

“My School”

After 5 Years of Implementation: Outcomes and Lessons Learned

National Conference

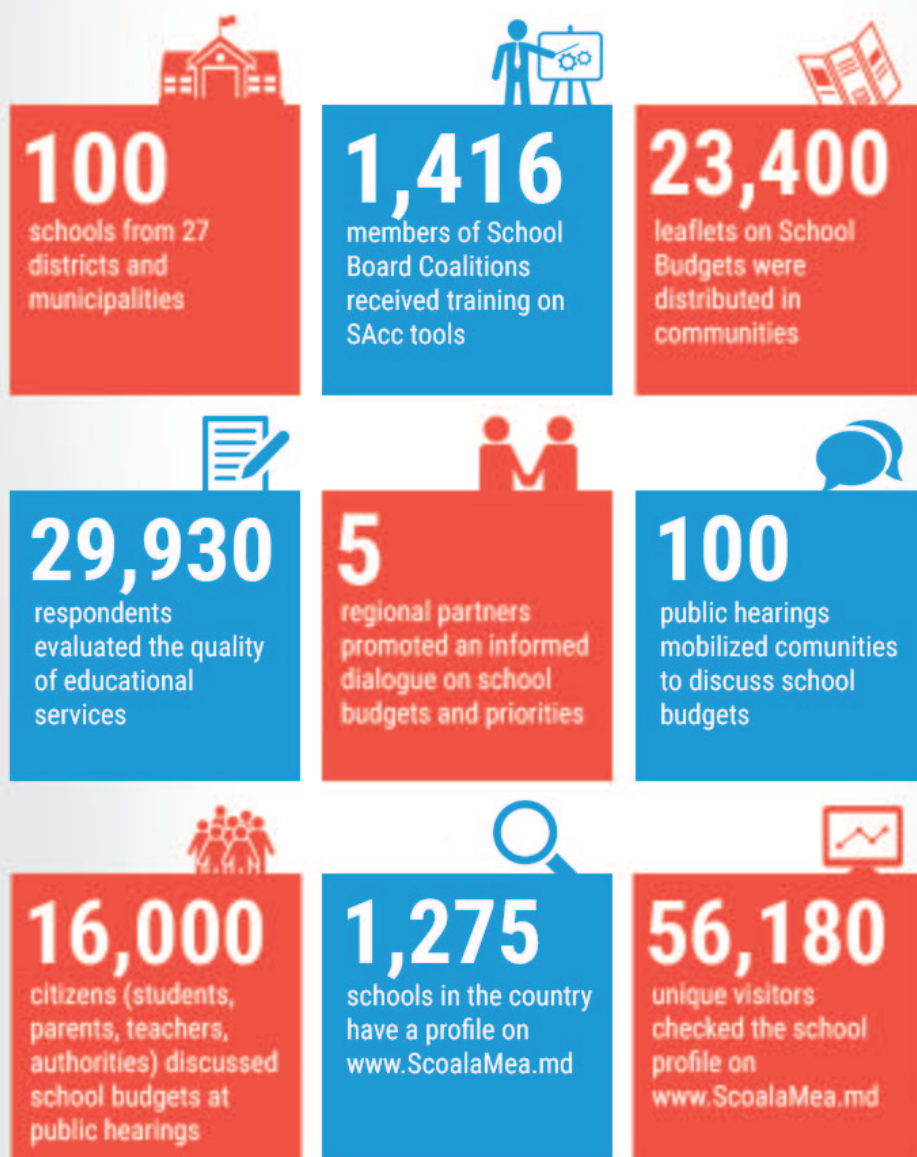


November 22, 2018
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Key Numbers



Key-numbers for 2014-2018



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Introduction



Monica Babuc,
Minister of Education,
Culture and Research of
the Republic of Moldova

"Scoala Mea" is a beneficial and necessary project not only for the authorities and institutions involved, but also for the community. It is well known that the student who is informed today about the activity of the school, tomorrow will be an active citizen. Therefore, we support the further implementation of this project, with the certainty that will contribute to a better education. As Ambassadors I hope you will also be able to inspire and motivate others around you – directors, institutions, friends, family and the community – by your own example of civic activism and engagement – to make them want to contribute positively in promotion of the Social Accountability principles in the schools at the national level.



Anna Akhalkatsi,
Country Manager,
The World Bank Group

Education is the key to the success of an individual, a community and, ultimately, of a nation. It is an essential driver of a country's well-being and enabler of strong human capital. This is why citizen participation in decision-making is of paramount importance. It enhances the quality of services and ensures their sustainability, building trust and transparency. Over the years, "Scoala Mea" project has proven the benefits and advantages of people's participation. I hope that all schools in Moldova become inspired by this experience.



