



CHILD-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

External Evaluation Report of the
Child-Friendly School Initiative (2007-2011)
Republic of Moldova



Ministry of Education
of the Republic of Moldova



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Contact person, UNICEF Moldova: *Liudmila Lefter*

The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organizations that have implemented the Child-Friendly School Initiative: the Moldovan Ministry of Education and UNICEF Moldova.

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Authors:

Simona Velea, Chapters I –VII, VIII.1-VIII.3, IX
CReDO, Sub-chapter VIII.4

Data collection: Aliona Badiur, Vasile Ciubotaru, Angela Cojocaru, Marcel Gherghelegiu, Simona Velea

Processing and statistical interpretation of data collected through questionnaire:

Irina Burlacu, Bianca Buligescu

Coordination: Liudmila Lefter, Education Officer, UNICEF Moldova

Svetlana Stefanet, Chief of Equitable Access to Quality Services Programme, UNICEF Moldova

Elena Laur, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF Moldova

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MoE	Ministry of Education
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
ToR	Terms of Reference
SbS	Step by Step Education Programme
APT	Parent-Teacher Association
MDL	Moldovan Leu
MSU	Moldova State University
IES	Institute of Education Sciences
IPP	Institute for Public Policy
CReDO	Human Rights Resource Centre
CFS	Child-Friendly School
USD	US Dollar
MSIF	Moldova Social Investment Fund
SEN	Special educational needs
GD	Government Decision
THS	Theoretical Lyceum
MLSPF	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family
ICT	information and communication technologies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Child-Friendly School (CFS) is a global model that UNICEF has been promoting since the mid-1990s – one that has children’s rights at its core, along with the pursuit of equity, inclusion and empowerment of the poorest and most excluded children. Under the auspices of UNICEF Moldova and the Government of the Republic of Moldova, the Child-Friendly School Initiative was implemented on an experimental basis from 2007-2011. In line with the global model, the Moldovan CFS Initiative aimed at increasing participation in education, reducing dropout rates and improving the students’ academic achievements by transforming schools into inclusive and child-friendly institutions. The current document reports the findings of an external evaluation of the pilot project, conducted in 2011. (For a description of the evaluation’s methodology, see Annex 1).

The Initiative sought to integrate the five principles of the Child-Friendly School:

1. inclusiveness;
2. efficiency;
3. a safe, protective and healthy environment;
4. gender equity and friendliness; and
5. family and community involvement.

Given these stated goals, the evaluation finds that, on the whole, the Moldovan Initiative’s interventions were positive and successful. The CFS Initiative resulted in:

- improved physical environments;
- better-prepared teachers;
- parents who have become more

- involved in school life;
- improved school attendance and quality of education; and
- greater inclusion and gender equality.

Learning in the schools in which the CFS principles were adopted was significantly enhanced when compared to a control group of schools where they were not. There was greater attendance and participation, particularly by children from vulnerable groups and those with disabilities, and greater achievement by students who previously had poor academic outcomes. And while the Initiative’s direct beneficiaries were the children, its indirect ones, this report concludes, were their parents, teachers, school infrastructure and society at large. In short, this paper suggests that, based on its findings, the Moldovan CFS Initiative deserves to be extended. Its specific recommendation is that the Initiative be mainstreamed into the national educational system.

Background

The CFS Initiative was implemented in a comprehensive way at four schools, referred to here as the “experimental schools”. This implementation entailed:

- material investments to create a safe and comfortable environment;
- courses for teachers in child-centred teaching methodologies, inclusive education, children’s rights and school to family/community cooperation;

Executive summary

- school assessments by the students, parents and teachers; and
- the implementation of a joint action plan.

While planning and implementing the Initiative, UNICEF worked closely with the Ministry of Education, educational institutions in charge of teacher training and the development of school curriculum, and with international agencies and NGOs. The fact that CFS principles were integrated into educational policy documents and thematic/sector policies – as regards teacher training, curriculum, assessment standards and inclusive education – demonstrates the full commitment of these authorities to the global CFS model as implemented in Moldova.

Purpose of this report

This external, technical evaluation of the Initiative was carried out at the request of UNICEF Moldova in order to objectively measure and document the changes brought about by the CFS Initiative, at a policy level as well as in the experimental schools. The evaluation's intent was also to gather objective and comprehensive information that would inform national education reform and support the extension of the CFS model. It does not purport to give a narrative history of the CFS Initiative in Moldova.

Findings

The CFS Initiative was found to be relevant to the Moldovan educational system, since its objectives are congruent with national priorities and with international aims for economic and social development. It also acts in synergy with programmes offered by various other governmental and non-governmental educational institutions.

Moldovan authorities and institutions in charge of curriculum and teacher assessment and training have voiced their support for CFS. And teachers and school principals participating in the Initiative have expressed their interest in continuing or extending the project, stating "there was no turning back" for them in terms of the school improvement process.

The Initiative contributed to the creation of an educational policy framework and to measures that support a school's development and ability to meet the specific needs of its students, teachers, parents, communities and other stakeholders. Taken together, its stipulations for inclusive, child-centred education, school assessments by students, parents and teachers, pre- and in-service teacher training, a child-centred curriculum, and parental and community involvement in education provide a path forward for transforming Moldovan education.

For students, the evaluation found that the CFS Initiative translated into a more comfortable and safer school environment, increased attractiveness of learning, and closer teacher-student relationships. Students' behavioural changes were reflected in greater and more frequent participation in school activities, especially for children with disabilities or from vulnerable groups. Better academic results were obtained by more children, with notable progress made by low achievers: notably, academic performance increased by 16 per cent in the experimental schools. Also evident was the development of transversal competencies such as problem solving and "learning to learn", and attitudinal and behavioural improvements, including higher self-esteem and confidence in their skills, better communication and relationships, freer expression of opinions, more tolerance and responsibility, a decrease in school violence, and finally, better integration of children with special needs, including children from poor families and vulnerable groups.

Perhaps the most unexpected and consistent improvement brought about by the Initiative was in teacher training. The introduction of practical, relevant and well-organized child-centred training programmes proved to be very effective and useful. As a result, participating teachers were better equipped for working with children with special needs and children from ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities; for promoting gender equality; for creating a closer relationship with students (more knowledge of students' needs, interests and concerns, better relationships and the capacity to place the child at the heart of the school); and for emphasizing the application of knowledge to everyday life. Motivating and providing educators with ongoing support emerged as a crucial feature of the model.

Regarding parental involvement, the evaluation highlighted the need to better understand and encourage their involvement in school life and in the education of their children, as their current involvement, particularly in decision-making, is still low. Parental involvement should be understood broadly, not just in relation to the school but also in relation to their children (through educational activities at home, by offering support and encouragement, setting standards, creating a healthy, stable, balanced environment) and to other parents (forms of association, communication, and mutual support). To this end, educational materials are needed to provide a common understanding of parental involvement, together with specific guidance to encourage communication and real collaboration between schools and families. Also, the need exists for training programmes for parents and future parents in order to improve the educational climate and practices in the home - the "home curriculum". Another recommendation, based on an identified need, is to enhance inter-school partnerships, both national and international.

Conclusions

Because of its success, the CFS Initiative deserves to be extended. The main questions are, how and on what scale? Two alternatives were identified by the evaluation team. One option would be to gradually scale up the Initiative. This would have the advantages of feasibility, quality assurance and a better capacity for management and monitoring. Its disadvantages are its limited impact (a few "islands" of CFS), the time required to involve a critical mass of schools, plus the difficulties of ensuring sufficient funding.

Since, at a national level, the necessary legal framework for promoting CFS has already been created, there is a second option: mainstreaming the Initiative. The strong advantage here is to significantly widen its impact. However, there are still the issues of ensuring sufficient funding for implementing all dimensions of CFS; providing the same level of child-centred training to all pre- and in-service teachers; adequately monitoring the entire network, and of overcoming an inherent resistance to change. There is also the risk that the CFS principles could become overly formalized and, therefore, devalued over time.

In the final analysis, however, the case for mainstreaming the Initiative appears to be strong. The pros and cons of each scenario are detailed in the report's conclusions.

I. Introduction

The educational system in the Republic of Moldova has undergone a long process of reform over the last two decades, aimed at modernizing education and harmonizing the system with international trends and socio-economic developments at the national level. The purpose of these policies and programs was to transform schools into democratic, attractive, fair and non-discriminatory spaces, open to all children and providing quality education.

Changes in education, like all social change, are complex and require a major investment of resources. These resources are not just financial, but also involve mobilization of human resources and knowledge over extended periods of time. However, as the social pressure for educational reform increases, policy makers are forced to seek the most adequate solutions that produce the most rapid results.

Is the Child-Friendly School Initiative suitable for the education system in Moldova? Is it a feasible solution for school transformation in a short time? What were the outcomes at the schools where the Child-Friendly School Initiative was implemented? How sustainable are the results? These are the main questions this report seeks to answer, based upon a comprehensive process of evaluative research.

This evaluation provides an overview of the Child-Friendly School Initiative in Moldova during the years 2007-2011. The report is based both on qualitative data collected through individual and group interviews, through expert consultations and desk review, and on quantitative data collected through questionnaires and then statistically processed. The representatives of educational authorities, of academia (teacher training institutions, non-governmental educational organizations), students, teachers, school principals, parents and community representatives from the four schools involved (referred to as the "experimental schools") and from the group of four control schools (referred to as "the comparison" or "control schools") all participated in the evaluation process. The inclusion of a control group was done in compliance with internationally-accepted quasi-experimental techniques.

The overall purpose of this report is to extract from the accumulated data ideas that can be applied in new contexts and situations and to validate "lessons learned" from the experiment that have proved to be effective, relevant and efficient. After all, the evaluation was designed and carried out as a learning exercise.

II. The child-friendly school initiative

Overview

II.1. The role of UNICEF in promoting the Child-Friendly School Initiative

The Child-Friendly School Initiative implemented by UNICEF Moldova and the Government of Moldova at a national level sought to increase participation in education, decrease drop-out rates and improve the learning outcomes by supporting the transformation of the school into an inclusive and friendly facility. The direct beneficiaries of the Initiative are children in the mainstream of education, while the indirect beneficiaries are much more extensive: parents, teachers and society as a whole.

The Child-Friendly School (CFS), a concept widely-promoted by UNICEF over the past two decades, is characterized by five main qualities:

- inclusiveness;
- effectiveness;
- a safe, protective and healthy environment;
- equity and sensitivity in relation to gender issues; and
- family and community involvement.

UNICEF promotes the Child-Friendly School approach globally and it has been implemented so far in over 60 countries. The concept was brought to Moldova in 2007, when the first evaluation of Moldova's basic education system was carried out from a CFS perspective. That study mapped basic education from the perspectives of inclusiveness, efficiency, gender, a healthy and safe school environment, and children and parents' participation in school life.

Since 2007, UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Education in promoting and implementing the CFS Initiative by providing financial and technical assistance.

II.2. The implementation of the CFS Initiative: objectives, activities and results

The Initiative sought to increase school participation and decrease the drop-out rate by creating a friendly environment and by providing support to high risk children identified in the first grades of education. It also sought to prevent marginalization and exclusion by the school of so-called "problem children" (children with poor outcomes or with special educational needs, including behavioural problems, plus children from minority ethnic or linguistic groups) by developing realistic, achievable educational standards and through ethical and transparent evaluation methods designed to support learning, rather than competition and special needs tracking.

The creation of an inclusive and child-friendly school environment was supported by:

- curriculum evaluation: review of objectives, contents and methodology so as to be more relevant and to broaden the learning horizon;
- development of performance standards;
- gender dimension: curriculum and materials to promote gender equality and cultural sensitivity;
- physical environment: creating preconditions for a safe, protective and healthy school environment;

- parental and community participation in and support to the schools; and
- training for teachers.

To ensure the impact of the Initiative at the national level, the following activities were designed and conducted:

- evaluate, review and modernize the school curriculum and develop performance standards for students;
- develop educational materials promoting inclusiveness, child-centred education, gender equality and cultural sensitivity; and
- provide an accurate reflection of CFS principles in the major legislative/normative documents (Education Law, Government Decision 523 on the approval of the '2011-2020 Programme on Developing Inclusive Education in Moldova', draft, 11 July 2011; 'Education - 2020 Sector Development Strategy for 2012-2020') and in the pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes.

Financial constraints led to the delay of a number of originally planned activities, including the creation of a system for monitoring and early identification of children at risk of drop-out, and the provision of modern equipment (computers, laboratories, libraries) that could have diversified and expanded the learning horizon.

The CFS Initiative has been implemented, as a whole, intensively

and comprehensively, at four schools, hereafter referred to as the “experimental schools”. The purpose was to test the model’s functionality and to learn lessons for expanding or integrating the model into mainstream education. In the four experimental schools, the Initiative included the following elements:

1) Material investment in schools to create a safe and comfortable environment. In two of the schools – the Theoretical Lyceum in Molesti and the Gymnasium in Sofrincani – the investment was made with Veolia Environnement Foundation support and included installation of modern indoor toilets, upgrading of thermal insulation, replacement of windows, outer doors and lighting fixtures, plus heating system optimisation. In the other two schools, the investment was more modest: replacement of windows (Crocmaş Theoretical Lyceum and Valcinet Gymnasium), changing the interior doors (Valcinet Gymnasium) and external doors (Crocmaş Theoretical Lyceum) and repair of the roof and gym (Crocmaş Theoretical Lyceum). In the schools that received significant material investment, the conditions for study were significantly improved. Heating systems in three schools were brought up to standard, while heating remained a problem in the fourth experimental school, whose temperatures were even lower than the average of the four schools in the “control group”, where indoor temperatures were well below standard.

2) Training for teachers in the following topics:

- child-centred teaching methodologies;
- inclusive education;
- children’s rights; and
- school-community and school-family cooperation.

3) School assessment by students, parents and teachers, and the implementation of a joint-action plan. Each of the groups began by working separately to identify the challenges, and then they all came together to create a joint action strategy. This activity proved to be very significant, not only because it led to specific actions but due to the exercise itself, which required working in groups for a common goal, joining forces, thinking through the role of the school and of all members of the school community. This enabled them to envisage the potential for positive change, identify obstacles, and address individual and group aspirations.

The results of the Initiative are described in subsequent chapters. But generally speaking, there was a satisfactory match of expected outcomes and achieved results. The CFS experiment led to the issuance of stronger policy documents and strategies; planned activities were undertaken; changes in school practices were implemented and students’ participation in their own education increased. The Initiative has helped create, in the experimental schools, a friendly environment, inclusion of disadvantaged children and better preparation of teachers to provide a child-centred education. It has also attracted partners – parents and local authorities – to work together

for the common goal of improving the educational system.

II.3. Monitoring the CFS Initiative

The Initiative was monitored by the MoE and UNICEF through field visits, periodic joint meetings with policy makers, visits of donors, production of human interest stories and periodic reports to donors. The frequency of monitoring visits and the composition of monitoring teams varied for each component. In terms of infrastructure, visits conducted with Veolia experts were made twice a month while the work done with the support of MSIF was monitored by consulting engineers. At the district

level, engineering inspectors monitored the implementation of activities related to the infrastructure.

School self-evaluation and teacher training were monitored throughout the Initiative with the support of implementing partners. The aim was to observe the implementation process, the timing, involvement and satisfaction of beneficiaries and the potential changes generated by the Initiative. UNICEF and MoE had regular meetings/information-sharing sessions every two weeks.

The monitoring process served as a quality-assurance tool and a source of data for evaluation. Monitoring data were used along the way, especially during interviews with representatives of the institutions implementing the Initiative.

III. Evaluation context and methodology

The external evaluation of the Child-Friendly School Initiative was conducted at UNICEF Moldova's request by a team consisting of an international consultant and a local non-governmental organization. The selection criteria, the evaluation team's responsibilities and the methodological milestones for the evaluation are outlined in the Terms of Reference (see Annex 6).

III.1. Context of the evaluation

The context of the evaluation was shaped by a number of interrelated factors, described briefly below:

The social, economic and political situation

These three factors influence the education system and all those involved. Recent reforms in Moldova, the economic crisis that has affected the entire world and the crisis of values that arose in the wake of the country's major socio-

economic transformation starting in the early 1990s, have all had significant effects on education. Resources allocated for schooling have declined at the same time as social demand has increased for improved education in terms of quality, inclusiveness, relevance and appropriateness to the job market and greater efficiency. Both the unstable material conditions of a part of the population and the prevailing crisis of values are risk factors for social responsiveness to education and for the sustainability of the socio-educational interventions required for the system's functioning. This evaluation of basic education from the perspective of CFS uncovered how material conditions influenced students' access to and participation in education, particularly the risks of poverty and the need for social support mechanisms.

What emerged was a better understanding of such problems as children not attending school, absenteeism and dropping out of school entirely. Forging effective partnerships among those responsible – parents, educators and local authorities – stands out as an ongoing challenge. Another phenomenon whose effects

III. Evaluation context and methodology

are still poorly understood occurs when parents go abroad and leave their children behind in the care of others, often grandparents or other relatives. According to data collected in this evaluation, between one quarter and one half of the children in the participating schools have at least one parent abroad. This situation, currently insufficiently explored, places children in a poor socio-affective balance. It is not just the absence of the parent, but the lack of a whole constellation of affective relationships which provides the child with a balanced environment conducive to his or her cognitive, emotional and moral development. Some NGOs are already carrying out projects aimed at raising the awareness of parents/families, schools/teachers and local and central authorities regarding the implications of this phenomenon and providing different means of support to the affected children and families.

