

**FOCUS** on Social Responsibility  
quarterly SRDA Newsletter



- SRDA believes in challenges, research, studies, projects, that find solutions to today's complicated life;
- SRDA believes in education that makes us mindful of today's #SocRespo issues, and dares us to take action.



*“Social Responsibility rests on education. It starts early... it never ends...” JL*

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*.. If you want to fight social inequalities, you must first of all fight against inequalities in the field of education, starting with the youngest ages. ” Jean-Michel Blanquer, Minister of National Education (France)*

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## FOREWORD

A message to All



As a global family, we should try harder to #educate the young.

*#childrenoftheworldchapter #makingapoint*

About **children** everywhere, as they are the key to our ever evolving **world**--

**Children** are born equal, all the same, changing only as they are moulded-- they are the result of our contribution to their lives, whether a success or a failure. All of us (parents, grandparents, teachers etc) are their mentors, in more ways than one. Until they fly, the blame or the congratulations belong, mainly, to us.

What does reality tell us?... What do we see?...

We see that we fail as grown ups more often than before. We see that time and patience are getting shorter, our preoccupations more chaotic-- „with no random elements involved”, just like in mathematics-- and **children** grow up without us paying much attention to them. Are **we responsible**?...

Then...

There is the **world** we all live in. A **world** which is constantly changing and, in the process, some people are, luckily, starting to speak its language, by learning the real meaning of the word **responsibility**.

Often times, this **world's environment** gets upset due to (our) abuse, neglect, lack of compassion or, simply, lack of love, and then we feel its anger. It is for this reason, first and foremost, that **children** must be taught **responsibility** from their early ages.

All these cannot be done without a proper **education**, where **children** must learn to define the **world** and nature, as part of us. We, all, are **responsible** for us-- as a whole-- hence, for everything that surrounds us in this **world**.

Let us teach our **children** well!

*Irina, a personal view*

## #ARTICLES

### Education

- **21st century #EDU: Digital Age, meet android Pepper! / by [Matti Alderson](#)**

Our escalating digital age is now so integral to our everyday life and it has provided us with enormous advances in both life-enhancing technology and an enormous breadth of lifestyle choices. Many of the advances that we now take for granted were predicted, and predictable, 50 years ago. All very positive, but to many people hailing from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century... and, here we are! The speed and impact of digital expansion can be both puzzling and challenging.

It is true, too, that companies with multi-billion budgets employing innovators, including small independents or sole technicians, will inevitably stay considerably ahead of Governments and other regulators internationally in producing often unfettered products and services. It takes time for the law and regulators to catch up, and they certainly rarely pre-empt digital technology. By then, of course, the next innovation will have hit the market.

In many ways this is right and proper – and positive, and it is historically how things have always worked to originate and transform markets. Consumers should not have to wait for regulations to catch up with, and potentially hamper, every detail of technological advancement.

Companies conscious of maintaining their hard-earned reputations are at pains to exercise responsibility for their products and services. We hear much of the negative effects of technology: isolated children who are unhealthily focussed on computer games; pornography available to pre-teens; cyber bullying and more. The constructive and progressive news reports of technological benefits sometimes get overlooked in the plethora of negative press.

**One such advance may hold the key, in the future, to individually tailored education in schools in areas where very large class sizes with low teacher ratios make adequate schooling a challenge.**

**In October, one such innovation addressed Members of the Education Select Committee in the UK Parliament. A metre-tall android named Pepper made history by being the first non-human to address a Select Committee and answered questions**

**about the rise and uses of artificial intelligence. Specifically, Pepper was asked to talk about how AI could be used to enhance classroom teaching.**

Currently, 'he/she/it' speaks in a childlike voice and works with students at Middlesex University in England on an international research project developing programmes for teaching primary school pupils. This might be children with special needs, but more likely these 'classroom assistants' will in time be able to tailor teaching to each student, developing their literary and numeracy skills. And, of course, young children accustomed to digital technology will not be fazed by talking to a device rather than an adult teacher.

Members of the Committee were interested in how the 'fourth' industrial revolution would perceive the role of humans in advancing education. Pepper was reassuring: there 'would always be a need for the soft skills that are unique to humans'.

At the end of the presentation, Members of the Select Committee were impressed. Indeed, one Member remarked that Pepper's presentation made considerably more sense than some of the Government Ministers required to attend mandatory Select Committee hearings!

