

International Research Project  
Enhancing Professional Development of Education Practitioners and  
Teaching/Learning practices in SEE countries

**NATIONAL REPORT**  
**REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

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## 1. Educational System in the Republic of Moldova

State policy in the field of education, including in the field of higher education, is framed by the Law on Education of the Republic of Moldova no. 547-XIII dated 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1995. The Law on Education regulates the organization and operation of the educational system.

The educational system in the Republic of Moldova has several levels and stages:

I. Pre-school education

II. Primary education

III. Secondary education:

1. Secondary general education:
  - a) gymnasium (basic) education;
  - b) lycee (general school) education.
2. Secondary vocational education.
3. Secondary professional education.

IV. Higher education

V. Post-graduation education

1. Specialized post-graduation education
2. Post-graduation education

The educational system also includes other forms of education:

- special needs education;
- complementary education;
- adult education.

Pre-school education covers children aged from 3 to 6(7); primary education lasts 4 years (I–IV grades); gymnasium education has a five-year duration (V–IX grades); lycee education lasts 3 years (X–XII grades). Secondary general schools (eleven-year length of studies) will exist until the end of the period of transition towards the new structure of the educational system.

*Secondary vocational education* provides pre-service training in a trade (profession) as well as lifelong learning and requalification training for skilled workers and unemployed.

*Secondary professional education* is provided by colleges. Holders of baccalaureate diplomas and of school or gymnasium certificates can be enrolled in colleges as a result of an admission contest. The length of day-time studies is 2–3 years. The duration of part-time studies is one year longer.

*Higher education* is delivered by higher education institutions: universities, academies and institutes.

*Specialized post-graduation education* is provided by higher education and research institutions which dispose of the required conditions for theoretic and specialized education of researchers and of the teaching staff.

*Post-graduation education* is implemented by the means of doctorate, post-doctorate and other types of post-graduation courses, as well as professional development courses provided by research and accredited higher education institutions.

Lifelong learning courses are delivered by specialized vocational training institutions and by other types of public or private institutions which are subject to academic accreditation or hold are licensed to deliver such training according to the legislation into force.

At central level, the educational system is managed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, at local level – by General Departments for Education, Youth and Sports. From

the administrative perspective, such Departments are subordinated to District Councils, while from the teaching and methodological perspectives, they are subordinated to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. In the Republic of Moldova, there is not any independent organization in charge of monitoring and ensuring the quality of education. Such functions are exerted by several units of the Ministry and subdivisions of General District Departments.

## **2. The Teaching Staff: Brief Presentation**

### **2.1. General Education Teaching Staff**

The work of educational actors in pre-university educational institutions is regulated by the following documents: the Law on Education, the Frame-Status of Secondary School, the Regulation on Lycee Organization and Operation, the Regulations on the Evaluation of Teaching and Managerial Staff.

According to the legislation in force, the *teaching staff* of pre-university educational institutions includes:

- educators in pre-school, primary and special educational institutions;
- speech therapists in pre-school, primary and special educational institutions;
- school psychologists in pre-university educational institutions;
- teachers in primary education (I to IV grades);
- teachers in secondary education (gymnasias, lycees, vocational schools);
- instructors and foremen in secondary vocational education.

*The rights* of the teaching staff provide for:

- the respect of the teacher's dignity;
- the freedom of opinion;
- ensuring efficient conditions for work and for professional development;
- the freedom of professional initiative in reaching educational goals: selecting teaching techniques, evaluation of pupil's performance according to his/her own conscience, under a valid evaluation system, using the teaching aids and the resources available within the educational system, modernizing the educational process due to innovative ideas, pupil involvement in research;
- the right to join national and international professional, cultural associations and organizations, trade unions, as well as legally-established political organizations.

The teaching staff have the following *duties*:

- study syllabi, curricula, manuals and professional literature;
- conduct semestrial planning;
- develop teaching projects or draft-lesson plans;
- deliver lessons;
- ensure the efficiency of the educational process;
- encourage self-education, initiatives and creative skills of the pupils;
- ensure the security of pupils' life and health during lessons and extra-curricular activities; organize and hold school competitions;
- take part in the works of chairs and of the teaching council;

- attend, when required, the meetings of the Administration Council and take part in its works;
- organize and hold class-meetings;
- deliver additional lessons and consultations to pupils;
- collaborate with the pupils' families;
- ensure his/her professional development in the field of the subject he/she teaches, of psycho-pedagogy, of teaching techniques;
- take part in lifelong learning courses held both in school and extra-school;
- fulfil all professional obligations.

A number of *professional associations of teachers* have been established in the Republic of Moldova. They regroup teachers of the same professional fields: the Society of Philological Sciences, The Society of Historians, the Association of Managers, the Association of English Teachers, etc. Professional associations encourage scientific and methodological research in the concerned field, enhance professional development of the teaching staff at all educational levels, disseminate widely knowledge both in and out of school, raise young people's interest in sciences, support the scientific societies of pupils, represent and promote professional, teaching and scientific interests of their members.

## **2.2. National Regulations on the Conferment of Teacher's Degrees**

According to the Law on Education, teachers are awarded degrees based on a Regulation issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Throughout many years, the regulation has been subject to several modifications (1999, 2000, 2001 and 2003 updates), in response to the reforms implemented within the educational system as well as a result of political interference. Nevertheless, despite the changes imposed by political conjuncture, the Regulation into force provides for teachers' confirmation and conferment of degrees based on professional achievements, academic performance, pedagogical and psychological skills.

The *confirmation* of the teaching staff is compulsory once in 5 years. Beginners can be confirmed in their posts after a three-year term of teaching service.

Applicants for the conferment/confirmation of the first and the highest teacher's degree are required publications on teaching issues, participation with reports in teacher conferences and seminars. They are also expected to have trainer's or a tutor's experience as well as experience of work in professional partnerships.

*Second teacher's degree* is conferred/confirmed on the basis of:

- the resolution issued by the evaluation board of the educational unit, the evaluation portfolio;
- public presentation of the self-evaluation report.

*First teacher's degree* is conferred/confirmed on the basis of:

- the resolution of the evaluation board of the educational unit, the evaluation portfolio;
- public presentation of the methodological paper/self-evaluation report in front of the national evaluation board;
- performance interview evaluation.

*Highest teacher's degree* is conferred/confirmed on the basis of:

- the resolution of the evaluation board of the educational unit, the evaluation portfolio;
- public presentation of the scientific-methodological paper/self-evaluation report in front of the national evaluation board;

- performance interview evaluation.

Holders of research and teacher's titles/degrees in pedagogy or in the field of the subject they teach are conferred/confirmed the highest teacher's degree and holders of master diplomas are conferred/confirmed the second teacher's degree on the basis of:

- the resolution of the evaluation board of the educational unit, the evaluation portfolio;
- title related documents.

Teaching and managerial staff can apply for teacher's and manager's degrees on their own behalf. Holders of the highest degree have a 50% increase in salary, holders of the first degree – a 40% increase and holders of the second degree – a 30% increase.

There are three stages of the process of evaluation of the teaching and managerial staff: on-the-job evaluation, development and public presentation of teaching projects, performance interview.

The on-the-job evaluation is under the full responsibility of the educational units. Evaluation boards are set by the resolution of the Teaching Council. District/city education departments and teacher trade unions monitor the work of the evaluation boards set by educational units. Based on the evaluation results and on the resolution of district evaluation board, the Education Department issues an ordinance concerning the conferment/confirmation of the second teachers' and manager's degrees.

Under the on-going educational reform in the Republic of Moldova, the system of training/evaluation of the teaching staff has considerably changed. The development and the approval of the *Concept of Training Pre-university Education Teaching Staff* (Resolution no. 6.1 of the Ministry of Education dated 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2003) is a notable achievement which generated radical changes in the process of lifelong training with a view to decentralize the system and to delegate more competences to educational institutions, to communities and to district Education Departments. The *Concept's* major principle provides that teachers hold the largest share of responsibility for their professional development.

### **2.3. Educational Background Required for Becoming a Teacher in the Educational System of the Republic of Moldova**

Pre-service teacher education is delivered in the Republic of Moldova by secondary professional institutions – colleges (which train educators for pre-school institutions and primary school teachers) and by higher education institutions – universities (which educate all categories of teaching staff).

*College* graduates pass graduation examinations and (or) defend a graduation paper (project). College education leads to a diploma of specialized studies awarding the qualification of middle-rank specialist in the respective speciality. College graduates can be employed as educators in pre-school institutions or as primary school teachers. They can also continue their studies in higher education institutions. If they follow-up their studies for a speciality related to the one studied in the college, the length of their higher education is one year shorter as provided.

To mention the lack of a clear vision on the role of teacher training colleges in training the teaching staff. Or, many universities consider that pre-service education of educators and teachers should be an exclusive prerogative of higher education institutions.

Pre-service education of the teaching staff for all educational institutions is delivered by higher education institutions – universities, academies, institutes. Higher education graduates pass a graduation examination.

