



**Culture &
Creativity**

EU-Eastern Partnership Programme

DEVELOPING AUDIENCES FOR PUBLIC CULTURE AND ARTS EVENTS IN MOLDOVA

A policy brief for the Culture & Creativity
EU-Eastern Partnership Programme

Nº17



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Executive Summary:

According to the District Youth Strategy report in 2012 many young Moldovans do not go to cultural events in public concert halls and galleries because of young people's limited access to cultural programmes or their low level of knowledge. Another factor is the cultural programmes of public cultural institutions do not interest young people. At the same time young Moldovan audiences are not familiar with culture and classical and academic art because cultural education includes too few school trips to theatres and museums from an early age.

Public institutions do not have dedicated marketing budgets and the management are unfamiliar with targetted marketing that could significantly improve communication and promotion of their activities, while commercial events are able to fill concert halls. The problem is not the public, the problem is the poor advertising of the event by the public sector.

Six Steps to Developing Audiences in Public Institutions:

1. Government investment in the professional development of the staff working in the cultural sector
2. Implement more projects that would cultivate love for academic art in children
3. Familiarise the public with culture and the arts
4. Improve cultural programmes in public institutions
5. The public sector should hire marketing companies to promote their own events
6. Use tax credits for PR companies to encourage re-branding and promotion of public institutions

Recommendations:

For Cultural Institutions

Public cultural institutions should change their focus onto their audiences.

For the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research

The education system should be more involved in the development of the creative potential of children and youth. Develop a sustainable long-term policy on young people's access to culture. Increase budget allocations to public cultural institutions. Coordinate the entire activity of systemic regulation for the cultural sector. Coordinate public opinion surveys on cultural consumption. Allow publicly-funded culture organisations to hold outdoor events in public spaces.

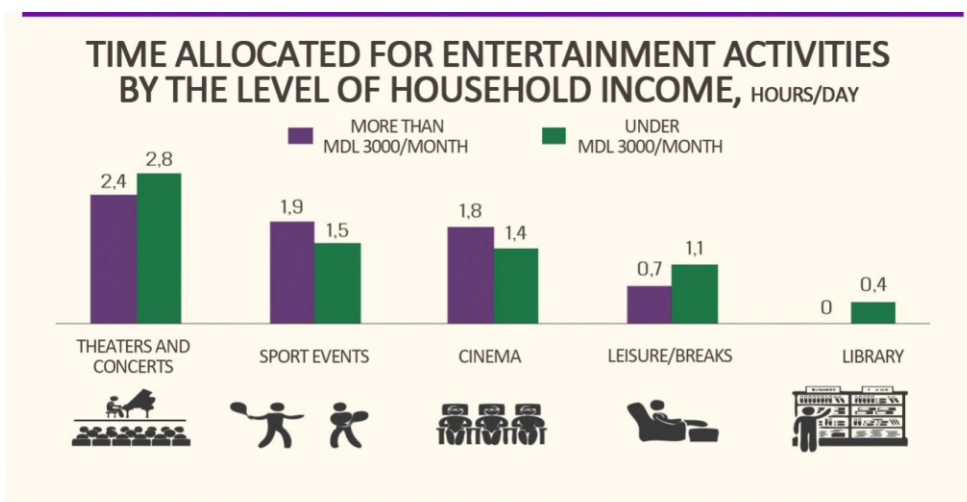
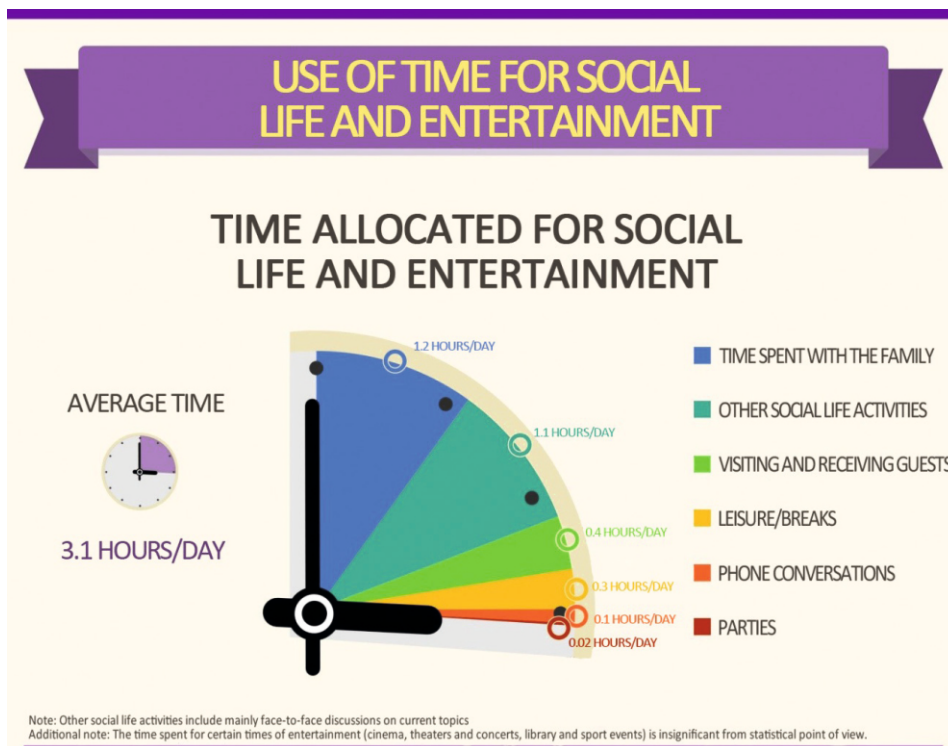