Educational agenda and the specific features of the education system

Over the past decades, the educational system has implemented several reform initiatives whose overall objective was to democratize and increase the quality and relevance of education, as well as ensure child-inclusiveness and child-centredness. The need for curriculum adjustments and updates emerged in order to allow: greater flexibility (necessary due to decentralization), a child-centred approach and focus on key competencies, gender equality (to ensure equal opportunities for girls and to give them support to perform better in their adult life), and inclusion. The same goals have led to the need for a new emphasis on student assessment

and teacher training. As regards teachers, training is only one element in a range of concerns, which include: their status, professional development opportunities, salary level (currently equal to two thirds of the average salary of other professions in the public sector), aging of staff and the feminization of the teaching profession directly related to recruitment policies.

The evaluation's baseline study highlighted the poor state of schools regarding the age and condition of the buildings, access ramps, heating, water supply and sanitation, hot water and so on. The visits undertaken by study personnel showed that in most rural areas, school buildings are old and large, built in response to upward demographic trends but now serving a small number of children. Thus, building maintenance is very expensive.

Overall, the education system now faces the necessity to reorganize its entire network of schools. This is dictated by the need for more efficient and transparent budgetary spending, correlated with a new mechanism for funding schools on a per capita basis.

In this context, the CFS Initiative has maintained a high degree of consistency with national priorities and concerns. Several government initiatives are summarized below to demonstrate this:

- **Education for All – Fast Track Initiative¹** – a project run by the Ministry of Education to increase access to quality preschool

1

<http://www.prescolar.edu.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=3&n=1>.

III. Evaluation context and methodology

education, supported by a grant from the Education for All - Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund. The project was aimed at rehabilitating and equipping kindergartens; creating Early Childhood Development Community Centres; developing early childhood policies; training teaching and non-teaching kindergarten staff, and advocating for early education programmes and partnerships.

- **Quality Education in Rural Areas of Moldova Project** – an initiative started in 2006 by the Government of the Republic of Moldova, with World Bank support, to increase access to quality education for children from low-income families (particularly in rural areas), optimize the use of resources and strengthen the capacity of educational planning and management services². In the framework of the project, 1,190 gymnasiums, intermediate and high schools from rural areas were awarded Equity Grants to purchase educational materials and equipment (the average value of a grant was USD 2,000) as well as Quality Grants to rural high schools worth over USD 1 million. Each high school grant recipient was provided with scientific equipment for physics, chemistry and biology laboratories, as well as a computer and a projector. Methodological and curriculum guidelines, along with standards for in-service training of secondary school teachers were developed, along with training courses for high

school teachers to prepare them to implement the new curriculum. It was with this project that Moldova joined the PISA 2009+ (Project of International Student Assessment).

- **Step by Step Programme** – a programme that has provided a consistent flow of resources for education, ranging from national and international research and publications (manuals, training materials, brochures, magazines) to professional training and conferences. Current projects³ within this programme are complementary to the CFS Initiative.
- **Modernization of Moldova's education by expanding access to flexible education** – a project implemented by the Institute for Public Policy that is focused on training teachers and students in e-education⁴. The initiative supports education reform and better engagement of students and future teachers.
- **Projects and activities for in-service training** of teachers, conducted by the Pro Didactica Educational Centre⁵. The centre has

³ The Model of Child-centred Education in Action project, begun in 1994 initially for preschools and later extended to general education; the A Good Start in Life for Rural Children in Moldova project, aimed at supporting the modernization of early education and children's optimal growth and development; the Community School Development project (2007-2011) for optimizing schools, particularly in rural areas, through better communication with the community and by assuming the role of a catalyst for social change (www.pascupas.md).

⁴ <http://www.ipp.md>.

⁵ http://www.prodidactica.md/current_projects.php3. *Improving quality and equity in education in countries of Southeast Europe, 2007-2009; School communities in action: Creating the conditions for students from socially vulnerable families to stay in school; Equity and inclusion in education: Piloting tools for planning and evaluation in education.*

III. Evaluation context and methodology

published a series of very relevant papers for teachers concerning gender equality in education; skills development through interactive teaching strategies and guidelines for the personal development of children, especially those coming from vulnerable families.

- **Projects implemented by other non-governmental organizations**, with particular emphasis on the training of teachers, developing educational and support materials for various fields of intervention and promoting children's rights (Child Rights Information and Documentation Centre⁶, National Resource Centre for Youth⁷, SIEDO⁸).

Basis for the evaluation

The Terms of Reference is the evaluation's regulating document which established its objectives, schedule, selection criteria and responsibilities of the evaluation team, as well as the questions and parameters of the evaluation process. Recent developments in social and educational programming were also used to plan and conduct the evaluation. The methodology focused on collecting quantitative and qualitative data, drawing on all possible data sources (institutions responsible for educational policy, teachers, students and parents

6 www.childrights.md.

7 <http://youth.md>.

8 <http://www.siedo.moldnet.md/proecte.php>.

in communities with experimental and control schools), and on upholding the highest ethical standards.

This evaluation is:

- **first of all, a learning activity.** Its aim is to facilitate learning based on acquired experience, an intervention implemented both at the individual level (intervention actors, direct and indirect beneficiaries) and at the institutional level (schools, teacher training facilities, educational authorities - all seen here as learning organizations);
- **clearly not an audit**, even if it is concerned with cost-benefit analysis and with measuring the degree of the proposed objectives' success. Rather, it is research that analyzes how the CFS Initiative has worked in practice in the experimental schools that identifies factors that can support or impede the expansion of the Initiative and that offers lessons learned that will affect future decisions;
- **a means of quality assurance.** It provides detailed and objective information; it supports decisions based on that neutral information and it offers solutions for improving the Initiative;
- **guided by rigorous research standards** and the objectivity and impartiality of the evaluators.

III. Evaluation context and methodology

Programme features

It is well known that the results of interventions in education emerge only over a protracted period of time. Some results can be measured during the intervention or shortly after its completion, but others after a much longer period. In the case of the CFS Initiative, the evaluation captured the short-term results, these being predictive of the longer-term effects.

Available resources

Evaluation is a complex process that requires significant focus, patience and openness to participants, and, at the same time, objectivity. In the case of the CFS exercise, the involvement of all stakeholders and others affected by the projects required a significant investment in human resources and time. The evaluation team held preparatory meetings during which the basic rules and operational parameters, including the study's ethical standards, were established.

III.2. Objectives, goals and roles

This evaluation looks at the CFS Initiative as a whole. It seeks to explain how it works in practice, analysing the strengths and weaknesses of translating a theoretical model in a given context. The relevance, effectiveness, efficiency

and sustainability of the Initiative are examined. As the functionality of the model could determine its eventual implementation at the national level, a cost-benefit analysis is also included.

These aspects are clearly outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR), which specifies that the main objective of the evaluation is to measure the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the CFS intervention. The evaluation does not look at the Initiative in isolation; it also takes into account the socio-economic and political environment, in particular Government plans and similar programme interventions initiated by other institutions.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the evaluation was undertaken with two main objectives in mind:

1. to analyse and assess possible ways to strengthen the three basic CFS principles in the educational system: inclusion, child-centred education and participation of stakeholders. It was to document and disseminate best practices under the Initiative and thereby significantly support educational reform. It looked at the Initiative's sustainability and the extent to which it could inform government educational policies;
2. to make recommendations on the future of the CFS Initiative, based on different scenarios – essentially, whether or not it should be integrated into the national education system.

III. Evaluation context and methodology

The main goals of this approach are:

1. facilitating knowledge and understanding of how the CFS Initiative worked in the experimental schools, in order to identify issues relevant to changes in education, in general, and to the further use of the CFS model, in particular;
2. supporting the decisions of CFS and, more broadly, its interventions in the education system.

III.3. Type of evaluation and audience

This is an **external** evaluation – the evaluators were not involved in the Initiative’s planning and implementation. It is also a **summative** exercise conducted at the end of an intervention cycle in the form of evaluative research.

The **audience** for the evaluation represents primarily those institutions that implemented the project – UNICEF Moldova and the Ministry of Education – that are interested in knowing in greater detail how the Initiative was conducted and the results it achieved, in order to improve it in the future. Secondly, the evaluation addresses the main partners of the CFS Initiative – institutions and individuals involved in educational reform, pre-service and in-service teacher training institutions, NGOs in education and the educational institutions themselves. Broadly

speaking, all those involved in education can extract some useful information from this evaluation of the Child-Friendly School Initiative: decision makers, teachers, school principals, parents, local authorities and representatives of educational institutions.

III.4. Criteria and questions

Planning took into account the evaluation criteria and the key questions specified in the Terms of Reference. These criteria were: relevance, effectiveness (outcomes and effects on students, teachers, parents and community), efficiency, inclusiveness and sustainability. In addition, the study focused on the results-based management and human rights-based approach to programming. For each criterion, a different set of questions was used (see Annex 6).

III.5. Preparation

At this stage, all available project-related information and documents were studied. The evaluation methodology and a toolkit for data collection were then developed, including:

- a questionnaire for teachers in the participating schools and in the control schools;
- questionnaires for students from both types of schools;
- focus-group guides for parents, students and teachers;

III. Evaluation context and methodology

- a guide for observing classes and the school environment.

These instruments were tested and revised accordingly. All data collection tools were designed taking into account the **evaluative questions** listed in the Terms of Reference. Briefly, they aimed at determining:

- CFS's relevance to: 1) education availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability; 2) national priorities in education and child's rights; 3) the needs of students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders and 4) teacher training needs and priorities;
- CFS's effectiveness at the school level: results achieved for students, teachers and school-family and -community cooperation;
- the efficiency and sustainability of the Initiative;
- increasing inclusion: measures to enhance nationwide and school inclusion; raising cultural, ethnic and gender awareness; instilling in students friendly attitudes and behaviour, including tolerance and equal treatment for all people; and lastly,
- placing human rights at the centre of programme design and implementation.

As the Terms of Reference require a quasi-experimental research methodology, criteria were established

for selecting the control schools and these were met as closely as possible.

In this regard, the selection of the control schools was difficult, as it was almost impossible to identify a school that had made no progress in any of the areas covered by the CFS over the given timeframe. Over the last two years, the Ministry had organized educational conferences for all schools in the country on the basic principles of the Child-Friendly School, and of child-centred education and inclusion at school/class level. Also, it had conducted trainings of teachers and managers for the implementation of the new competency-based curriculum developed under the Initiative. The standards for the evaluation of student's learning outcomes were also developed under the Initiative; it was another way of bringing schools across the country closer to the CFS principles. Meanwhile, school administrators and teachers were making their own efforts to keep up with contemporary trends in education, upgrading school environments and complying with in-service teacher training (mandatory at least once every five years).

To offset such potentially confounding factors, we sought schools for the control group that were similar to those in the experimental group in terms of size and make-up of the school population (numbers of students and teachers, type of schools, share of students with special needs or from vulnerable groups). They were also chosen for their similarities in terms of the environment where they were located (size of locality, ethnic and

III. Evaluation context and methodology

linguistic composition, infrastructure and socio-economic level, distance from the nearest town), as well as teachers' specific characteristics. Schools were sought for the control group which, as much as possible, had not participated in educational reform programmes over the past three years, especially in programmes that were similar to the CFS in terms of programmatic approach and philosophy.

The differences between the two groups of schools had to be considered as a whole, in terms of the interventions' complexity and completeness. More specifically, in the four experimental schools, the interventions implemented under the Initiative were homogeneous from the teaching standpoint: all teachers received the same training; and students, parents and teachers went through the same process of self-assessment and worked together to put together a joint plan of action. However, they were heterogeneous in terms of investment and improvement of the physical plant. In the control schools, on the other hand, there were no such interventions. One cannot say that teachers in these schools were not trained in similar topics over the prior three years, especially if one considers the compulsory number of training

hours as well as the training topics. The differences that appeared at the school level, as a whole, were due to the fact that:

- in the experimental schools, all teachers underwent the same set of courses at the same in-depth level, unlike the control schools where only a fraction of the teachers had completed training relevant for the CFS; and
- the control schools had not conducted a self-assessment.

III.6. Data collection

Data was collected in the field from 7- 17 November 2011. All schools covered by the study were visited and consultations were held with educational authorities and experts. (For a list of meetings held, see Annex 3).

III.6.1. Data sources

To obtain as complete and accurate data as possible, several methods and techniques of data collection were used. The main methods were through questionnaires and interviews.

III. Evaluation context and methodology

III.6.2. Stakeholders' participation in the evaluation process

Table 1. Stakeholders' participation in the evaluation process

Categories of stakeholders	Participation in:						
	Preparatory phase	Questionnaires	Individual interviews	Focus groups	Classroom observations	Meetings with evaluation team	Validation workshops
MOE			✓				✓
UNICEF	✓					✓	✓
Teachers	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Students	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Parents	✓			✓		✓	✓
Headmasters	✓		✓				✓
Implementing partners			✓				✓
Local authorities			✓				✓

III.6.3. Questionnaires

Two types of questionnaires were created: one for teachers and one for students. The student questionnaire was exactly the same for both experimental and control schools; the one for teachers had one different item. The questionnaires were distributed as follows:

- all of the teachers received a questionnaire; and
- half of the students received a questionnaire (through randomized distribution).

The experimental schools had a population of 538 students in grades 5-9 and 109 teachers. The control schools had 564 students in grades 5-9 and 113 teachers. The questionnaires were given out mainly in grades 6-9.

Filling in the questionnaires was voluntary; therefore, the rate of questionnaires filled in and returned was not 100%. 320 students (30 per cent) and 116 teachers (52.3 per cent) turned in completed questionnaires.

III. Evaluation context and methodology

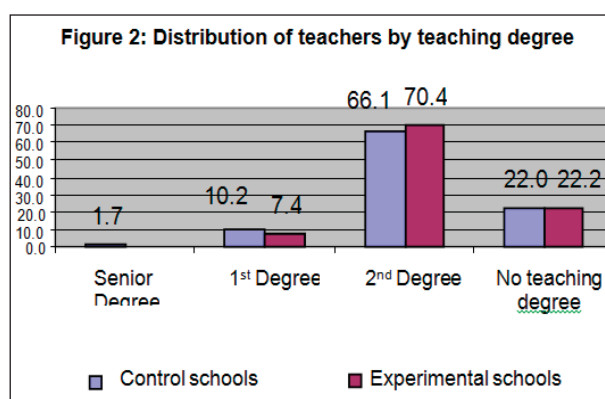
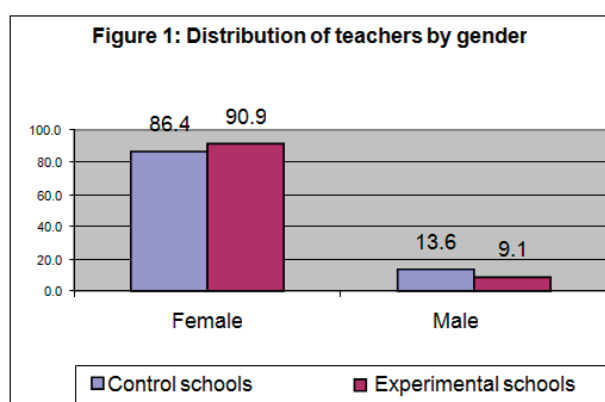
Tabelul nr. 2. Distribuția pe localități a numărului de elevi și profesori care au participat la ancheta prin chestionar

School	District	Language used in classes	Number of students	Number of teachers
Experimental schools				
Theoretical Lyceum – Molesti	Ialoveni	Romanian	45	12
Theoretical Lyceum – Crocmaz	Stefan Voda	Romanian	43	22
Gymnasium – Sofrincani	Edinet	Russian	34	10
Gymnasium – Valcinet	Ocnita	Russian	49	12
Total questionnaires used in the experimental schools			171	56
Control schools				
Theoretical Lyceum – Zimbreni	Ialoveni	Romanian	39	15
Theoretical Lyceum – Caplani	Stefan Voda	Romanian	63	15
Gymnasium – Cuconestii Noi	Edinet	Russian	21	19
Gymnasium – Unguri	Ocnita	Russian	26	11
Total questionnaires used in the control schools			149	60

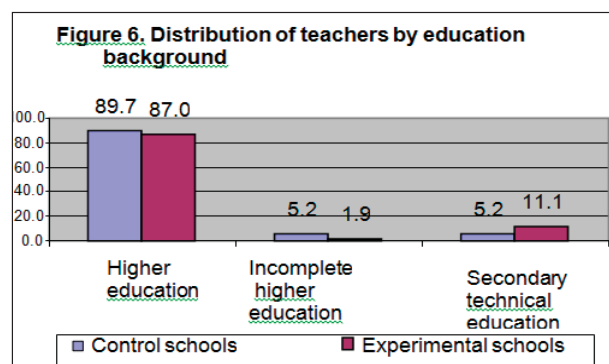
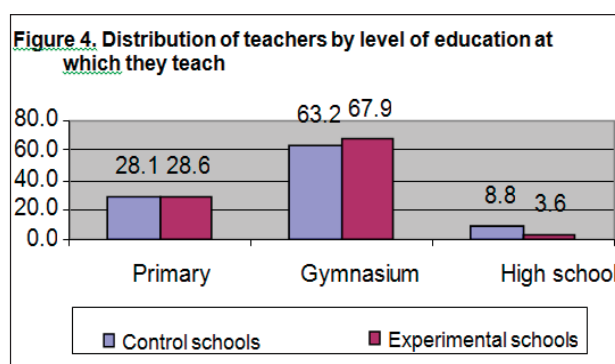
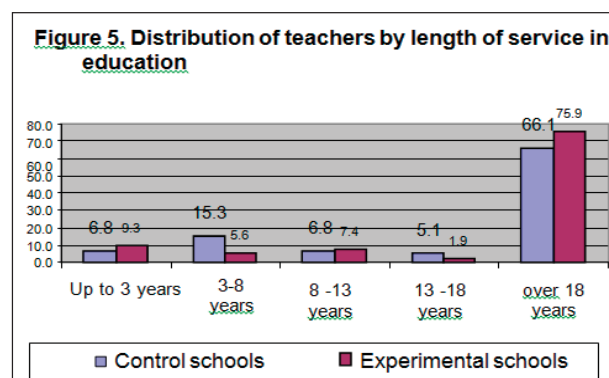
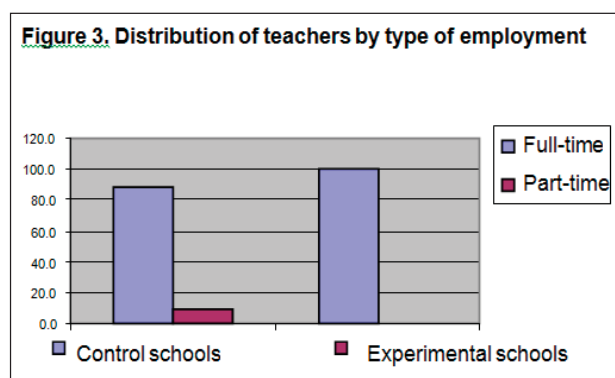
III.6.3.1. Teacher demographics

In both categories of schools, the teachers observed were very similar in terms of gender, teaching degrees, length of service and grades taught. Most were women with higher educations, employed full-time, who teach at the gymnasium level (grades 5-9).

