

THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND FAMILY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF OUR STUDENTS

¹Fatmir Vadahi, ² Eranda Bilali (Halluni), ³Mehdi Kroni, ⁴ Kujtim Pelingu

¹University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Faculty of Education, Albania,
E mail: fatmirvadahi@gmail.com

²University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Faculty of Education, Albania,
E mail: erandabilali@yahoo.com

³University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Faculty of Education, Albania,
E mail: kronimehdi@yahoo.com

⁴University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Faculty of Education, Albania,
E mail: kujtimpelingu@yahoo.com

Abstract

Nowadays, the cooperation among school, families and the community is very important. School is required to be open to parents and the community so that they can participate actively in decision-making. This cooperation is crucial for the wellbeing of students, as well as for the improvement of the quality of teaching, an easy adaption of children in school, coping with various crises, etc. At any time the beneficiaries are the students themselves. But, to what extent is this collaboration present in our schools? How do students see this collaboration? Are they satisfied with the participation and commitment of their parents in school? How are their relations with the teachers? How much do they support teachers in different situations? How do students feel inside the school, the class and the family? These are some of the research question that will lead this study. The study is carried out with the participation of 300 students in the seventh and eighth grade of secondary schools in Shkodra. As a tool for the gathering of data has been used a questionnaire compiled according to Likert scale. Results from the study give us a clear picture of the current state of the functioning of this collaboration. On the other hand, the study indicates that the cooperation between school and family exists, but it should be stable and should constantly improve. The allocation of the recommendations for the school, teachers, students and parents will help readers focus on the part where they can give their contribution.

Keywords: *collaboration, school, family, teachers, parents*

Introduction.

The school, family and the community share together their mission of schooling and education of the young generation. The importance of school-family-community cooperation is closely associated with the student, by the action of creating a positive atmosphere in the school, by improving the quality of learning, by the need of change, by the challenges to achieve positive results, by finding ways to include all factors of cooperation with effective collaboration process, by taking responsibility to contribute in constructing the society of the knowledge. The cooperation of the school with the family and the community has many outputs in education, because it increases the effectiveness of the school, enhances the quality of the teaching, conducts a functioning government, prepares people for work and professions, are encouraged the human values on life skills especially for the lifelong learning .

By the cooperation of the factors family-community and school is expected that the most important goal and the fundamental education will be achieved, personality development, development of genetic potential and displaying his maximal appearance. Cooperation between social and institutional factors of children-students education is considered one of the most essential on strengthening these factors, one of the most essential to the welfare of the child education process in the family and school and their successful involvement in the community life. For these reasons it is important to analyze this dimension of the importance of cooperation and to work on the awareness of the factors to this issue.

Partnership between the school and the families among others is important because through it the knowledge of deeper understanding of the student's personality is achieved, of temperament, and individual traits, passions, will features, attitudes in relation to the self, family, peers, intelligences, affective sphere of personality, appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, individual learning panaches, the assistance that should be provided to them. Also the information on family life are completed, which is closely linked to the success or failure of the student. The main and the only aim of parents and teachers is not to think about their future, but to enable them to build their future.

On seeing the importance of this partnership on a range of issues related to the school and the community in general, and what is more important for the welfare of the student, we undertook this study to get opinions from the students about the level of this cooperation.

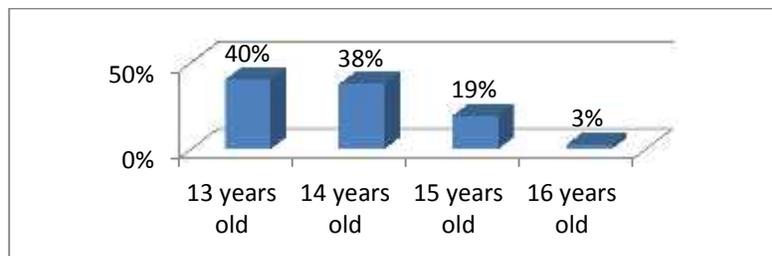
Methodology and the sample

This is a quantitative study. For data collection, a questionnaire has taken place which included 300 students from 5 schools in the city of Shkodra. Sample selection was done randomly. The data were processed with the Microsoft Office Excel 2007 program. This survey was conducted through students self-report. Students who participated in this study were selected randomly, regardless of age or the gender. This survey was conducted in January 2014 to May