The length of full-time higher education is 4 to 5 years, while part-time higher education is one year longer. The length of higher education for college graduates who continue studying in higher education institutions a speciality related to the one studied in the college is one year shorter.

Higher education syllabi focus on modules of subjects. Depending on the subject's purpose and its role in the professional training, they can be classified into fundamental subjects, humanities, specialized subjects. The syllabi consist of compulsory and optional subjects.

## 2.4. Statistical Data Concerning General Education Teaching Staff

Table 1 shows statistical data concerning the structure of the teaching staff of secondary general education.

**Table 1. Teaching Staff of Secondary General Education**

Total number of teachers	41005	100%
Disaggregated by teacher's degree:		
– highest teacher's degree	373	0,91%
– first teacher's degree	2268	5,53%
– second teacher's degree	16510	40,26%
– no degree	21854	53,30%
Disaggregated by stages and levels of education:		
– pre-school	676	1,65 %
– I–IV grades	9268	22,60%
– V–IX grades	15877	38,72%
– X–XII forms	4864	11,86%
Teachers of music, arts, sports	4867	11,87%
School directors	1494	2,91%
– deputy-directors	1810	4,41%
– vice-directors in charge of education issues	1008	2,46%
– teachers in special schools	1141	2,78%
Disaggregated by levels of pre-service education:		
– higher education	33222	81,02%
– incomplete higher education	1295	3,16%
– secondary professional education	6488	15,82%
Disaggregated by length of service:		
– up to three-year length of service	3442	8,39%
– 3 to 8 years length of service	3687	8,99%
– 8 to 13 years length of service	3968	9,68%

– 13 to 18 years length of service	5809	14,17%
– over 18 years length of service	24099	58,77%

Source: Institute for Education Sciences, 2005

The qualitative analysis of teacher training in the Republic of Moldova reveals that most of the teaching staff (81,02%) of pre-university education hold an university degree. Meanwhile, the share of young teachers in the total number of the teaching staff is 8,34%. Most teachers (58,77%) have over 18 years length of service, nevertheless, the “maturity” of the teaching staff does not necessarily mean enhancement of teaching skills: the share of holders of the first and of the highest teacher’s degrees is relatively low among them – (6,64%).

A share of 0,91% of the total number of the teaching staff of pre-school, primary and secondary general education hold the highest teacher’s degree, while 53,30% of them do not hold any degree.

The Report’s authors explain such a phenomenon by the lack of efficient tools for encouraging professional promotion of candidates to teacher’s degrees, as well as the lack of professional standards intended to focus lifelong learning and teacher evaluation on relevant and measurable performance.

The results of the questionnaires revealed that about 40% of school and lycee teachers have graduated either from college or from university 20–30 years ago. In rural areas, their share is even higher. It points out the pressing need for professional development courses focused on modern teaching and learning techniques, broad application of information technologies and of computer-assisted learning.

### 3. National System of Pre-Service Teacher Training

#### 3.1. Narrative of the Present System of Pre-Service Teacher Training

Teacher training in the Republic of Moldova targets at educating a professional and cultured personality, able to respond efficiently to the educational and cultural requirements of individuals, of the nation, of the country and of the human society.

The present system of pre-service teacher education consists of:

- *colleges* (secondary professional education institutions) train educators for pre-school institutions and primary school teachers;
- *universities* (higher education institutions) train educators and primary school teachers, teachers and managers for gymnasium, lycee, vocational and post-secondary professional education.

From historical perspective, all higher education institutions of the Republic of Moldova have been set as teacher training institutions. Throughout the years, they expanded their field of competence and teacher training became in many cases “the second profession”. Because of the legal imperfections of the register of specialities, the delimitation between pedagogic and scientific profiles is very vague, pedagogic identity is now really visible only in pre-school and primary teacher education.

As far as pre-school and primary education are concerned, the Register of qualifications and the practice of educational institutions make a plain delimitation among teacher qualifications: pre-school pedagogy, primary education pedagogy, pre-school pedagogy and a



foreign language, primary education pedagogy and a modern language, primary education pedagogy and choreography, etc.

On the other hand, as far as secondary general education is concerned, teacher qualifications are neither explicitly defined in the Register of qualifications nor delimited in university practice: mathematics and informatics, physics, chemistry and chemical technologies, biology and soil science, law, letters, foreign languages and literatures, etc. As a result, psycho-pedagogical implications and the prospects of a teaching career are pushed on a secondary position.

To improve the situation, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has recently developed and the Parliament has passed a new “Register of the fields of professional education and of qualifications to be delivered in higher education institutions (I cycle)”. The Register contains a new general field of education – “Education Sciences”. The new field comprises two sub-fields of professional education: “Teacher education and training” and “Education Sciences”. “Teacher education and training” field comprises fifteen qualifications which correspond to the subjects included in secondary education curriculum. “Education Sciences” field includes pedagogical, psychological and psycho-pedagogical qualifications.

The Register entered into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2005 but it will be really operational in four years.

### **3.2. Pre-Service Teacher Training Institutions**

In the Republic of Moldova, pre-service teacher training is delivered by colleges and universities.

„Gh. Asachi” Teacher Training College of Lipcani, Teacher Training College of Călărași, Teacher Training College of Chișinău, Teacher Training College of Orhei, Teacher Training College of Soroca, Teacher Training College of Bălți, Teacher Training College of Comrat and Teacher Training College of Taraclia train educators for pre-school education and primary school teachers. Enrolment in colleges is possible after completion of gymnasium, secondary school, lycee or vocational school education.

The duration of college education can be of either 2 or 4 years, depending on the previous educational background and on the field of studies: for gymnasium graduates – 4 years, for secondary school or lycee graduates – 2 years. As far as gymnasium graduates are concerned, a special college education curriculum is designed for them: in addition to studying a professional field, they are also provided lycee education and can get a baccalaureate diploma.

After completion of college education, students either pass graduation examinations or defend a graduation paper (project) and they are awarded a post-secondary professional education diploma. Holders of such a diploma get a middle-level qualification in the respective field.

Secondary professional education diploma opens the way to employment as well as to higher education. College graduates enrolled in higher education enjoy one-year reduction of the study duration, provided that they choose a related field to their college qualification.

Absolute majority of the teaching staff hold an university degree obtained either in distinct subdivisions or at a science faculty. The following universities deliver teacher pre-service education: State University of Moldova, “Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University, State University of Tiraspol, “Alecu Russo” State University of Bălți, National Institute of Physical Training and Sports, “Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu” State University of Cahul, State University of Comrat.

The universities of the Republic of Moldova award the following qualifications:

First cycle – *license (bachelor) degree*. After having passed two tests as part of the license examination and defended a license thesis (project), graduates are awarded the title of licentiate (bachelor) and a license (bachelor) diploma in the respective field. Graduates who pass two tests as part of the graduation examination without defending a license thesis (project) are awarded a higher education diploma. Students who fail the license examination are only given, upon their request, a certificate.

The second cycle – *master's degree*. A master's degree is awarded upon completion of this cycle. Graduates from the first cycle can get master education in a broad area of fields related to teacher training: pedagogy, psychology and pedagogy, theory and methodology of the teaching process (by subjects), special pedagogy, pedagogical psychology, developmental psychology, personality psychology, special psychology, physical training and sports, etc.

The third cycle – *doctor's degree*. The completion of doctoral education is marked by the public defense of a doctor's thesis in front of an accredited specialized scientific council. Practically, all the fields of education sciences are covered by universities of the Republic of Moldova under doctoral education: general pedagogy, theory and methodology of the teaching process (by subjects), special pedagogy, pedagogical psychology, developmental psychology, personality psychology, special psychology, theory and methodology of physical training and sports, rehabilitation physical training, etc.

With a view to respond to the cultural needs of ethnic minorities of the Republic of Moldova, higher education institutions have designed curricula to train teachers for Russian-language, Ukrainian-language, Gagauzian-language and Bulgarian-language schools of the country. All universities implement Russian-language curricula. State University of Bălți trains teachers for Ukrainian-language schools, while the University of Comrat provides teacher education in Gagauzian and Bulgarian. A new University has recently opened in the town of Taraclia. It will train teachers for Bulgarian-language schools.

*Annex 1* lists teacher education institutions of the Republic of Moldova. To point out that the process of developing and approving the standards for pre-service teacher education in universities is under way. There are three levels of standards: (i) standards for general education in university education, (ii) standards for pre-service education at profiles/specialities/specializations, (iii) curriculum standards for each academic subject. The establishment of educational standards is considered as a requirement for ensuring the quality of education.

The quantitative and qualitative analyses of the survey's results lead to the conclusion that most universities deliver pre-service teacher education in parallel with providing qualifications for various fields of science and of national economy. Three in eight interviewed universities showed that teacher education and training was their exclusive field of activity, while the rest of universities focus on other fields and qualifications.

The capability of pre-service teacher education institutions depends on their geographical situation (is it in the capital city or outside it) and historical traditions. In general, the present level of capability of higher education institutions is sufficient for responding to the educational system's needs for skilled teaching staff.

