=2.569; p<0.05
	10th grade	2.95	0.52			
	11th grade	2.81	0.50		t(350)=-2.527; p<0.05	
	12th grade	2.72	0.54	t(291)=3.924; p<0.001	t(368)=4.089; p=0.001	t(304)=1.430; p=0.15
Equal opportunities	9th grade	2.10	0.44		t(333)=-1.732; p=0.08;	t(268)=0.396; p=0.69;
	10th grade	2.18	0.43			
	11th grade	2.08	0.43		t(345)=-2.238; p<0.05	
	12th grade	2.10	0.42	t(287)=0.067; p=0.94;	t(364)=1.946; p=0.05	t(299)=-0.355; p=0.72;
Relationship with classmates	9th grade	2.50	0.47		t(208,530)=-2.545; p=0.05	t(255)=1.114; p=0.26;
	10th grade	2.63	0.36			
	11th grade	2.43	0.50		t(222,058)=-3.850; p<0.001	
	12th grade	2.45	0.48	t(272)=0.957; p=0.33	t(266,248)=3.875; p<0.001	t(283)=-0.211; p=0.83; NS
Problematic behaviors	9th grade	1.43	0.36		t(319)=-0.792; p=0.42;	t(254)=-5.010; p<0.001
	10th grade	1.46	0.29			
	11th grade	1.66	0.37		t(235,161)=5.255; p<0.001	
	12th grade	1.66	0.33	t(271)=-5.385; p<0.001	t(281)=0.099; p=0.92	t(281)=0.099; p=0.92
School violence	9th grade	1.25	0.24		t(319)=-2.205; p<0.05	t(250)=-4.807; p<0.001
	10th grade	1.32	0.27			
	11th grade	1.43	0.33		t(327)=3.332; p<0.05	
	12th grade	1.35	0.28	t(270)=-2.973; p<0.05	t(296,737)=-5.804; p<0.001	t(278)=2.175; p<0.05
School attachment	9th grade	2.17	0.59		t(304)=-2.745; p<0.05	t(232)=-0.474; p=0.63
	10th grade	2.35	0.56			
	11th grade	2.20	0.56		t(306)=-2.283; p<0.05	
	12th grade	2.14	0.56	t(260)=0.327; p=0.74	t(334)=3.379; p<0.001	t(262)=0.852; p=0.39

### Annex 7 Examples of projects proposed by students to improve the atmosphere in their school

The students participating in the advisory groups, under the guidance of the coordinating teachers, have realized projects that have started to be, or will be implemented at the level of their school:

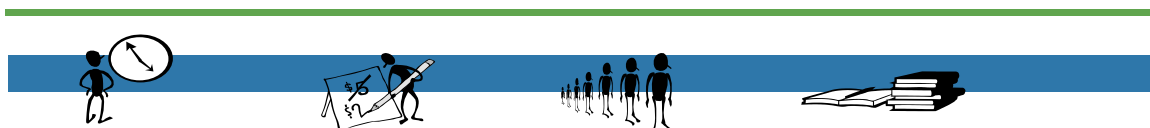
Project title	Aspects to be improved through this project	Targeted activities	Expected results
<b>Mentalness</b> Project of the students from the Technological High School "N. Iorga", Negrești, Vaslui County	Improving relationships between students Improving the student-teacher relationship	Mental-wellness No discrimination, more communication Board games session Q&A students and teachers Play and playing in nature	Improving the student-student and student-teacher relationship The percentage of well-off students should be reduced and discrimination between students should be reduced.
<b>The strength lies in the team!</b> Project of students from Cămărașu Secondary School, Cluj County	Improving relationships between students inside and outside the school. Increasing student involvement in school decision-making.	We learn to write project proposals We spend quality time together We communicate efficiently and assertively Health comes first Improving the activity and visibility of the student council at school level and the way of communicating information to students and teachers, through the school magazine, the school's Facebook page, the school's website.	To communicate more efficiently / assertively with classmates, but also with teachers; Adequate management of emotions by students. To develop skills to organize group activities; To feel part of a group.
<b>Debate club</b> Project of the students from the "Radu Negru" National College, Făgăraș	Improving students' confidence in the ability to express appropriate opinions in front of teachers. Improving relationships between students and between students and teachers.	Regular debates on various topics proposed by students.	Improving students' argumentation skills Development of assertive communication skills
<b>United through sport!</b> Project of the students from the "Radu Negru" National College, Făgăraș	Improving the well-being of students, but also improving relationships between students in the school through mutual knowledge in mixed teams.	Organizing sports competitions in which teams of students from different classes participate.	Getting to know the students of the school in a pleasant and organized environment. Improving relationships



