

ANALYSIS OF TRAINING PROGRAMS OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ROMANIA IN 2021*

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Abstract

The pandemic has brought educational systems in front of certain changes in the educational paradigm and at the same time in front of enormous challenges.

Online education has been a reality for many months, and teachers have worked hard to adapt to the situation created by the crisis facing schools. It was a period that very often brought to the surface the creativity of teachers and the great availability to adapt to the situation of online education. Depending on the environment of residence, the infrastructure of the schools, the digital competencies they possessed, the teachers found solutions so as not to further increase the inequalities between the students.

We proposed making a synthetic analysis of the training programs of school teachers in Romania, having 2021 as reference year, a pandemic year. This analysis was carried out at the level of development regions, at the level of the structure of the providers of continuous training programs and of the topics of continuous training.

Key words: *Continuous training of teachers; Continuous professional development; Continuous training programs.*

1. Introduction

All education systems have faced a multitude of challenges during the last three years, with the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, followed by a period of almost two years, when countries oscillated between opening and closing schools, then the year 2022, when almost all schools were opened and a period of readjustment to physical education followed.

This crisis has shown the strengths of our education systems, but also weaknesses, and has taught us important lessons on how to adapt to the current context. The crisis required us to improve digital education and equip teachers with

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relevant and adequate skills. The crisis has also stressed the need to invest in joint efforts and further reinforce the amazing spirit of our education community across Europe (Eurydice, 2021, p. 3).

The quality of teaching is one of the key factors in ensuring quality learning for students. It is very important for teachers to be able to continue their training throughout their teaching career, both to improve teaching skills, to manage the class of students, and to remain motivated to ensure quality educational activities.

In developing the European policies on continuous teacher training, the starting point is the community strategies and programs, with each country adapting its national policies according to specific training needs, but also to the social, economic and cultural context. This differentiating aspect is the reason why the continuous training of teachers has a different status from one country to another, respectively it is based on different constructive visions.

CPD (Continuing Professional Development) activities may also need top-level coordination and planning. Many European countries have a body or agency that is responsible for providing support for lower secondary teachers in the area of CPD. Such an organization usually provides information about available (or accredited) CPD programs or maintains searchable digital information platforms. Often, the CPD agency organizes and implements CPD activities and provides methodological support. The data shows that in the EU, on average, teachers attended three to four different types of professional development activities (average 3.5) in the 12 months prior to the survey (TALLIS, 2018). The number varies from 2.4 to 6.1. On the lower end, teachers in Belgium (French Community) and France participated in two or three different types of training (approximately 2.5 on average). Teachers in Denmark, Malta and Portugal participated, on average, in three different types of professional development activities. On the higher end, teachers in Lithuania stand out, with the most varied CPD activities, attending on average six different types of training in the 12 months prior to the survey. In the neighboring Baltic countries (Estonia and Latvia), teachers attended approximately five different types of professional development activities (Eurydice, 2021).

In Romania, according to the report *Status of pre-university education 2020-2021*, prepared by the Ministry of Education, in the school year 2020-2021, started the operationalization of the legislative/ normative framework composed of framework-legislation and subsequent, operational legislation for the organization of pilot, experimental and training schools application, created by:

- Decision of the Romanian Government no. 559/2020 on the operation of pre-university education units with the status of pilot, experimental and application units, published in the Official Gazette no. 635 of July 20, 2020;
- Methodology - framework for the establishment, organization and operation of pre-university education units with the status of pilot, experimental and application units, approved by the Order of the Minister of Education and Research no. 4811/2020;

- The framework regulation for the organization and functioning of pedagogical education in the pre-university education system, approved by the Order of the Minister of Education and Research no. 4812/2020.
- The framework regulation regarding the organization and functioning of the pre-university education units with the status of pilot, experimental and application units, approved by the Order of the Minister of Education and Research no. 4813/2020

The legislative changes were determined by the evolution of the pandemic context, trying to facilitate the widest possible access to continuing education programs.

2. Research Methodology

Our study was based on the Register of Continuing Education Programs, which is a public document on the website of the Ministry of Education.

Starting from the data provided by this register, we performed a synthetic analysis of the continuous training offer in Romania, in June 2021, at the level of the development regions.

