



DEMOGRAPHIC BAROMETER

SITUATION OF YOUTH IN REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: FROM GOALS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Mariana BUCIUCEANU-VRABIE, Irina PAHOMII¹

Summary: The key problems young people from Republic of Moldova face are examined. A high degree of vulnerability and susceptibility to various risks (namely poverty, inequity of educational opportunities, training and access to information, economic opportunities, health and harmful habits) has been observed, which compromises the opportunities and the development of youth: A high degree of social exclusion of young people has been recorded – about 29% do not attend any form of education or training and are not employed. In this regard, Republic of Moldova has the worst indicators among countries in the region. Over 31% of employed youth have informal jobs, and 10.4% are working without individual employment contracts. Over 16% of the youth of the country are working or looking for a job abroad.

Ongoing investment in the young generation, primarily in education, health and employment are highlighted among the most urgent actions.

The current demographic and economic challenges raises the problematic regarding situation of the young people and orientation of youth policies as a driver of investment in human capital become a very important issue. Currently youth represent a quarter of the country's population, being a strategic component of its sustainable development, the demand for labor market, the ground for creation of families and for mankind continuation. Despite the ongoing implementation of the National Strategy for Youth Development Sector 2020, the reduced

financing of the planned activities do not provide the expected results, and delaying of socio-economical and socio-political reforms worsen the situation.

Education of young potential. In recent decades successes in increasing the level of education of the population are visible in Republic of Moldova. Thus, compared to 2000, in the structure of the population aged 25 years and over, proportion of those who have completed a higher level of education has almost doubled (from 12,4% to 20,1% in 2014).

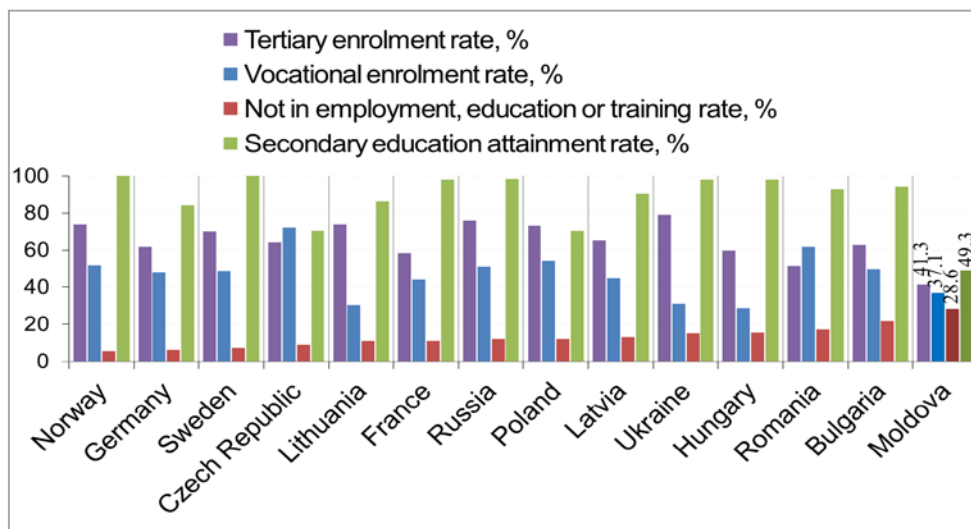


Fig.1. Educational attainment of young population (aged 15-24), year 2013

Source: The Human Capital Report 2015.

¹ Mariana Buciuceanu-Vrabie, PhD in sociology, coordinator scientific researcher, Centre for Demographic Research of the National Institute for Economic Research, Republic of Moldova.
Irina Pahomii, scientific researcher, Centre for Demographic Research of the National Institute for Economic Research.

This shift is due to the younger generation (15-29 age), where the share of those with high education (19,2% in 2014) is higher than in the case of adult age population (12,3%).

However, the education achievements and the quality of young capital in the Republic of Moldova there is less competitive compare to other countries. Thus, the share of people aged 15-24 recorded the lowest rate of enrollment in tertiary education (41,3% in 2013) among the compared countries (Fig.1), and in the case of vocational studies (37,1%) Moldova is advancing only Ukraine (31%), Lithuania (30,4%) and Hungary (28,9%).

It is worthy to mention an extremely high percentage of young people who do not attend any form of education or professional training and who are not employed (NEET rate) (about 29%). For this indicator Moldova exceeds all comparable countries, including the EU average (17,9%)², which confirms the high degree of vulnerability and social exclusion of young people.

Youth on the labor market. In recent years, the imbalance between the labor force demand and supply has doubled (from 20.8 in 2001 to 42.1%³), mostly because of the low capacity to employ high educated persons, particularly

from younger age group.