Photo Mihai Potarnache

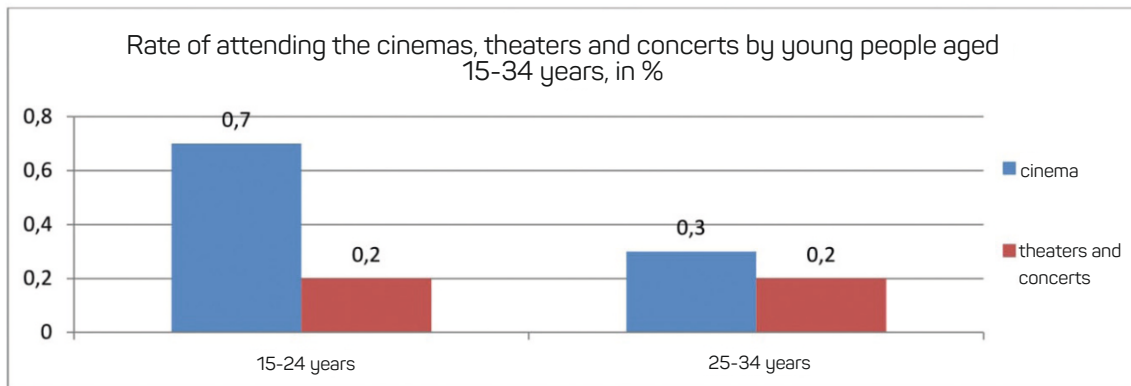
Problem statement:

Many people, who are often young and open to culture, have never been to public cultural institutions. Often the reasons mentioned are young people's limited access to socio-cultural programmes or their low level of information, according to the Youth Regional Strategy, which prioritised the problems identified by young people.

Although cultural life is a priority for young people, many of them give more importance to family time than time spent on some types of entertainment:



According to the National Bureau of Statistics the cinema, theater and concert attendance rate for young people aged 15 – 34 years, in percentage terms is:



In developed cities across Europe and beyond, although access to cultural and artistic institutions is based on ticket sales, everyone pays for cultural events even if tickets are not cheap. But there are also cultural, artistic, public spaces, where the entrance is free and the attendance is high. For example, free public events in London.

The public cultural and arts halls in Chisinau and the rest of the Republic are visited by a small number of people. So far we have little official information and statistics on the real state of the attendance at cultural and artistic halls. Information on their low rate of participation is represented internally by cultural workers.

