

General Structure of National Educational System

The changes in the economic, social and political life of Moldova demanded the development of a new educational policy and legislative framework. Three major documents have been adopted:

- Educational Development Conception of Moldova in 1994;
- Law of Education in 1995;
- National Educational Development Program (for 1995-2000).

The educational system of Moldova is the social institute for training and education of young generations.

The main task of education is to educate children and other categories of population as prerequisites for the consolidation of the state independence, its economic and cultural potential, and its integration into the European and global communities.

Education is realized through a great diversity of structures, forms, contents and educational technologies. Education is lay, on national, racial, political discrimination. State education is free of charge.

The main objective of education is to provide equality of opportunities to education for all people. The right to education is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova. The State provides equal opportunities to education depending on everyone's abilities and aptitudes. Population literacy is quite satisfactory (96,4% according to official data). The share of registered students to educational institutions according to the age levels is very close to the existing one in the neighboring countries.

The educational system relies on educational standards approved by the Government. The standards set up minimum requirements to levels and stages of education.

According to the Law on Education of the Republic of Moldova the educational system is organized in levels, stages and cycles. Its structure is as follows:

- 1) preschool education;
- 2) primary education:
 - a) secondary education;
 - b) general secondary education (gymnasium, lyceum);
- 3) vocational secondary education;
- 4) higher education;
- 5) post-graduate higher(doctoral and post-doctoral) education.

The educational system may include other forms of education too.

- special education;
- complementary education;
- continuing education

Within the educational system we distinguish day, evening and extramural classes, individual studies, etc. The academic year is September to July. Basic education is compulsory and comprises forms from I to IX. The grading system is from 1 to 10 (highest scale is 10; lowest pass level is 5; lowest on scale is 1). The languages of instruction are Romanian and Russian.

Pre-school education is the first level of education. It comprises a net of educational institutions of various types, mainly kindergartens; they can be public or private, offering diverse educational programs corresponding to the national educational standards.

Primary education (I-IV forms) is for children from 7 to 11

It is provided as full-time attending in 1576 schools. Primary schools are attended by approximately 201,650 children that make up 99,87% of the total number of children of this age.

Gymnasium education is also full-time (V-IX forms) for children from 11 to 16. Children come to gymnasiums after primary school graduation. Gymnasium education finalizes with a graduation exam comprising more subjects. The gymnasium issues a Certificate of studies of the form required by the Ministry of Education.

Secondary education

Lyceum (High school) education (X-XII forms) provides fundamental theoretical training and creates conditions to enter higher educational institutions or vocational schools. Lyceum education is 3 years. Admission to lyceum is only through examination for gymnasium graduates or polyvalent vocational school graduates. Lyceum education finalizes with bachelor's exams and the graduates receive a Diploma of Bachelor.

Vocational secondary education provides training in vocational and professional schools.

Special education offers training for children with mental and physical deficiencies. The duration of the compulsory education is 8 years depending on the level of disease.

Arts and sports education is for children with special musical, artistic, sports abilities. Admission to this education is through testing.

Complementary education (out-of-school) is a very important trend of national education. It helps to develop the abilities and talent of children in various domains.

Continuing education comprises all types of education for this category: various courses, open universities, distance education etc.

Private education The expansion of market relations had an impact on educational services, too. Since 1992 the net of private educational institutions has developed along with the public education. Private education encounters many impediments. Imperfect legislative framework, lack of an adequate infrastructure are only some of the multiple difficulties that new educational establishments face.

Nowadays there are about 163 private educational institutions functioning on the basis of the license issued by the Ministry of Education. The institutions are of various levels and steps: 25 universities, one post-university institution, 18 colleges, 60 pre-university institutions (kindergartens, primary schools, gymnasiums, lyceums), 5 vocational schools, 200 training courses for adults.

Traditionally education is provided in public schools, gymnasiums, secondary schools, lyceums, and vocational schools. The **budget** is the main financial source of educational system.

Usually each level of education finalizes with State Exams and the graduates receive a Certificate of Studies or Diploma, if the exams have been successfully passed in an accredited institution. The design of Certificates and Diplomas is approved by the Council of the Ministry of Education. The assessment of the quality of education has just started.

Higher education in Moldova is provided by universities, academies, institutes. The period of studies is 4-6 years, depends on specialization. Admission to higher education is for graduates from general secondary schools and lyceums, holders of Certificate of studies, in the first case, and holders of Baccalaureate Diploma, in the second case. Higher education finalizes with graduation exams and a Diploma thesis. The graduates receive a Diploma of License or Diploma of higher education in a certain subject area.