According to the national statistics regarding the economic participation of youth, 3 out of 10 young people are employed and about 2/3 are economically inactive (447 thousands). More than half of those economically inactive are involved in the process of education and professional training, and over 20% are involved in housework. Over 31% of employed youth have informal jobs⁴, and 10,4% are working without individual employment contracts. At the same time, although there are programs supporting young entrepreneurs, the share of young people among entrepreneurs remains relatively small – 2.4% were aged up to 24 years and 20.3% were aged 25-34 years.

A big decrease in the share of youth employed in total employed population is attested. Despite its decreasing trend in recent years youth unemployment rates the highest values – 7,2% in 2014 compared to other age groups or the country average (about 4%) - (Fig.2). The decrease of youth unemployment rate is a result of the low level of official unemployment, intense migration flow of young people abroad, but also a result of poor statistical evidence of the real number of population in RM.

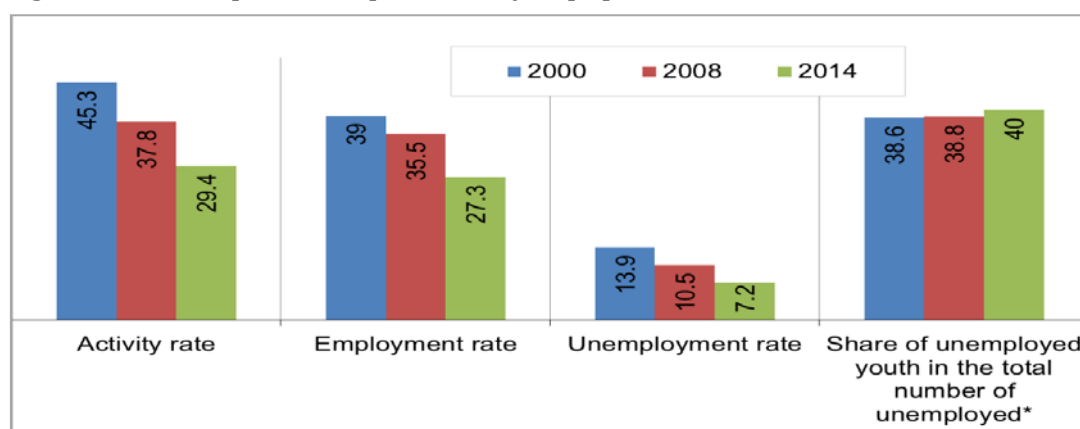


Fig.2. Economic participation of young people (15-29 age), %

Source: base on NBS data. *Officially registered unemployed.

According to official data, four out of ten officially registered unemployed are young (aged 15-29 years). Among them 3 out of 5 are men, 7 out of 10 are from rural areas, and 9 out of 10 are aged 20-29. From the total unemployed young people about 13% were long-term unemployed.

The comparison with the neighboring countries and some countries in the region rates Moldova as having the lowest youth employment rate (18,1% for those aged 15-24 and 42,4% for those aged

25-29). At the same time, youth in Moldova have the highest rate of inactivity (over 66% according to the international data), exceeding the EU average more than twice (27,7% for 2014).

Young people's health. The access of young people aged under 18 and of those who continue their studies to health care is guaranteed by the state, through free medical insurance. Meanwhile, the young unemployed remain without insurance.

² Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators. Paris, 2013.

³ Research and analysis of job vacancies and skills needs in the European Union, Moldova and Ukraine. Chisinau, OIM, 2013, p.47.

⁴ Transition to the school to the labour. Chisinau, BNS, 2015.

Maintaining the health of young people is a lot influenced by the subjective factor of their behavior – health behavior. Because of their lifestyle, proper to a high-risk behavior, rebellious nature, carelessness and lack of experience deprives young to notify the connection between current actions on their health and the future consequences.

An overview of health statistics show that among persons with disabilities 8% are people aged under 29. Although the incidence of tuberculosis cases among young people is decreasing in the last years, the share of youth aged 25-34 years old among patients with active tuberculosis is constant – about 22%, and for those aged 15-24 years – 10,2% of all patients. At the same time, even if by governmental and non-governmental institutions common efforts are made to inform young people about protecting against sexually transmitted infections, 6 of 10 persons infected with this type of diseases are in the age group 15-29 and their share maintains constant in the last decade. However, approximately 14% (in 2013) of newly detected cases of HIV infection refers to persons aged 15-24. In addition, various studies⁵ show a decrease of the share of young people with comprehensive knowledge about HIV from 40,5% (in 2005) to about 32% (in 2013). Another risk behavior is tobacco use (smoking) among youth⁶, which recorded over 14% among the total population aged 15-24 years (24,1% among men and 4,3% among women).

Currently, the need to promote a healthy lifestyle

is increasingly required. However, there are several medical services, for example those that refer to reproductive health, which are not covered by the mandatory health insurance.