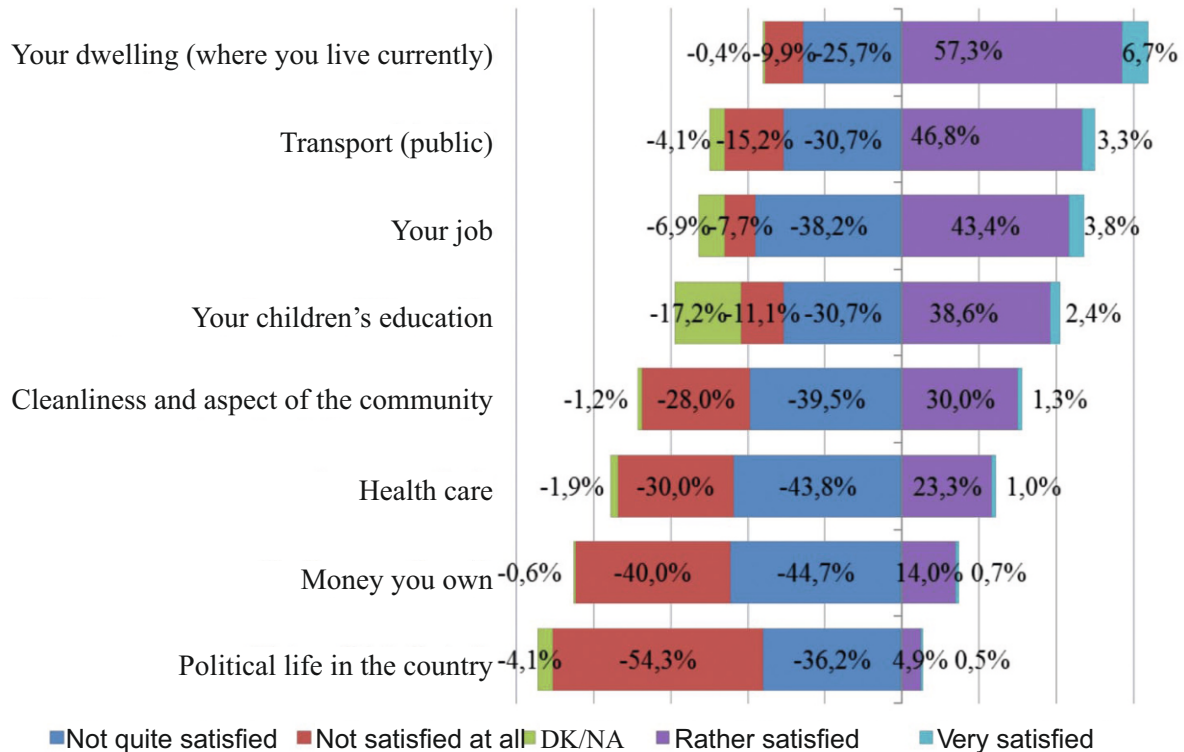
We still feel the effects of the Soviet system, where the public is accustomed to getting everything for free. A good example of this is free concerts, which show active participation by the public such as:

- „Europe Days in Chisinau”
- „Youth Festival 2016”
- „American Film Festival in Chisinau”
- „The 16th Francophone Film Festival”
- The „Mărțișor” International Music Festival, the 2017 edition, where the US Air Force Ambassadors stationed in Europe played with the Jazz - AMPTAP Orchestra and had full halls.

Since concerts are paid for, then a significant reduction in the attendance rate is noticed. Therefore, the cultural and artistic institutions, such as the Maria Biesu Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Puppet and Drama Theatre, the National Philharmonic „Serghei Lunchevici” etc., do not have sufficient or permanent audiences to maintain decent, artistic institutions and artists themselves, or develop, according to the event organizers themselves, the managers and workers of these institutions.

This problem is closely linked to other problems: The public is not familiar with culture, cultural education is lacking, attendance at cultural - artistic halls is low, and a love for culture and academic art is not cultivated. The artistic disciplines are not well represented in the pre-school, primary, gymnasium and vocational education curricula, or are treated with disinterest. In the Opinion Barometer of October 2016 says 30.7% (not too satisfied) and 11.1% (not at all satisfied) of the population are dissatisfied with the education that children receive in school:

Distribution of answers to the question: *How satisfied are you with...?*



Distribution of aggregated answers 'Not satisfied at all', 'Not quite satisfied'		Health care	Your dwelling	Transport	Your children's education	Your job *	Money you own	Political life in the country	Cleanliness and aspect of the community
TOTAL		73.8%	35.6%	45.9%	41.8%	45.8%	84.7%	90.5%	67.5%
Sex	Male	75.9%	33.4%	48.3%	43.0%	44.6%	82.0%	92.7%	66.0%
	Female	72.1%	37.4%	43.8%	40.9%	47.3%	86.9%	88.7%	68.7%
Area of residence	Urban	75.5%	33.9%	44.7%	48.8%	46.9%	82.6%	92.9%	72.8%
	Rural	72.4%	36.9%	46.8%	36.1%	44.5%	86.5%	88.5%	63.3%
Age	18-29 years	69.0%	36.2%	51.5%	45.3%	41.9%	80.2%	92.0%	74.2%
	30-44 years	75.4%	40.5%	51.6%	39.4%	47.4%	82.0%	88.7%	66.7%
	45-59 years	76.3%	36.9%	42.7%	43.5%	47.8%	87.4%	91.2%	67.7%
	60+ years	73.8%	27.4%	36.9%	39.6%	41.4%	89.4%	90.5%	61.5%
Nationality	Moldovan/Romanian	75.0%	37.5%	48.1%	41.7%	48.5%	86.6%	90.7%	68.6%
	Russian	74.8%	28.5%	34.2%	45.5%	22.9%	76.2%	88.4%	75.8%
	Ukrainian	68.0%	23.4%	27.1%	39.4%	35.8%	78.6%	90.8%	58.1%
	Other	63.2%	24.9%	38.9%	42.5%	41.3%	72.6%	89.4%	54.7%
Education	Low	67.7%	39.9%	45.5%	41.3%	51.2%	87.9%	88.0%	63.2%
	Medium	73.7%	36.0%	44.9%	40.2%	50.0%	86.4%	88.8%	63.9%
	High	76.1%	33.4%	47.3%	44.3%	42.1%	81.3%	93.6%	73.8%
Socio-economic status	Low	73.1%	44.3%	45.4%	39.9%	41.4%	88.6%	88.9%	61.8%
	Medium	75.8%	32.6%	44.5%	41.2%	45.5%	84.8%	91.6%	64.9%
	High	72.9%	30.1%	47.5%	44.3%	47.5%	81.0%	91.0%	75.1%

Sample: 365 employed respondents

At the opposite end, another situation is the case of commercial events, where the halls are full, most often they are busy. In the view of the promoters the explanation is simple the problem is not the public in this case the public assumes the role of financier of the commercial event the problem remains to be the poor promotion of the event. Examples of well-attended commercial events include:

- Opening of the first Moldovan Castle, Mimi, located in Bulboaca, Anenii Noi.
- Reopening of the Manuc Bey Mansion in Hancesti town.
- The Underland Wine & Music Fest Festival, which is the first and only underground festival of wine and street music in the world, and is underground in the legendary Cricova vaults.

Analysis of options: Six Steps to Developing Audiences in Public Institutions.

1. The first step to attract and increase audiences in cultural and artistic spaces is to offer a considerable reduction of about 50% for pupils, students and retirees, in the context of young people from the Republic of Moldova being part of the most vulnerable segments of poverty and social exclusion, along with children, women, people with disabilities, the elderly and Roma. A pupil, student or pensioner who does not have a financial income will find it difficult to afford to attend multiple cultural events, as long as the network of leisure and leisure facilities is weak and poorly diversified in rural areas and costly for those in the urban area. Pupils and students who study arts should have free access to artistic events, because they are the real beneficiaries, who will be encouraged and motivated to develop in this sphere. They should have free access for all open events such as exhibitions, museums, etc. In addition at least 10 percent of the seats in concert halls should be equally free to students. By offering discounts and ticket price freezes revenue will not be increased but the number of visitors will increase considerably. Plus these pupils and students will become adults with a financial income who will consume art. In the same way we know that the best advertising is the „the word of mouth”, so that pupils, students and retirees who will have discounts and ticket price freezes will provoke other people willing to consume art, already at a cost.

This issue could be solved by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research.



2. Another step, also specifically linked to children and young people, from the earliest possible age is initiating several projects to develop children's and young people's love for academic art and their familiarity with the culture and the arts. Why specifically children and young people? Because children and young people today are our tomorrow's viewers, are future cultural consumers.