In 2021, at the level of June, in the National Register of Continuing Education Programs there were 526 accredited continuing education programs at national level, most of them being in the Bucharest-Ilfov Development Region (117 programs, which represents a share of 22,2% of the total). The lowest training programs were in the South-East Development Region (48 programs, which represents a share of 9.1%). The structure of the training program offer for each development region is presented in the chart below:

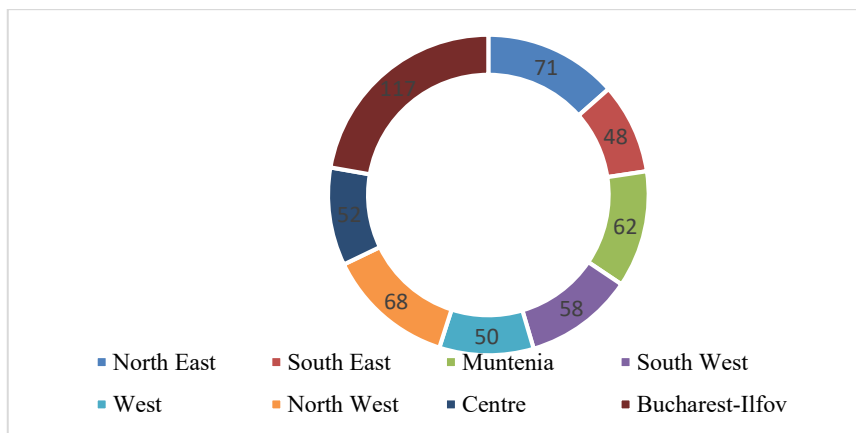


Figure 1. The structure of training programs in Romania June 2021 - by development regions (n = 526)

Next, we are going to present the detailed analysis of the continuous training programs for each of the 8 development regions, mentioning the share registered by each county, their share of the total training programs at regional level, as well as the share of the training programs in each region, from the national total.

At the level of the North-East Development Region, in June 2021, the training offer included 71 training programs. Their distribution was slightly unbalanced on the 6 counties of the region, the most training programs being in the counties of Bacău (19 programs), Iași (17 programs) and Vaslui (16 programs). On the other hand, the least training programs were in Botoșani (3 programs) and Neamț (6 programs) counties.

Table 1. The total number of training programs N-E Region

County	Number of continuing education programs (June 2021)	Share of total number of training programs N-E Region. (%)
Bacău	19	26,8
Botoșani	3	4,2
Iași	17	23,9
Neamț	6	8,5
Suceava	10	14,1
Vaslui	16	22,5
Total	71	100

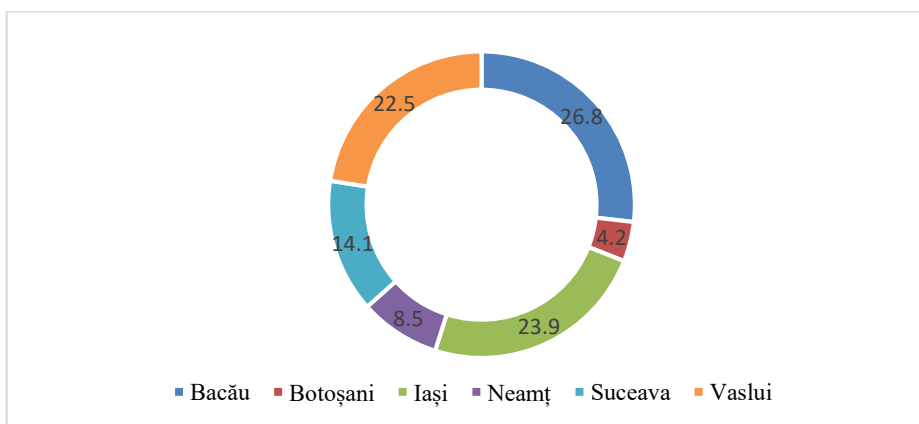


Figure 2. The structure of training programs in the North-East Region June 2021 - by counties

At the level of the South-East Development Region, in June 2021, the training offer included 48 training programs. Their distribution was relatively balanced on the 6 counties of the region, the most training programs being in the counties of Brăila (11 programs) and Vrancea (11 programs). On the other hand, the lowest training programs were in Buzău (2 programs) and Tulcea (7 programs) counties.