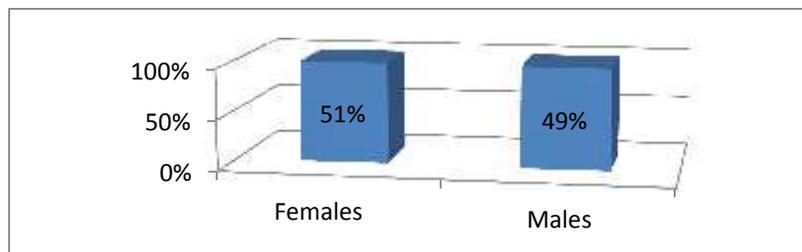
2014. The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify the level of cooperation between the school and the family, from the perspective of the students. For the procession of the study, a questionnaire by Likert scale is designed. The study involved 300 students from the 5 schools of the city of Shkodra, from classes VIII to IX..

Characteristics of the sample included in the study

Students who participated in the study were from age 13, 14, 15 and 16 years old. This age group was chosen because it can easily answer the questions posed. In the chart below we notice that in the study were included 121 students of the age 13 years old , 113 students of age 14 years old, 58 students of age 15 years old and 8 students of age 16 years old.

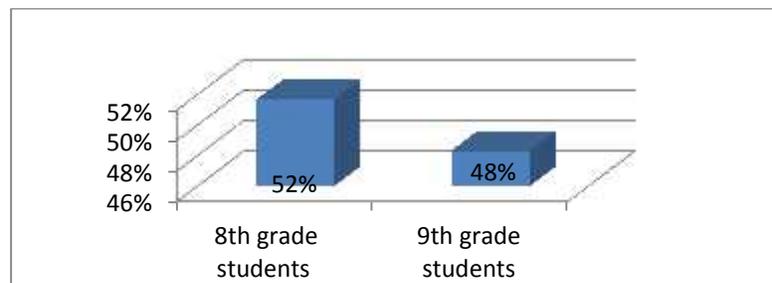


Graphic.1 The age of the students



Graph.2 The gender of the students

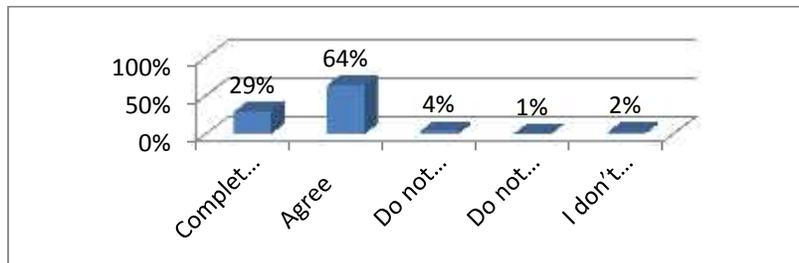
During the study, the questionnaires were distributed in different parallels in the schools involved in the study. 153 females and 147 males were involved.



Graph.3 The Classroom

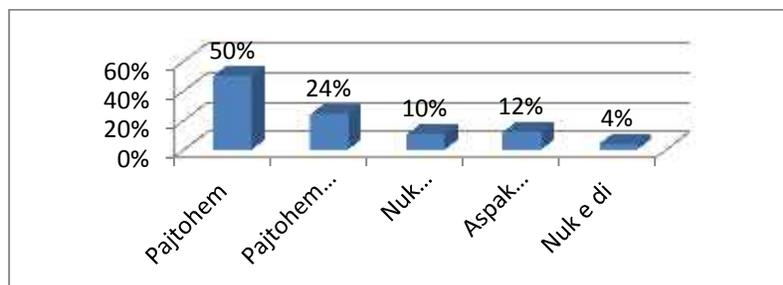
In distributing the questionnaires we tried to keep a balance, trying to have the same number of students of the classes VIII and IX. From the 300 students involved in the study, 155 students were in the 8th grade and 145 students are in the 9th grade class students.

Results of the study



Graph 1. My parents come to school very often to be informed of my progress.