This problem can be solved primarily by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova through the restructuring of the curricula by expanding those disciplines that directly stimulate art (literature, music, painting, etc.), but also by including new disciplines to support all forms of creativity, including the arts, in the curricula of pre-school, primary, secondary and vocational education.

In this context when the cultural offerings of public cultural institutions are of low interest to young people who prefer cultural consumption by alternative methods, producers and cultural managers need to adapt their cultural offers and how to access them to young people's current lifestyle especially as they are in the process of developing consumer and customisation practices of cultural preferences.

We can get inspired from the example of Sound Box, which aims to lure the millennial generation, in a lively location that offers a significantly different reception than an ordinary evening in the classical „Davies Symphony”. People can drink during concerts and are in a casual space:

<http://stringsmagazine.com/sonic-youth-how-symphonies-are-reaching-out-to-millennial-audiences/>

- 3.** Also in order to familiarise the public with the culture and art it is necessary to organise more things as follows:
 - A.** Open Door Days when anyone can visit a cultural and artistic hall for free and be guided by an experienced person.
 - B.** Masterclasses and / or presentations made by well-informed individuals a few days before the artistic event in which to present and interpret the cultural product to be exhibited and / or interpreted.
 - C.** Take artists out of the cultural and artistic halls and organise events / projects in as many unusual spaces. In this way the spectator will be motivated to attend the cultural halls.
 - D.** The Museum Night already exists. But why not organise Theatre Night, the Night of the Exhibitions or the night of any other field? These nights can be organised separately, but it is better to synchronise and create a common event in which the general public has free access to all cultural and artistic institutions at night.
 - E.** A certain number of days when pensioners have free access.
 - F.** Use of cultural and artistic spaces for renting various types of events and business receptions including a tour of the space.

Cultural institutions could diversify the forms and contents of the presentation of their artistic acts in an interactive way (e.g. audio guide, electronic maps or by interacting with the public), which would attract an audience and consumers eager

to experience and interact with an act. In this context, visual art events are a type of cultural activity that can take a variety of ways of exposure to the public. For example street art offers a way of free and interactive consumption. Some public institutions can adapt and develop small open-air infrastructure near cultural institutions, (exhibition spaces, or even building facades) to make them available to authors for various exhibition projects free of charge. State cultural institutions have subsidies from the state budget and their own income. So leasing space is a form of making an income. It would be necessary for the funds received from the rents of the premises to be fully covered by the budget of the respective institutions.

Therefore three actions that would improve the programmes of cultural institutions are:

- A.** Presenting the already existing programme in a more interactive way, involving the public in the artistic process and using modern technology.
- B.** Introducing new and modern programmes.
- C.** Making programmes that reach out to the public by intelligently adapting them to the public need and interest in a sophisticated way. This should not mean pastiche or kitsch programmes.

This problem can easily be solved individually by cultural institutions by adapting and diversifying their cultural services and directly addressing the public's needs, which could increase the interest and satisfaction of this segment of consumers towards the activities of public cultural institutions. Cultural offers must be attractive, creative, relevant and contain an interactive dimension.

An example is open-air concerts: Concerts are already made in the Republic of Moldova by the Moldovan National Youth Orchestra and Moldo Crescendo. Or Summer Nights, a practice met in the West, where viewers are involved as conductors in open-air concerts.

- 4.** We also notice that few cultural institutions have a well-defined visual identity. The first contact by a spectator with an event is via posters (online and offline). For this it would be necessary to hire brand specialists and create an attractive visual identity for each institution that will generate interest among the public. International experts agree that the identity of the organisation is an important resource. Brand specialist Wally Olins says that identity can be a marketing resource, a design resource, a communication source or a behavioral resource. Visual identity is important for organisations provided it is consistent and consistently applied. Through visual identity an organisation differentiates itself and positions itself on the market and in the communication space in order to gain credibility and notoriety. Each cultural institution should develop its own visual identity strategy. Cultural institutions that already have a strategy and brand identity need to systematically communicate with all target audiences, modelling the organisation according to new trends, adding new dimensions and revitalising the identity of the organisation.

5. Similarly cultural institutions give too little importance, sometimes not at all, to promotion (management and marketing). Commercial events however, such as those mentioned above, place great emphasis on promotion which have brought results. Audiences tend to go to the events they heard of. It seems very logical. If cultural progress is to be pursued, it must focus on motivating the 80% of non-artistic people. It not sufficient to confine marketing focus to just the 20% of people in the cultural or socially active area, who attend cultural events without them having to be promoted, or because they work in the field.