	Reducing conflicts between students in different classes.		between students. Developing team spirit. Emotion management. Increasing student resilience.
<b>Story pages</b> Project of the students from the “Radu Negru” National College, Făgăraș <b>and</b> <b>Journey into the world of books</b> Project realized by the students from the Coțofenii din Dos Gymnasium School, Dolj County	Personal development and mutual knowledge through reading clubs, which will improve the relationships between students	Book club	Forming a community of students passionate about reading in school. Promoting a way of spending free time that contributes to personal development. Better relations between students.
<b>Fulfilled dreams</b> Project of the students from the “Radu Negru” National College, Făgăraș	Encourage students to develop according to their own talents and potential Improving student-teacher relations, but also student-student	Competitions on various topics and disciplines	Increasing self-esteem among students. Interconnection through common passions, improving relationships between students. Increasing students' motivation for personal development in accordance with their own passions.
<b>Together for the community</b> Project of the students from the “Radu Negru” National College, Făgăraș	Improving student engagement, active involvement and responsibility Improving relationships between students Improving the student-teacher relationship	Volunteering Organizing charitable events	Development of emotional intelligence, empathy, team spirit. Developing the students' initiative.
<b>"A safer world for children",</b> a project of the students from the Coțofenii din Dos Gymnasium School, Dolj County	Raising awareness of the phenomenon of bullying, preventing and combating it;  Promoting the safety of children on the Internet and in the community, awareness and information on the dangers found in the virtual environment and in social groups;	Let's understand bullying and its negative effects;  Bullying- Cyberbullying-Internet – risks and benefits;  Organizing an anti-bullying flash mob;  Dance and music	Elimination of bullying and its negative effects on children;  Awareness of the dangers of using the Internet;  Promoting all project activities on the school's website and Facebook page;

	Educating children and parents on measures for their protection in the new virtual environment and on socially responsible behaviors;	support the fight against bullying;	
"A flower for my school" project of the students from the "Ciprian Porumbescu" Art College, Suceava	Improving the relationship between students There is no adequate furniture in the schoolyard to encourage students to actively use this space and we often choose to stay inside the school. Following the discussions between us, we thought of creating a friendly space inside the schoolyard that would bring the students together to spend their time and socialize during breaks.	Volunteer activity Action for the care of the space in the schoolyard and planting decorative flowers - a first construction experience for high school students from the specializations conservation-restoration, architecture, environmental arts, design or plastic and decorative arts.	Developing the students' initiative. Redeveloping the space in the schoolyard will give life to an important place for what school life and culture means.

#### Annex 8.1 DECISION TREES <sup>4</sup>



**Time:** 30 minutes

**Age:** 8-18

**Group size:** 10-15

**Materials:** Flipchart sheets, markers / pencils

#### **Purpose**

To help children think of more possible outcomes when choosing a particular course of action.

#### **Product**

A tree with pros and cons in making a decision.

#### **Preparation**

Draw a large tree on a flipchart sheet. Above the tree write a question that can be answered with "Yes" or "No." Under the question, write "Yes" on one side of the tree and "No" on the other.

#### **How to proceed?**

The aim of the activity is to get the feedback of the participants and to give them the opportunity to think about the pros and cons in making a specific decision.

<sup>4</sup> HearVoice. *Finding Ways for Children's Voices to be Heard*, 32

Choose a topic of discussion. What is the problem facing children and young people? For example, "School should serve children cereal with milk in the morning". Ask the children to start thinking about the pros and cons of this. You can write down the ideas of the participants as they are stated or you can ask them to come forward and write them on paper.