Adrian Lupusor,
Executive Director,
Expert-Grup

Nowadays, a qualitative and sustainable education cannot be achieved without the help of the community. The ultimate goal of "Scoala Mea" ("My School") initiative is to empower Moldova's citizens to engage local, regional and national authorities in a dialogue regarding educational reform, quality of services, and development priorities of schools and to enable an environment in which Social Accountability (SAcc) initiatives thrive and develop. This way, each and every one of us, teachers, parents, the non-governmental sector, national and local public authorities and students themselves contribute to the development of this country.

About the Initiative

“My School” is an initiative of Expert-Grup Independent Think Tank, which was launched in 2014. Its mission is to create such an environment, where citizens together with school management, as well as with local, district and national level authorities could have a dialog underpinned by evidence and arguments related to the reform of the education sector, quality of services and school development priorities. The tools provided to the beneficiary schools are involvement forms, public hearing and independent analysis of the school budget. They are meant to provide a platform for the involvement of citizens in decision-making and evaluate the satisfaction of stakeholders with the educational process.

Besides social accountability tools, “My School” also created an interactive platform with the profiles of 1,275 educational institutions from all-over the country. Namely, www.ScoalaMea.md provides information about the following: number of pupils and teaching staff; qualification level of the teaching staff; school budget; average expenditure per pupil; budget execution by categories; and school performance. The platform also provides interactive maps that allow comparing certain indicators with the average per district/municipality and per country, but also to search schools by certain parameters (number of pupils, budget, exam pass rate, etc.).

During five years of implementation, the Project involved around 50,000 people from 27 districts and municipalities in discussing school budgets, while 100 beneficiary schools learned and applied social accountability tools, thus creating opportunities for students and parents to contribute to the improvement of the educational process, i.e. improvement of their school.

The Project was funded by the World Bank Group under the Global Partnership for Social Accountability and has been implemented with the support of regional partners and of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova.

AGENDA

10:30 **Registration, coffee and networking**

11:00 **Welcoming remarks**

Anna Akhalkatsi, *Country Manager for Moldova, The World Bank Group*

Monica Babuc, *Minister of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova*

Adrian Lupușor, *Executive Director, Expert-Grup*

Tatiana Savva, *Project Coordinator "My School", Expert-Grup*

11:30 **The results of "My School" after 5 years of implementation**

Moderator: Gabriela Ojog, *Executive Director, FDRM Moldova*

Speakers:

Natalia Răileanu, *Director, "Ion Pelivan" Highschool, Răzeni, Ialoveni*

Svetlana Ciobanu, *Executive Director, Regional Center for Sustainable Development, Ungheni*

Gabriela Vatamaniuc, *Pupils' Council, "Victor Coțofană" Gymnasium, Chetrosu, Drochia*

Angela Prisăcaru, *Main Adviser by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova*

Key questions:

- What made social responsibility translate into success stories?
- Citizens perceptions over the quality of education services.
- Why being transparent pays off: a vision from the policy makers.

13:00 **Lunch**

14:00 Making it count: replicating the social accountability tools at the national level

Moderator: Ana Vivdici, Advisory Council Member for “My School”, ex-director of the National School Inspectorate

Speakers:

Valentin Crudu, *Head of the General Education Department, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova*

Nicolae Dandiș, *Mayor, Cahul municipality*

Ion Pruteanu, *Head of the Anticorruption Education Department, National Anticorruption Center*

Stela Cudalb, *Program Officer “Common Initiative for Equal Opportunities”, East Europe Foundation, Moldova*

Valentina Caplinscaia, *Director, “Alecu Russo” Highschool, Sângerei Noi, Sângerei*

Key questions:

- Going national: opportunities and incentives of implementation of social accountability tools in the national educational system.
- Examples of social accountability practices from schools outside the project, local authorities.
- How can an informed community become an anti-corruption tool in the educational system?
- How SAcc tools can improve citizens’ involvement at the local level?
- Agents of change in the educational system: how teachers can influence innovation for greater transparency?

15:30 Awarding the acknowledgement distinctions for the “My School” Ambassadors”

15:50 Final remarks and closing the event

Tatiana Savva, “My School” Project Coordinator, Expert-Grup

Lucia Casap, Operations Officer, Task Team Leader, The World Bank Group

16:00 Reimbursement of transportation costs

Partnerships in Education – “My School” Success Stories



Stela Scripliuc, Principal of “Liviu Damian” Lyceum from Riscani, “My School” beneficiary, 2014

“My School” strengthened the relationship between the lyceum and the local authorities. Nowadays many activities are organized jointly with the Department of Education, Youth and Sports and the District Council contributes to this. The tools applied at that time, particularly the public hearing, made everyone understand that improvement can be achieved only by joint efforts and transparent activity. “Several parents and representatives of local authorities took part in organizing the hearing in 2016. I prepared a report on several years, where I showed revenues and expenses and parents saw that not so much money is left for the development of the school. Ever since, we have public hearings yearly. There are fewer participants than the first time, but we insist that everyone who wishes to come is welcome and so are the representatives of district administration. Hearings help us draft and approve the budget easier.”