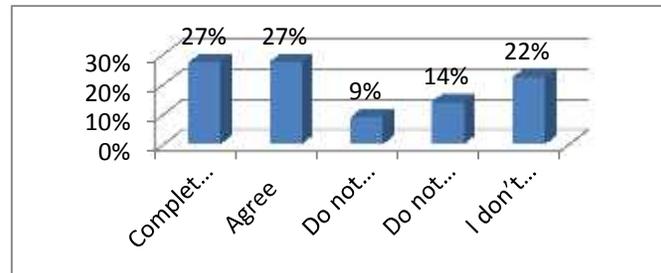
As the graphic shows we notice that 64% of the students responded agree. This suggests that students want their parents to be present at school. Parents and the teachers are able to communicate together in a direct way, a way quite effective if both parties know to utilize it, in a fair and rational way. However, this communication has no room for expansion and partnership deepening, as parents talk to their children only and not as to the well running of the school and its needs in general. 29% of the students have responded that they completely agree, which means that they are satisfied with their parents' participation in their school.



Graphic.2 My parents come to the school for the parents meetings

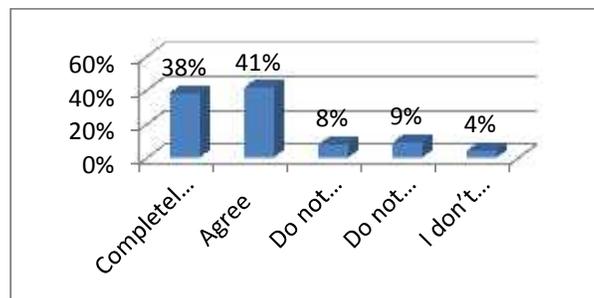
The second question, that how much "My parents come to school for parents meetings" almost 50% of students responded that their parents come to parents meetings regularly, while 24% of them confessed that their parents participate occasionally in the meetings and 22 % of them confessed that their parents do not participate in them, being not a small number compared to the importance of the meetings with the parents to discuss the achievements and developments in the class or in the school rank. In the case when the parents come regularly and there is the

possibility of cooperation and is under the teachers discretion to know how to involve them to cooperate on the certain issues. Meanwhile, when parents are not present neither in the parents meeting is under the responsibility of the school to use all opportunities to a greater participation of the parents in the classroom.



Graph 3. My parents help in organizing the school activities

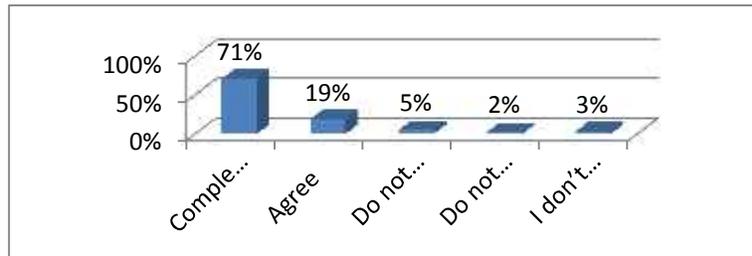
The question about how much "My parents help in organizing the school activities," The students almost in equal % said that, they totally agree and they agree that their parents would help on activities organized by the school, but in the second case they were not very confident that their parents would help. About 24% of them said they disagree and not agree at all that their parents will assist in organizing the school activities, probably because of the engagement of the parents or may be even the school did not offer anything like that before . In some schools where there are no activities, 22% of students answered don't know, which makes one think that the parents do not ever been asked to assist in organizing activities. In this case a greater commitment is required to parents community to accompany the work of the school.



Graph.4 My parents come to the school when the teacher or the director calls them

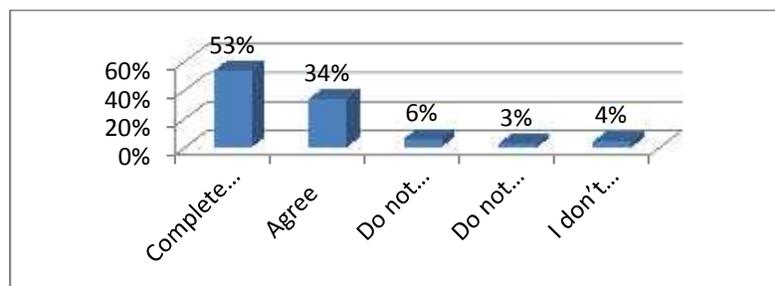
The question "My parents come to the school when the teacher or the director calls them" refers to the moment when the parent is called by the teacher or the principal. Precisely this moment has to do with the willingness of the parents to respond to their call. There is a high % and about 38% of students responded that they totally agree that their parents would come to school, so 41% of them answered that they agree, 17% of the students claim that their parents will not come to school even if notified. Practices in our schools suggests that parents get calls