Table 2. Total number of training programs Region S-E

County	Number of continuing education programs (June 2021)	Share of total number of training programs S-E Region (%)
Brăila	11	22,9
Buzău	2	4,2
Constanța	8	16,6
Galați	9	18,8
Tulcea	7	14,6
Vrancea	11	22,9
Total	48	100

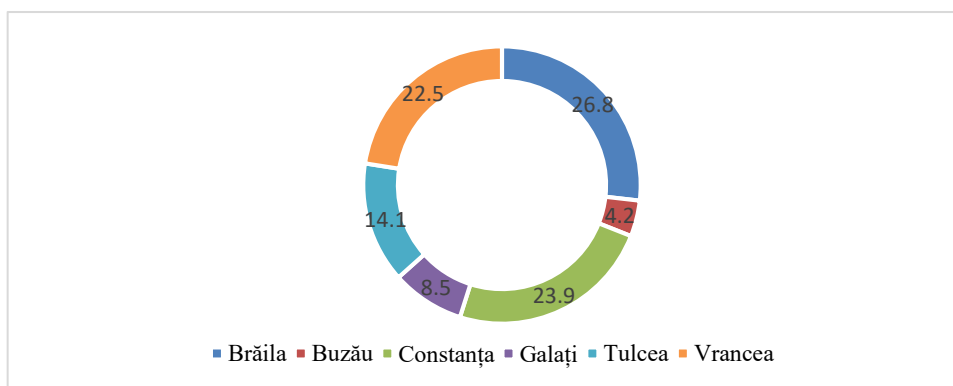


Figure 3. The structure of training programs in the South-East Region June 2021 - by counties

At the level of the Muntenia Development Region, in June 2021, the training offer included 62 training programs, the most training programs being in the counties of Argeș (20 programs), Dâmbovița (11 programs) and Călărași (10 programs). On the other hand, the least training programs were in Teleorman County (5 programs). It should be mentioned that in June 2021, in the National Register of Continuing Education Programs, there was no training program in Giurgiu County.

Table 3. The total number of training programs S-E Region

County	Number of continuing education programs (June 2021)	Share of total number of training programs Muntenia Region (%)
Argeș	20	32,3
Călărași	10	16,1
Dâmbovița	11	17,7
Giurgiu	0	0
Ialomița	8	12,9
Prahova	8	12,9
Teleorman	5	8,1
Total	62	100

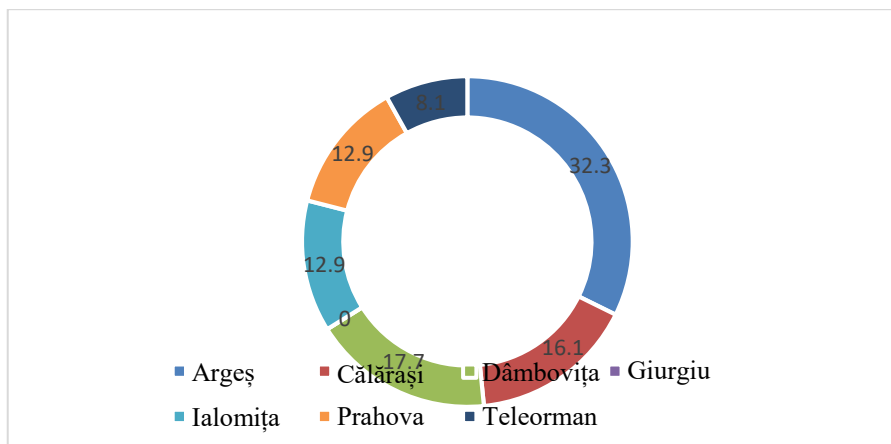


Figure 4. The structure of training programs in the Muntenia Region - by counties

At the level of the South-West Oltenia Development Region, in June 2021, the training offer included 58 training programs, in only 4 counties out of the 5 of the region. Most training programs were in the counties of Olt (27 programs) and Dolj (25 programs). On the other hand, the least training programs were in Mehedinți County (2 programs). It should be mentioned that in June 2021, in the National Register of Continuing Education Programs, there was no training program in Vâlcea County.