A lack of dedicated budgets and lack of awareness of managerial developmental delays the application of specialised marketing that could significantly improve communication and promotion of activities. Most institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research have considerably low budgets. It would be feasible to replace the funding for these institutions, and instead develop and implement marketing strategies and consumer studies for them. These consumer dynamics must be studied and understood, prior to formulating visions and institutional missions.

6. The options in point 4 and 5 on visual identity and promotion are usually expensive. But that can be resolved in a chain by solving another problem, namely creating tax benefits for economic agents, physical and legal persons who financially support culture. At the moment, we do not have a legal framework and there is little interest in investing or sponsoring art.

This problem can be solved by the state (Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and the Ministry of Finance) through the elaboration of a public policy or law that initiates the support of the public-private partnerships through sponsorships, donations, etc.

Recommendations:

For Cultural Institutions

1. Public cultural institutions should refocus their attention to their audiences. They should attract and maintain the public's interest. They should promote the value and importance of the services they offer and their role to society. They should be distinctive and provide a qualitatively good experience.

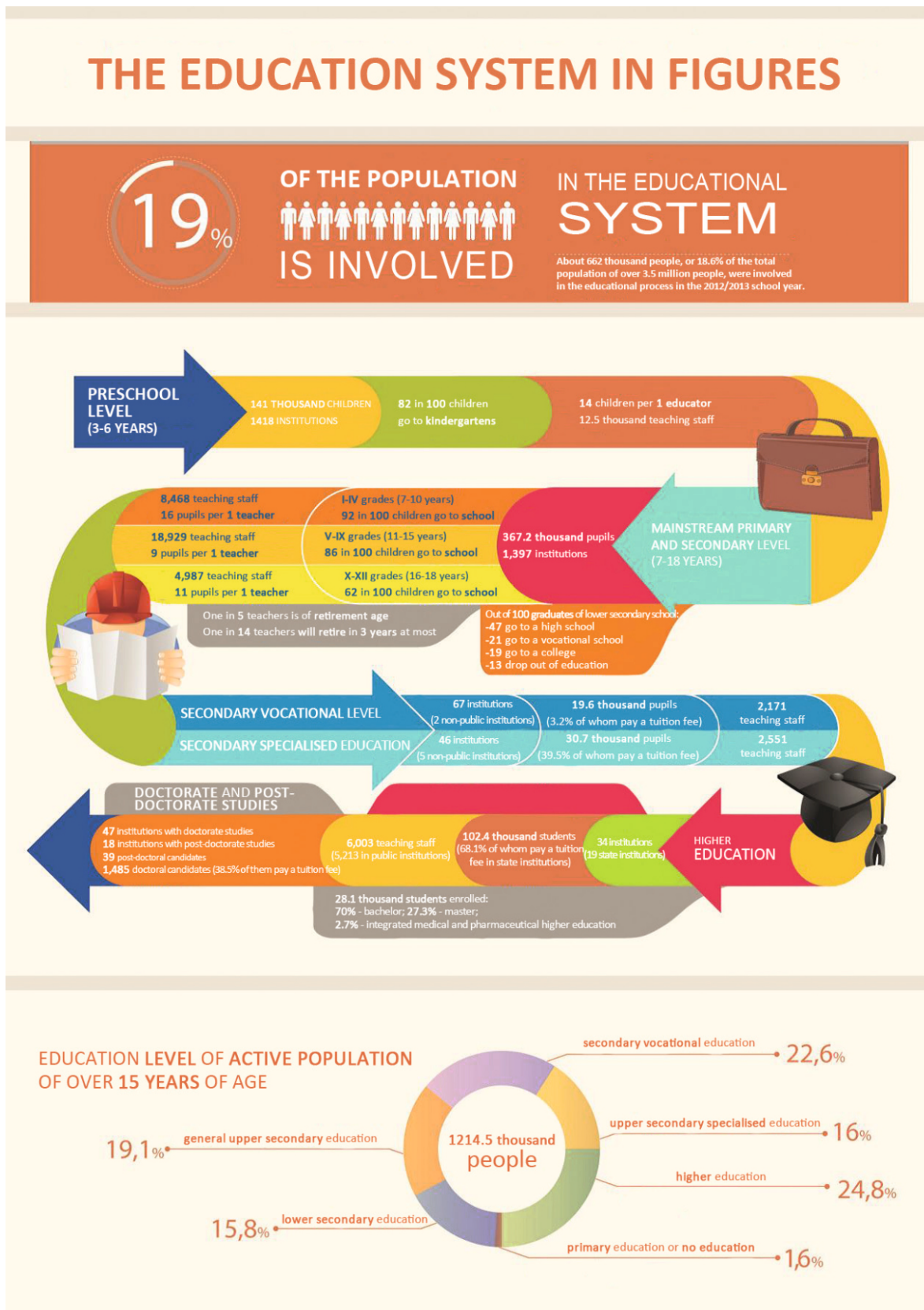
For the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research