from the teacher or principal only when an unwanted event has occurred to the child or the child has done something in school. Parents may be called to school for various reasons, so there should not always be alluded only to bad things (negative), they should be considered the best friends and associates of the school.



Graph.5 I speak freely with my parents about all my problems.

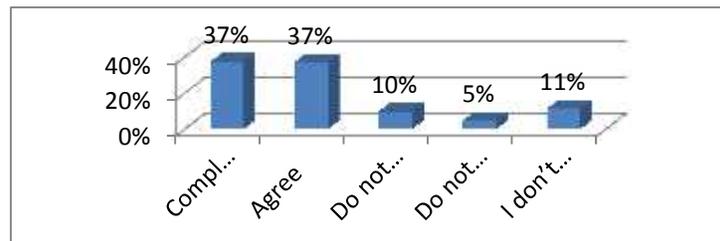
To the question "I speak freely with my parents about all my problems," 71% of the students responded that they completely agree that they can speak freely with their parents. We believe that there is freedom of expression, which positively affects on the students achievement, improvement of the student behavior and building better relations between the parents and the teachers. Considering that the age of 13-16 years old is an age characterized by a range of specifications, good rapport parent with child, affects the crisis affecting this age. But students from conversations with them we learned that they also discuss with parents on topics like: smoking, alcohol and drugs. This means, that is related to the level of awareness of the parents about the great importance of having an open communication with the children. Also 19% of the students claim that they agree that can talk with their parents about all problems. While 10% of them claim that they have difficulty in communicating with parents.



Graph.6 Teachers help me when i have difficulties

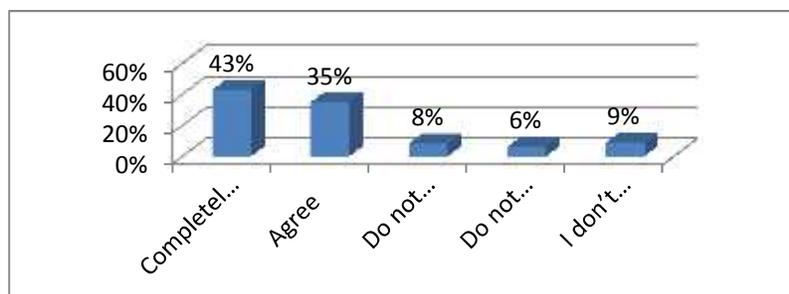
To the question "Teachers help me when I have difficulties" about 53% of the students responded that completely agree, which shows that exists the spirit of cooperation between the students and the teachers, but this zeal must be completed and progress further on. 34% of students involved in the study hae responded that they agree that teachers help then in case of

difficulties, letting you understand that there is a separation barrier, so they do not respond with determination their assistance. 6% of the students claimed that they disagree that teachers help them in case of difficulties, and only 3% of the students stated categorically that the teachers do not help them. Well so, we realize that all the students do not have the same treatment.



Graph.7 Teachers try to help me by communicating with my parents about my difficulties

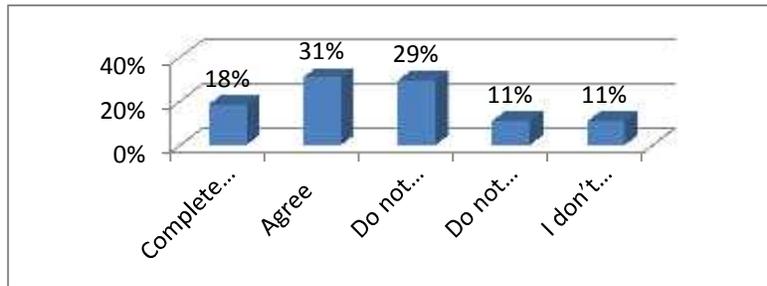
As seen from the graphic about 37% of the students said they totally agree that teachers communicate with their parents and try to come together and help pupils equally, so 37% said that they agree that the teachers contact the parents in the case of difficulties, what makes you think that there is a communication ratio, but not that powerful and effective. 10% of students said that they disagree that the teachers contact the parents in the case of difficulties, while 5% of them said that they do not agree at all that the teachers contact their parents in case of difficulties. By analyzing the answers that should be seen more parent- teacher cooperation. In the schools where meetings with the parents are made periodically, this type of aid is more widespread. Students said they feel better when the parents and the teachers try to understand and help them.