Those who teach language and communication, and mathematics and science (subjects requiring more teaching hours and, therefore, a greater number of teachers per school) were the largest group represented. In both categories of schools, most teachers had 18+ years of service.



III. Evaluation context and methodology



The only statistical difference between teachers in the experimental and controls schools was their employment status: the experimental schools had no part-time teaching staff⁹.

III.6.3.2. Student demographics

Students participating in the survey through questionnaires from the two categories of schools had an almost identical median age: 13.17 years in the experimental schools and 13.21 years in the control schools.

Table 3: Distribution of students who filled in the questionnaires, by age and grade

	Experimental schools	Control schools
Students' median age	13.17 years	13.21 years
Grade		
5	14.91%	6.57%
6	17.39%	21.90%
7	29.19%	35.04%
8	19.88%	18.25%
9	18.63%	18.25%

9 Pearson Chi Square = 4.8583, Likelihood = 0.028.

III. Evaluation context and methodology

From the standpoint of gender, there were more girls who filled in the questionnaires in the experimental schools than in the control schools (63 per cent versus 52 per cent).

who were either school principals, local authorities or who represented educational authorities or pre-service and in-service teacher training institutions.

III.6.4. Focus group demographics

Focus group guidelines, including a protocol for conducting the interviews as well as sample questions, were developed to take into account the distinct nature of the groups being interviewed (students, teachers or parents) and whether their school was in the experimental or control category.

III.6.6. Observations

Twenty-four classroom observations, equally distributed between the two categories of schools, were conducted in grades 4-9. Most took place in grades 6-8 (7, 6 and 6 observations respectively). Most teachers whose lessons were observed had a 2nd-level teaching degree (20 out of 24 teachers) and 18 years of service (16 teachers).

Table 4: Number and type of focus group participants and their distribution by school

Experimental schools				Control schools			
School	Students	Teachers	Parents	School	Students	Teachers	Parents
Theoretical Lyceum from Crocmaz	11	9	14	Theoretical Lyceum from Caplani	18 (two interviews)	8	12
Theoretical Lyceum from Molesti	14	9	16	Theoretical Lyceum from Zimbreni	9	10	9
Gymnasium from Sofrincani	11	5	15	Gymnasium from Cuconestii Noi	13	16	12
Gymnasium from Valcinet	14	5	11	Gymnasium from Unguri	12	9	12
TOTAL	50	28	56		52	43	45

A total of 274 people participated in the focus groups: 102 students, 71 teachers and 101 parents.

Table 5: Distribution of classroom observations by school

Theoretical Lyceum – Molesti	4	Theoretical Lyceum – Zimbreni	4
Theoretical Lyceum – Crocmaz	2	Theoretical Lyceum – Caplani	3
Gymnasium – Sofrincani	4	Gymnasium – Cuconestii Noi	3
Gymnasium – Valcinet	2	Gymnasium – Unguri	2
Total	12		12
Combined total		24	

III.6.5. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 20 people

III. Evaluation context and methodology

III.6.7. Desk review

A range of relevant documents were reviewed by the evaluation team, obtained from the websites of UNICEF, the Moldovan educational authorities and other institutions. These included progress reports, the initial evaluation of the education system's readiness to implement the CFS model, UNICEF planning documents, legislative materials, education policy papers, curriculum documents, academic studies and other research sources. The list of documents reviewed is available in Annex 2.

III.7. Data processing and interpretation

Questionnaire data were processed in SPSS and STATA. According to data types (predominantly ordinal) and sample size, different methods were applied for analysis of comparative groups, such as chi-square and factor analysis.

Data obtained from using other methods were processed in accordance with their quality specifics through content analysis. Classroom observation data were processed both through quantitative statistical techniques and qualitative data analysis.

III.8. Ethical issues

The evaluation was planned and conducted so as to protect and respect the rights and welfare of all participants.

During the preparatory phase, stakeholders (UNICEF and implementing partners) were first consulted, and the data-collection tools were tested on a small group of teachers, children and parents who participated voluntarily after being informed about the testing process. This was done to identify anything that could possibly be interpreted as causing a nuisance, creating awkward situations or affecting the rights of participants.

During the data collection stage, respondents were assured that all data was confidential and would be used exclusively for evaluation purposes. This was also stated in the introductory text of the questionnaires. Questionnaires did not contain any fields for filling in personal data that could lead to the identification of the respondents.

During the focus groups, the names of the participants were not recorded, nor were the sessions taped. Participation was based on informed consent: participants received information about the evaluation approach, their role in it and the benefits to them directly (as a learning experience) and indirectly (as a contribution to better understanding the educational system). During the interviews, the interactions among the participants themselves as well as their interactions with the evaluators were based on mutual respect and trust. At the end of the focus groups, some students said they enjoyed "the lesson" and asked if they could participate in a similar activity in the future.

III. Evaluation context and methodology

During data processing, no precise references were made to a particular school or to statements made by particular students, teachers or parents. Data from the questionnaires were statistically processed and the qualitative data was reviewed as a whole, without any personal information.

III.9. Gender issues

Participation in the evaluation was open to male and female pupils, teachers and parents equally. In the case of the parents, more mothers than fathers were involved, perhaps due to the fact that mothers usually take more responsibility for their children's education.

In the focus groups, boys and girls participated almost equally, with just a slightly higher proportion of girls involved than boys. Similarly, 57 per cent of the questionnaires returned were filled in by girls, a slightly higher percentage than by the boys, even though there was an equal distribution by gender. The decision to not fill in the questionnaires was respected and had no negative consequences for those students. As for the teachers, the very large share of women working in the field was reflected in the sample.

III.10. Evaluation limitations

The limitations of the study derive primarily from the difficulty of selecting

the control schools. The control schools selected were, as much as possible, a "mirror" of the experimental ones. This took into consideration a complex set of criteria: school and community size, student and teacher demographics, the type of school, socio-economic conditions, and the language in which the courses were taught.

Another factor that may have influenced the results of the study was the inadequate filling-in of the questionnaires by some students, especially younger ones and those who had poorer grades. Another issue, already acknowledged in this document, is that teachers may have provided answers that would show themselves and their schools in a better light than was actually the case: the so-called "prestige effect".

However, the goals and methodology of the research were designed and explained so as to minimize the distorting effects of such limitations as much as possible. Every effort was made to prevent or mitigate evaluation-related biases such as "evaluation means control"; "evaluation always uncovers something negative". In addition, the questionnaires included control questions to check the consistency of answers and, where appropriate, other techniques were used to eliminate statistically confounding factors.

IV. Relevance of the child-friendly school initiative

The relevance of a project refers to the extent to which it meets certain needs or addresses certain problems. The CFS Initiative is relevant in that it offers viable solutions that address the educational system's needs, as identified by the *Baseline Study on Basic Education in the Republic of Moldova from the Perspectives of the Child-Friendly School*¹⁰. That study identified the issues negatively influencing basic education, including poverty and its effect on school participation, performance, absenteeism and the drop-out rate; the increase in school violence; difficulties in integrating children with special needs or physical disabilities into conventional schools; the poor physical condition of schools and their equipment; the need to decentralize school systems; inadequate medical and cafeteria services for students; the gender imbalance among teaching staff, overwhelmingly comprised of women; the need for stronger pedagogical support and insufficient parental participation in school life.

¹⁰ Barbarosie, A. and others, Institute for Public Policy, Chisinau, 2008.

IV.1. The relevance of CFS for national priorities in education and child rights; its congruence with other educational programmes

The Child-Friendly School Initiative is relevant in that its objectives are congruent with the national priority^{11,12} of providing access to quality education. Quality education requires, among other features, an improved legal framework, sustainable financing, flexible curriculum and support materials; the mainstreaming of children with special needs within the conventional education system; provision of health education programmes and investment in the education and development of children from vulnerable groups in line with the

¹¹ The 2012-2014 Programme for Strategic Development of the Ministry of Education, 23 December 2011, medium-term policy priorities, p. 16.

¹² Republic of Moldova, Government of Moldova and UNICEF, 'Increasing Access to and Quality of Education, Two Year Rolling Work Plan (RWP) for Equitable Access to Quality Services'.

IV. Relevance of the child-friendly school initiative

Consolidated Plan of Action¹³ and UNDAF objectives¹⁴.

The baseline study found that the CFS Initiative could address many of these issues, recommending:

- modernization of pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes;
- modernization of basic-education curriculum and development of standards for assessing school performance; and
- application of CFS principles in educational policy documents, especially as regards to promotion of inclusion¹⁵.

Other issues raised by the initial evaluation of the educational system's preparedness to implement the CFS model were successfully addressed at a micro level through the complex set of actions carried out in the four experimental schools. The Initiative has confirmed the Child-Friendly School model's positive consequences for education in the Republic of Moldova.

The CFS initiative is also aligned with other educational programmes/projects implemented by various governmental or non-governmental institutions (see subchapter III.1.).

13 UNICEF, CFS Project Proposal.

14 UNDAF, Objective 2: By 2012, to increase equity and safety of access to basic qualitative services provided by the state with civil society support; in this case, meaning better access to basic education and its qualitative improvement; Objective 6: Everyone, especially those coming from vulnerable groups have better access to early education and basic education with a satisfactory level of quality (grades I-IX).

15 Decision 523 on the approval of the 2011-2020 Programme on Developing Inclusive Education in Moldova, 11 July 2011.

IV.2. Availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability of education

The four concepts listed in the title above refer to¹⁶:

- free education open to all, supported by adequate infrastructure and employing qualified teachers (*availability*);
- non-discriminatory and inclusive education, implementing affirmative action rather than the marginalization of some groups (*accessibility*);
- relevant, culturally appropriate and non-discriminatory educational content imparted in a safe environment (*acceptability*); and
- education that responds to changing social needs, contributes to the prevention of inequalities (such as gender discrimination), and that adapts to local culture and context (*adaptability*).

Through its diverse activities, the CFS Initiative has generated a number of positive outcomes related to these four goals – some at the national level and others limited to the experimental schools. Nationally, these outcomes¹⁷ are directly correlated with

16 <http://www.right-to-education.org/node/226>.

17 GD 523, 2011-2020 Programme on Developing Inclusive Education in Moldova, 'The new curriculum, modernization of the pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes', 11 July 2011.

IV. Relevance of the child-friendly school initiative

increased availability, accessibility and acceptability. As for the experimental schools, the CFS Initiative has resulted in:

- improved physical environments;
- better-prepared teachers;
- parents who have become more involved in school life;
- improved school attendance and quality of education; and
- greater inclusion and gender equality.

The school's physical environment (directly correlated with availability and acceptability) greatly influences the social environment, or climate, in which interactions between students, and between students and teachers, take place. It also influences the children's welfare, health and safety. For most children, the school premises and their surroundings are the first impression of school that they receive. To what extent do they arouse curiosity and interest? To what extent are these attractive, so that children, especially small ones, want to come and to stay in school?

As John Mayer pointed out in a work published under the auspices of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education: *"We spend lots of resources trying to create schools that provide quality education. By seeking the latest technological advances, we may ignore the fundamental need for the school to be a safe and friendly environment where children play and*

learn. If the school does not provide a safe environment, there are numerous consequences for children, as well as for teachers to face. When students do not feel safe, conflicts among themselves and with the school staff increase, lack of respect and vandalizing school property follows and, generally speaking, attention is diverted from learning". Furthermore, the author explains the physical environment's importance: *"Children are very visual. They love and thrive in pleasant, comfortable and safe environments.... A nice colour, an expressive face or an interesting object are all things that may naturally attract them. However, most [school] buildings do not possess these qualities."*¹⁸

What is more preferable: a decent physical environment or a good teacher? This is a question often raised to distract from the primary need for a comfortable school environment. Neither of the two variables can provide quality education when the other is missing. A good teacher cannot compensate for the lack of good lighting, adequate heating, proper nourishment and other necessities.

Visits to the four experimental schools supported by the UNICEF Initiative as well as to the four control schools led to a greater appreciation of the critical importance of the physical environment. Differences in motivation and even in the degree of relaxation were evident when children whose schools had been renovated to ensure the right

¹⁸ Mayer, John E., 'Creating a Safe and Welcoming School', IBE, UNESCO, Imprimerie Nouvelle Gonnet, 01300 Belley, France, 2007, p.7-8

IV. Relevance of the child-friendly school initiative

temperature, adequate lighting and an improved general appearance were compared with children in the control schools, or even in non-renovated experimental schools.

In addition to minimum standards for health and safety, schools should also provide an environment conducive to both cognitive and aesthetic development of all students. Educational goals are not achieved through teacher-student interaction alone, but also through the student's interaction with the physical environment. A great deal of aesthetic, moral and emotional development is significantly linked to the "hidden curriculum": the implicit influence of the physical environment, social climate and available role models. It has been rightly emphasized that: *"Through socio-emotional learning, school performance and strong character are based on classes and schools that are not threatening to students...and motivate them to learn more... These are the kind of schools where students feel safe, welcome and valued."*¹⁹

In nearly all of the experimental schools, the classrooms were beautifully organized and created a friendly atmosphere, more so than in the control schools (91.7 per cent versus 66.7 per cent), with easy-to-arrange furniture (58.3 per cent versus 41.7 per cent). Likewise, in the experimental schools, students' work was more often on display in the classroom.

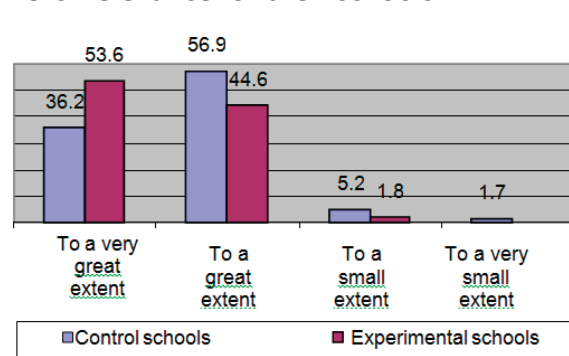
IV.3. The relevance of CFS to the needs of students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders

As evidenced by survey answers and comments made in the focus groups, the educational improvement goals furthered by the Child-Friendly School Initiative meet the needs of key stakeholders: students, teachers, parents, local authorities and policy makers.

Data from the questionnaires show that most teachers from both the experimental (98.2 per cent) and control schools (93.1 per cent) consider the CFS Initiative to be relevant.

In the focus group interviews, teachers in the experimental schools were asked whether or not (and if so, why) they would recommend that other schools become 'Child-Friendly'.

Figure 7: Teachers' opinions of CFS' relevance for their schools



19 Elias, Maurice J., 'Academic and Social-Emotional Learning', IAE, IBE, SADAG, Bellegarde, France, 2003, p.8

IV. Relevance of the child-friendly school initiative

Their responses were unanimously positive, with answers commonly referring to:

- **the benefits for the children:** As the school environment became safer and more comfortable (in schools that had indoor toilets, for example, the incidence of illnesses declined), children started to enjoy coming to school, the relationships with their teachers grew closer, the teachers were more sensitive to their needs, there was better communication and students' behaviour improved (as evidenced by a decline in violent incidents);
- **the usefulness and impact of teacher training:** Practical, relevant and truly inspiring educational practices promoted as part of the Initiative improved educators' style of teaching and increased student classroom participation. *The training seminars have been more 'pedagogical' than prior trainings, involving more group participation*". (Focus group, teachers, Valcinet Gymnasium).
- **the role and contribution of parents:** *"Parents have changed many things with just their attitude and their involvement; children tend to respect their schools more since the parents are doing their share of work, keeping things neat and clean"*. (Focus group, teachers, Molesti TL).