The questionnaire's data concerning *the syllabi and the curricula in the field of teacher education* show that seven institutions provide doctoral studies (third cycle) in the field of teacher education, six institutions provide master education (second cycle) in the field of teacher education and four institutions provide pre-service teacher education for specialists from other fields.

*Research activities* are a regular part of the work of six institutions, while two respondents stated that research projects are occasionally included in development activities. It reveals the availability of a synergy of research and teaching activities performed within educational institutions.

*Publishing* is the task by publishing units established in the framework of the concerned institution which regularly issue new titles (books, handbooks, manuals, textbooks, magazines, etc.) for students and university professors as well as for secondary school teachers.

The use of *Information and Communication Technologies* is limited in pre-service teacher education institutions of the Republic of Moldova. Three in eight interviewed institutions use systematically ICT to support teaching/learning process, while four institutions have just started to use ICT in several educational fields and they plan to expand their utilization. A newly established university stated that the use of ICT is very limited because of the lack of material and human resources.

As a whole, the implementation of ICT in the educational process is in its early stage, computers are mainly used at computer classes. There are no efforts to develop electronic manuals and distance learning sites, there is no legal framework for computer-assisted learning.

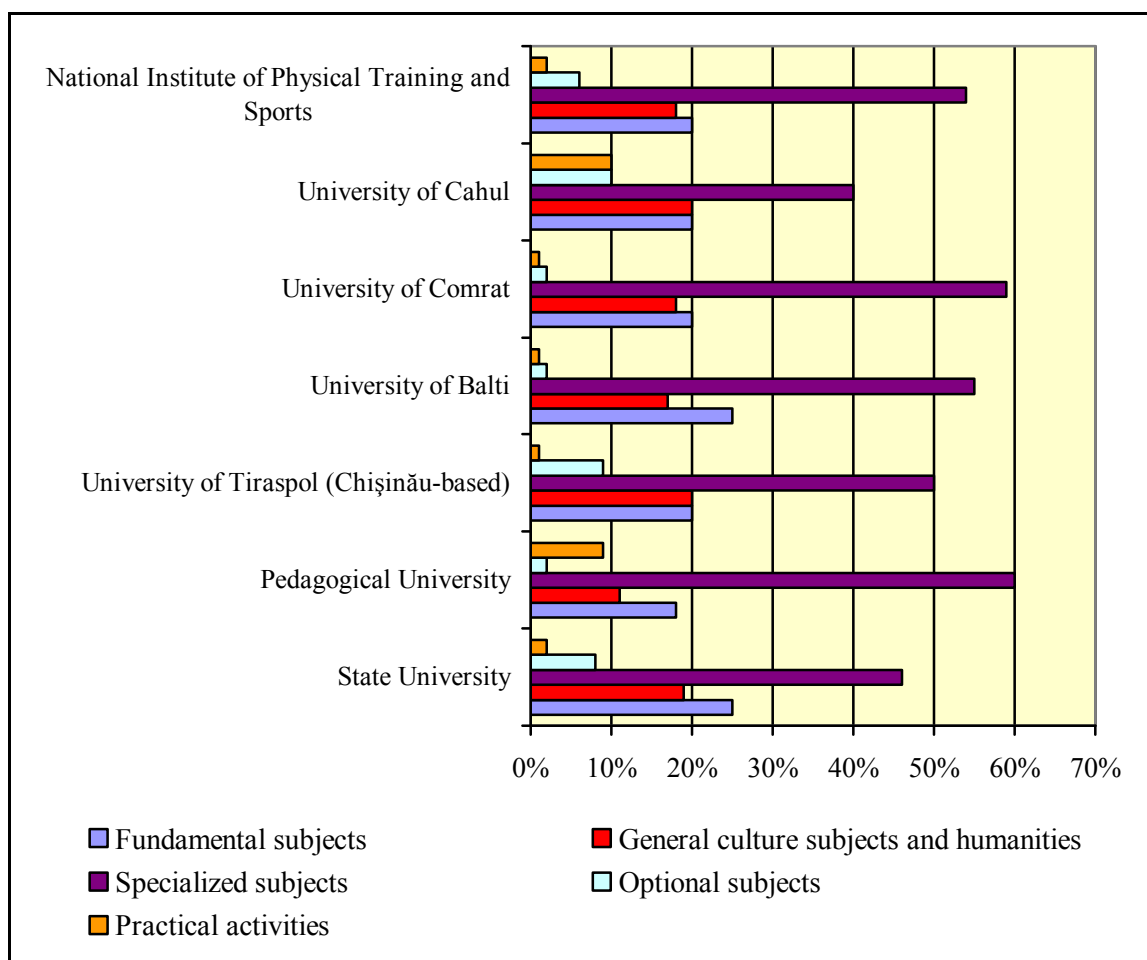
### **3.3. Curriculum Description**

*Basic higher education curriculum* in the Republic of Moldova is a regulatory tool for planning, implementation and evaluation of the educational process. Higher education curriculum targets at enhancing the education quality by the means of:

- ensuring the coherence of higher education system;
- developing, implementing and monitoring new curricula;
- setting educational and vocational standards for all educational fields and subjects;
- designing and enhancing continuously teaching-learning-research strategies;
- setting evaluation criteria for different spheres of higher education.

Pre-service teacher education curricula are designed under the Frame-Curriculum of higher education which comprises a cycle of fundamental subjects, a cycle of humanities, a cycle of specialized subjects. *Figure 1* shows the share of each cycle of subjects.

**Figure 1. Distribution of the Time-Load Allocated to Teacher Education**



Source: Institute for Education Sciences, 2005

In general, there are no essential differences among the curricula of teacher education universities. Nevertheless, a number of universities pay more attention to psycho-pedagogical education: „Ion Creangă” State University, qualification Pedagogy of Primary Education – about 60% of the total time-load, Comrat State University, qualification Primary Education – about 59%, National Institute of Physical Training and Sports, qualification Teacher of Physical Training – about 54%. According to higher university curriculum, *general objectives* of teacher education aim at: cognition and understanding the fundamentals of education sciences, of psychology, of philosophy and of the legal framework concerning the field of education, identifying the orientations and the trends of education and of education sciences development, setting and foreseeing educational outcomes, designing didactic programmes/projects and other curriculum related outcomes, efficient implementation of educational activities, identifying adequate contents, developing and implementing teaching techniques in accordance with teaching objectives, identifying evaluation criteria, co-relating curriculum elements (objectives-contents-evaluation activities), implementing curriculum innovations in education.

*Education sciences* (for pedagogical faculties) included in pre-service teacher education curriculum aim at developing knowledge and skills for designing and implementing the educational process, providing students with cognitive and applicative tools for rigorous, objective, exigent and critical approach of the educational process. Syllabi are designed for all subjects. The syllabi set the goal, the objectives, the role and the place of the respective

subject in educating the student and describe the subject's basic contents, distribute the time-load for lectures, seminars, practical and laboratory works, list the recommended literature.

*Teaching/learning strategies* recommended by the Curriculum imply general methods (presentation, lecture, conversation, fundamental course), verbal methods (either written or oral), explicative methods focused on memorizing and passive listening, participative methods which stimulate personal exploration of the reality, methods focused on reception-based learning (presentation, expositive demonstration), creative methods (self-observation, heuristic exercises, problems solving, brain-storming).

Pre-service teacher training institutions use several *teaching forms*: courses (subject-oriented, integrated, lecture, combined, debates), seminars (introductory, revision and thorough-going, systemizing, applied, evaluative, seminar-debate, report-based seminars, exercise-based seminar, seminar-training).

*The contents of education sciences* included in the Curriculum are divided in modules and sub-modules and they build together a system of theories, concepts and principles. The contents are systemic, relevant, trans-disciplinary, coherent. Contents are focused on general, reference and operational objectives.

Evaluation within pre-service education courses responds to Curriculum requirements related to evaluation forms, methods and tools, theoretical and practical skills. Evaluation can be conducted by the means of tests, written papers, projects, annual papers, promotion examinations, graduation examination.

An evaluation session can include 4–5 tests, 3–4 examinations, one project or annual paper; an average number of 7–9 evaluation items.

*Evaluation* is done at the end of each module and upon completion of a course. There are several types of evaluation: pre-service evaluation, formative evaluation, summative/final evaluation.

Students of pre-service education institutions are compelled to pass classroom-practices: specialization classroom-practice and teaching classroom-practice. Classroom-practices are intended to provide students with practical and organizational teaching and pedagogical skills. Curricula of pre-service teacher education set the following classroom-practices:

- *initiation* classroom-practice focused on building basic skills required for a qualification;
- *teaching* classroom-practice focused on building and strengthening the skills to conduct teaching-research-evaluation in pre-university educational institutions;
- *state* classroom-practice focused on the completion of license (bachelor) thesis.

As a rule, students have two classroom-practices: a classroom-practice of 4–6 weeks during the fourth year and a five-week classroom-practice in the fifth (final) year. The share of classroom-practices in the Curriculum is from 12% to 18%.