Rodica Caraja, Principal of “Ion Creanga” Lyceum from Cahul, “My School” beneficiary, 2016

The principal is confident that “My School” fostered a durable connection between school and parents, but also between pupils and teachers. So, today school management has frequent meetings with the pupils, especially with the ones in upper grades and asks for their advice. “They have concrete suggestions. For instance, we intend to repair the hallways and they picked the color of the paint, made the design. We selected some of their ideas and they were really good,” says Rodica Caraja. The lyceum manager has drawn the conclusion that nowadays “There is a different generation of students. We can’t hide things from them, decide on our own, because this is about them and they are interested in everything happening in the school.”



Natalia Raileanu, Principal of “Ion Pelivan” Theoretical Lyceum from Razeni, “My School” beneficiary, 2017

Public hearing became necessary in Razeni. As the principal said, it raised not only parents’ interest, but also teachers’, who generate ideas and justify the spending of school money under various projects. “I believe that hiding things from the parents, from the community just gives birth to more doubts. That is why we decided that public hearing would be a good experience for our school. We are a big team of teachers, a village full of parents and children from 5 neighboring villages attend our school. There many issues to discuss. For instance, parents from Razeni wonder why do they pay for transporting children from Horesti to school. Our argument is that if we want the school to live and thrive, it needs pupils. Because every pupil brings money. So, we pay for instance 50 thousand lei for a bus, but we will gain 250 thousand lei because there are 30 children, which means over 300 thousand lei. Every spent penny has to be justified,” says Natalia Raileanu.



**Angela Cutasevici, State
Secretary, Ministry of Education,
Culture and Research**

"The 'My School' Project is beneficial and necessary not just for authorities and educational institutions, but particularly for communities. It is well-known that a pupil that is informed today about school activity, will be tomorrow an active citizen of the society. Consequently, we support the implementation of this Project and we are confident that this way we'll ensure a high-quality education."



**Liuba Sanduta-Plesca,
Principal of "Mesterul Manole"
Theoretical Lyceum from Salcuta
village, Causeni district, "My
School" beneficiary, 2017**

"What did we learn from parents and pupils? First of all, we do a lot of things and we do them well, but people don't actually know about it. Secondly, a lot has been invested in the technical endowment of the school. Parents and pupils told us it was the time to make big investments in the intellectual development of children. Teachers told me that we have to focus on their education abroad," says the principal of the lyceum.



**Ana Vivdici, Principal of "Mihai
Eminescu" Lyceum from
Hincesti, member of the "My
School" Advisory Board, "My
School" beneficiary, 2014**

"I started to understand processes, what resources were available, how money was spent in the previous years, what savings were made. So we made an evaluation of the previous years and compared it to the situation existing at that moment. It was an analysis that covered the last two years, which I intended to present during a public hearing where I invited parents, teachers, pupils, but also the mayor. Everyone at that meeting felt a certain level of tension. Everyone was thinking of how it used to be and how it was at that specific point in time. Ultimately, it was a successful hearing because we learned to promote an assertive message, which encourages collaboration. What message did I have to pass to the parents? What did I have to convince them about? I had to tell them that we had nothing to hide. That we talked openly about things that related to all of us and that we had to be open in order to admit that we had issues, but that we could overcome them together. And that we were waiting for their reaction, either positive or negative. That was the most important thing."



**Nicolae Dandis, Mayor of Cahul
municipality**

Leading by his own example of being involved in schools' activity, Nicolae Dandis tries to influence as many LPAs as possible to do the same thing, because school is one of the most important institutions in a community. This is possible because there are representatives of the local authority on every Management Board and the education conditions and quality depend on their responsibility and involvement.

"We also tried to promote the social accountability principles outside the educational system. Having used the guides and other resources provided by 'My School' Project, we organized the first public hearing of Cahul city budget. Nowadays, the mayoralty of Cahul municipality is one of the most transparent in the country and I am sure that when the mayoralty is involved responsibly in the educational process, both school management, parents and pupils will trust the positive change that is taking place in the educational system," stated the Mayor.

“My School” Ambassadors

Since the launch of the “My School” project in December 2013, the Independent Analytical Center Expert-Grup, together with local partners, has been interested in setting up a platform for cooperation and sharing experience in order to promote good practice in implementing social accountability tools. Expert-Grup collaborates with teachers and representatives of training institutions or educational authorities, regional partners, local and central public authorities. One of the multiplication platforms of the project’s good practice is the establishment of the “My School” Ambassador Network, where the institutions, after completing the “My School” project, are willing to serve as a local reference point of social accountability. If you are open to the initiative and want to implement independent social responsibility tools, you can contact by email or by phone the listed below Ambassadors.