Parents participating in the interviews mentioned the many different kinds of positive changes they had experienced and observed. With respect to their

involvement in school life, many said that they had noticed the effort *"to actually communicate with parents, not just to inform"* (FOCUS GROUP data – a frequent comment in interviews). In their view, a Child-Friendly School is one *"...that knows that the role of education is not merely selecting the gifted, but developing each child's potential"*. (Focus group parents' data, Valcinet Gymnasium).

Most students reported feeling that their schools had become better in terms of student-teacher and student-student relationships, but were less enthusiastic about the improvements to the physical environment.

„I think our school is friendly, the teachers are sympathetic, help and encourage us. Teachers listen to us, they want us to enjoy / feel good at the school.” (FG, students, Șofîncani)

„The school is friendly, we have good relationships, teachers understand us, and so the colleagues ... Would be friendlier if warm. And if the toilets are inside the school” (FG, students, Cuconeștii Noi).

IV. Relevance of the child-friendly school initiative

Students in the experimental schools were consistently positive, saying that, during the last year of the Initiative, „lessons have become more interesting”; „new teaching methods are being used; the teachers talk more with the students”; and „they do more experiments and had more laboratory classes” (Focus group, students, Molesti and Șofrîncani). „New working methods are used: there are more demonstrations and visual aids, and we have demonstration lessons.” (Focus group, students, Valcinet).

When asked what would make children eager to come to school, most of the students indicated the need for better material conditions (well-furnished classrooms that are „warm during winter, so we won’t catch cold or have to keep our coats on and better equipped gyms and labs”). They also pointed to the need for classes and activities more relevant to their interests (more „interesting topics” and extracurricular activities) and, especially in the experimental schools, having access to computers as part of their lessons.

IV.4. Relevance to the needs and priorities of teacher training

The UNICEF-supported study: “Teachers: a Study on Recruitment, Development and Salaries of Teachers in the Republic of Moldova”²⁰, emphasized the social

importance of the teaching profession and proposed recommendations for its further development and improvement. The study analysed the profession’s current shortcomings: low wages (currently two-thirds the average monthly salary of other public sector professions) and lack of incentives, an aging staff, the heavy workload, the need to improve pre-service and in-service training and the lack of professional development opportunities. The study on “Basic Education in the Republic of Moldova from the Perspective of the Child-Friendly School”²¹ also underlined the aging and “feminization” of the teaching profession (i.e. the disproportionate share of women working in the field), the low attractiveness of the field and the lack of and need for a new, standardized system of training and career advancement. Other studies and strategy documents²² have stressed the need to improve the quality of teacher training by refining strategies and interactive methods as well as by offering improved methods of teacher evaluation. It is clear that educators need the skills to create a curriculum relevant to student needs and interests, one that promotes inclusion and the values of health, peace, tolerance,

ment, Development and Salaries in the Republic of Moldova”.

21 Barbarosie, A. and others, Institute for Public Policy, Chisinau, 2008.

22 Coroi, E. and others, ‘Teacher Training in Moldova, în Zgaga’, P, Neacșu, I., Velea, S. (coord.), Teacher Training. European Experiences, Ed. Universitara, Bucuresti, 2008, The Evaluation of the School Curriculum –Perspective on Modernization, Ministry of Education, Academy of Science of Moldova, Institute of Education Sciences, Chisinau, 2009; The Concept of Training Pre-university Education Personnel, 2003c.

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intercultural education, sustainable development and equality.

In the experimental schools, the CFS Initiative addressed these issues by focusing on three critical areas in teacher training:

- a child-centred education methodology;
- an emphasis on school-community and school-family collaboration; and
- the promotion of an education that is inclusive.

Teachers, educational authorities and representatives of teacher training institutions widely recognize the relevance of the CFS Initiative in relation to training needs and priorities, as reflected in comments made during the focus groups:

“The UNICEF project has benefited us materially, through investments – the gym renovation, roof repair – but also personally, as we are now better teachers.

(The training) have helped a lot. We’ve learned practical things that we can actually use. Regular courses are more based on theory, but this was different: we have learned by doing things on our own, and we shall pass on these things to our students too. We have “played” student games and better understood what they are doing, and how they feel or perceive classes.

The seminars were addressed in a serious manner, with focus on practical, student-centered workshops. Teachers were more or less familiar with student-centered ideas, but now they could tackle them practically” (FG, teachers, Crocmaz)

“The courses taught us a lot about working with these children (note: children with special education needs). We no longer have problems and neither do they: they are gentle and friendly.” (FG, teachers, Molesti)

In contrast, teachers in the control schools repeatedly stated: “We want training seminars”; “Our in-service training courses are the same ones we usually have, but they are still theoretical. We want practical courses” When asked what courses they would like, they listed computer-assisted training, new teaching methods and new methods of working with children with special needs.

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Table 6: Teachers' participation in in-service training over the last three years

Participation, in the last three years, in in-service training courses on topics related to:	Experimental schools			Control schools		
	%			%		
	Yes	No	Did not have an opportunity yet, but I could use such courses	Yes	No	Did not have an opportunity yet, but I could use such courses
1) child-centeredness;	94,1	2,0	3,9	53,3	26,7	20
2) children's rights;	86,1	2,8	11,1	27,8	44,4	27,8
3) school-community / school-family collaboration.	91,8	2,0	6,1	32,4	32,4	35,1
4) inclusive education	91,1	4,4	4,4	31,6	36,8	31,6

The table above lists the percentage of teachers who participated in CFS-relevant training activities. It shows that in the last three years, a large proportion of teachers in the control schools had also participated in activities designed to promote child-centred learning, and a smaller proportion (almost one-third) in training on inclusive education and school-family and school-community collaboration.

What is significant to note is the large proportion of teachers in the control schools who said that they had "Not had an opportunity yet, but I could use such courses". This demonstrates the relevance of the training offered through the CFS Initiative as well as a high level of awareness of the need for improved training -- a necessary prerequisite for sustaining teacher training reform.

V. Effectiveness of the initiative

In order to measure the Initiative's effectiveness in the experimental schools, the data obtained from the questionnaires was processed through advanced statistical analysis. The results suggest significant differences between the experimental and control schools in terms of the effectiveness of teaching practices, particularly in the following areas: inclusion of children from vulnerable groups and of those with special educational needs; promotion of gender equality; and greater student involvement and responsibility for their own learning. Since the evaluation was conducted shortly after the project was implemented, the quantitative data were not sufficient for a comprehensive analysis. For this reason, the qualitative data from the focus groups were used to highlight the differences perceived by teachers and students since the Initiative's inception.

V.1. Student-level results

The students in the experimental schools who took part in the focus groups said they had closer, warmer

relationships with their teachers, better communication with the teachers and with one other, and were more involved in learning. As a whole, the students reported they had better school attendance records, were more motivated to learn, received more encouragement from their teachers and got along much better with students from vulnerable groups and with those who had special needs. And students who had poorer grades than the others generally reported they were doing better.

V.1.1. School attendance

The schools implementing the CFS model saw an improvement in school attendance. The teachers and school management team, whose members had been made more aware of the importance of teaching all children of school age, reached out more to children who were either not enrolled or had poor attendance. However, there were still instances of non- or poor school attendance. Students and teachers who

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participated in focus groups believed that those children with parents who went abroad for work were neglected, directly or indirectly, and so were not supported in coming to school. Also, there were parents who set other priorities for their children, such as performing household tasks or working to help support the family.

“Attendance is better, but there are problems with children whose parents are working abroad. The attendance problems are present especially in children from higher grades. But there were no cases of drop-out.” (Focus group, teachers, Crocmaz Theoretical Lyceum)

“Some children in the village do not come to school because their parents do not take care of them. Some parents are often not at home. There are also children from families where the children must work. As a result, the children cannot come to school.” (Focus group, students, Crocmaz Theoretical Lyceum)

“Parents do not allow children to come to school, and say it is better for them to do the housework to avoid paying other people to do it.” (Focus group, students, Molesti Theoretical Lyceum)

- Some parents' behaviour and attitudes towards their children's education may be explained by poor parenting practices: a lack of understanding that completion of the highest

level of education means a better chance of finding a good job, and being better paid; and

- the culture of poverty, and its implications in terms of lifestyle, family concerns and needs.

In some cases, focus group participants felt that the low attendance was not the parents' fault, but rather the students' lack of responsibility.

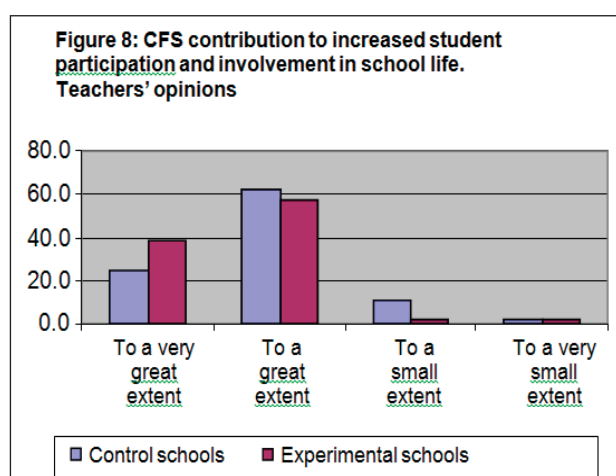
“There are two children who have problems with school attendance. Their parents send them to school, but they do not come here. They do not like to learn. Teachers go and see them at home, to talk to them, to convince them to come to school, but students do not really go.” (FG, students, Sofrincani Gymnasium)

The lack of interest in school or the refusal of some children to go to school was found to be caused by a series of complex factors. The mere “sending” of children to school by parents is not enough, and does not absolve the parents of the responsibility to instil in their children a desire to learn, and to help them understand the importance of getting an education.

After the family, the school itself has certain responsibilities toward the children: to provide them with a safe environment in which they feel valued, respected and encouraged – not an “assembly-line” environment where they feel lost in the classroom and during the lessons. *“If we look at several children at once, we see that none of*

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them is alike and that each needs an individualized education. If we look at how children play, we see how much they like to explore, discover and learn. There could not be a better lesson in the educational methods we should use. We should acknowledge the child's interest in the world, life, and nature and not for subjects that have no logical relationship between them. Then the interdisciplinary approach in education becomes easy to understand²³”, says Speranta Farca.



Data collected through interviews was corroborated by that collected through the questionnaires: teachers in the experimental schools participating in the project (96.3 per cent) believe that the Initiative led to an increase in school attendance and in the involvement of students to a very great (38.9 per cent) or a great (57.4 per cent) extent. This opinion is shared by the teachers in the control schools, who believe that the participation of their schools in the project would have resulted in increased attendance and involvement of the students to a great (62.5 per cent) or very great (25 per cent) extent.

23 <http://speranta.farca.ro/ca-profesor-intre-domnul-vu-cea-i-domnul-trandafir/>.

What explains the improvement of attendance and involvement? On the one hand, teachers and school management were more persistent in persuading families and students that the children needed education; on the other hand, by increasing the lessons' attractiveness and by encouraging teachers to become closer to their students, more children began to enjoy school. Encouragement is very important to students; numerous studies suggest the direct relationship between the "labelling" of the school skills and the achievement obtained. If students are encouraged and supported to learn according to their own styles and unique qualities (not only as regards age and individual-cognitive, but also social and emotional factors), they are more likely to do better in school.

V.1.2. Communication, expression of opinions and participation in the decision-making

Classroom observation showed that students in the experimental schools have, to a greater extent, the initiative to talk, ask questions, give examples and suggest work tasks. In the control schools, students speak mainly when the teacher asks them to.

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“We work with children more, we work in groups. We encourage critical thinking, expression of opinions, and arguing more. We encourage them to help each other, to learn together, and to learn from each other.” (FG, teachers, Crocmaz)

*“I cannot say that the learning outcomes are better, because many children had a good achievement before. But, one can notice the **change of their attitude** – they are more open, talkative, serious, **in motivation** – they are more willing to learn, in the **relationships between them** – they help more or with us – they talk more with us. And, this it is noticed in more children now than before.” (FG, teachers, Sofrincani Gymnasium)*

“It seems that teachers encourage us more now. They encourage us to learn and to express our opinions.” „Our voice is listened and encouragedi” (FG, students, Șofrîncani and Crocmaz)

At the same time, student participation in actual decision-making remained relatively low in both groups of schools (Figure 9). The experimental schools have slightly more involvement of the students in decisions made on:

- the head teacher’s lessons (an average of 1.17 compared to 1.49 in the control schools (on a scale of 0 to 3, with 0 representing “often” and 3, “never”);
- the amount of homework given (1.29 compared to 1.59 in the control schools);
- analysis of cases when

children report being mistreated (1.95 compared to 2.18 in the control schools);

- resolution of conflicts between the students (1.67 compared to 1.76);
- how marks are given (1.36 compared to 1.45); and
- selection of optional subjects (1.69 compared to 1.72 in the control schools).

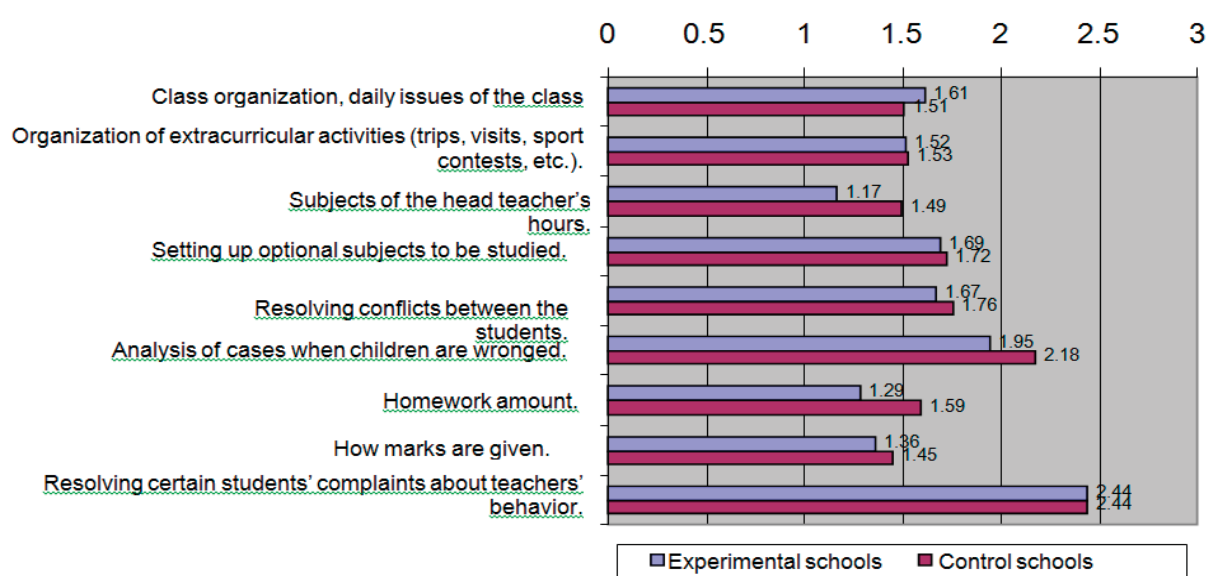
Compared to their peers in the experimental schools, students in the control school are somewhat more often consulted and involved in decisions about classroom organization and the resolution of daily problems among classmates (1.51 compared to 1.61 in the experimental schools).

In the students’ opinions, when discussing issues of classroom organization, decisions are generally:

- made by a group of teachers or by the head teacher (26 per cent of the time in the experimental schools compared to 18 per cent in the control schools);
- discussed and agreed upon (36 per cent in the experimental schools compared to 34 per cent in the control ones);
- proposed by students and agreed to by the head teacher (44 per cent of the time in the experimental schools and 49 per cent in the control ones).

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Figure 9: Student consultation and involvement in decision-making. Averages comparison (0=often, 3=never)



While this data indicated some increase in student participation in decision-making, there is clearly a need for further efforts and for more teacher training that encourages greater participation in decision-making.

V.1.3. Problem-solving and “learning to learn”

In the context of a knowledge-based society, the development of skills and attitudes for lifelong learning is absolutely essential to increase job opportunities and reduce social exclusion or marginalization. Focusing on competences has become the *leitmotiv* of educational reform over the past two decades. Society and the economy require that a graduate be an autonomous person, able to solve problems, cope with a wide range of

situations and work tasks, motivated to learn throughout life. Especially, it involves learning how to learn: that is, to continuously do the self-assessment necessary to continue growing. All these skills have to be taught and then practiced at school.

The teachers in the experimental schools think that their students are “taught how to learn” and to take responsibility for their own learning to a very great extent (51.0 per cent), and to a great extent (48.2 per cent), a view shared by most peers in the control schools.

Teachers and pupils in experimental schools believe that students are “taught how to learn” and to assume responsibility for learning (Fig. 10 and Fig. 11), a view shared by most of their peers in control schools. The same opinion is held in terms of the schools’ contribution to the development of problem-solving skills.