1. It is important that the education system gets more involved in the development and stimulation of the creative potential of children and youth. Their creative potential can be improved by exposing them to culture, by developing their cultural consumption and by getting them involved in artistic and creative activities.
2. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research should formulate policies and programmes for the school curriculum that are flexible and include cultural education and creative or cultural and artistic activities.
3. Develop a sustainable long-term policy on young people's access to culture touching upon:
 - The need to conduct surveys on young people's needs and aspirations regarding cultural supply and infrastructure.
 - Open up direct access for young people to creative venues for learning and cultural activities.
 - Initiate communication between cultural institutions and young people about what young people want from cultural programmes.
4. Increase budget allocations to public cultural institutions. At the same time diversify funding sources for culture through subsidies, investment funds or tax incentives.
5. Initiate and if necessary coordinate the entire activity of systemic regulation for the cultural sector. Create a framework to develop and support financial alternatives outside of the public system. Formulate a regulatory framework for culture that covers public and private offers, strengthening financing mechanisms for private initiatives.
6. Conduct and if necessary coordinate public opinion surveys on cultural consumption in the Republic of Moldova. Improve assessment mechanisms in the field of art and culture. A system of cultural indicators.
7. Encourage the use of public spaces for cultural events, including streets, forecourts, parks, gardens, public squares, open spaces, etc.



Annexes:

Annex 1: Current situation, problem definition and general trends from the 2014 – 2020 National Strategy for Youth Sector Development:



Annex 2: Cultural Institutions on Indicators, Mediums and Years. The number of seats in showrooms per 1000 inhabitants for 2015 (total on the republic - represents 93 seats):

The screenshot shows the 'Banca de date statistice Moldova' website interface. At the top left is the logo for 'STATISTICA MOLDOVEI'. To the right is a language dropdown menu set to 'română'. Below the logo is the title 'Banca de date statistice Moldova'. A breadcrumb trail reads: 'Statistica sociala >> Cultura si sport >> Cultura >> Institutiile culturale pe medii, 1995-2015'. There are three numbered steps: '1 Alege tabelul', '2 Alege variabila', and '3 Afiseaza tabelul'. Below these are options for 'Editeaza si Calculeaza', 'Salveaza tabelul ca', and 'Tabel pe ecran - Model de prezentare 1'. There are also social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and a 'CSV' download option. Below the navigation are two buttons: '+ Setari tabel' and '+ Salveaza extragera'. The main content area is titled 'Institutiile culturale pe Indicatori, Medii si Ani' and contains a table with the following data:

	2015
Numarul de locuri in salile de spectacole la 1000 locuitori	
Total pe republica	93

Note
Informatia este prezentata fara datele raionelor din partea stanga a Nistrului si municipiul Bender

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Note

The policy briefs are the result of capacity building work by the EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme in 2016-2017 with 240 Programme Associates, who had completed a series of eight workshops in business management for mid-career cultural operators.

The purpose of these briefs is to help them additionally understand the role of professionals in providing concise and neutral policy advice in the area of their competence. The task was to identify problems within the sector, provide potential models, options and solutions, support critical thinking, evidence-based policy analysis and the formulation of recommendations. The ideas were developed by the Associates themselves.

The report is developed with the assistance of the EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme. The content of this report does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for information and views expressed in the publication lies entirely with the author.





Culture & Creativity

EU Western Partnership Programme



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