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Resources

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Expert-Grup Independent Think Tank, contact person – Tatiana Savva, tatiana@expert-grup.org, 079803266, 022 929994;

Regional Center CONTACT-Balti, contact person – Nina Bandiu, nina.bandiu@gmail.com, 69033939;

“DACIA” Youth Resource Center, contact person – Stela Babici, stela.babici@yahoo.com, 068338284;

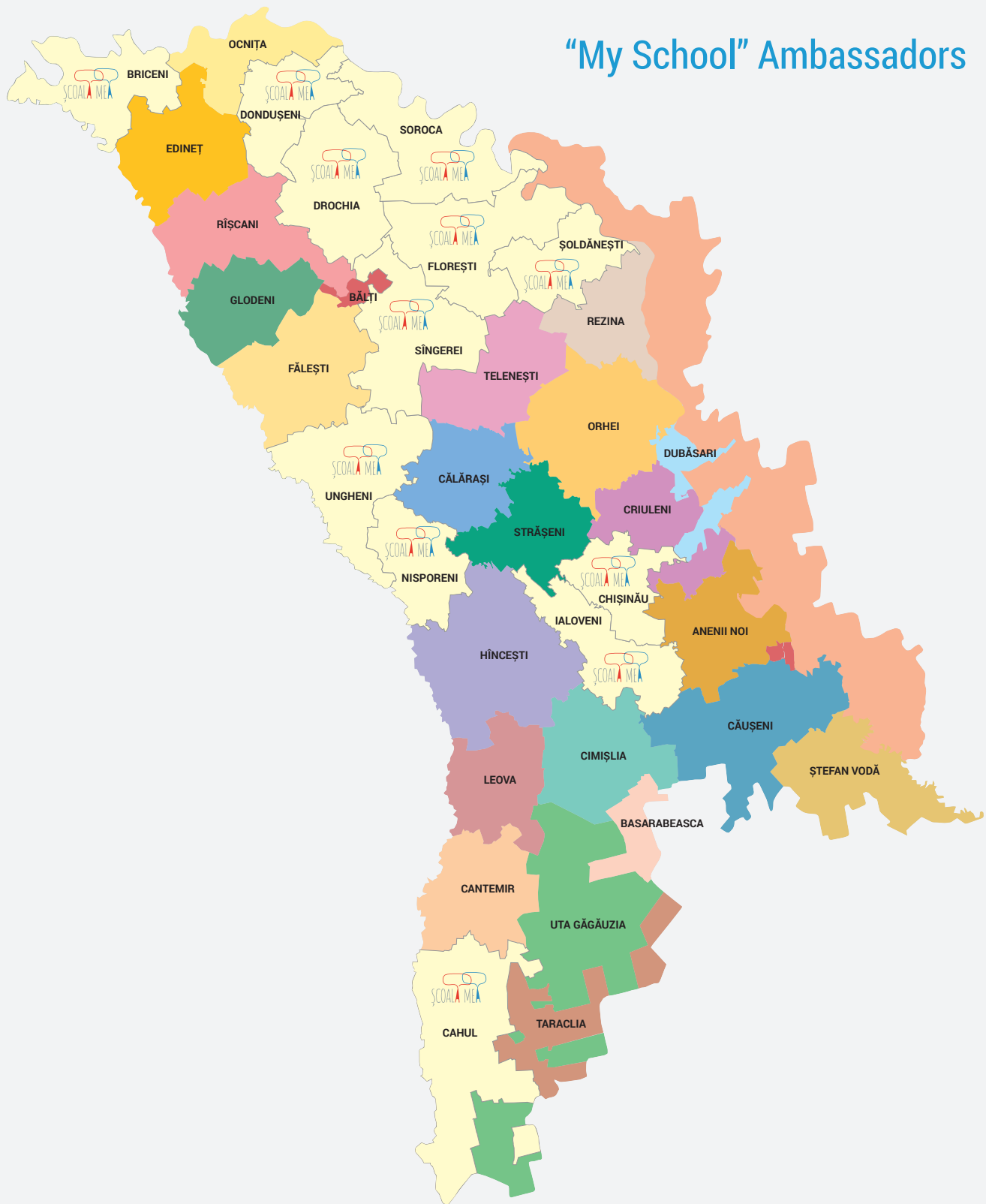
Ungheni Regional Center for Sustainable Development, contact person – Svetlana Ciobanu, crdd_ungheni@yahoo.com, 069293036;

Development Foundation from Moldova, contact person – Gabriela Ojog, gabriela.ojog@fam.md, 069163090.

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"My School" Ambassadors



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