**So, an amusing anecdote, but one with a serious and positive objective where the digital age may significantly benefit children in the future.**

- **#EDU #RESPO chapter, #rolemodels: Everywhere, the reforms in education spread their wings-- in the EU, the example of France / by [Irina Little](#)**

### **Communication made in the Council of Ministers: Next steps in education reform**

Excerpt from: 24/10/2018 Brief of Jean-Michel Blanquer, Minister of National Education of the French Republic

#### Achievements that get stronger

Since 2017, the priority has clearly been given to mastering basic knowledge throughout compulsory schooling.

First of all, this results in the duplication of CP and CE1 classes in priority education (September 2018 to September 2019). (In September 2017, 2,200 classes of CP REP + were split for 60,000 students. In September 2018, 3,200 classes of CP REP and 1,500 classes of CE1 REP + were split. From now on, 190,000 students benefit from the device. Duplication will end in September 2019.) and will (then) involve more than 300,000 students.

These duplications are accompanied by a pedagogical mobilization for all students, with the national assessments for all CP and CE1 students at the start of the 2018 school year.

**The ambition of general elevation of the level and social justice also guides the transformations undertaken for the general and technological high school, on the one hand, and the professional path on the other hand.** These reforms are currently unfolding, with the prospect of a new class of 1st general and technological, and a new class of 2nd professional in September 2019.

**Finally, the national education strongly promotes the values of the Republic at all levels, not only to bring out an ever more inclusive and benevolent school, but also firm, with respect to all forms of violence, harassment and discrimination.**

#### A law for the school of trust

The draft law for the school of trust provides in particular for the lowering of the age of compulsory education to 3 years, thus concretizing a commitment of the President of the Republic. **This lowering of the age of compulsory education will come to devote the place of the nursery school in the French education system and will also contribute to social justice by fighting against the first of the inequalities: that before the language.**

The law for the school of trust also contains provisions that should allow innovation to adapt to the needs of the territories, improve the human resources policy of the national education, simplify the education system and strengthen its efficiency.

**The bill promotes, especially, the evolution of the teachers' training.** In this context, special attention is paid to the attractiveness and conditions of entry into the profession, with

the establishment of a pre-recruitment path that will entrust educational and teaching missions to students interested in the profession of teacher. **Concretely, the national education will offer, from the 2nd year of license to students from underprivileged backgrounds, the opportunity to prepare teaching competitions in optimal conditions.**

### Transformation levers

To consolidate a major public service of education in the 21st century, national education is based on several levers of transformation, presented specifically within the framework of the transformation process "Public Action 2022".

For this, **the national education develops a true culture of evaluation. In addition to international assessments and assessments of student achievement, the draft law for the school of trust provides for the creation of a national school evaluation body, in line with an audit logic that includes both human resource, budget and educational issues as safety, climate and the quality of school life.**

To achieve the objectives set, the lever of human resources is essential. In this field, it is a question of going from a statutory mass management to a logic of personalization of responsibility and valorization of the courses of the teachers. This results in the experimentation of a local human resources policy in half of the academies in the autumn of 2018. This will also result in the significant increase in profile posts, for which recruitment is entrusted to the head of the establishment.

**Another condition of transformation is the evolution of the relationship with the territories to provide answers that are better adapted to the needs of students and their families.** The territorial map of national education is evolving to reach, on 1 January 2020, 13 metropolitan academies that will have the same territorial perimeter as the regions. The Ministry of National Education and Youth will also propose, in the spring of 2019, a new approach to the allocation of resources to better respond to the challenges of the territories, in priority education and in rural areas.”

## Environment

### ● Next steps addressing water quality in the EU / by [Dan Radulescu](#)

The 5th European Water Conference took place in September 2018. The ongoing Fitness Check of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), its associated Directives and the Floods Directive, as well as the evaluation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD) were among the topics discussed. The Conference looked also at whether Europe's water policy is able to deal with current and future water challenges, such as pollution from microplastics or pharmaceuticals and the impacts of climate change. [The Water Framework Directive, in force since 2000, is one of the most ambitious pieces of EU environmental law. Its key objective is to achieve good status for all water bodies by 2015.]

The European Commission concluded that the overall picture of Europe's waters today is mixed. Among the positives, it was identified that

- ✓ good progress has been made in improving water quality
- ✓ the management of water has become more integrated, and far more knowledge is available
- ✓ the management of risks to prevent floods has also advanced

On the less positive side, structural problems remain, including pollution from agriculture or insufficiently treated wastewater, damaging physical changes to rivers and lakes and over-abstraction of water.