The questionnaires filled in by pre-service teacher training institutions showed that most universities consider their professional development courses need optimization and approximation to European and international programmes. On the other hand, two higher education institutions stated that their curricula comply with the needs of the educational system in the Republic of Moldova and there is no need for radical reforms in this sphere.

According to the Report's authors, the diversity of opinions showed by higher education institutions reveal current contradictions within teacher higher education: on the one hand, there is a need to train teachers under an unitary professional system and, on the other hand, under the existent system, teacher education is dispersed, students follow both courses in the field of education sciences and courses intended to train them for exerting another (non-teaching) profession. Consequently, teacher education must be done within an integrated professional module which must be a balanced system of theoretical and practical approaches. As a result, teacher education would have a larger focus on school learning: observation,

experiment, introduction to teaching issues. According to the respondents, a comprehensive curriculum reform is required in order to ensure the essential modernization of the national system of teacher professional development as well as its approximation to European educational trends.

### **3.4. Co-operation between Pre-Service Teacher Education Institutions and Schools**

There are diverse ways of co-operation between pre-service teacher education institutions and schools:

- teaching classroom-practices for college and university students in pre-university educational institutions;
- participation of the teaching staff in designing National Curricula for each subject;
- participation of the teaching staff in preparing and conducting national baccalaureate examinations;
- preparing and conducting olympiads and other national contests for school and lycee pupils.

Pre-service teacher education college and university curricula compulsorily include teaching classroom-practices. As a rule, educational institutions conclude contracts either with city (district) education departments or with pre-university institutions of national scale. Such contracts set the conditions for conducting teaching classroom-practices, the rights and the duties of students-teachers, the role of school teachers as tutors, the responsibilities of school administration.

The questionnaires revealed that interaction between schools and pre-service teacher education and teacher professional development institutions is less based on official contracts than on the community of interests in the field of teacher education. The respondents pointed out that co-operation between pre-service teacher education institutions and schools should target at building practical skills, at establishing partnerships focused on the implementation of joint research projects in the field of education sciences, at enhancing the exchanges of ideas and pedagogical innovations. The analysis of the questionnaire's data confirms that both college and university leadership and the teaching staff realize the importance of student's perceptions of the correlation between educational theories and practices. Or, it complies with the needs for the modernization of the concept of theoretic-practical education and training of the teaching staff.

Unfortunately, the co-operation between pre-service teacher education institutions and schools does not have a significant impact on the employment of graduates: five in eight interviewed universities emphasised this fact. In addition to it, the respondents revealed that many serious problems still remain without solution: problems related to education based on school learning requirements (observation, experiments), introduction to the particularities of teaching work (3 respondents), dissemination of the information about professional development training courses (3 respondents).

## **4. National System of In-Service Teacher Training**

### **4.1. Description of the System of In-Service Teacher Training**

In-service education is subject to the *Regulation on In-Service training*, approved by Government Decree dated 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2004.

– *The national system of in-service training* concerns the totality of bodies, organizations, institutions, economic entities whose activities focus on professional development. Government plays the main role in providing in-service training courses and in designing strategies, national programmes and documents in the field of human resources development, in compliance with national sustainable development policy. The development of legal, methodological, organizational and didactic frameworks as well as strategies, programmes, curricula, certification procedures and evaluation indices are under the authority of central government. All activities in such fields need co-ordination with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and with other concerned ministries, within their sphere of competence.

There are several types of in-service training:

*Qualification* – building a totality of professional skills required for exerting a specific occupation or profession.

*Professional development* – building new professional skills within the same qualification.

*Specialization* – acquiring knowledge and skills in a specific area of an occupation.

*Getting a supplementary qualification* – acquiring special knowledge and specific skills required to exert a new occupation or a profession related to the previous one.

*Requalification* – acquiring new competencies required for exerting a new occupation or profession, different from the previous one.

In-service training can be done by the means of:

- training courses organized by the employers within their own organizations or in vocational training institutions;
- professional development or requalification courses and programmes;
- traineeship and specialization courses in different domestic and foreign organizations;
- seminars, conferences, round-tables, workshops;
- distance-learning courses;
- other types of training courses complying with the legislation in force.

The periodicity of in-service education of employees is established by their organization, provided that employees take vocational training courses at least once in four years.

In-service training programmes are designed and implemented by professional training institutions based on participative methods, with a special emphasis on multimedia: training by correspondence, distance-learning, video conference, computer-assisted learning, etc.

Professional requalification of graduates of higher education and of post-secondary professional education institutions is an individual type of vocational training, based on two criteria:

- profile of the previous educational background;
- social needs for new qualifications and professional skills.

Professional requalification of graduates of higher education or post-secondary professional education institutions with a view to exert new occupations or professions must comply with the requirements set by the Register of Qualifications for some professions and occupations.

Professional training diplomas and certificates play a role in professional evaluation, while conferring degrees and titles, as well as qualification grades.

## 4.2. In-Service Teacher Training Institutions

In-service training of the teaching staff of the Republic of Moldova is implemented by *centres of in-service training for the teaching and leadership staff*. Teachers and representatives of school administration are compelled to follow training courses by a written ordinance of the General Direction of Education, Science, Youth and Sports. A fixed number of teachers of all districts take every year part in training courses funded by the state budget.

In-service teacher training institutions of the Republic of Moldova deliver different types of training courses: out-of-job courses, courses by correspondence, self-training courses, requalification courses, commissioned courses, seminars. A training kit is developed during the training course which is intended to be further used during the teaching process. Directors of the centres of in-service training for teaching and leadership staff are responsible for the quality of the training courses delivered by their centres. The subdivision for evaluation and professional development of the teaching staff of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports co-ordinates and monitors the process of in-service training of the teaching and leadership staff in training centres.

Unlike the pre-service training, implemented by a relatively great number of educational institutions with great capability, in-service teacher training courses are delivered by a small number of institutions with limited capacity. Non-governmental organizations (either public associations or private educational institutions) play an important role in teacher professional development.

Among the most important state institutions which provide in-service training courses for teachers are: Institute of Education Sciences, “Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University, National Institute of Physical Training and Sports, “Alecú Russo” State University of Balti, Centre for New Information Technologies. The most active non-governmental organizations in this field are the Institute for Lifelong Learning, Pro Didactica Educational Centre, “Pas cu pas” (“Step by Step”) Educational Programme, the Independent Society for Education and Human Rights (SIEDO), etc.

The *Institute of Education Sciences* is a national-level research institution in the field of education as well as a post-graduation institution. It has an autonomous status under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and it is state funded. The Institute targets at complex, special and in-service professional training of pre-university teaching staff (professional development, requalification). The Institute conducts national-wide co-ordination of the teaching staff professional development and collaborates with all other in-service teacher training centres of the Republic of Moldova.

“*Ion Creanga*” State Pedagogical University provides the following types of in-service training courses:

- specialization/qualification courses on educational management by the means of combining traditional (academic) methods and electronic teaching methods (distance-learning);
- professional development training courses for education leadership;
- professional development training courses for teachers of: Romanian, Romanian as a foreign language, history, pre-school education, fine arts, Russian, Russian as a foreign language, psychology, pre-school education, speech therapy, special education (primary and gymnasium cycles), Bulgarian, Gagauzian;
- on-the-job training courses for school directors and for the teaching staff.

“*Alecú Russo*” State University of Balti provides training courses for the teaching staff on the following subjects: Romanian language and literature, Russian language and literature, Ukrainian language, French language, English language, primary education, educational management, musical education, physics, informatics, mathematics, technological training, pre-school education.



*National Institute of Physical Training and Sports* provides teacher training courses on: physical training in school, gymnasium, lycee, physical training in college, vocational school, trade school, coaching in sports clubs and sports schools.

*Centre for New Information Technologies* provides vocational training courses for teachers of informatics.

*Institute of Lifelong Learning* provides in-service training courses for school and university managers. The Institute provides various forms of traditional courses (using modern teaching techniques) and distance-learning courses.

*Pro Didactica Educational Centre* is a non-profit non-governmental organization which provides a large package of educational services (education, training, consultations, information) under a license issued by the License Chamber of the Republic of Moldova.

*“Pas cu pas” (“Step by Step”) Educational Programme* focuses on pre-school and primary education, special needs education. It provides a large spectrum of in-service training courses, workshops, seminars, study-visits, etc.

*Independent Society for Education and Human Rights (SIEDO)* is a non-profit non-governmental organization in the field of civic education. It has a broad experience both in in-service teacher training and in developing teaching aids in the field of human rights, civic education, law education.

See *Annex 2* for the comprehensive list of in-service teacher education institutions.

According to the opinion of the teaching staff (347 respondents), training courses/seminars/workshops held by in-service teacher education institutions had the greatest share of contribution to their professional development (31% of respondents), 25% of respondents appreciate most the training delivered by non-governmental organizations, while 21% of teachers prefer on-the-job training, 20% of them – training courses provided by higher education institutions and 3% of respondents – training services delivered by private educational institutions.

The analysis of the questionnaire data reveals contradictory opinions of higher education and of in-service teacher training institutions concerning the efficiency of the present system of in-service teacher education. Almost half of respondents consider it as inefficient and obsolete. The respondents plead for essential changes: system decentralisation, diversification of training courses, implementation of a credit-based system, expanding the autonomy of in-service teacher education centres, enhancing the use of participative teaching/learning methods.