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Figure 10: “Learning to learn” and the responsibility for learning. Teachers’ opinions.

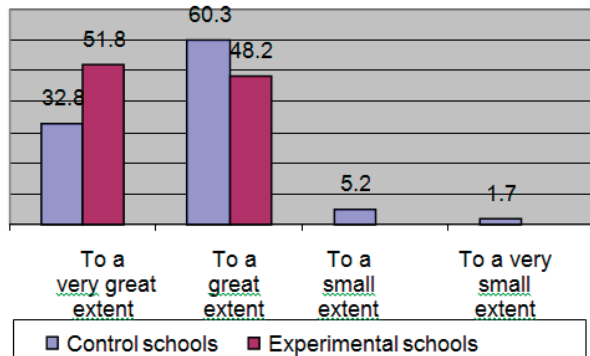
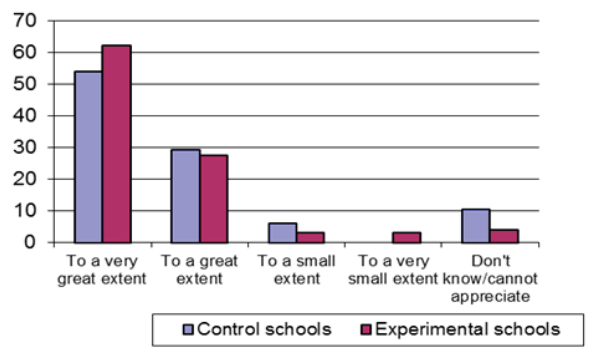


Fig. 11. Students’ opinions concerning their involvement in planning and in reflecting on the learning process



The same opinions were noticed concerning problem-solving skills development (Figure 11). Data collected through the focus groups uncover new learning situations or opportunities that are used by teachers to develop problem-solving skills:

“Children wrote projects and submitted them to an NGO for fund-raising. Is it also a result, they have learned to cope, to work in a team, to adapt to what we require of them now.” (FG, teachers, Molesti TL)

The discussions with experimental school teachers on problem-solving skills development or on meta-cognition revealed a desire to address the full range of learning outcomes, according to Benjamin Bloom’s taxonomy (1956): from knowledge to understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation, or in the taxonomy of Lorin Anderson (1999), from knowledge and understanding to application, analysis, evaluation and creation.

V.1.4. Better performance for more children

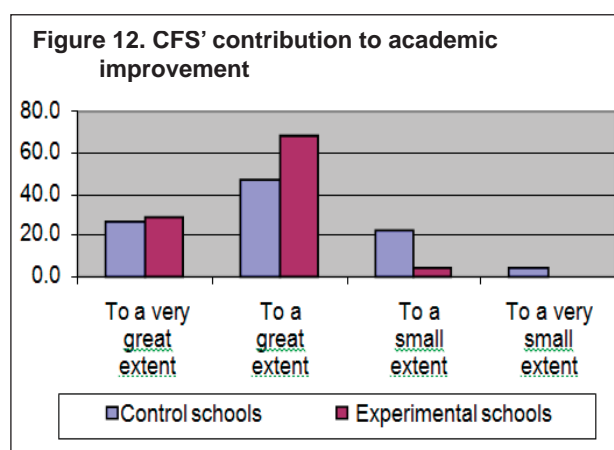
According to discussions with the teachers, the Initiative’s impact on students’ school performance is as follows:

- more children learn better now; and
- children who were doing poorly have improved.

“Students are delighted to come to school. Better results... I could say we see an improvement of the outcomes in particular in weaker, less motivated children. All children are brave, they want to learn more. More children have better outcomes now. Being more interesting, they make efforts to learn.” (FG, teachers, Molesti TL)

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*„Yes, especially the weaker children are the ones who now are making progress... **For the students who also learned well before, we cannot say that there is a difference, but for others, yes. Both we and they strive; they begin to enjoy learning, because they began to see that they could.**”*
(FG, teachers, Valcinet Gymnasium)



Overall, in the experimental schools, teachers feel that the implementation of the CFS Initiative has led to an improvement in school attendance to a great (57.4 per cent) and very great (38.9 per cent) extent, a view

shared by most teachers in the control schools when estimating the probable contribution of the project to the improvement of their schools' performance during its implementation in the experimental schools (47.2 per cent and 26.4 per cent, respectively).

Table 7 shows the results of statistical tests conducted to determine if there are differences between the experimental and control schools in terms of learning outcomes. The first column shows the tested dimensions and results by combining several sub-questions from the teachers' questionnaire; the second and third columns show the averages of the two groups of schools for each category; the fourth column shows the difference in the averages; and the last column shows the statistical calculation indicating whether or not the differences between the two groups of schools are significant. The test results suggest that, in the opinion of the teachers, learning outcomes have improved by 16 per cent in the experimental schools, mainly by promoting an inclusive education and an increase in tolerance among the groups of students through inclusion activities, child-centred teaching, improved communication and interaction.

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Table 7: The results of statistical tests on the types of outcomes

Index	Control schools	Experimental schools	Difference	Likelihood
1. Developed group-work skills. ²⁴		1.55	11%	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.2159
2. Improvement in learning outcomes. ²⁵	1.82	1.66	16%	Ha: diff > 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.0184
3. Increased tolerance through integration activities, teaching, interaction within working groups . ²⁶	2.37	1.89	48%	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.0002
4. Improvement in teachers' attitudes towards students and increased involvement of students in learning through interactive and participatory teaching methods ²⁷	1.71	1.57	14%	Ha: diff > 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.0565
5. Enhanced teachers' skills to assess students' performance transparently and objectively ²⁸	1.95	1.92	2%	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.7838
6. Stronger relationships between schools and communities ²⁹	1.78	1.74	4%	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.7138
7. Greater parental involvement in school life, and their taking responsibility for their children's education ³⁰	2.67	2.5	17%	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.1697

24. Teacher questionnaire, items aggregated: 11.8, 11.17.

25. Ibid., items aggregated: 11.1, 11.2, 11.6, 11.9, 11.14., 11.19.

26. Ibid., items aggregated: 11.3, 11.4, 11.8, 11.10, 11.11.

27. Ibid., items aggregated: 11.13, 11.15, 11.17, 11.19.

28. Ibid., items aggregated: 11.7, 11.16.

29. Ibid., items aggregated: 11.5.

30. Ibid., items aggregated: 11.5, 11.12.

In the focus groups, teachers explained that their students:

"...learn better, because they learn more easily, in an applied manner... And, they like it better. As to disadvantages... not many. It's difficult at first, until you get used to it... you are still seeking, thinking how to make the learning in the classroom more interesting..." (Focus group, teachers, Crocmaz Theoretical Lyceum)

"Students like to participate and work, not only listen to the lesson. The interactive methods are very suitable for them; they catch their attention, motivate them and help them learn more." Focus group, teachers, Molesti Theoretical Lyceum)

V.1.5. Relationships, tolerance, responsibility

The data collected through classroom observation and group interviews show that, in most of the experimental schools, student-student and student-teacher relationships are based on mutual respect and on valuing each other. In two of the schools from the control group, undesirable behaviour was observed. In one of the control schools, this behaviour was serious; both verbal and physical violence took place. And, in the case of this one school, teachers put little emphasis on school work and on collaboration, and two cases were detected of students

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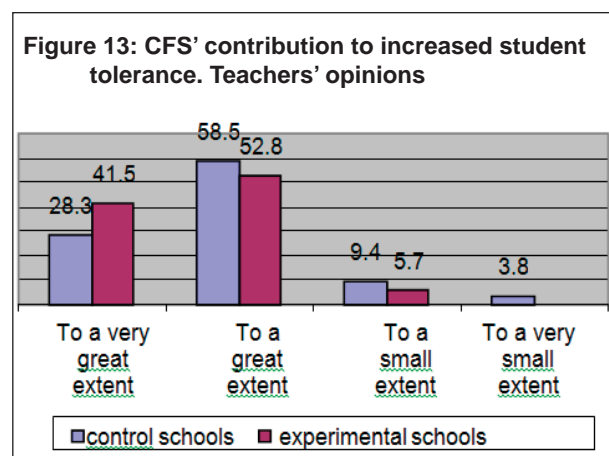
who were discriminated against because of their gender or socioeconomic status.

„Students from poor families are mocked by other students, because the other students think they are above them.” (Focus group, students)

The questionnaire data suggest that teachers in the experimental schools positively assess the CFS Initiative’s contribution to increased tolerance in students and improved relationships between them. Teachers think that CFS helps to increase tolerance, confidence and self-esteem to a great or very great extent.

In the focus groups, teachers described the changes in students’ attitudes and behaviours:

“Stronger students are keen to help the ones who have more trouble learning. We have no cases of violence, even verbal violence. Students are open, friendly. They are more relaxed, but also are conscientious and serious.” (Focus group, teachers, Gymnasium from Sofrincani)



We work more with children; we work with them in groups. We encourage their critical thinking, expression of opinions and debating more. We encourage them to help each other, to learn together and to learn from each other.” (Focus group, teachers, Crocmaz)

“Teachers strive to help, motivate and attract their students with special needs or in vulnerable situations. We treat each other well.” (Focus group, students, Șofrincani)

“Neither we nor our teachers treat anyone differently. We help each other.” (Focus group, students, Zimbreni)

V.1.6. Self-esteem and involvement in learning

Students were respectful and friendly, they exhibited confidence in their teachers and in being with their peers, and they felt more confident to ask for help. In the experimental schools, a higher percentage of students:

- paid attention during the classes and helped each other – observed during 91.7 per cent of the activities in the experimental schools and in 66.7 per cent of the activities in the control schools;
- showed interest in their lessons and actively participated in classes by asking questions, solving tasks and making suggestions - 66.7 per cent of the time in the experimental

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- schools compared to 41.7 per cent in the control schools; and displayed self-confidence – 75 per cent of the time in the experimental and 41.7 per cent in the control schools.

During the focus groups, teachers explained how the use of participatory methods increased student interest and involvement in class, and how these methods are more effective for learning:

“I can say that I see greater openness and attentiveness shown by the students; they want to learn more, they don’t rush out of school. They also go to the library, and they stay longer at school.”

„Students are more serious, more attentive and more involved.” (Focus group, teachers, Gymnasium from Sofrincani)

„Students like to participate and work, not only listen to the lesson. The interactive methods are very suitable for them. They capture their attention, motivate them and help them to learn more.” (Focus group, teachers, Theoretical Lyceum from Molesti)

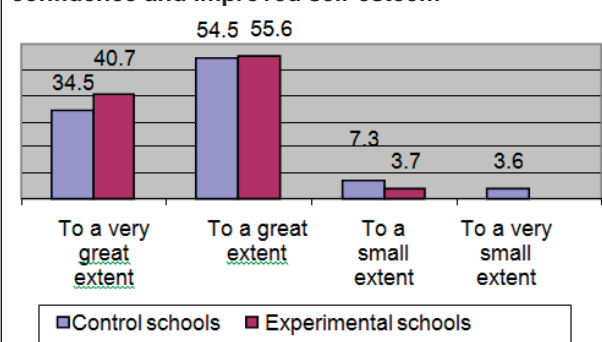
Improved communication and relationships between teachers and students and among the students themselves, increased tolerance, and more frequent group work in the classroom appear to be closely related to increased self-esteem and student involvement in learning.

In the experimental schools, almost all of the teachers think that the CFS model enables students to improve their self-confidence and self-image to a great or a very great extent (a total of 96.3 per cent). This perception of CFS’ confidence-building potential is shared by 89 per cent of the teachers in the control schools.

V.2. Teacher-level results

A significant component of the CFS Initiative involves training teachers to have an in-depth understanding of the importance of child-centredness, inclusion and of meeting students’ needs. Teaching is very complex, since it has to take into consideration a large number of factors, many of which are impossible to predict or control. These factors include the status of the family, the dynamics of the student’s home life and the demands of work facing parents – all of which influence the children greatly. The importance of the teacher in the student’s formation and academic performance has been established by numerous studies. These studies suggest that students who have good teachers progress three times faster than those who do not, and that teachers’ reading and communication competencies affect student achievement more than any other factor. The positive influence of the Initiative on teachers in the experimental schools was observed in several different areas:

Figure 14: CFS’ contribution to increased student confidence and improved self-esteem



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- teaching practices, including student assessment;
 - teaching style;
 - inclusion and equal treatment;
 - communication skills and relationships with students; and
 - satisfaction with the changes implemented, and professional motivation.
- (establishment and communication of criteria) and self-assessment;
- ensuring that students are taught how to learn, and that what they learn has relevance to their daily lives; integrating into the classroom the positive learning experiences students acquired outside of school;
 - diversification of cases of learning situations and teacher's roles: conveying information, facilitating their own search for information, guidance, moderation.; and
 - cultivating good communication with parents, and encouraging parental involvement in their children's education.

V.2.1. Child-centredness

Child-centredness is a methodological approach that can be translated into a number of specific components, such as:

- knowing students' learning styles, problems and aspirations;
- involving and valuing all students, regardless of ethnicity, social status, disability, religion or gender;
- shifting the focus from teaching to learning and making the entire teaching process child-friendly;
- involving the students in establishing goals, learning new study methods, and in performance evaluation

Data collected through the questionnaires reveals improved teaching practices in the experimental schools as regards child-centredness, but no significant statistical difference between the experimental and control schools in this area. The following table, combining data from a number of questionnaire sub-items, demonstrates this.

Table 8: Averages on various teaching-related indicators. Students' opinions (column comparison, lower score = better situation of the given indicator)

Items	Experimental schools	Control schools
1. Encouraging thinking in students, and self-assessment of their own learning styles ³¹	3.77	4.33
2. Setting hours and homework assignments together with the students ³²	15.48	16.89
3. Working with children who have disabilities, and those with learning difficulties ³³	7.74	8.51
4. Working with children of ethnic minorities ³⁴	6.7	7.33
5. Treating other teachers and all students with equal respect ³⁵	2.79	3.05
6. Creating school conditions favourable to equal treatment ³⁶	6.62	7.3
7. Encouraging communication and dialogue with other teachers and with parents and students ³⁷	25.02	26.24
8. Management of knowledge (correct learning, use of information technologies, etc.). ³⁸	5.1	5.31

31 Student questionnaire, Item 1, questions 10.4, 11.4, 11.12.

32 Ibid., Item 2, questions 9.1, 9.4, 9.3, 9.7, 9.8, 11.1, 11.7, 12.3, 12.4.

33 Ibid., Item 3, questions 11.3, 10.6, 11.12, 11.17.

34 Ibid., Item 4, questions 10.4, 11.4, 11.12.

35 Ibid., Item 5, questions 10.7, 11.7.

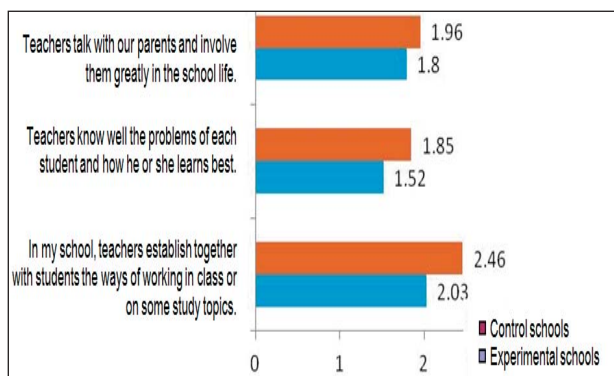
36 Ibid., Item 6, questions: 11.9, 11.11, 11.12, 11.17.

37 Ibid., Item 7, questions: 9.1-9.9, 11.1, 11.2, 11.11.

38 Ibid., Item 8, questions: 12.5, 12.1, 11.8.

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Figure 15: Teaching practices relevant to child-centredness. Students' opinions (comparison of averages, where 0 = to the greatest extent and 3 = to the smallest extent)



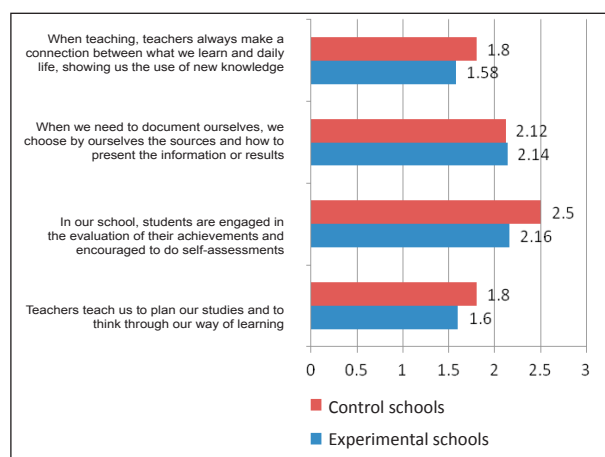
Based on the students' responses, teachers in the experimental schools appear to know their students better, communicate more effectively with parents and involve students more in deciding on classroom methods, as well as in choosing study topics.

"Teachers are sympathetic, good, working to explain as well as possible. They care about our opinions." (Focus group, students, Șofrâncani)

"Teachers are friendly, in general. Some of them listen to what we say, some not. During lessons, they decide what we do and how we work. They consult with us when deciding upon homework." (Focus group, students, Cuconeștii Noi)

"Teachers help students with poor school results. They explain the lessons to us many times, if needed. We are praised for our results." (Focus group, students, Vălcineț)

Figure 16: Teaching practices. Students' opinions (comparison of averages, where 0 = to the greatest extent, and 3 = to the smallest extent)



On the whole, teachers in the experimental schools make a better connection between the subjects learned and daily life, assuring greater applicability of the knowledge.