Under the "Yes" column, children should list the things that would happen if the school served cereal with milk. These can be positive or negative aspects. Under the "No" column, children should write what would happen if the school did not serve milk cereals. If the initial question cannot be answered with yes or no, ask the children to add branches with different options and consequences of each action. After giving the participants a chance to make their voices heard and record their opinions, take time to evaluate the tree. Discuss the implications of whether or not the school serves milk cereals. If possible, try to reach a group decision on what should be done.

**What should the facilitator pay attention to? Ground tips**

- The facilitator can make this exercise very fun and visual for children. You can start writing down the positive aspects/consequences directly on the branches and leaves, and then start writing at the root to go deeper into the cause of the problem.
- The facilitator should challenge the children with the question "why" to identify the cause of the problem but also know where to stop, so that the problem and its causes are not overwhelming for the children. However, they must write down as the children say and facilitate the process towards the causes with which the children feel comfortable to analyze them.

**Skills developed in children:**

- ✓ Critical thinking
- ✓ Problem solving;
- ✓ Decision making;
- ✓ Advocacy;
- ✓ Communication skills.

**Annex 8.2 THE KITE<sup>5</sup>**

## ZMEUL



**Time:** 20 minutes

**Age:** 8-15

**Group size:** 8-15

**Materials:**

Flipchart

sheets, markers

**Purpose**

To assess the strengths, weaknesses, the need for resources and support from employees to implement the project.

**Product**

A kite diagram illustrating what needs to be done to ensure the success of the project.

<sup>5</sup> Evans, Les (ed). Participation, Spice it Up, 82-83

## **Preparation**

Draw a big kite. Also include a string from which it is attached to the ground, or draw a person holding the string. The kite must be large enough to be able to write on it and there is still space outside it(on the edge).

### **How to proceed?**

**What people should support us:** On the kite's tail, write the names of the people or organizations that need to support the project in order for it to be effective (to be carried out).

**What exactly is needed for the project to be launched:** On the kite, write down all the things needed to implement the project. What would ensure its success? (e.g. employees, resources, buildings, etc.).

**What are the obstacles in carrying out the project:** On the string, write down the things that make it difficult to carry out the project(keep it in place), opposing its progress.

**What it would take for the project to take flight:** Above the kite write down the things that would make the project a success.

**What would prevent the project from being realized/implemented:** On the edges of the kite, write down things that would be an obstacle to achieving the goal of the project. What challenges would the project face?

The collected ideas can be used to plan and implement the project.

**What should the facilitator pay attention to?** Ground tips:

- The facilitator could use the kite for planning and monitoring. Each stakeholder who has taken responsibility can be held accountable for keeping their commitment.
- As children need to reach a consensus (for example, what success should look like, etc.), the facilitator needs to ensure that no child dominates the group, each child has a framework for free speech, including those who are not as talkative as others.

### **Skills developed in children:**

- ✓ Analytical skills;
- ✓ Planning Skills (Assessment);
- ✓ Critical thinking;
- ✓ Decision making;
- ✓ Negotiation skills.

Annex 8.3. Funding application template

**GRANT APPLICATION**

**(MODEL PROPOSED BY WORLD VISION ROMANIA)**

1. INFORMATION REGARDING THE APPLICANT	
Team name	School Student Council.....
Name of team members	1. 2. 3. 4.
Team members are beneficiaries of WVR projects	YES – how many?  NO- how many?
The class to which the team members belong	1.1st/5th/9th grade – name? 2.2nd/6th/10th grade – name? 3.3rd/7th/11th grade – name? 4.4th/8th/12th grade – name?
Experience in other previous projects/activities with WVR or other associations	

**2. DATA RELATED TO THE PROJECT**

**2.1 Project title:**

**2.2 Project location**

County	
Locality	
Address	

**2.3 Justification of the need to implement the project**

*(What situation, need of the school determined the elaboration of this project and how exactly it affects the target group it targets. It will be specified why the implementation of the project is necessary and how it can contribute to solving the identified needs/situation)*