In the respondents' opinion, the development of in-service teacher education system is hindered by such obstacles as excessive and sudden changes of the legal frame concerning the field under consideration, the lack of funding tools for teacher training both at national and at local levels, disparities between rural and urban environments, inadequate institutional frame.

### **4.3. Curriculum Description**

In-service teacher education is conducted within *lifelong training institutions* in accordance with module-based frame-curricula, designed in compliance with the requirements of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Training curricula target at updating knowledge on the taught subject, as well as teaching and psycho-pedagogical skills, adjusting them to new concepts, curricula, teaching and evaluation techniques. Teacher training programmes tend to ensure a relative balance between the educational background and teacher vocational training. All frame-curricula encourage trainees to define their own training programme, their educational itinerary, depending on their interests, options. It makes training more attractive and more efficient. During the process of curriculum implementation,

lifelong training institutions ensure the flexibility of training courses, taking into account the expectations and the individual interests of the trainees.

In-service teacher education courses provided by training institutions of the Republic of Moldova aim at the following goals and objectives:

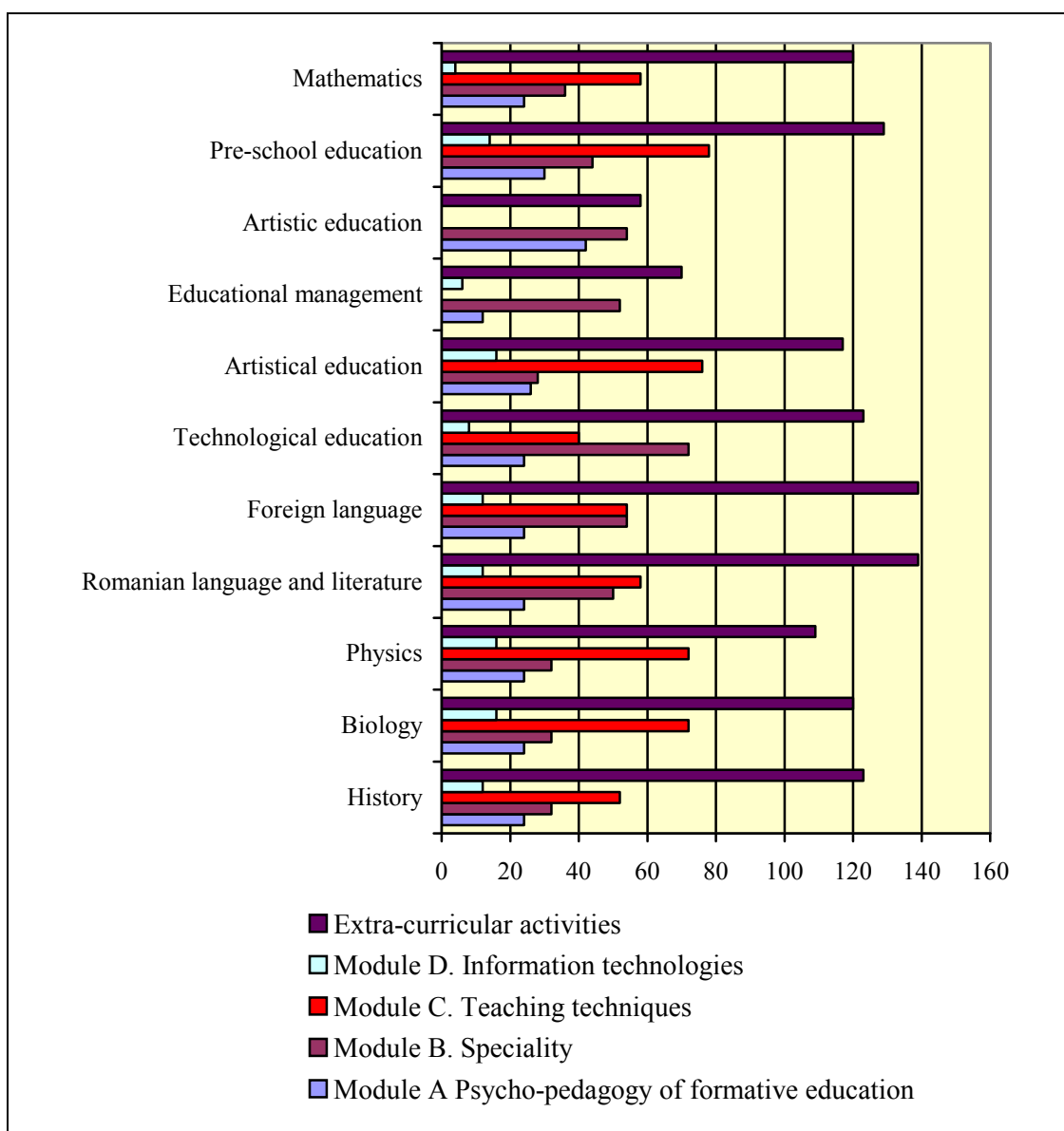
- adequate focus of psycho-pedagogical skills on the process of modelling the pupil's personality;
- identifying legal regulations complying with a concrete educational project;
- adapting theoretic and practical aspects of teaching strategies to a concrete situation;
- assessing the strengths and the weaknesses of on-going evaluation strategies;
- identifying the ways to involve pupils in the evaluation process: self-evaluation, inter-evaluation;
- adapting the algorithm of didactic designing to a concrete subject;
- building knowledge/skills required to start community-oriented activities;
- collaborating with all stake-holders with a view to reach the objectives of in-service teacher education.

In-service teacher education is implemented by the means of:

- subject-oriented professional development/specialization courses (up to 72 hours);
- short-term professional development/specialization courses (72 to 100 hours);
- multidisciplinary professional development/specialization courses (100 to 500 hours);
- requalification courses and programmes for holders of university or college diplomas with a view to further exert a new professional occupation (500 to 1000 hours).

*Fig. 2* shows the distribution of the teaching load by courses delivered by the Institute of Education Sciences. As the Institute is the national co-ordinator in the field under consideration, frame-curricula of all other in-service teacher education institutions have a similar structure.

**Figure 2. Distribution of the Teaching Load (number of hours) within the Frame-Curriculum of the Institute of Education Sciences**



Source: Institute of Education Sciences, 2005

Frame-curricula generally include the following modules: psycho-pedagogy of formative education, speciality (subject), teaching techniques, information technologies, extra-curricular activities. As *Fig. 2* shows, there is a considerable number of hours assigned to extra-curricular activities, which include career counselling, psycho-pedagogical evaluation, portfolio evaluation, etc. The number of hours assigned to the Teaching Techniques Module varies depending on the subject. This module gives the teacher the opportunity to design and implement teaching-learning-evaluation activities. The number of hours assigned to Speciality (Subject) Module depends on the concrete subject and it allows teachers to update the contents of the curricula to new scientific achievements. According to the opinion of the report's authors, there is an insufficient number of hours assigned to Psycho-Pedagogy of Formative Education and Information Technologies Modules.

In compliance with present curricula, educational process is implemented by the means of participative training methods, taking into account the particularities of adult education. Teaching/learning strategies target at the trainees specific and expectations. There is a visible

trend to pass from passive, theoretic activities to problem-solving, role-play, developing teaching projects.

The trainee's evaluation is done both at the beginning (with a view to identify training needs) and at the end of the training course (to identify the changes). Evaluation sheets and self-evaluation tests furnish a comprehensive information concerning further enhancement of training methods. Upon completion of the course, trainees pass tests in psycho-pedagogy, school curriculum and information technologies, consultancy and educational management.

A special training curriculum is designed for professional development and requalification training courses for school managers. The curriculum (developed by State University of Moldova and the Institute for Lifelong Learning) focuses on education managers of national and local levels, rectors of higher education institutions, colleges, directors of training schools and centres. It comprises the following modules:

- Fundamentals of educational management.
- Planning and funding within the educational system.
- Institutional resources management.
- Human resources management.
- Evaluation and quality management within the educational system.
- Change management within the educational system.
- Information and communication technologies management within the educational system.
- The need to reform educational management in the Republic of Moldova.

The curriculum may be adapted to the specific of trainee's groups. Its final version is submitted by the group's tutor. Each module usually lasts a total number of 100-150 hours. Upon successful completion of each module, trainees are awarded certificates which support participation in contests for manager's and teacher's degrees. When all modules of the curriculum are successfully studied (over 500 hours), examinations are passed and a diploma paper is defended, the trainee is awarded a diploma of professional qualification - "Manager in Education".

The questionnaire data point out that in-service teacher education curriculum needs substantial improvement. A share of 57.1% of respondents consider that training programmes could be broadened, 27.3% of respondents consider that the offer and the quality of training programmes need substantial improvement and only 7.3% of them do not plead for radical changes.