Table 4. The total number of training programs Region S-V

County	Number of continuing education programs (June 2021)	Share of total number of training programs South-West Region (%)
Dolj	25	43,1
Gorj	4	6,9
Mehedinți	2	3,4
Olt	27	46,6
Vâlcea	0	0
Total	58	100

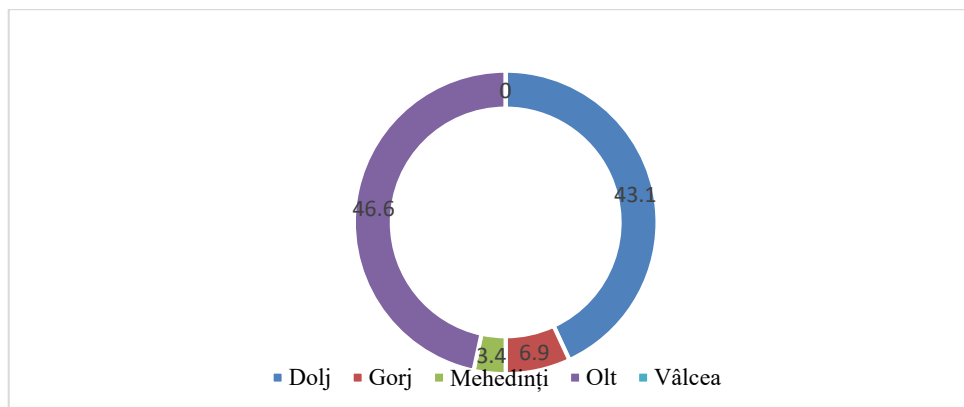


Figure 5. The structure of training programs in the South-West Region – by counties

At the level of the West Development Region, in June 2021, the training offer included 50 training programs in the 4 counties of the region. Most training programs were in Timiș County (20 programs), followed by Arad (13 programs) and Hunedoara (12 programs). On the other hand, the least training programs were in Caraș-Severin County (5 programs).

Table 5. The total number of training programs West Region

County	Number of continuing education programs (June 2021)	Share of total number of training programs West Region (%)
Arad	13	43,1
Caras-Severin	5	6,9
Hunedoara	12	3,4
Timiș	20	46,6
Total	50	100

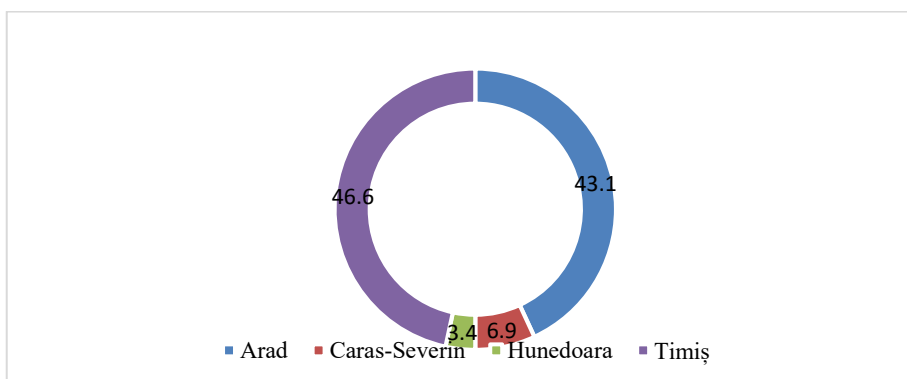


Figure 6. The structure of training programs in the West Region - by counties

At the level of the North-West Development Region, in June 2021, the training offer included 68 training programs in the 6 counties of the region. Most training programs were in Cluj County (32 programs), followed by Bihor (9 programs) and Maramureș (9 programs). On the other hand, the lowest training programs were in the counties of Satu-Mare (5 programs) and Sălaj (5 programs).