"The European Commission's assessment after two cycles of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) and the first cycle of Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) implementation identified a list of important issues for consideration, based on preliminary findings:

- Insufficient progress on achieving WFD objectives
- Governance
- Non-deterioration obligation
- One-out-all-out principle

- Definition of 2 different status - chemical and ecological status
- Flexibility through exemptions
- 2027 final deadline for the application of exemptions
- Quantification of costs and benefits
- Reporting tools (WISE)
- Policy coherence (agriculture, energy, transport)
- Climate change and water quantity / water quality
- Water pricing, and polluter pays principle
- Floods Directive – overarching progress indicator
- Duration of the RBMPs cycles, and reporting cycles of other pieces of EU law
- Integration of the objectives of protected areas within the RBMPs
- Link drivers-pressures-measures.”

For more information, follow this link: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/high-level-conference-makes-case-more-integrated-water-management-europe-draws-lessons-future-eu-water-policy-2018-sep-21\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/high-level-conference-makes-case-more-integrated-water-management-europe-draws-lessons-future-eu-water-policy-2018-sep-21_en)

## #PROJECTS

proposed by SRDA

- **Introduction to Financial Resilience in Younger Generations - A New programme and pilot project for Romania / by Simona Fleanta**

In Romania there are several aspects that need to be considered, starting from the consequences of not having an economic and financial education and thinking formation.

To begin with, according to the OECD stats, Romania follows Bulgaria and is the last European country investing in education: just 1% of GDP. One of the consequences stands in the income inequality, which is highest in Romania; 20% of the population represent the richest people and 20% of the population represent the poorest people.

According to Wall Street in 2017, saving money in Romania has slightly changed its patterns. That is, up to 2013, 46% of the Romanian diaspora used to save money for building homes, or invest in engineering / construction sites. Since then, 52% of Romanian diaspora save money to invest in businesses, or other projects, and many of them return home.

There were found no national statistics with regards to how many people save money and how they do it. However, looking at this market, it seems that people who feel the need to enhance knowledge in personal finances do it in banks, or other individuals offering free workshops, which are not centred on the specific needs of the client. This is one aspect that shows why Romanians are poor financial literates.

Another aspect that shows financial illiteracy among Romanians is the level of poverty which is reflected in the number of paid employees connected to the number of pensioners. In this case, it is not only about demographic decline and population aging process, but also about poverty and quality of life. In 2015, Teleorman county reported severe levels of poverty reflected in 10 paid employees in relation to 17 pensioners. The stats in the 2015 NIS shows that economy will find it harder, if not altogether impossible, to support further generations of pensioners.

Having looked at the Romanian economic reality, still, there is a perspective to support an inclusive economy through different initiatives. There is a platform that addresses the need to access the financial market which can be a great potential for those who wish to invest.

Also, according to statistics taken from a bank, it seems that financial literacy is less seen as a method to manage personal finance in order to increase money return through investment. This is what explains that, generally speaking, people would rather save money from as much as they earn, without multiplying it, or else, spend as much as they earn.

Taking the above aspects into consideration and the fact that nowadays professional aspirations are higher than ever before, younger generations need financial mentoring programmes that encourage them to think strategically and on a long-term. This type programme will be summarised in the next issue of SRDA #SocRespo FOCUS. Presently it is planned as a pilot project for Romania.

### **Other SRDA projects**

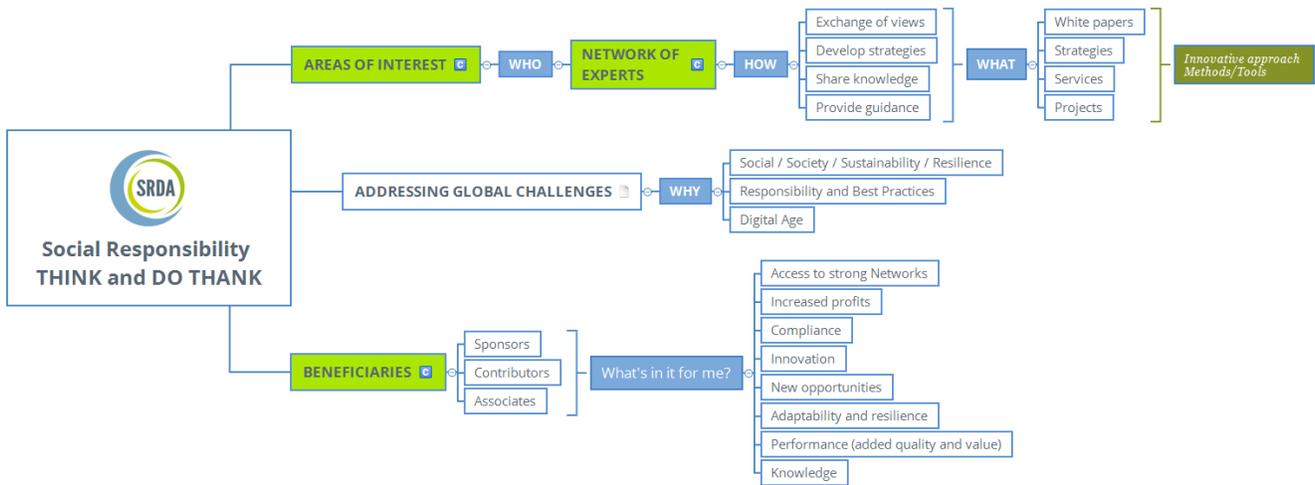
... for info on below proposals, please see 1st & 2nd Newsletter issues.