Also, a higher number of students in the experimental schools reported that they are taught to plan their learning and to think critically about what they have learned; they also noted that the teachers involve them in the evaluation of their work and encourage them to do self-assessment of their performance (Figure 16, above).

V.2.2. Use of participatory methods

Analysis of the data obtained in the evaluation showed that more teachers encouraged students and listened to what they said than not – nine out of 10 teachers in the experimental schools,

V. Effectiveness of the initiative

compared to six out of 10 in the control schools. In the control schools there was a very small incidence (8.3 per cent) of passive rejection of students, gender stereotyping and inappropriate, sarcastic or aggressive language.

From the standpoint of the teaching methods used, no differences were noted between the two groups of schools; most teachers used interactive methods. It was observed, however, that teachers in the control schools tended to remain at the front of the classroom, standing at their desks, while the teachers in the experimental schools made use of the entire classroom area by spending an average of half of the class time among their students.

More frequently in the experimental schools, teachers:

- made sure that all students participated in discussions (they avoided isolation or marginalization of one or more students);

- encouraged the students to ask questions, to express opinions and to debate;
- provided constructive feedback, and had the students provide feedback to one another;
- taught the students 'how to learn' (they encourage them to work with the information, to explore sources, to analyse and evaluate them, and to come to their own conclusions); and
- summarized the main ideas of the lessons, using anchoring information techniques.

In both groups of schools, teachers tended to give collective feedback during assignments. However, in the experimental schools, teachers were more likely to comment upon and evaluate student answers, and encourage peer assessment.

Table 9: Use of class time

Percentage of one class hour	Experimental schools	Control schools
1) When the teacher teaches he or she gives a lecture, explains, dictates, writes on the blackboard	20%	29%
2) The teacher talks with the students	49%	43%
3) The students work individually (they read, write, solve problems, draw)	17%	23%
4) The students work in teams or groups	14%	6%
Total	100%	100%

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V.2.3. Involving students and getting their attention

In all four experimental schools, teachers assessed the quality of the training seminars they received, often comparing them to their pre-service and in-service training:

"We have tried out some of these things before – e.g., we've used interactive methods, we knew about multiple intelligences, but after the training I understood better what to do. I'm more aware of what I'm doing." (Focus group, teachers, Gymnasium from Sofrincani)

"They (the seminars) have helped a lot. We learned practical things that we can actually use. In regular courses, they teach mainly theory. Here it was different, we learned by doing new things, which then will be done by our students. We role-played being students and understood better what they do, how they feel and perceive the lessons."

"The seminars were approached seriously. They focused on practical workshops and child-centredness. Teachers were more or less familiar with child-centredness, but this time we had practical work." (Focus group, teachers, Crocmaz)

"The in-service training courses – the subject taught, the subject methods, psychopedagogy -- are courses we usually do. But all are theoretical. Other institutions (CFS) do such practical courses." (Focus group, teachers, Theoretical Lyceum from Zimbreni)

Putting teachers in learning situations -- placing them in the "students' shoes", has helped them better understand how children learn and what methods or techniques can generate positive reactions. As a result, teachers are more committed to getting the students' attention, and motivating and involving them in teaching and learning.

"We have implemented what we learned during the course. We spend a lot of time preparing the teaching materials for the lessons, and we make the lessons more interesting. For example, I now teach a lesson about beans and have prepared charts with interesting facts about this plant for the students. For some classes we do word puzzles, and through them find a new subject to discuss or to investigate further. The students also come to class with information and with games."

"We start with a problem, a challenge that children have to unravel and so catch their attention. We let them work more in groups. They like it, they help each other." (Focus group, teachers, Theoretical Lyceum from Molesti)

"The seminars helped us a lot. Now we work more directly with the children, we involve them; we often change the work methods to make the activities interesting and to avoid their getting bored."

"For example, during history, we do many activities: they look for information, work in groups and look for solutions, and then they exchange the information between the groups and ask questions." (Focus group, teachers, Crocmaz)

When students in the experimental schools were asked what changes they observed in the teaching methods during

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the last year of the Initiative, they said that they appreciated the greater degree of their involvement in the various learning activities and in group work, and their teachers' efforts to use more interactive learning methods and materials:

"Teachers encourage us to learn and to provide feedback. We communicate more in lessons and work more in small groups. As a group, we have shared homework. Sometimes we play games to learn." (Focus group, students, Șofrîncani)

"Lessons are more interesting. We talk much more, do experiments and practical tasks" (Focus group, students, Molești)

Students in control schools frequently mentioned improvements in the teaching and in their learning activities due to the use of computers, while in experimental schools pupils said they would like to work more with computers. From the perspective of information and communication technologies (ICT) and their integration into teaching and learning, the evaluation found that the control schools were generally more advanced than the experimental schools. These statements were corroborated by data gathered from the questionnaires and focus groups.

V.2.4. Change in teaching style

The Child-Friendly School Initiative has caused some teachers to change their teaching style:

"I was more authoritarian before, but now I've changed my style: I encourage them more, I smile more, and I help them, and, you know, they have not crossed the line and they have not misbehaved as they might have before."

"Children are more assertive, they give their opinions and they have more confidence and self-esteem. We were bossy, but we have changed. And children love to feel involved, respected and taken into account."

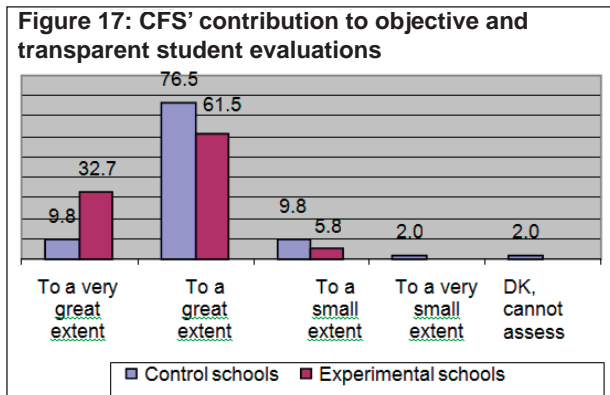
"Now our school is friendly, because we relate more to the children, we are closer, more open and welcoming to the children. Now we smile more. We have conditions that allow it. We no longer stay in our coats in dark and uninviting classrooms. Both we and our students are now delighted to come to school." (Focus group, teachers, Theoretical Lyceum from Molești)

In discussions with both teachers and students, the warm, closer relationships and the improved communication and mutual trust between them were frequently mentioned. To expand on one teacher's words (above), there was fear among the teachers that if they shifted from an authoritarian to a democratic teaching style, they would lose control and the students wouldn't know how to behave. The reality is that this change can be controlled and managed, especially when it is not sudden but takes place over time, and is supported by specific teaching methods. Consistency, accountability, reliability and empathy are the values that support the transition to a democratic teaching style, which is then not perceived by the students as a sign of "weakness".

V. Effectiveness of the initiative

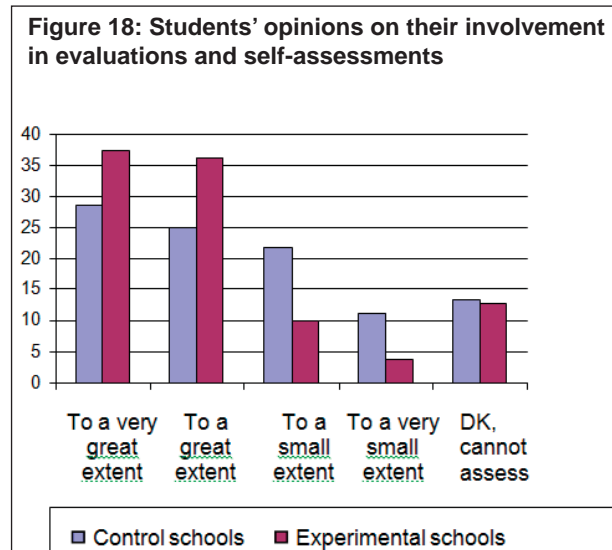
V.2.5. The capacity for objective and transparent evaluation

Most teachers in the experimental schools (94.2 per cent) believe that the CFS Initiative has helped increase objectivity and transparency in student evaluations (Figure 17).



This opinion is supported by the teachers in the control schools (71.3 per cent believe that implementing CFS in their school would have such an impact). Only one in 10 teachers in the control schools believes that a CFS programme would not significantly change their way of evaluating students.

The students in the experimental schools feel that they are now more involved in evaluations and in self-assessment (73.42 per cent), whereas only 53.38 per cent of students in the control schools share this opinion (Figure 18).



Classroom observations suggest that teachers tended to give mainly collective feedback during lessons in both groups of schools. They comment upon and assess the students, and encourage group or peer assessment more often in the experimental schools.

V.3. Parents and community

While schools are required to be more and more effective and efficient, the non-formal and informal influences on them are increasing significantly. As some authors suggest, *"Even in countries which lengthened their academic year, the time spent by children in school during the first 18 years of life remains low (13 per cent of their waking hours), compared to the time spent in the family and in the community."*³⁹

39 Redding, Sam, 'Parents and learning', IAE, IBE-UNESCO, PCL, Lausanne, 2000, p.5

V.3.1. Improved parental involvement in school life and decision-making

The Child-Friendly School Initiative has led to greater parental involvement in school life, thanks to:

1. the investment in school renovation and maintenance. Schools that have benefited from substantial infrastructure investment have done so because parents and local authorities have contributed to making improvements, both in terms of funds and in manpower. More parents are supportive of their children having a safe and comfortable environment at school.

“Parents changed their attitude when the school renovations began. The material conditions were very important for parents. It made them become involved; they wanted better conditions for their children.” (Focus group, teachers, Theoretical Lyceum from Molesti)

“They were happy with the material conditions; as with any parent, they were caring for their children’s health.” (Focus group, teachers, Sofrincani Gymnasium)

2. the school assessment, in which they participated and which brought about joint action.
3. the more open attitude of teachers and school management.

“We have had several meetings and discussions. Now they themselves (the parents) suggest some activities and provide support for their own initiatives; we do not need to persuade them.” (Focus group, teachers, Sofrincani Gymnasium)

Parental involvement has had beneficial effects on the children, and enhances a feeling of ownership and responsibility for the classroom environment.

“Parents have changed their attitude; they feel the school is their work too, their property, and they teach the children to respect the property, to behave well, and to take care of the school.” (Interview with the principal, Molesti Theoretical Lyceum)

The data from the questionnaires show, in general, a greater involvement of the parents in the experimental schools. There is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control schools in only one area: the participation of parents in educational activities organized by the school specifically for them, such as courses, meetings with experts (doctors, speech therapists) and discussions with school psychologists or counsellors. For almost all sub-items regarding parental involvement, the experimental schools recorded better – or higher – averages. The only area in which both groups of schools have similar results is the one related to parents’ participation in organizational meetings.

Obstacles to parental involvement are mostly of financial in nature.

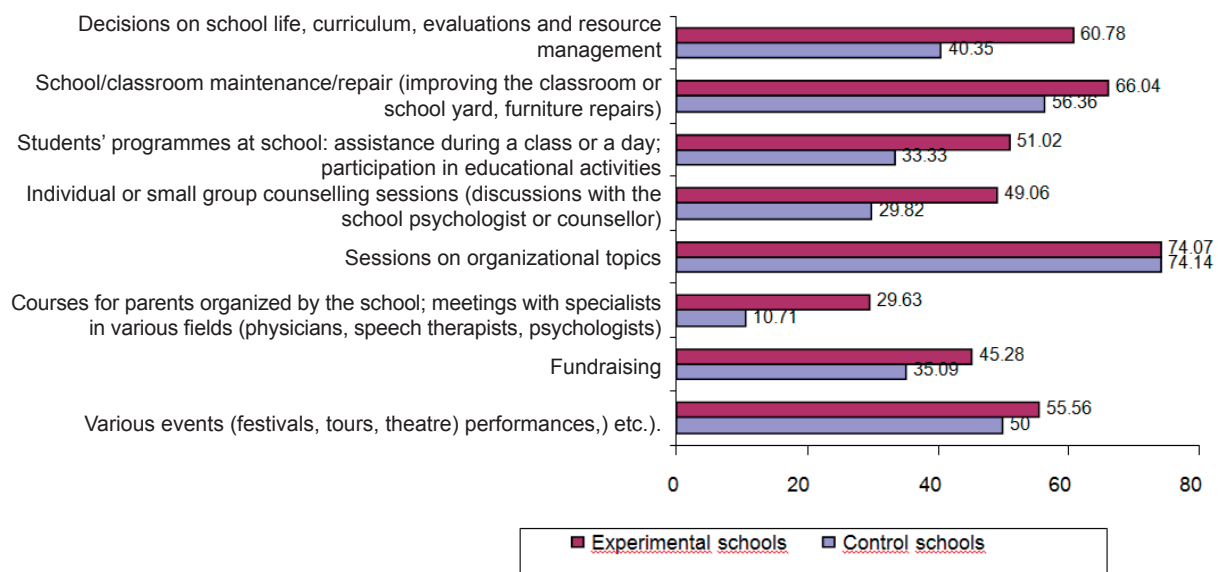
“Parents are interested in school,

V. Effectiveness of the initiative

children...but they have problems, especially financial ones. There is not much work; those who have more children have greater difficulties." (Focus group, teachers, Theoretical Lyceum Crocmaz) A growing number of children are faced with their parents' absence

from home. Between one-quarter and one-third of students have one or both parents working abroad. Teachers underlined the fact that *it would be better if more parents could stay home more with their children.* (Focus group, teachers, Sofrincani Gymnasium).

Figure 19: How often do parents take part in school activities?



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Table 10: Difficulties or obstacles affecting parental involvement. Teachers' opinions (1= to a very great extent, 4= to a very small extent, 5= don't know; cannot assess)

	Experimental schools					Control schools				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. The overloaded school programme and the administrative or bureaucratic activities of the teachers allow only sporadic collaborative relationships with parents.	7,9	42,1	36,8	5,3	7,9	9,3	27,9	25,6	25,6	11,6
2. Lack of adequate room for activities with parents.	2,7	13,5	40,5	40,5	2,7	10,5	21,1	28,9	34,2	5,3
3. Major discrepancies / differences between the opinions of parents and teachers on child education.	2,2	23,9	50	23,9	-	2,6	30,8	28,2	33,3	5,1
4. Low interest of parents in cooperation and child education.	10,4	27,1	41,7	18,8	2,1	16,0	36,0	26,0	16,0	6,0
5. Parents are overloaded with work and family life (parents lack time, parents leave for abroad for work).	26,9	51,9	17,3	3,8	-	28,0	52,0	8,0	8,0	4,0
6. Lack of recognition of the teachers' work.	14,0	25,6	44,2	11,6	4,7	13,2	28,9	36,8	7,9	13,2
7. The minor role parents can have in anything related to the school.	5,3	34,2	50,0	7,9	2,6	8,6	28,6	34,3	17,1	11,4

The most common obstacle to parental involvement in school and, more broadly, their children's education, as perceived by most teachers in both groups of schools, is the fact that parents are overloaded with work and in the family: they lack the time, and even have to go abroad for work. Other obstacles are perceived differently. In the experimental schools, half of the teachers say their overloaded programme and administrative and bureaucratic responsibilities at school leave them with time for only sporadic collaborative relationships with parents. In the control schools, the second-most common obstacle cited is parents' low level of interest (52 per cent), followed by the lack of recognition of the teachers' work (42.1 per cent).

The analysis of the data in the table above suggests a wider gap between teachers and parents in the

control schools, as compared to the experimental schools. Teachers in the control schools also tend to feel that parents are the ones who are mainly responsible for the low levels of cooperation that exist.

V.3.2. Better school-community relationships

In most schools covered by the study, the interviewees (including representatives of local authorities) described good relationships with the authorities and with community institutions. Mayors' offices were particularly involved in obtaining funds for school modernization in order to ensure that minimum conditions needed for the children's health (running water,

V. Effectiveness of the initiative

hot water, heating, lighting, indoor toilets) were met.

Local authorities have a variety of mechanisms to support vulnerable children and families and, in some cases also scholarships for children with high academic achievement involved in extracurricular activities. In some localities, the Mayors' offices cover the cost of school breakfasts or lunches for children in grades five through nine, whose families are in low income brackets. In other cases, they provide social support services to at risk families.