Graph.8 My teachers understand me when I make a wrong move.

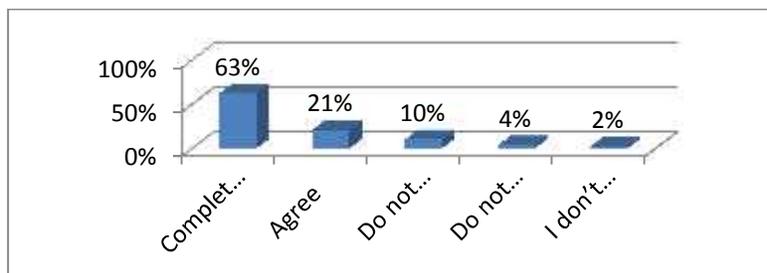
43% of students said they completely agree, what proves that there is a breath of tolerance which would serve quite well building a sustainable partnership between the teachers, pupils and the parents. 35% of the students said they agree that the teachers understand them, while 14% said that teachers do not understand them. So what is observed is that a significant number of

students involved in the research finds no understanding on the teachers side for their committed deeds. This situation must necessarily change by making the students aware on their rights and responsibilities. Often the teachers are in a such situation , where they can not ignore the students mistakes and punish them by creating a rapport not too suitable for both parties.



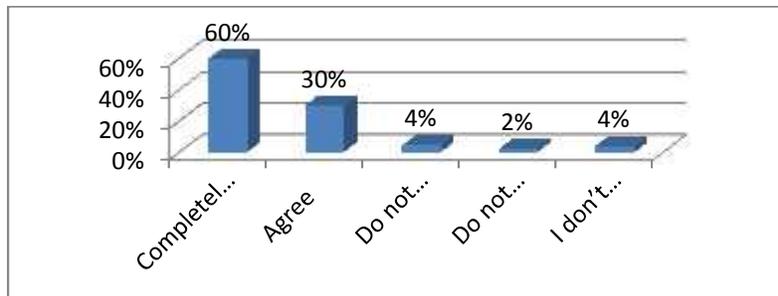
Graph.9 I can speak freely to all my teachers about all my problems.

The question "I can speak freely to all my teachers about all my problems." Has to do with the freedom of the expression between teachers and students, regarding the confidence that students have on teachers. As seen from the graphic, about 18% of students said they completely agree that they can communicate freely with the teachers, 31% that agree , which shows that students speak freely with some teachers and some others not. 29% said they do not agree that they speak freely with the teachers about their problems and 11% have stated categorically that they can not speak with the teachers about their problems. Lack of the communication freedom can lead to learning disabilities, expected in behaviour also, and leads in creating the communication barriers that would not be neither in the favour of the students only, but nor building sustainable partnerships between the school and the family. These results lead to the conclusion that there does not exist a great freedom of expression between the teachers and the students. In fact students are reluctant to talk about their problems with the teachers which depends on the nature of the students, on the student- teacher ratios, their proximity to them, etc., but in other cases the teachers lack the willingness to listen and to advise them.



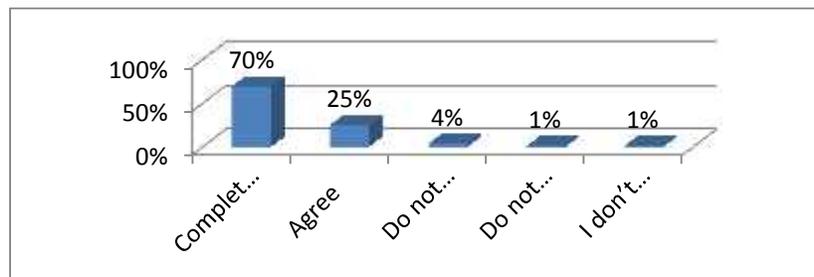
Graph.10 I mingle with all my friends anmy girl-friends without distinction.