Table 6. The total number of training programs North-West Region

County	Number of continuing education programs (June 2021)	Share of total number of training programs North-West Region (%)
Bihor	9	13,2
Bistrița-Năsăud	8	11,7
Cluj	32	47,1
Maramureș	9	13,2
Satu-Mare	5	7,4
Sălaj	5	7,4
Total	68	100

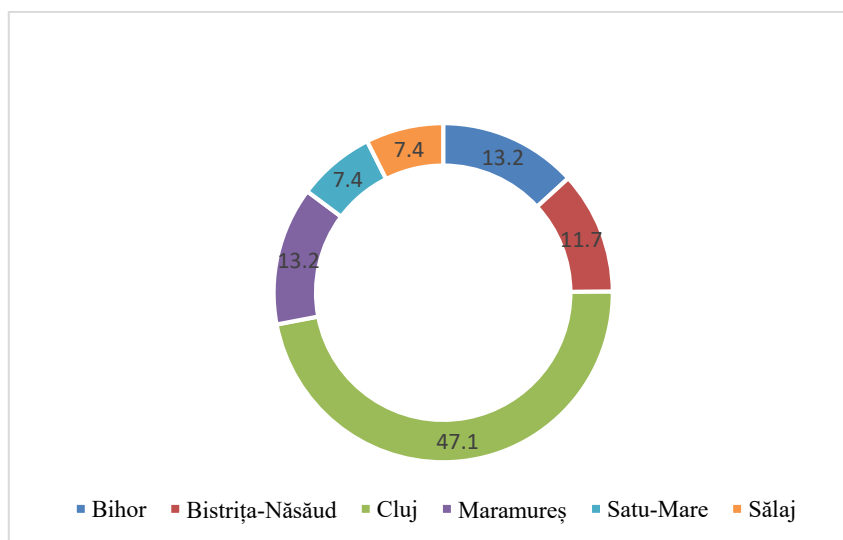


Figure 7. The structure of training programs in the North-West Region - by counties

At the level of the Center Development Region, in June 2021, the training offer included 52 training programs in the 6 counties of the region. Most training programs were in Mureș County (17 programs), followed by Brașov (15 programs) and Sibiu (13 programs). On the other hand, the least training programs were in Alba and Harghita counties (2 programs, for each county). The situation as well as their share of the total number of continuing education programs/ region are presented in the table and graph below.

Table 7. The total number of training programs Center Region

County	Number of continuing education programs (June 2021)	Share of the total number of training programs Center Region (%)
Alba	2	3,8
Braşov	15	28,9
Covasna	3	5,8
Harghita	2	3,8
Mureş	17	32,7
Sibiu	13	25,0
Total	52	100

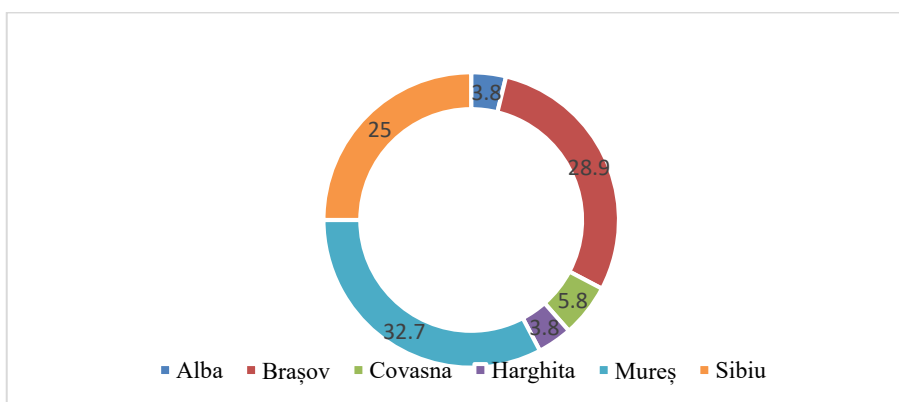


Figure 8. The structure of training programs in the Center Region - by counties

At the level of the Bucharest-Ilfov Development Region, in June 2021, the training offer included 117 training programs, of which 90 in Bucharest and 27 programs in Ilfov County. The offer of training programs in this region represents 22.2% of the 526 training programs that existed at national level.