Young family. Young families are perceived as very vulnerable from socio-economical point of view. Their needs for living are high, especially in the situation when very few young families are provided with dwellings (houses) and the wage of young specialists is small and does not cover the minimum necessary for living. According to national researches⁷, about 29% of young families are not adapted to current socioeconomic conditions, most of them living in rural area. Most of these families have children (77%) and only 1/3 of them have their own home. All these characteristics argue the need for special interventions from the state and the community.

The future of the youth: in Moldova or abroad? Migration of young Moldovans has several forms, namely labor migration, migration for studies and migration for family reunification.

According to current statistics on labour force⁸, an important category of inactive young people (about 193,5 thousands) is represented by those who left abroad for work or to look for a job. Based on various official sources (*Table 1*) the number of young people working abroad has increased in recent years, as well as their share in the total number of young population (from 13,1% in 2008 to 16,2% in 2014).

Table 1. Statistics on the young people outflow

National Bureau Statistics data refers to labour force				
Age	Youth being abroad for work or looking for a job (<i>thousands persons</i>)		* Share of young emigrants in the total number of young people, %	
	2008	2014	2008	2014
15-24	75,9	72,3	11,2	13,6
25-34	85,8	121,2	15,3	18,3
15-34	161,7	193,5	13,1	16,2
State border crossing data				
Age	Youth being abroad, <i>thousand persons</i>		Share of young people absent from the country for more than one year, %	
	2008	2014	2008	2014
15-24	144,3	125,1	27,4	33,3
25-34	214,6	253,1	36,2	41,6
15-29	259,8	254,1	31,2	35,9
15-34	358,9	378,1	32,7	38,8

Source: calculated by authors based on NBS data; Centre for State Information Resources "Register" (via Acces-Web).

*calculated based on NBS data concerning the average number of resident population and labor force data in Moldova.

⁵Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012 (MICS). Summary report. Chisinau, 2014; Moldova Demographic and Health Survey 2005

⁶World Health Statistics 2015. WHO, Geneva, 2015.

⁷Sinchevici-Chistruga I. Adaptation of young family to a society in transformation (based on sociological investigations in Republic of Moldova). PhD thesis in sociology. Chisinau, 2014.

⁸The labor force in Moldova. Employment and unemployment. NBS. Chisinau, 2015.

Young people represent 57,3% of total migrants in urban area, while in rural area – over 60%. Of all men left abroad, almost 2/3 are youth, and in case of women, the share of youth is 43%.

The intensity of migration, the socio-demographic characteristics of migration flows among young people, and the period of time migrants stay abroad, induce direct losses of the younger generation, namely of people in reproductive and economically active age – a very valued capital in the socio-demographic and economic aspects of the country. In addition, the loss of the working age population gradually induce the pressure on social funds. At the same time, it notice that the profile of a young emigrant is changing qualitatively: predominantly young people with completed internship training are going abroad, including those who have not yet created a family.

Migration of youth for studies

The share of young people left abroad for study is difficult to estimate, but both national and host countries' statistics show an annual growth of Moldovan students living abroad for this purpose. According to official data obtained from registers of host countries⁹ (Romania, Russian Federation, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Ukraine, United States of America, academic exchange program ERASMUS and CEPUS) academic mobility of students is performed at all 3 levels of educations: Bachelor, Masters and PhD. According to these sources, 20538 young people left for studies for the academic year 2011/2012 with an increase to up to 24642 in 2013/2014. The host countries' records are about 4 times higher than national statistics (5673 students abroad in the year 2013/2014). This difference is determined by the fact that many young people are accessing the educational institutions abroad directly, avoiding national institutions or programs.

Conclusion. Young people are part of society and are equal participants of the social and political

processes. At the same time, the changes in the socio-economic situation of the country put young people in a particular situation, close to social exclusion. The support provided to children and young people is insufficient, and the integration of youth into adult society, in conditions of an economic decline, wasn't facilitated by any significant measures of support. Being in an interdependent relationship with the society, current investment in the young generation with priority implications in education, health and economic participation, professional skills and knowledge becomes an imperative to keep the most valuable aspect of socio-demographic and economic contingent in the country.

In current conditions, among the most stringent measures to improve the situation of youth, to extend their rights and opportunities we highlight the following:

- the employment policies shall focus on developing a special support for integration into the labor market of the graduates, encouraging gender equality and equity in employment, the development of the employment policy related to reconciliation of professional and family roles etc.;

- integration of youth problems (issues) in sectorial policies when those are formulated. Monitoring and implementation of policies and actions in other areas with a significant impact on youth, such as education, health, labor market and welfare;

- extension of high quality social and healthcare services, including prevention, treatment and care, that will impact on improvement health indicators of young people. The development of psychological assistance (counseling services and therapy) and family life education;

- developing of tools and institutional mechanisms to increase participation of youth in community life, to stimulate their civic activism and their empowerment through the local structures of youth etc.

⁹ Grigoraş E. The academic mobility of students in Republic of Moldova. In: Journal of Philosophy, Sociology and Political Science, nr.2. pg.228. Chisinau, 2014.