The question "I mingle with all my friends without distinction" has been intended to highlight how students are associated with each-other without the differences of gender, racial, and social, etc.. There is a high percentage of 63% of the students which responded that they fully agree that they socialize with their friends and girl-friends without distinction, a sufficient number to see how relations are between students at school. 21% agreed that they socialize with all without distinction. The more that students spend the time together with all his friends and girl-friends more easily they cope with the future when they will have contacts with people of different cultures and ideas. The aim of the school is to teach students to live together with others. 14% of students responded that they are not socialized with all his friends and girl-friends, which means that in our classes, students have prejudices about their friends and their girl-friends, the prejudices that may be of different nature. Only 2% of the students were not confident to respond.



Graph.11 I will willingly accept a student with special needs in my class.

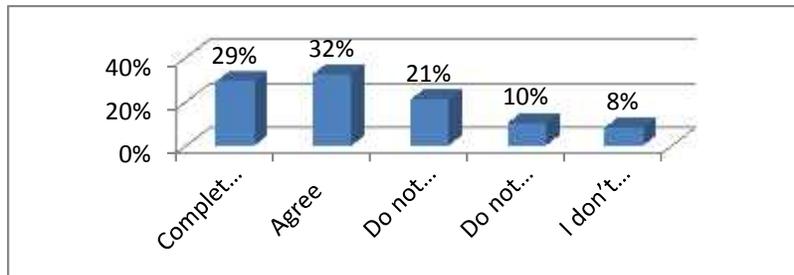
To the question "I would willingly accept a student in my class with special needs", 60% of the students said that they completely agree to have in the classroom a student with special needs, 30% said they agree by not confessing, such a desire for the inclusion of the students with special needs in their classes. Number of the students who disagree results at 10%.



Graph.12 When a friend or a girl-friend has a problem I try to help

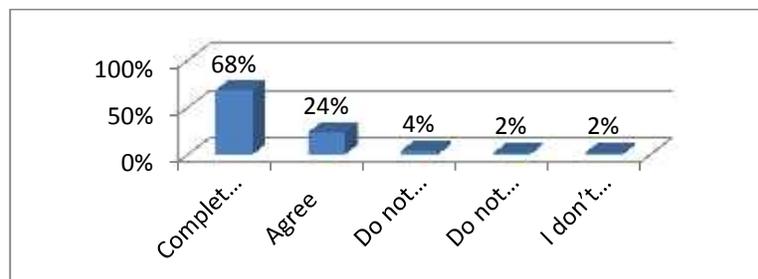
The age which is chosen in the study as we know is very dependent on the opinion of the others. And as shown by the graphic has a high percentage of students who are willing to help each other for their problems, even to preserve the confidentiality. 24% of them responded that they agree to make us understand that if their assistance is required, they will help, but they

do not have a maximum alert, or they do not feel very safe that can hide the secret that his friends or girl-friends tell in confidence. Only 6% of them said that they would not agree to help their friends, this response depends on a number of factors such as the nature of the student, problems that students themselves may have and do not want others to know about, etc.. From the students' responses we learn that among students there is a mutual harmony and understanding, because they are for a long time together and know each other pretty well. Perhaps in the higher level of the education we will not have such an overview.



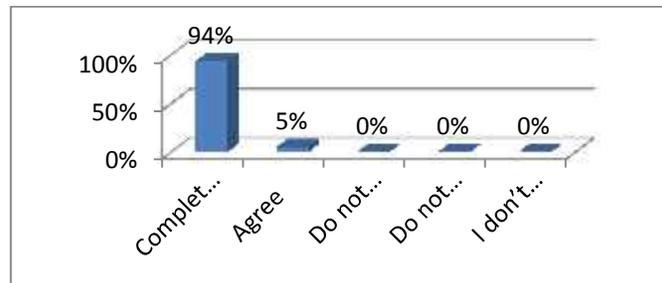
Graph.13 I can speak freely with my friends and my girl-friends about my problems.