Table 8. The total number of training programs Bucharest - Ilfov

County	Number of continuing education programs (June 2021)	Share of total number of training programs Bucharest-Ilfov Region (%)
Bucharest capital city	90	76,9
Ilfov	27	23,1
Total	117	100

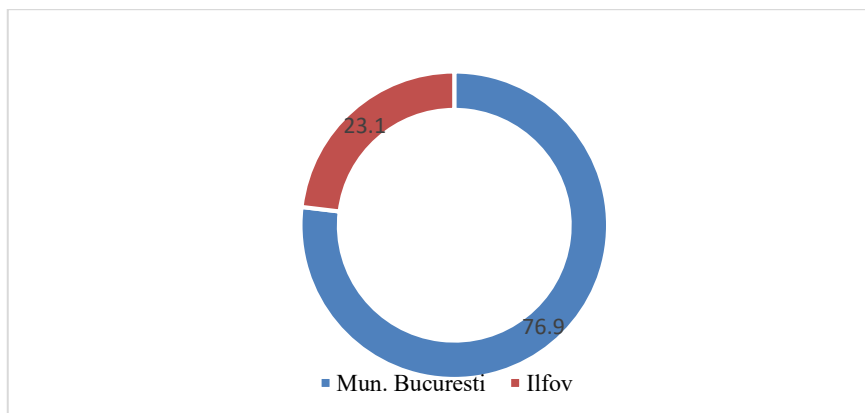


Figure 9. The structure of training programs in the Bucharest Ilfov Region - by counties

The continuing education of teachers can be organized by several categories of training program providers: Teachers' Training Centres (CCD) located in the National Network of Teachers' Training Centres; Universities/ Associations/ NGOs/ social partners. The 526 nationally accredited training programs in 2021 (June) were provided primarily by the Teachers' Training Centre - the offer included 253 training programs, which represents a share of approx. 48% of the total number of training programs. The second category of training program providers is represented by Associations/ NGOs/ Institutes/ Social Partners - the offer included 221 training programs, which represent a share of approximately 42% of the total number of training programs. Within the universities, the training offer included 52 programs, distributed on several thematic areas, as you will be able to see in the chart, point 3 of this report.

Table 9. The total number of training programs according to the provider

Category, provider, training programs	Number of continuing education programs (June 2021)	Share of total number of training programs (%)
Teachers' Training Centres	253	48,1
Associations/ NGOs/ Institutes/ Social Partners	221	42,0
Universities	52	9,9
Total	526	100

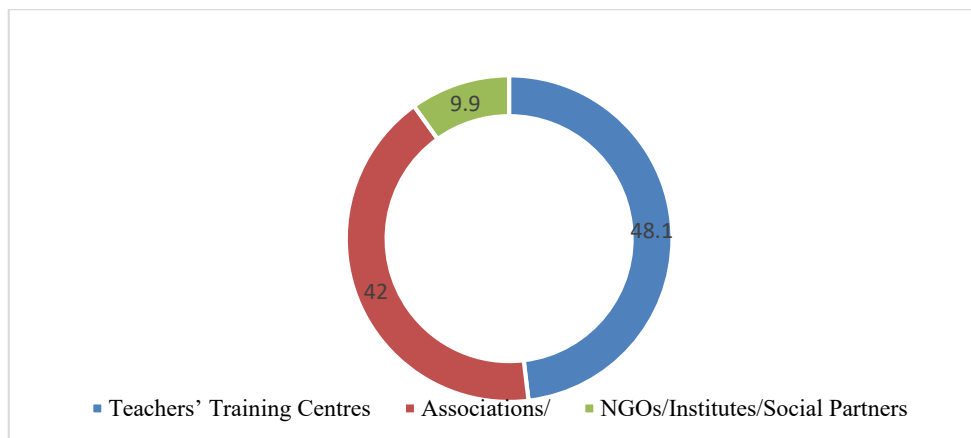


Figure 10. The structure of providers of continuing education programs, depending on their specifics (June 2021)

Analyzing the data from the National Register of Continuing Education Programs, we can see that the range of thematic areas of training programs is quite wide. However, there is a significant share of training programs in the field of Digital Skills/ ICT, which can be explained based on two main arguments: a) the need for teachers to align with the new requirements of 21st century education, where digital skills represent a priority; b) the need for teachers to adapt to the new educational context imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, a context that brought to the fore the importance of using ICT in education. Also, a significant number of training programs are in thematic areas such as: "Management and leadership", "Teaching strategies for teaching-learning-assessment", "Education of children with SEN" or "Equality of opportunities and gender". The distribution of training programs by thematic areas can be seen in the table and graph below.