**2.5 The purpose of the project**

*(Given the identified need, the purpose of the project will be specified in a single statement. )*

## 2.6 Target group/project beneficiaries

*Characteristics of the target group (children, young people, adults, number, age, etc.). Brief description of the target group (relevant aspects of the project). Please specify numerically how many girls/women and boys/men will benefit from the project.*

## 2.7 Project objectives

*(The objectives that lead to the achievement of the project goal will be stated and will be correlated with the proposed activities).*

	Objective	Activity
O1		
O2		

## 2.7 Description of project activities and implementation schedule of activities

*(The project activities will be described. For each activity, details will be provided and the period of development will be specified. The role of each partner in the activities will also be specified)*

Activity Name	Short description of the activity	Period of development	Managers / Partners
1.1			
1.2			

## 2.8 Description of the expected results as a result of the project implementation

*(The concrete/expected results that will be obtained following the project will be specified)*

## 2.10 Implementation period

*(when the project will start and end - specify the date of the first activity and the date of the last activity)*

## 3. PROJECT EVALUATION

### 3.2 Ways to monitor and evaluate the project

*(What tools will be used to evaluate the project - evaluation forms, lists of beneficiaries, photos, testimonies, minutes, reports, questionnaires, etc)*

#### 4. MATERIAL RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR THE PROJECT:

##### 4.1 Detailing the material resources necessary for the project

*(Detail the resources needed to carry out the project on each activity, as specific as possible)*

Annex 8.4.

RIVERWORLD



**Time:** 20+ minutes    **Age:** 12    **Group size:** 4-8    **Materials:** Flipchart sheets, markers

##### **Purpose**

To reflect on the achievements or lessons learned.

##### **Product**

A drawing of a river illustrating progress from a specific stage of life.

##### **Preparation**

Gather markers, pens or other writing instruments and make them available to participants. Bring large pieces of paper for participants to draw the course of a river. You can glue several pieces of *flipchart* sheets.

##### **How to proceed?**

Give each group writing tools and a long piece of paper. Ask them to draw a river. This will be the river of their lives. It can be from the moment they were born or from a certain period in their lives. Ask them to think about important events that happened during that time. They can illustrate difficult times by drawing whirlpools, crocodiles or rocks and better times by drawing flowers, the sun and a smooth course of water. Encourage them to be creative. After everyone has drawn their own river of life, ask them to introduce it to the whole group. Why was it a certain difficult period? What was extraordinary at another time? Who helped them get through the most difficult times? Who helped them celebrate the good times?

You can ask them to focus on a specific aspect of their lives, such as the type of responsibilities they receive at different ages. This could be useful if you want to have a targeted, detailed discussion about specific topics.

##### **Variation<sup>6</sup>**

- This exercise could also be used as a tool to get to know the participants, asking the participant to write other things about him along the river, such as what were his favorite bands, favorite sports teams or TV shows at different ages.

##### **What should the facilitator pay attention to? *Ground tips***

The facilitator could use this exercise for reflection and monitoring purposes.

<sup>6</sup> Evans, Les (ed). Participations, Spice it Up!, 84-85

The facilitator should create an atmosphere of trust so that all children can express themselves freely. If more painful situations arise in the life of the participants, the facilitator should have a plan on how to solve/overcome them, so that the child feels protected/supported. The feeling that the group is there to support is of crucial importance, but for the facilitator in the foreground must be the best interests of the child to be supported. (references: *Response guide for children suffering in consultation processes, part of the implementation guide of the new WV Child Protection Standards*). In countries where it is difficult for children to choose aspects/changes in their community using the symbols above (because they are from countries with land under occupation and have rarely seen water, especially a water creature, except those seen in books), you can use instead of mountain water, with clouds for the difficult/challenging times in their community. The tool can be called the *Path of Life*.

- ✓ **Skills developed in children:** *Creativity, Empathy, Caring (for others), Respect for others, Critical thinking, Expressing feelings and thoughts through creativity.*





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