To the question "I can speak freely with my friends and my girl-friends about my problems", 29% of the students answered that they totally agree, which means that there are students in the class seeking to solve problems by seeking help from friends and girl-friends. 32% have agreed that their problems may require the help of friends and girl-friends, but requests for help will not cover all the problems, because the students were not sure on this answer, or will be for a certain number of the friends and the girl-friends, precisely with those friend and girl-friends with whom students have close relationships. 31% of the students indicated that they can not talk to all their friends about their problems. 8% of the students answered do not know, what probably means they have not faced such situations. If in the above question (question 12), students showed willingness to help others, at this question is shown that they are reluctant to reveal their problems to other students.



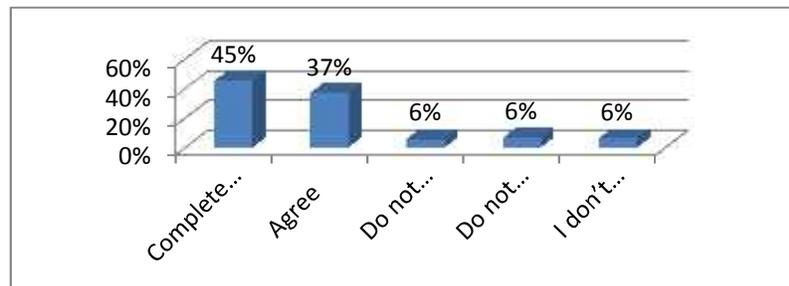
Graph.14 I feel very well in this classroom

As is seen in the graphic there is a high percentage, about 68% of the students who claim that they feel better in the classes where they study, as well as in the company of friends and lady-friends. Here we should clarify something, because the conversations and the problems that concerns them, do not belong in the school, so they claim to feel comfortable in classrooms where learning takes place. On the other hand, the willingness of the parents to communicate with their children, replace their need to seek help from friends or girl-friends. 24% of the students said that they agree feeling comfortable, making us realize that there is a need for improvement. Only 8% of the students do not feel comfortable in this classroom and this might be for different reasons. During informal conversations with the students, we realized that they were accustomed to each - other. Ninth grade students expressed that there is a monotony in the class in relation to each-other and to the studying. They claim that they are now grown up for this school, but did not deny the fact that they have a good time with each other.



Graph.15 I am happy with my family

To the question "I am happy with my family", has a percentage, relatively very high 94%, have responded that they completely agree that they are happy with their families, but what possibly is called happiness? During the conversations with the students, they provide many different answers, symbolizing the happiness with material goods, education coverage, good living conditions, respect of the speech, etc..This makes us realize the way of how they see the "happiness". 5% of them responded agree, what makes us realize that there are difficulties and problems in the family relations.



Graph.16 In my school things go well

When asked "In my school, things go well", 45% of the students responded that they are satisfied with the school where they study and they are optimistic for the continued positive changes. 37% responded agree what it means that there are things to be fixed and improved. 12% are not satisfied with the school and do not think that things are going well. This is one of the reasons that the students are demanding and are willing that everything to be at it best. 6% of the students have answered do not know, what it means that they have not paid a particular attention to the changes in the school. By raising the level of the partnership with the families, stakeholders, the community and the school it will have significant changes, both in terms of the infrastructure and the quality of the teaching. It is the responsibility of everybody to expand this community, which means that the biggest beneficiaries are the students.

Conclusions

This study has given us a clear information on the state of family- school collaboration in our schools. What we noticed is that in our schools the communication is traditional, reduced to a traditional swing in obtaining the information through meetings with the parents or individual meetings. Lacking on the effective strategies for family involvement.

Parents need to be more effective in school. On the other hand is required that the schools organize more activities in which the parental and community support is required.

In teacher-parent relationships has room for improvement, as cooperation exists, but there is still much work to do.

Although there is a willingness of teachers to help to understand the students, there is a students uncertainty to represent the problems in front of the teachers, which makes it possible to deepen and non-disclosure of the problem.

There is uncertainty in the unfolding of the problems to the friend and lady-friends classmates, but it is important the fact that they love and feel comfortable with each other.

The presence of psychologists in school every day of the week is necessary.