#### **4.4. Co-operation Between Teacher Training Institutions and Schools**

The co-operation between in-service teacher training institutions and schools is implemented by the means of the involvement of university and school teachers as trainers in professional development courses, trainees' participation in demonstration-lessons held in educational units, teacher's participation in the process of evaluation of training courses.

In addition to the above-mentioned, the co-operation is implemented by the means of teacher's involvement in research projects conducted by training institutions. Within research projects, teachers can combine teaching-learning activities and research, implement new teaching techniques and experiment new teaching aids.

The co-operation between the Institute of Education Sciences and schools is framed by research projects funded by the Government. Such projects mainly focus on the following issues:

- psycho-pedagogical fundamentals of pre-school education of children from different types of families;

- psychology and sociology of education;
- scientific fundamentals of special education development;
- psycho-pedagogical aspects of the implementation, evaluation and development of pre-university curriculum in the Republic of Moldova;
- designing educational standards of the Republic of Moldova;
- theoretic-methodological fundamentals for designing, developing and implementing the system of evaluation of pre-university education in the Republic of Moldova;
- concept and strategy for the development of in-service teacher education in the Republic of Moldova.

Partnerships between non-governmental institutions and schools are the outcomes of on-the-job training courses and workshops for teachers, awarding various types of grants to teachers of rural areas. In addition to it, non-governmental institutions issue journals for pre-school, primary school and secondary school teachers and disseminate them in all educational units.

Educational web-sites, including web-sites of educational institutions and the one of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports play a considerable role in strengthening the partnerships between teacher lifelong training institutions. *Pro Didactica* Educational Centre and “Pas cu Pas” (“Step by Step”) Educational Programme disseminate, by the means of their web-sites, comprehensive information concerning curricula, manuals, teaching aids, educational softwares, teaching projects, recent news in the field of education. Due to UNESCO National Commission support was established a web-site which covers all school subjects and contains useful information for both pupils and teachers, including news about teaching projects, training opportunities, etc.

Under co-operation projects between in-service teacher education institutions and schools, school teachers are directly involved in developing and updating national curricula, organizing and conducting national baccalaureate examinations, olympiads and other national contests for pupils, modernizing teaching classroom practice, conducting research and developing doctor’s theses.

## **5. Recent Programmes and Projects of Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Training**

### **5.1. National Strategies for Enhancing the Quality of Pre-Service Teacher Training**

National strategies for enhancing the quality of pre-service teacher training are framed by the general plan of actions focused on building a unique European educational space. The Republic of Moldova has officially joined Bologna Process on May, 19–20, 2005, at the Conference of European Ministers of Education held in Bergen. Accession to Bologna Process implies changes both in the legal frame and in the contents of higher education. Certainly, the reforms imposed by the country’s accession to Bologna Process had started long before 2005 and they generated rapid modernization of the legal framework and prepared the field for restructuring higher university curricula. Since 2005–2006 academic year, higher education in the Republic of Moldova will be organized in two cycles: license (bachelor) higher education (3-4 years) and master higher education (1–2years).

The questionnaires filled in by higher education and teacher professional development institutions showed that both academic administrations and the teaching staff are very well informed about Bologna Process. Only one in seven interviewed universities stated it was not

enough informed about all aspects of Bologna Process. All respondents consider that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports should play the central role in reforming the educational system according to Bologna Process requirements. Meanwhile, three institutions stated they do not have a distinct programme of training process reorganization.

In this context, while answering a multiple choice question, all respondents pointed out the availability of a national action plan and of a programme of implementation of Bologna Process requirements in the field of pre-service teacher education and all other required documents have already been developed. Unfortunately, only two in seven universities agreed that there is such a programme at institutional level, too.

The respondents had contradictory opinions concerning the restructuring of the system of pre-service teacher education. First, some pre-service teacher education institutions (4 respondents) consider as insufficient the duration of three years of the first cycle of higher education. Second, two in seven institutions stated that the existent system of pre-service teacher education is a good one, it was developed throughout many years and does not need substantial changes.

As far as the duration of the educational cycles was concerned, most of respondents pleaded for a four-year duration of the first cycle of pre-service teacher education (license) and one-year duration of the second cycle (master) and disagreed with the three-year duration of the first cycle. The *Law no. 142 on the Approval of the Register of Fields of Professional Training and of Qualifications Delivered by Higher Education Institutions, first cycle* (passed by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2005 and entered into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2005), provides for a total of 180-240 credits for the first cycle of initial education (license higher education). As a result, universities can implement a flexible structure of the educational process.

One of the most important achievements of pre-service teacher training is its strict delimitation from other fields, such as sciences (exact sciences, humanities, political science, economics, natural sciences), technologies, engineering, etc. The above-mentioned *Law no. 142* provides that “graduates of higher education institutions, except graduates of “Education Sciences” field, can teach in pre-university educational institutions after compulsory completion of a supplementary module of psycho-pedagogical theoretic (30 credits) and practical (30 credits) education (a total of 60 credits,) leading to the qualification of “teacher in pre-university education”.

It is well known that teachers of rural areas work in more difficult conditions than teachers of urban areas. In village schools, there is usually a limited number of hours for each subject, insufficient to make a normative teaching load. Consequently, pre-service education should prepare teachers for teaching at least two related subjects. To ensure such an education without lowering its quality, *Law no. 142* provides that “in the general field of “Education Sciences”, students can be trained in parallel for two related qualifications, with the consent of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports”. The above-mentioned provision explains the expansion of the first cycle length from three (180 credits) to four years (240 credits).

According to the questionnaire data, all initial teacher training institutions have launched curriculum reform projects both at institutional and at faculty levels. In four universities, curriculum objectives of the first educational cycle (license) mainly focus on basic teacher training, while in three other universities such objectives focus on a wider sphere of training, useful for employment and/or further studies.

As far as the objectives of the second educational cycle (master) are concerned, four respondents stated that they target at advanced education for all interested teachers and professors, while one respondent stated that such objectives focus on research in the field of education and two universities did not answer the respective question, because they do not provide master courses

The questionnaire's data show that pre-service teacher education institutions of the Republic of Moldova are well informed about Bologna Process and they are willing to modernize curricula and teaching techniques. Nevertheless, most curriculum modernization processes are launched and promoted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports as well as by academic administrations, less by associations of teachers or academic associations.

Pre-service teacher education institutions have their own internal tools for monitoring the quality of education aimed at teaching/learning activities, research, administration, student conciliation. Institutions use different means to involve students in the evaluation of educational process: surveys on the opinions of student organizations, including representatives of students in quality committees of the educational institutions, analysing the data of evaluation questionnaires filled in by the students.

A number of obstacles to the modernization of the educational process which can hardly be overcome by pre-service teacher education institutions have been pointed out: insufficient funding, lack of adequate facilities and equipment, lack of human resources, low motivation of academics and of the technical personnel.

## **5.2. National Strategies for Enhancement of the Quality of In-Service Teacher Training**

The modernization of the system of teacher professional development is an efficient tool for changes in the context of the education reform implemented in the Republic of Moldova. Taking into account the role and the importance of this system in the reform process, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports developed in 2004 the *Concept on In-service teacher education of the Teaching and Managerial Staff of Pre-University Education* and submitted it to public debates. The Concept targets at the following objectives:

- modernization of the system of teaching and managerial staff in-service teacher training, in compliance with modern requirements;
- integration of teaching and managerial staff lifelong learning into an unitary educational system;
- integration of teaching and managerial staff lifelong learning into the context of educational reform implemented in the Republic of Moldova;
- professionalization of the teaching career in the Republic of Moldova;
- developing the “market of lifelong learning programmes”, based on the principles of a loyal competition system, intended to provide teachers with a diversified offer of lifelong training courses;
- correlating the structures and the stages of the teaching career with the educational standards and ensuring professional dynamics by the means of the system of transferable credits;
- developing a modern institutional frame aimed at optimizing teacher lifelong learning: the Office for Lifelong Learning of Pre-University Teaching and Managerial Staff;
- implementing the management of change by the means of teacher lifelong learning;
- ensuring the continuity of pre-service education, in-service teacher education and professional requalification of the teaching staff.

The Concept's draft focuses on the following issues:

1. Authorizing a larger spectrum of educational institutions to provide in-service teacher training: universities, in-service teacher education centres, non-governmental organizations in the field of education, professional associations of teachers.

2. Diversification of in-service teacher training, developing new training programmes intended to give more training opportunities: from enrollment in lifelong learning

programmes at university level to participation in seminars, workshops, conferences, study-visits abroad, exchanges of experience, etc.

3. Setting up a National Agency (or a Centre) in charge for the management of in-service teacher training, for the development of training policies, for the accreditation of training courses, for quality monitoring and evaluation.

4. Establishing an educational system which includes four basic components of in-service teacher training – learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together with other people and learning to be – based on democratization and decentralization principles.

5. Defining the professional skills corresponding to all four components, making the inventory of teaching skills required by the international practice, taking into consideration the situation in the Republic of Moldova.

6. Establishing tools for development and accreditation of in-service teacher training programmes focused on enhancing the quality of teacher professional development in a decentralized and liberalized environment with autonomous providers of teacher lifelong learning.