Another way communities have of supporting schools is by attracting young teachers to teach there. To this end, Mayors' offices provide young teachers with financial support to pay their rent, their heating bills in winter and so on. However, municipal representatives said *they did not have the opportunities to help the schools as much as they would have liked*. So, in the absence of sufficient resources, other solutions were proposed, such as:

- **projects** that could be financed by other institutions: *"We have a good relationship with the Mayor's office, and partnership project proposals have been submitted to the Moldova Social Investment Fund (MSIF) to install an indoor toilet and to fix the sewage system. The school has running water, but the sewage system is broken."*

(Interview with principal, Crocmaz school);

- **the participation of Mayor's office staff and other community members in renovations:** *"In 2009, when we repaired the school, each one contributed as much as they could, including businesses. The Mayor's office joined the school; they brought paint and other materials. When the work was done, the Mayor's staff and the school staff remained to do the cleaning-up together."*(Interview with school principal and with the Mayor, Sofrincani Gymnasium)

The CFS Initiative is widely viewed by respondents as a driver for community involvement: *"UNICEF has helped us very much with materials, investments, education, the training of all teachers, and community support. Everyone was mobilized: the parents, the Mayor's office. They understood that they could make a difference, but only if everyone was involved. With support from the Mayor's Office the pavement and alleys of the school have been renovated. With the parents' support, the classrooms have been repaired (walls, floor, linoleum). With the help of sponsors, other things have been done, such as the purchase of curtains."* (Interview, principal, Molesti Theretical Lyceum)

VI. Inclusiveness

VI.1. Incentives for inclusion on a national level

Over the past several years, the Government of Moldova has shown significant concern for promoting educational and social inclusion. In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴⁰, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁴¹, policies and strategies have been developed to increase social equity and inclusion: the National Strategy "Education for All"⁴², the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (2010–2013)⁴³, the National Strategy for Child and Family Protection⁴⁴, the 2007–2012 National Strategy and Action Plan for Residential Childcare Reform⁴⁵, and the

- 40 Moldova ratified in 1990
41 Ratified by the Moldovan Parliament by Law 166, 9 July 2010.
42 Government Decision (GD) 410, 4 April 2003.
43 Law 169, 9 July 2010.
44 GD 727, 16 June 2003.
45 GD 784, 9 July 2007, with its further amendments.

2011–2020 Programme for Developing Inclusive Education in Moldova⁴⁶.

The 2011–2020 Programme for Developing Inclusive Education in Moldova provides for *"the continuous change and adaptation of the educational system to meet the diversity of children and their needs deriving from it, to provide quality education for all..."* and stipulates that *"promotion of an inclusive education, and therefore of an inclusive attitude and culture, will lead to the establishment of new forms of human solidarity in an inclusive society."*

In "The Evaluation of the School Curriculum", the authors of the report recommended, among other things, *"promoting an inclusive educational curriculum and child-centredness."*⁴⁷ When developing the standards for student evaluations⁴⁸, the principle of inclusion was also promoted:

- 46 GD 523, 11 July 2011.
47 Evaluation of the School Curriculum – the perspective on modernization, ME, IES, UNICEF Moldova, 2009
48 Competency Standards – an instrument of educational policy implementation, ME, IES, UNICEF Moldova, 2010, p. 97

VI. Inclusiveness

"The standards will encourage social and school inclusion, taking into consideration the ability of all children to learn, to develop and to make progress regardless of their physical or emotional abilities, their acquired experience or cultural heritage."

The new curriculum⁴⁹ integrates and capitalizes on inclusiveness, promoting the education and participation of all children in mainstream education and thus supporting the development of inclusiveness in the schools.

Inclusive education is also promoted in the draft Education Code, and the introduction of a child-centred education module in pre-service and in-service teacher training is an effective mechanism to support inclusion.

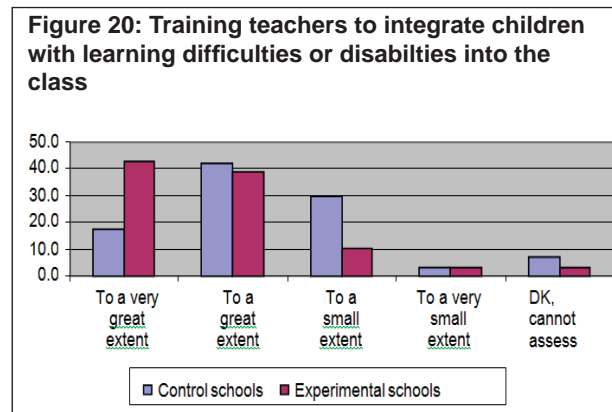
These policies, strategies and programmes ensure better dissemination of the concept of inclusiveness, and offer more opportunities to make inclusiveness a reality.

VI.2. The CFS Initiative's contribution to increased social and educational inclusion of students

The CFS Initiative's contribution to the promotion of inclusive education is evidenced in better training of the teachers for working with children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The answers to the questionnaires suggest that experimental school teachers

49 School curriculum, grades 1-4, ME, 2010

who had been taught about inclusive education felt more prepared to work with children with special educational needs than those in the control schools.



The discussions held during the focus group interviews supported this finding and offered two explanations for the change:

- a) a change in teachers' attitudes** – greater responsiveness to the needs of children with special educational needs, trust that they can be educated together with the other children, and evidence of the positive impact on children of empathy, cooperation and support for their special needs..

"I have learned a lot from our training on how to work with these children. We have no problems now, and the children have no problems, either; they are attentive and friendly."

"I have a short girl (with dwarfism) in the class and the other children always help her, for example, to hang her coat on a hanger. And I teach and encourage them to help her, as she will grow taller a bit later and will be able to hang up her things by herself." (Focus group, teachers, Molesti Theoretical Lyceum)

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b) **the improvement of working methods and techniques** based on the needs of each child.

"I have learned a lot from our training on how to work with these children. We have no problems now, and the children have no problems, either; they are attentive and friendly."

"I have a short girl (with dwarfism) in the class and the other children always help her, for example, to hang her coat on a hanger. And I teach and encourage them to help her, as she will grow taller a bit later and will be able to hang up her things by herself." (Focus group, teachers, Molesti Theoretical Lyceum)

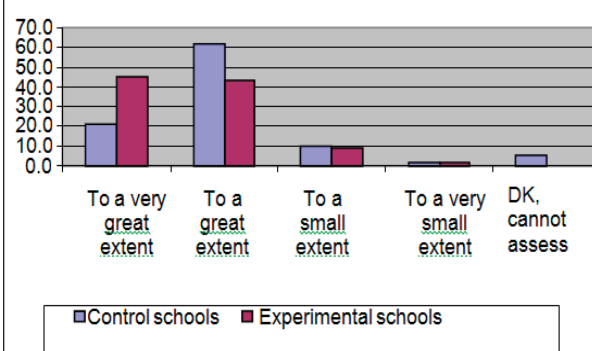
Another finding of the evaluation that requires special attention is the need to better understand the individual child who has difficulties. It is important to pay close attention to the needs of children with disabilities (or other types of difficulties), and to avoid rigidly applying rules and regulations without taking into account their individual needs and circumstances. These rules should be applied on a case-by-case basis. To give an example: There was a girl who had become disabled due to an accident, and who had initially refused to come to school. Her teachers understood her need to be alone for a while, and they went to her home to help her with her homework. A year later, the student began to attend school again because she had gotten accustomed to her disability. She had learned to accept it and to redefine who she was. She returned to school when she was ready. It would have been a huge mistake,

and traumatic for the child, if she had been forced to attend school before she felt she was ready to be with her classmates.

"A girl had an accident: she fell one storey and was not able to walk. For some time she did not want to come to school; she did not want the other children to see her in such a condition. We went to her house to do her lessons at home. The girl learned very well; she was an excellent student. One year later, she came back to school." (Focus group, teachers, Valcinet Gymnasium)

Taking into consideration ethnic diversity in the classroom is another part of the training provided under the CFS Initiative, one that has a direct impact on inclusiveness.

Figure 21: Training of teachers to work with students from minority ethnic groups



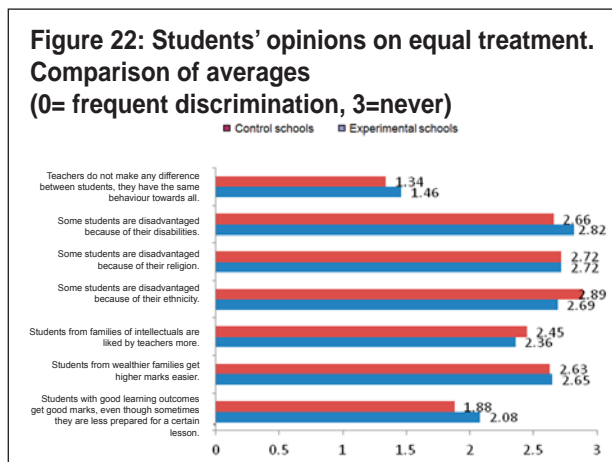
Teachers' and students' statements alike confirm that teachers in the experimental schools were able to work without any problems with students with learning difficulties or with disabilities, and with those belonging to ethnic or linguistic minorities. The differences of students' opinions in the experimental and control schools were statistically significant in terms of teacher training and the extent

VI. Inclusiveness

to which existing mainstreaming efforts in both kinds of schools were working.

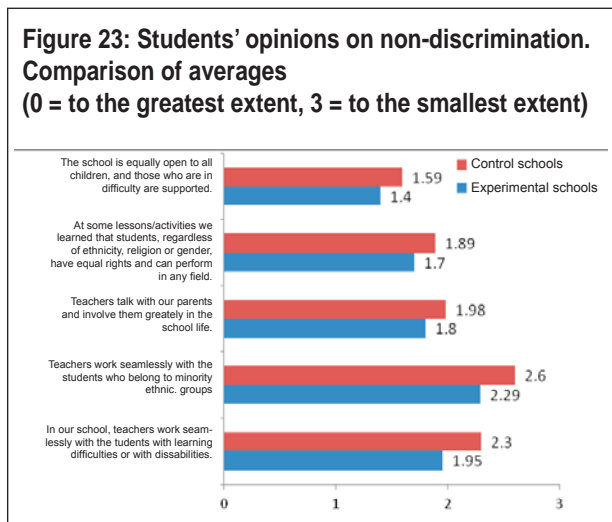
The data showed that both groups of schools exhibit openness, tolerance and non-discrimination. The statistical difference was noted in two items that reflect the qualitative jump in the teachers' ways of teaching (according to Figure 22).

Equal treatment and non-discrimination. Overall, teachers treat all students equally in both the experimental and control schools. There are rare cases of discrimination due to the financial situation of families, to the parents' employment status, or to ethnicity or disability. Students with disabilities are sometimes treated less well and high achieving students are sometimes favoured by teachers in the control schools. In the experimental schools, students from ethnic minorities are sometimes not treated equally by their teachers. These cases are shown as having higher recorded averages since they occur very infrequently in the teachers' practices, as Figure 22 suggests.



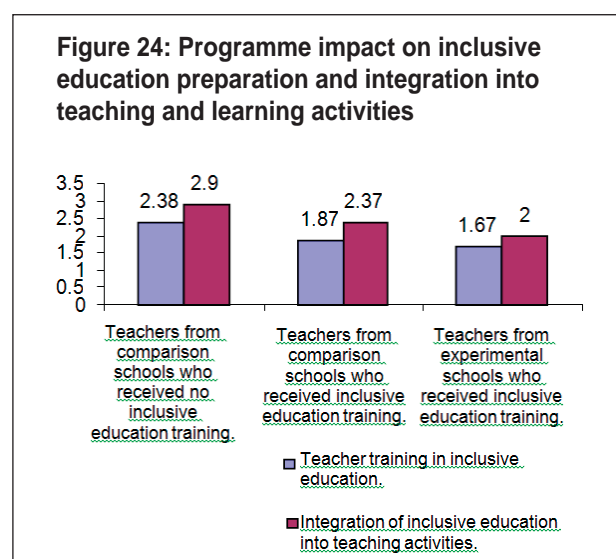
The comparison of averages of the questionnaire items used to determine if certain categories of students received special or different treatment, presented in the table below, shows that students felt the experimental schools were somewhat better than the control schools in the following areas:

- my school demonstrates openness to all children, without any differences;
- teachers in my school convey the idea of equality and equal rights;
- teachers work well with students of ethnic minorities and those with disabilities.



As there is often a gap between training and actual teaching practice, statistical procedures were used to see how training in inclusive education – or

lack of it – translated into classroom practice.⁵⁰ With regard to teacher training, it was found that teachers who attended training courses in inclusive educational principles tended to integrate them more into their teaching. The data showed that teachers who did not attend such training scored, on average, 2.31, while the average of teachers who did attend the course was 1.71 (where 0 = to the greatest extent and 3 = to the smallest extent). This represents a statistically significant difference of 60 per cent (T test = 3.1854, Pr (T> t) = 0.0010), which strongly suggests **inclusive education training led to improved capacity and performance of teachers in this area as a result of the CFS Initiative.**



⁵⁰ The subitems: “In our school, teachers are prepared to integrate children with learning difficulties or with disabilities in the class” and “Teachers are prepared to work with students belonging to minority ethnic groups” are aggregated to indicate the level of training. And the subitems: “Teachers design learning activities to show students that gender- and learning-achievement-related biases are not justified” (they give examples of female and male mathematicians, novelists, athletes), and “Teachers design learning activities through which students understand that ethnic or other biases should not be propagated: that not all Roma children know how to sing or dance; that children with physical disabilities compensate with other abilities” are aggregated to indicate the integration of these concepts into actual teaching.

By combining teachers’ participation in interventions, with their participation in inclusive education courses, we get three groups: a group of teachers in the control schools who have not attended the training courses, a group of teachers in the control schools who have attended the training courses, and a group of teachers in the experimental schools who have attended the courses. We can see that participation in courses leads to an increasing perceived level of training by 71 per cent. **The differences between the three groups are statistically significant.⁵¹ Participation in training courses led not only to better preparation, but also to better implementation of inclusive education principles in teaching and learning.** As Figure 24 suggests, it led to increased implementation by 90 per cent. (Note: *The score is the average of two ordinal variables, where 1 = to a very great extent, 5 = Don’t know; cannot assess. The lower the score, the higher the class preparation and implementation.*)

⁵¹ Anova F =5.85, Prob F=0.0043

VII. Sustainability

The CFS Initiative was judged to be a relevant, effective and efficient investment in the experimental schools - a response to actual and urgent needs - and achieved its objectives with a reasonable use of resources.

VII.1. CFS as a key piece of the puzzle

The strategy for implementing the CFS Initiative in Moldova, which combines actions that have nationwide impact with a focused intervention in the experimental schools, establishes ongoing prerequisites for the Initiative's sustainability. The inclusion of CFS principles in the government's educational policy documents and in the thematic/sector policies regarding teacher training, curriculum, evaluation standards, and inclusive education testifies to the educational authorities' commitment to the

maximum optimization of this Initiative. Consultations with representatives of educational authorities and of institutions responsible for curriculum, evaluation and teacher training have indicated their interest in and support for CFS, support motivated by the increased relevance of the Initiative to the educational system. The principals of the experimental and control schools have expressed their interest in continuing and extending the Initiative. Of most interest to the teachers in the experimental schools are the training activities and the school assessments. Next in importance to them is the renovation and improvement of the physical conditions in schools (although visits suggest that this is an urgent need).

The teachers in the experimental schools, in particular, have expressed confidence that the Initiative's model can and should be extended to as many schools as possible:

"We would like all schools in the country to become child-friendly schools. It depends on the resources."

"It is worth the effort. It was difficult to collect the contributions, but now we realize that it was worth it. It requires a lot of support, patience, and encouragement. It requires proper studying conditions."

"It would require money, and it would not be a waste." (Focus group, teachers, Sofrincani Gymnasium)

"I think it is worth the effort and costs. It is possible, but they need the help that we were given: improved conditions as well as training, including for parents." (Focus group, teachers, Molesti Theoretical Lyceum)

Very telling as to the sustainability of Initiative-related changes is the statement of a teacher who said: *"Not only would I recommend to other schools that they become child-friendly, but, if I had to go back to the school the way it looked two years ago, I would not want to, I would not be able to..."* (Focus group, teachers, Sofrincani Gymnasium) This statement suggests such a high degree of satisfaction with the project, and an awareness of the benefits of the changes on the part of participants, that "going back" to the way things were before is now inconceivable. Another teacher had this to say to colleagues from other schools interested in adopting the CFS model:

"It requires a lot of work. For example, we will hold three district seminars in our school this year because they are a positive example, but that means extra work for us. It requires expenditures on the part of teachers for seminars, for literature, for materials. You can no longer work as before. If you do not have any materials then you make them by yourself, at your own expense." (Focus group, teachers, Sofrincani Gymnasium)

The CFS Initiative is an important "piece of the puzzle" of the socio-educational interventions in Moldova. It is not an isolated initiative, however; rather, it is a comprehensive approach that is correlated, complemented and supported by projects of other social and educational organizations (a few such interventions are described in subchapter 4.1). These programmes have common objectives and put forward solutions that promote the same principles: access to quality education, inclusiveness, equal treatment and non-discrimination, and child safety and health.

VII.2. Potential barriers

As we have seen, the arguments supporting the sustainability of the Initiative are strong; barriers remain, however, especially socio-economic ones. The main obstacles to sustainability, as identified by teachers in both groups of schools, are: poor material conditions, the lack of financial resources, low teacher motivation, little

VII. Sustainability

Table 11: Statistical analysis of potential obstacles. Comparison of averages (1 = to a very great extent, 2 = on average, 3 = to a small extent, 4 = not at all)

	Control schools	Experimental schools	Difference	T test	Likelihood (Pr)
Item 18.1 Poor material conditions at school	1.81	1.81	0%	-0.0176	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.9860
Item 18.2 Lack of financial resources	1.90	1.72	18%	0.9052	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.3674
Item 18.3 Lack of managerial support	2.36	2.05	30%	0.6614	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.1859
Item 18.4 Low teacher motivation	2.28	2.05	22%	1.0119	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.3141
Item 18.5 Low student motivation to learn	2.20	2.03	16%	0.7825	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.4358
Item 18.6 Little involvement of parents and local communities	2.08	1.75	33%	1.7744	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.0791
Item 18.7 Poor understanding of educational policies	2.26	2.19	7%	0.2606	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.7949
Item 18.8 Lack of support from district and state educational authorities	2.06	2.03	2%	0.1065	Ha: diff ≠ 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.9154
Item 18.9 Specific teacher training needs	1.93	1.57	36%	2.0191	Ha: diff > 0 Pr(T > t) = 0.0231

involvement on the part of parents and local communities, a lack of support from the district and state educational authorities, and low motivation on the part of the students to learn.