Table 10. The distribution of training programs, by thematic areas

Thematic field	Number of training programs (June 2021)
Digital skills/ ICT	57
Teaching-learning-assessment strategies	66
Curricular ability	33
Management and leadership in education	83
Quality management in education	17
Equality of opportunities and gender	35
Curriculum design	15
Intercultural education	9
Education for democratic citizenship	7
Non-formal, extracurricular and informal education	32
Management and counseling	16
Career counseling and guidance	17
Education of children with SEN	40

Education for health	11
Education of children and young people with high skills	2
Classroom management	38
Other	48
Total	526

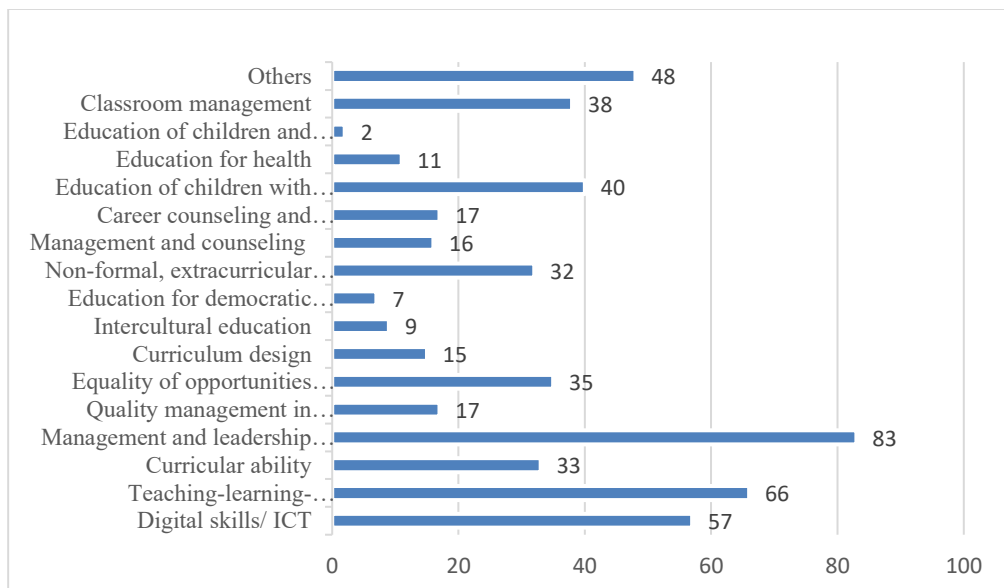


Figure 11. The structure of training programs according to their thematic field (June 2021) - n = 526

3. Conclusions and discussions

For a complete and relevant analysis on the continuous training of teachers, it is necessary to complete the existing databases with information on the continuing training courses completed by pre-university teachers.

The offer of programs at the level of development regions is not correlated with the need for teacher training. According to the Methodology for Accreditation of Continuing Education Programs, the programs that are submitted for accreditation to the Continuing Education Directorate of the Ministry of Education are based on studies on identifying the training needs, but most often these studies are focused more on the theme of the program to be accredited and less on identifying the real needs of continuing education.

Another negative aspect of the continuing education component of the education system is the lack of a permanent and functional commission at the level of each school to identify and monitor the real training needs of teachers in accordance with the human resources management of that school.

The simplification of the form of organizing the implementation of the accredited training programs, in online system, and the revision of the procedure for

supporting the final evaluation within the accredited continuous training programs, was achieved by OM no. 5767/ 15.10.2020 on the accreditation, organization and development of continuing education programs for pre-university teaching staff, in the school year 2020 - 2021. During 2021, 100 new continuing education programs were accredited:

- OM no. 3559/ 29.03.2021 regarding the accreditation of 26 programs
- OM no. 3737/ 27.04.2021, regarding the accreditation of 19 programs
- OM no. 3879/ 04.06.2021, regarding the accreditation of 10 programs
- OM no. 4618/ 11.08.2021, regarding the accreditation of 43 continuous training programs.

All the recommendations of the European Commission and the OECD, in the field of teaching career, specify as a priority for the intervention of national education systems the continuous professional training of teachers. The offer of continuing education programs is varied, covers all the thematic areas of the Continuing Education Methodology and there are even proposals that meet the needs to solve the problems that were not included in the legislative document at the time of its publication, but remains an open issue, the one referring to the number of teachers accessing this offer, which are the reasons they access it or not, it really meets the needs of teachers.

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