7. Supporting the development of training programmes aimed at enhancing professional skills of teachers.

8. Monitoring permanently and systematically the quality of teacher in-service training, with a special emphasis on its impact on the enhancement of basic aspects of teaching work.

To increase the efficiency of the system of in-service teacher training, new educational policies should focus on motivating teachers to participate in in-service teacher training courses and to apply the acquired skills and knowledge in their practical work.

It is also necessary to set a tool for sustainable funding of the system of in-service teacher training. At present, 0,4% of the total budget of educational system are allocated to in-service teacher training, while in developed countries this index varies from 1% to 2%.

According to the Concept, funding of in-service teacher training institutions will be decentralized. Budgetary and extra-budgetary sources will be used to fund training activities. Trainers will be remunerated based on the remuneration scale of higher education. Moreover, teacher lifelong learning will become one of the fundamental fields of activities of teacher training universities (departments, faculties).

The accession of the Republic of Moldova to Bologna Process will lead to quantitative and qualitative changes in the strategy for in-service teacher training; among them – broadening international co-operation in the field of teacher lifelong learning, flexibilization and individualization of educational itineraries, curricula modulization, multidimensional education as a result of expansion of pluridisciplinary profiles.

As the questionnaires show, teachers consider that the Concept developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports complies with the requirements and the expectations of practician-teachers. Teachers have done a number of proposals concerning the enhancement of the system of in-service teacher education. Here are their proposals listed following the order proposed by practician-teachers:

1. Training methods should focus on practical activities, use modern teaching-learning-evaluation techniques, combine theory and educational practice. Training sessions should be provided by practician-teachers.

2. Training courses should be funded both by central and local public authorities, as well as by teachers' organizations and public associations.

3. Teachers should take professional development training courses at least once in 3-5 years. As far as retired teachers are concerned, this periodicity should be reduced.

4. There should be centralized provision with teaching aids for each school subject as required by the teaching-learning-evaluation process.



5. Making exchanges of experience, visiting schools, especially urban ones and the ones with a well-known reputation, assisting at demonstration-lessons held by skilled teachers, expanding the length of classroom practice, combing lectures with practical sessions in schools.

6. Supporting alternative teacher training programmes, collaboration of non-governmental organizations in providing training courses, ensuring to trainees the possibility to select training institutions as well as training modules, recognition of all training courses taken by teachers.

7. Decentralization of the system of education, encouraging motivation to lifelong learning, financial support for innovations, promoting modern training techniques based on active learning.

8. Broadening practical activities, encouraging exchanges of experience, supporting study-visits abroad.

9. Holding meetings with authors of manuals, holders of doctor's degree, practitioners.

10. Promoting active collaboration between in-service teacher training institutions, disseminating best teacher practices by the means of video records, holding methodological-practical meetings at local and national levels, holding seminars, reduction of the teaching load.

11. Holding on-the-job training courses, especially in district schools.

12. Broadening training activities conducted by "Pas cu Pas" ("Step by Step") and "Pro Didactica" Educational Programmes, as well as by French Alliance.

13. Ensuring the possibility to take a medical treatment in parallel with training courses, improving living conditions in the campus of teacher lifelong training institutions.

14. Confering teacher's degrees for life.

15. Delivering distance-learning courses.

16. Simplifying the curriculum per subject.

The proposals made by practician-teachers are very useful for improving the *Concept on In-service teacher education of the Teaching and Managerial Staff of Pre-University Education* and are crucial points in the Concept's practical implementation.

## **6. International Co-operation in the Field of Pre-service and In-Service Teacher Training**

### **6.1. International and Cross-Border Co-operation between Teacher Training Institutions**

The activities conducted under the *Agreement of Collaboration between "Ion Creanga" State Pedagogical University and State University of Montana (USA) in the Field of Educational Management* had a significant impact on professional development of school directors. Projects implemented within 2001–2003 were mainly focused on building a democratic participative leadership model in the educational sphere as a result of changing the managers' way to think and act, in the context of new trends and realities aimed at reforming the education.

Participants in training courses on educational management (about 100 school directors) and in on-the-job training activities (about 650 school directors) have studied a new type of management – transnational management of human resources – which focuses on building

new skills of co-operation in heterogenous open and complex cultural environments which require permanent development and self-organization.

In 2001, 14 professors of „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University and 8 school directors and in 2002 – 50 school directors passed one-month training courses in educational management at Montana State University within the above-mentioned project. In addition to it, directors of all pre-university educational units took part in training courses aimed at building new managerial skills, adequate to new trends and realities, at implementing a democratic leadership model.

The outcome of the project was a new scientific approach of the educational management, developed as a result of thorough studies of the works of American experts as well as of the experience of outstanding educational institutions of the Republic of Moldova. The project’s outcomes have been widely disseminated by various means, including by the means of the “ Informative Bulletin on the Educational Management”.

State University of Moldova and Institute of Lifelong Learning in co-operation with Alicante University (Spain), Royal Institute of Technologies (Sweden) and Centrinity Company (Sweden) are implementing a project called “*The National Centre of Educational Management*”, funded under TEMPUS Programme. The major project’s goal is enhancing school management. Both traditional computed-assisted courses and distance-learning courses for school managers have been delivered under the above-mentioned project.

The educational programmes funded by SOROS-Moldova Foundation play a particular role in the process of modernization of pre-university education. They are mainly implemented by Pro Didactica Educational Centre, the Institute for Public Policy, “Pas cu Pas” (“Step by Step”) Educational Programme, etc. Here are some data concerning the impact of such programmes:

- 250 teachers have been trained at 35 methodological centres of “Pro Didactica” network of schools in 1996-1998;
- 280 teachers and school psychologists have been trained in 1998–1999;
- over 200 hours of individual and group psycho-pedagogical consultancy has been provided in 1998–2000;
- 550 school teachers have passed professional development training courses in 2000;
- 340 teachers were covered by professional development modules in 2001;
- 465 teachers, including 225 teachers of boarding schools, have passed training courses in 2002;
- over 950 teachers of all areas of the country have passed training courses on multicultural education, integration of linguistic minorities, official language courses, etc. in 2003–2005;
- a large number of teachers took part in study visits in centres for teacher professional development of other countries such as: International Centre of Foreign Languages (Iasi, Romania), Centre for Managerial Development (Cluj, Romania), International Centre of Pedagogical Studies (Paris, France), School Leaders Centre of MCGILL University (Montreal, Canada), Open Society Institute (Budapest, Hungary), IMATON Centre (Sankt-Petersbourg, Russia), EIDOS Centre, Centre for Personality Development (Moscow, Russia), etc.

The Independent Society for Education and Human Rights has played an important role in developing a school course on *Civic Education*. It has implemented, in collaboration with Open Society Institute (New York), Soros Foundation (Moldova) and Street Law Inc. (Washington), a project aimed at developing the curriculum, the textbooks and the teacher’s manuals for the above-mentioned course. The curriculum and the manuals have been approved by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and are under implementation in schools. A considerable number of teachers were covered by study-visits and training courses in the field of civic education matters. Trainees have evaluate experimental teaching aids,

have practised active teaching methods, have set the tools for an efficient feed-back (pupil-teacher, teacher-pupil, teacher-author), have developed tools of evaluation of the quality of teaching aids.

The project was an example of successful partnership between a central public authority (the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports) and a non-governmental organization.

## 6.2. International and Cross-Board Co-operation of Schools

Schools of the Republic of Moldova involve in international and cross-border co-operation within projects funded by international agencies and non-governmental organizations.

According to the Frame-Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and UNICEF Office in Moldova, a series of projects are implemented in the fields of children health, reducing children mortality, fighting against malnutrition, reforming health care system, developing children education courses, conducting sociological surveys on children related issues. Such projects are implemented under Primary Medical Care Programme, Educational Programmes, Planning and Social Statistics Programme, etc. Here is below a brief description of educational projects with an international and cross-border co-operation component.

The *Programme of Early Individualized Education* focuses on pre-school education. 45 pilot-kindergartens of all districts of the country with a total number of about 10 000 children benefited from this programme. 700 educators took part in training courses, seminars and workshops of 4–5 days. Eight Regional Resource Centres for parents have been established to facilitate the communication and the collaboration between families and kindergartens, as well as the parents' access to information on child care and education.

A National Resource Centre was founded in co-operation with "Ion Creanga" Pedagogical State University. The centre provides training courses, develops and disseminates teaching aids for educators and parents as well as educational materials for children. The Centre has also conducted the monitoring and co-ordinated the activities of pilot-kindergartens and provided consultancy on early children education. All activities held under this programme involved the establishment and the development of partnerships, exchanges of experience with teachers of other countries.

Sustainable relations of international and cross-border co-operation have also been established within programmes and projects implemented by the *United Nations Population Fund* which provides permanent support for promoting health education. An integrated courses for school teachers and psychologists training was developed in collaboration with foreign organizations under the Curriculum of Health Education and Building Skills for Family Life. Upon completion of three training modules, participants in this project are awarded certificates of the Ministry of Education and have the right to teach health education as well as to deliver training courses on this issue.