- **Tobacco Intervention Programme-- the 'TIP Project' / by [Arthur Pober](#)**
- **Songs for the 21st century, New Vision project / by [Arthur Pober](#)**
- **#SocRespo is built on #education / by [Irina Little](#)**
- **BPME: An International Programme on Best Practices Management Essentials, a Dialogue (INTERGRAM: the BPME Dialogue) / by [Irina Little](#) and [Daniela Cretu](#)**
- **3R: Resilience in Crisis - Building the Paradigm for Transformative Dissemination of Empowerment / by [Arthur Pober](#)**
- **BPIB: Best Practices in Insurance Business: Assuming a Civic, Honest and Moral Attitude / by [Irina Pricop](#) and [Ioana Balasa](#)**
- **EUCLID: European Consortium for Low Impact Development / by [Dan Radulescu](#)**

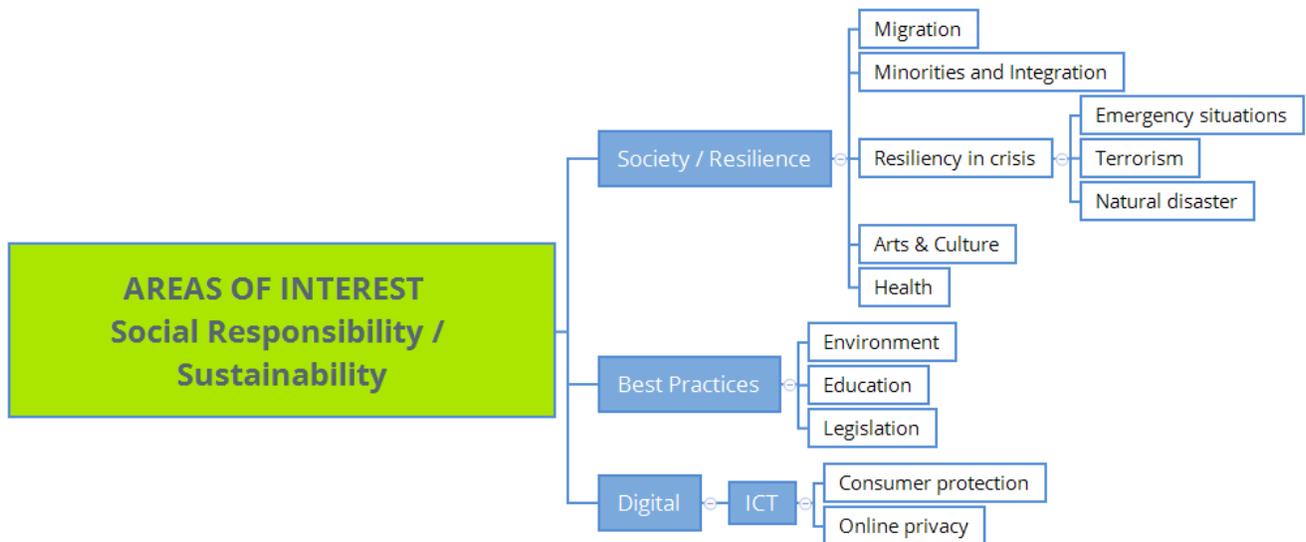


#SocRespo solutions, in a diversified world ●●●

### WHO are we?



### WHAT do we offer?





## The contributing Team



*Matti*



*Dan*

*Simona*



*Irina*

Thank you for reading us 😊 See you in January!