Based on the results we see that there are good relationship among students, they help each other. As related to their problems they reveal them only to a close friend or girl-friend. By this we understand that the level of confidence among students to major problems is minimal. Students are willing to have their classes attended by the students with special needs, but our schools still do not have the necessary infrastructure for this purpose. Overall, the study shows that the students are satisfied with the class in which they study, the family and the school. This fact entuses us for a better future of our students. Therefore all of us should work together for a better future than the present one.

Recommendations

The results of the study clearly show us the way to improve the existing situation, and through the conclusions we reached to highlight some issues that will focus our work in the future. Recommendations (without claiming that they are unique or the best) will be complemented by the work of the teachers during daily practices. Sharing them with the school, teachers, parents and the students, we think that will serve the readers to focus on the part that they will contribute.

For the school

The schools should be open to the community because the closure of the school to it besides reducing the effects of school, recycles negative results at all levels of the education.

Today more than ever it is necessary a more fruitful collaboration and more continuous between the family, school and the community, always taking into account also the changes that are taking place within the family today.

A true partnership between the school and the parents should contribute to the quality of education and schooling. To this, should be utilized all the bridges of communication between them.

The schools should have an action plan for involvement in a more organized way the family and the community in the school's life. It must find, forms, directions, ways for a greater involvement of parents in the school life, whose role should be seen as part of the process of decentralization and democratization of education, their governance trends.

School should utilize the parent's willingness to help the school. The decision to organize the activities, should be undertaken by the school in cooperation with the community, as a way to increase parent and community responsibility.

Schools should work to increase the reliability of the students toward teachers.

For the parents

Parents should be active in the school issues, because they are open to the requests, discontent, complains they may have against teachers.

Parents should systematically monitor the progress of their children in the school. On this should be worked on finding ways of effective direction toward the modernization of the information system for the parents.

Parents should be organized as a community which plays an active role in the school and the society.

Recognition of the rights and responsibilities of the parents, students and the teachers would affect on the improvement of the existing situation.

Undertaking educational initiatives towards the facilitating of the work of the school will positively impact in their involvement.

Parents should be the promoter of good relationships with the teachers and the school.

Parents should initiate activities aimed for the better acquaintance of the students with their teachers.

For teachers and students

The encouragement of the students, the organization of the activities in order to know the students better, encouragement, establishing better relations with the parents, creating an atmosphere of work with the student, etc. are the focus of the teachers.

Understanding the role of the school and the teachers on the education of the children, participating in the activities, support for students with special needs, equal treatment of the students, freedom on the expression of the problems, more open communication with the parents, good relationships with friends and the lady-friends, assistance in case of need and difficulty, being open to mistakes in order to improve them, are some of the recommendations that are addressed to the students.

References:

- Brada, dr. Riza (1995), *Pedagogjia familjare*, Pejë: Biblioteka pedagogjike.
- Brada, dr. Riza (2005), *Pedagogjia shkollore*, Pejë: Biblioteka pedagogjike.
- Deva-Zuna, Afërdita (2009), *Partneriteti shkollë-familje-komunitet*, Prishtinë: Libri shkollor.
- Dizdari, Islam dhe Aliu, Bahri (2007): *Edukata Familjare, Shkup, Prishtinë, Tiranë*: Logos
- A. Goldberg, Marsha Serling and Feldman, Sonia (2003), *Teachers with Class*, Kansas Cirty: Andress McMeel Publishing.
- Griffith, Mary (1999), *The Homeschooling Handbook*, 2 nd edition, Roseville, California: Prima Publishing.
- Grillo, Kozma (1998), *Faqe nga pedagogjia familjare*, Tiranë.
- Kugelmass, Judy W. (2004), *The Inclusive School*, Teachers College Press, New York and London: Colombia University.
- Mailaret, Gaston (1997), *Pedagogjia e përgjithshme*, Prishtinë: Koha.
- Mulhern, John 9 (1959), *A History of Education*, second edition, New York: The Ronald Press Company.

Ramsey, D. Robert (2003) 501 Tips for Teachers, Second edition, Chicago, New York, San Francisko, Contemporary Books.
Sadker P. Myra dhe Sadker M. David (1997), Mësuesit, Shkolla dhe Shoqëria, Prishtinë.