International and cross-border co-operation was the context of the *National Programme of Life Skills-Based Education*, implemented under the auspices of the Prime-Minister of the Republic of Moldova. The Programme was intended to develop and implement the curriculum of a new compulsory school subject – *Life Skills*. The Programme is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS and Tuberculosis and the World Bank. The project aims at developing training courses and teaching aids, training teachers, implementing a pilot-project, integrating the subject into the school curriculum.

A number of school partnerships have been established under this project. There were many discussions concerning the sexual, moral and religious aspects of *Life Skills-based*

*Education.* There are up to now contradictory opinions concerning the contents of this course, some parents consider it as inopportune for their children.

„*Pas cu Pas*” Educational Programme plays an important role in developing international and cross-border co-operation. The programme was licensed in 1994. About 900 educators, 1 400 primary school teachers, 1 300 gymnasium teachers have been trained within this educational programme. „*Pas cu Pas*” Programme collaborates with 11 institutions for pre-service education of pre-school and primary school teachers. It provides training courses for teachers and child- and community-centred new educational courses based on interactive teaching/learning methods. The Programme puts a special emphasis on teacher traineeships held in kindergartens and schools.

International and cross-border co-operation was considerably fostered as a result of the implementation of “Street Law/Civic Education” project of Street Law Inc. (Washington), funded by SOROS-Moldova Foundation. Within this project, educational institutions of the Republic of Moldova established collaboration relationship with partner institutions of 15 post-communist countries (Romania, Hungary, Poland, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, etc.).

The analysis of the education legal framework reveals the lack of thorough regulation on international and cross-border co-operation. There is no legal regulation on sustainable funding for such activities, while central and local budgets do not allocate funds for expanding and strengthening school partnerships.

As a result, as the questionnaire’s data show, only 4,1% of interviewed teachers have some experience of international and cross-border co-operation while 7,3% of them are not interested in such co-operation. Nevertheless, most of respondents (64%) are willing to co-operate with teachers and pupils of foreign countries.

## **7. Conclusions and Recommendations**

1. In general, the structure of the national educational system of the Republic of Moldova complies with the European system of education due to:

- enforcing the universal right to education, to general instruction and vocational training, regardless of the gender, race, nationality, religion;
- the state guarantees compulsory general education of 9-year length;
- strict delimitation – from teleological, contents and final evaluation viewpoints – of pre-school, primary, gymnasium, lycee education; secondary professional education, higher education;
- openness of each level of education towards the following educational level;
- availability of a system of in-service teacher education;
- efficient operation of the national system of professional development of the teaching staff and researchers which is under a permanent improvement.

2. Most teachers of pre-school and pre-university education hold an university degree. Recent developments reveal the trend of increase in the number of teachers who hold an university diploma.

3. “Ageing” of the teaching staff and high fluctuation of teachers are two major features of the present educational system. Teachers, especially the ones at the beginning of their career, abandon schools because of low salaries, poor living conditions, particularly in villages, work immigration.

4. The mechanisms and the criteria for professional advancement of candidates to teacher’s degrees focus more on the length of service than on professional performance. There are no professional standards which could explicitly lead training activities and teacher

evaluation to relevant, measurable and valid outcomes. To fill these gaps, a *Concept on In-Service Education of the Teaching Staff* was developed and submitted to public debates. The Concept targets at the modernization of the system by the means of decentralization, democratization, active involvement of pedagogical universities and faculties as well as of non-governmental organizations in teacher training and evaluation.

5. In the Republic of Moldova, universities (higher education institutions) implemented pre-service education of all categories and qualifications of pre-university teaching staff, according to the Register of qualifications, colleges (secondary professional education institutions) – of all categories of pre-school educators and primary school teachers. Pre-service teacher education in the Republic of Moldova is open for the whole society.

6. Up to 2005, with some exceptions, teacher higher education was a contradictory system, while teacher lifelong training was an incoherent activity: students studied both courses in the field of education sciences and courses aimed at training for exerting a non-pedagogical profession. The situation could improve as a result of the establishment of an unitary system of pre-service teacher education, as provided by the *Law on the Approval of the Register of the Fields of Professional Education and of Qualifications to be delivered by higher education institutions of the first cycle*. This Law sets a new general field of education – Education Sciences – which comprises pedagogical, psychological and psycho-pedagogical qualifications.

7. Curriculum is conceived by pre-service education institutions as a normative and regulatory document based on teleological and contents related requirements: focusing on the system of taxonomical objectives, defining and integrating the basic components of the educational act (objectives, contents, teaching strategies, evaluation strategies). The available curricula are mainly based on traditional training methods, to the detriment of active learning, computer-assisted learning, distance-learning. Curricula in force do not offer large possibilities to select the subjects and there are a small share of optional courses.

8. The most important tools for collaboration between higher education institutions of the Republic of Moldova and pre-university educational institutions are classroom-teaching practices, participation of the teaching staff in developing National Curricula on each subject, participation in preparing and holding baccalaureate examinations, olympiads and other national contests. Nevertheless, a number of universities and pedagogical faculties do not have affiliated pilot-schools which could host students for classroom-teaching practice and serve as field for experiments in education sciences.

9. The surveys conducted among higher education institutions and teaching staff revealed that the respondents perceive a trend to increase in the quality of pre-service teacher education as well as in the quality of the educational process in educational units. The respondents showed that the following factors contribute to enhancing the quality of pre-service teacher education:

- co-operation between schools (primary and secondary) and pre-service teacher education and lifelong learning institutions, with a view to ensure direct involvement of students in the educational process;
- setting an institutional frame for research and development projects implemented by teachers;
- aiming research and development projects conducted by universities at solving school problems, performing by pre-service education institutions an intense publishing activity;
- using Information and Communication Technologies in teacher education.

10. The gaps between the theory and the educational practice within pre-service education institutions generate contradictions between pre-service education and in-service teacher education. Self-professional development implies both enhancement of professional

skills and increase in the professional efficiency which requires creativity and a special background. Under its present form, pre-service education does not, unfortunately, aim at building skills of self-professional development as a result of initiating students in new contents, orientations, trends, perspectives. On the contrary, higher teacher education is often overrun by new trends in pre-university education.

11. The respondents have pointed out the need for setting in higher education institutions an educational environment favourable to training centered on school learning (observations, experiments, introduction to teaching practice). There is also need for a comprehensive curriculum reform by the means of modernizing the national system of teacher lifelong training and approximating it to European systems.

12. According to some respondents, professional development is now at a regress stage, there is a breach between intellectualistic schemes, spiritual training and educational reality. The share of teachers involved in professional development courses remains relatively low, most training institutions are situated in the capital city. A large number of respondents plead for enhancing the system of in-service teacher education as a result of its reorientation to school reality, adaptation of training curricula to the professional needs of the teaching staff.

13. Based on the proposals done by interviewed educational institutions and teachers, the following *recommendations* can be formulated:

- Follow the recommendations of international organizations concerning school education and education quality: enrollment of the best candidates to pre-service education, providing high-quality pre-service education, developing the professional skills of teachers, increasing teacher motivation, efficient application of the research outcomes into the educational practice.

- Promote a more active dialogue between local government, educational institutions and social partners with a view to enhance the quality of pre-service teacher education and teacher lifelong learning, establish a legal framework intended to encourage graduates to get employed in schools, especially in rural areas.

- Modernize curricula of pre-service and in-service teacher education courses with a view to ensure a reasonable balance between theory and practice, professionlization of the educational field. Both pre-service and in-service teacher education curricula should focus on building practical skills.

- Broaden the co-operation between pre-service and in-service teacher education institutions and schools. Develop a legal framework intended to regulate such a co-operation and ensure the delimitation of the spheres of competence and responsibilities among educational institutions and schools.

- Ensure the continuity between the system of pre-service teacher education and teacher lifelong learning. Diversify training methods, enhance personal responsibility of each teacher for his/her professional career.

- Implement a system of permanent monitoring of the professional career of each teacher and of his/her professional development, implement the system of academic credits both in pre-service education and in the system of teacher lifelong learning.

- Expand international and cross-border co-operation among in-service teacher education institutions, especially in fields related to teaching subjects with a sound social impact, to multicultural education, ethnic, linguistic and religious tolerance. Ensure the mobility of trainers and teachers, develop common manuals and teaching aids, set up international groups of authors.

- Enhance the synergy of higher education and research, involve school-practicians in designing teacher training programmes and in implementing research projects. Apply the outcomes of research projects in teacher lifelong learning as well as in schools with a view to enhance the educational process.

- Officialize the Status of Teachers which should define explicitly the professional and social rights and duties of the teaching staff, as well as the functions and the role of teachers, the professional skills required to correlate teaching career to the the society needs.
- Motivate teachers to take part in lifelong learning courses, develop performance-based tools for advancement, promotion and financial stimulation.
- Expand, diversify and reorient the funds allocated to pre-service and in-service teacher education in compliance with the trends of education development. Establish special items for in-service education of the teaching staff in the budgets of school units and of central and local bodies of educational system administration.

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