Teachers in both the experimental and control schools agree that, if the CFS model is to be sustainable, it requires, in particular: proper material conditions, support on the part of the authorities, greater involvement of parents and improved teacher training. Teacher training is particularly emphasized in the experimental group of schools, where eight per cent more teachers stated the need for and importance of training in the new methodology.

This shows a greater awareness of teachers in the experimental schools of the importance of teacher training for ensuring sustainability. Based on their own experience showing the positive impact of training on the Initiative's results, the teachers in the experimental schools single out training as the key to sustainability to a far greater extent than do teachers in the control schools.

Financial difficulties of families and professional overload

All families are facing financial difficulties and time constraints. Some families

Table 12: Factors affecting parents' involvement. Teachers' opinions

	Control schools %					Experimental schools %				
	Great	Average	Small	Not at all	DK	Great	Average	Small	Not at all	DK
Financial difficulties.	39	51	7	2	2	20	52	24	2	1.9
Lack of time for child education.	25	54	16	2	4	15	63	17	4	1.9
Big number of children in the family.	2	42	53	2	2	0	23	66	9	1.9
Family conflicts; violence, alcoholism.	0	31	50	12	7	7	28	48	11	5.6
Poor housing conditions, which are inadequate for child care and education.	2	32	46	12	9	4	28	48	19	1.9
Lack of knowledge about raising and educating children.	7	39	39	11	4	8	38	42	10	1.9
Long way to school.	10	42	33	15		6	25	39	29	

have a large number of children and their difficulties are many. Also, more than one quarter of students have one or both parents working abroad. Another issue influencing parents' involvement, as reported by teachers, is their lack of knowledge about raising and educating children. Some 46 per cent of parents, according to teachers in both groups of schools, are not sufficiently prepared for their parental roles and for supporting the children in their educational lives.

Teachers' salary level

Teacher motivation is negatively affected by low salary levels, and this factor is cited 23 per cent more by teachers in the control schools than by their peers in the experimental schools. Low salaries

affect not only motivation but also the ability of schools to attract and retain male teachers as well as young teachers. This is confirmed by the UNICEF study *Teachers: A Study on Recruitment, Development and Salaries of Teachers in the Republic of Moldova*. As that study suggests, in addition to better salaries there is a need for a transparent system of remuneration in which rewards, bonuses and other incentives are allocated based on clear and appropriate benchmarks.

Salary growth is an important factor in the motivation of teachers, as are professional development opportunities. In countries with advanced systems of education, teachers benefit from a number of paid hours of training every year.

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VIII.1. Informing and involving all stakeholders

While planning and implementing the Initiative, UNICEF worked closely with the Ministry of Education, the institutions in charge of teacher training and school curriculum, as well as international agencies and NGOs active in education. Ongoing dialogue with the Ministry of Education staff provided a high degree strategic support for the CFS Initiative. Its objectives and activities were adjusted in accordance with national priorities and with the European and international educational agenda calling for quality education for all, equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, building key skills and child-centredness.

VIII.2. Extension of the area impacted

All experts interviewed and all data collected from the schools covered by the evaluation bear witness to the

fact that the Child-Friendly School model is highly relevant to education in Moldova. To implement this model nationwide, however, would require extensive preparation and significant resources. Important steps have already been taken: educational policies and the curriculum of basic education have been appropriately updated; modernization of pre-service and in-service teacher training is underway; and a module on child-centredness methodology has been introduced into the core curriculum. The Ministry of Education is working to build a solid framework for inclusiveness in education, adapted to the needs of children, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups and children with special needs.

As a result, a relevant framework now exists for a large-scale extension/integration of the model into the entire educational system. The existence of this favourable framework as well as the success of the CFS Initiative has laid the foundation for all schools in Moldova to become Child-Friendly. Still, challenges remain: renovation of school buildings to create physically safe, comfortable and welcoming school environments;

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stepped-up teacher training; and, above all, professional development of teachers and the promotion of the CFS principles in the management and teaching practices of schools.

VIII.3. Integration of the principles of human rights into programme design and implementation

UNICEF has supported the Government in implementing its 2009–2013 programme, “European Integration: Freedom, Democracy, and Welfare”; the 2008–2011 National Development Strategy and other relevant programmes for the well-being of children and young people. The principles promoted by UNICEF are focused primarily on the inclusion of people from vulnerable groups; cross-sector collaboration; development planning based on data/research; the strengthening of systems, national plans and strategies; and capacity-building of human resources. To these ends, UNICEF works with the public authorities, families, children and young people to empower them to help advance reforms in accordance with national plans and to support a framework for participation of stakeholders in decision-making and management.

The CFS Initiative contributed to the upgrading of national legislation relevant to education (the Draft Education

Code, the Education Sector Strategy, the Government Decision on inclusive education) and to the standards for the evaluation of students, of the curriculum and of teacher training. Thus, the prerequisites are now in place translating child’s rights into all areas of the educational system -- from policies to specific school and community practices. Upgrading and developing these standards reflects the progress made in building the capacity of decision-makers to develop policies that include vulnerable groups.

The evaluation threw light on how this process played out at the micro-level. To a greater extent than their peers in the control schools, teachers in the experimental schools were able to take on board the principles of child rights and inclusion.

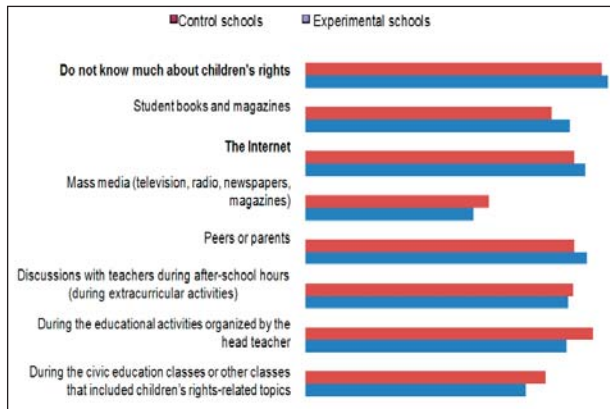
Also noted in the experimental schools is a more favourable environment for children’s participation in making decisions about their own learning, their classes and their schools. Data gathered through the student questionnaires show that greater emphasis is placed by these schools and teachers on informing children about their rights.

As to where in school the students learned about their rights, many stated that they received this information to a great extent from the head teachers. This was especially the case in the experimental schools, where students identified head teachers more than their peers in the control schools (1.71 versus 1.88, respectively). In addition, experimental school students were more likely to identify civics classes

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as the main setting for learning about child rights than students in the control schools (1.44 versus 1.57).

Figure 25: Where children learned about their rights. Students' opinions (average 0 = a very important source)



School assessments by students, parents and teachers were also a significant opportunity for human rights' promotion and for children and parents taking part in decisions about their schools. Throughout the assessment process, stakeholders worked together to analyze the current situation in their school, identified weaknesses and strengths and developed joint action plans.

VIII.4. CFS' cost analysis

VIII.4.1. Methodological remarks

This chapter will deal with the costs associated with Child-Friendly Schools. It is obvious that to create such schools, certain investments need to be made.

In general, CFS interventions are divided into the following categories, each of which has associated costs:

- Curriculum development (content, teaching, learning methods)
- Infrastructure improvement (facilities, equipment, resources)
- Safety, security and well-being of students and teachers
- Schools as part of communities.

Within each of the above categories, the choices the schools make to become more child-friendly will determine the resource requirements. They will identify gaps that may exist, set priorities for investment and identify the necessary resources. For example, depending on their needs, educational authorities may choose to invest in health care, school meals, counseling, safe water supply, emergency preparedness training, protective school spaces, new classroom furniture, improved lavatories or playgrounds, among other things, on an annual, incremental basis, depending on availability of additional resources.

There are two basic factors that must be considered in order to estimate the cost of making schools child-friendly:

- Data on the current state of the main variables; and
- Monetary values that can be assigned to these variables.

Monetary values can be assigned to variables when there are standard ways of determining unit costs for use in total cost estimates. In most cases, when

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the cost of the investment is known, one uses the accounting standards or the standards of the free-market costs associated with the investment. This is the case with school construction and refurbishment. It is relatively easy to estimate the unit cost for a child-friendly classroom (per square foot) by using available cost data on materials and types of contracts (whether it is with community labor or a commercial contractor). Similarly, the cost of training per teacher (unit cost) can be estimated by looking at the costs of past courses or making simple calculations⁵².

Applied methodology

Based on the available information on the types of investments that need to be made, as well as the accounting data of the schools and local administrations, we can assign a monetary value to the projected expenditures

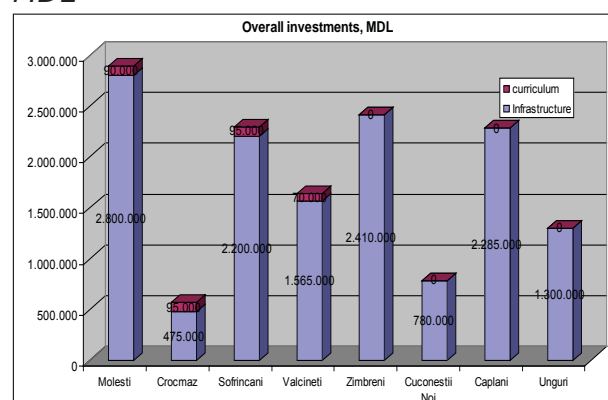
The data presented below is based on information collected from school and local administrations in both the experimental schools (Molesti, Crocmaz, Sofricani and Valcineti) and the control schools (Zimbreni, Cuconestii Noi, Caplani and Unguri).

⁵² It should be noted here that difficulties often arise when assigning monetary values to certain areas: for example, for maintaining a vibrant parent-teacher association; training-school committee members; and for sensitizing teachers to the school's accountability to the community it serves.

VIII.4.2. Comparative estimates

One can see in the figure below (Figure 26) that overall investments made in the experimental schools varied greatly. These investments included both infrastructure improvements and curriculum and training.) For the Crocmaz School – less than 0,5 mln lei; the Molesti School – more than 2,9 mln lei; the Valcinet School – slightly over 1,5 mln lei; and for the Șofrâncani School – 2,2 mln lei.

Figure 26: Overall costs per school, MDL⁵³



Looking at the investments on a per capita basis – that is, the cost for each direct participant in the CFS Initiative -- we see that the Sofrancani School, a small school in which almost all of the students benefited, received the highest level of support, while the Crocmaz School, the lowest.

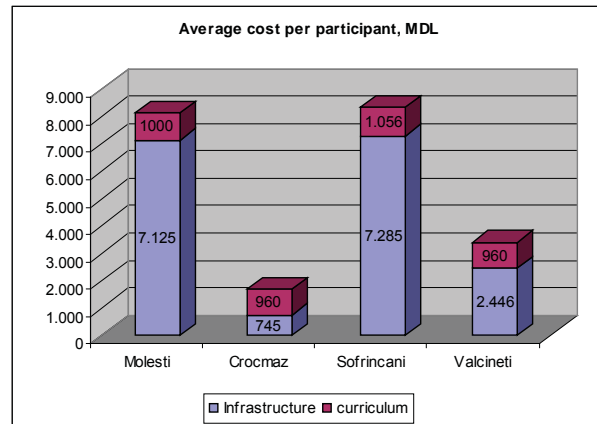
⁵³ Calculation based on the overall cost of infrastructure in schools in Zimbreni, Cuconestii Noi, Caplani and Unguri have not benefited from the child-friendly school investments, we count just general infrastructure investment.

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The share of investments devoted to training and capacity building, on the one hand, and to infrastructure improvements, on the other, varied from school to school. The proportion of overall investments devoted to training and capacity building ranged, per capita, from 4.1 per cent (Sofricani) to 38.9 per cent (Crocmaş), with Moleşti at 12.3 per cent and Valcineti at 7.3 per cent for each participant. However, the absolute value of the training component did not vary that much from school to school – they were all between 90-95.000 MDL. At the same time, there was significant variation in the infrastructure investments made by the schools – explained in large part by the different levels of community participation. Thus in Moleşti, for example, the contribution to the school infrastructure of local authorities and community members was 1,6 mln out of 2,8 mln MDL. Investments in training do not vary significantly between schools.

The average cost for each of the participants in the program varies from 1 700 (Crocmaş) MDL to 9 000 MDL (Sofricani. (See Figure 27.)

Figure 27: Average cost per participant, MDL⁵⁴



VIII.4.3. Evaluation of benefits

The evaluation of the benefits of these investments can be based on the perception of the direct beneficiaries of the CFS Initiative in the experimental schools. A comparison with the control schools provides a good basis for some relevant conclusions.

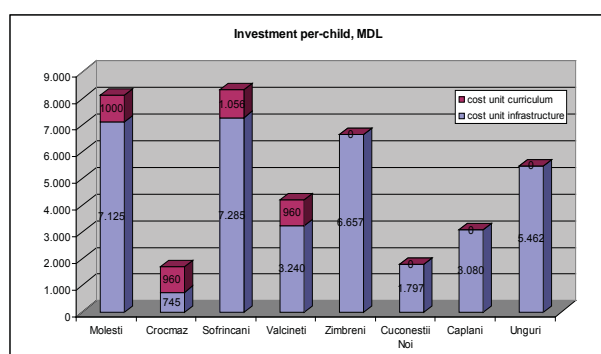
As the sociological survey results from chapter V.2 clearly show, there has been an improvement in teaching methods, a change in attitudes, better treatment of the students and a 16 per cent increase in overall academic performance in the experimental schools. These improvements can also be estimated in monetary terms. Rough calculations can even be made correlating specific monetary allocations with changes brought about as a result of the Initiative. In order to accomplish

⁵⁴ Calculated by dividing the costs related to the programme by the number of participants involved in the Child-Friendly School Initiative.

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this, more disaggregated data and information are needed for each of the schools, correlated with the costs incurred by each of the schools during the project period.

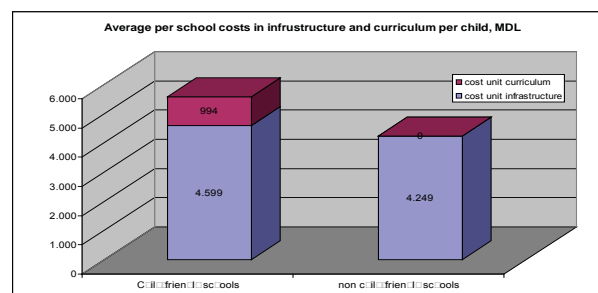
Figure 28. Investment per child, MDL⁵⁵



A general qualitative conclusion can be drawn on the basis of comparatively equal investments per child in experimental and control schools. Analyzing the average investments per child in experimental and control schools (Fig. 29), it is notable that infrastructure investments are similar in both groups, whereas curricular and training investments mostly account for the difference between the two groups. The relative weight of the curriculum/education component per child is about 20 per cent (1000 MDL compared to 4600 MDL). *Based on this, one can reach the qualitative conclusion that a meaningful investment in the Child-Friendly School will require mix of infrastructure and curriculum/education investment in the proportion of 1-5 at least.*

⁵⁵ Figure 28 was created by dividing the costs related to the CFS programme by the number of children involved. For the control schools, the curriculum component was not included.

Figure 29: Average cost per participant in the experimental and control schools combined, MDL⁵⁶



VIII.4.4. Analysis and conclusions

Overall costs per school were the highest in Molesti School and the lowest in Crocmaş School. However, the Molesti School did not have the highest overall cost per direct participant – the highest was at the Sofricani School. This discrepancy is accounted for by the indirect costs of the infrastructure for the overall benefits of the school.

The costs for training and curriculum in the experimental schools were only a small fraction of the overall costs of the investment and were fairly consistent as an absolute value from school to school. The lion's share of investment was in infrastructure improvement, which varied greatly from school to school. The direct contribution of this variable in the establishment of a Child Friendly School is, therefore, difficult to assess on its

⁵⁶ Figure 29 was created by dividing the costs related to the schooling by the direct number of children involved in the programme. For the control schools, the curriculum component was not included.

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own. One needs additional research to assess the detailed impact of each category of investment.

The average cost per direct participant in the Child-Friendly School varied as well from school to school. It has been difficult to assess the specific impact of the different type of investments based on the positive benefits produced for each school and participant. The average investment in training and curriculum did not vary significantly from school to school, while the academic results of students in experimental schools increased by 16 per cent.

In a previous section, we arrived at a qualitative conclusion that financial

investment in infrastructure must be accompanied by an investment in curriculum and training in order to produce the most meaningful results. Analysis of the financial data from the previous section suggests that the proportion of the investment in two categories should be at a rate of 1-5 per child in order to produce at least a 16 per cent improvement in the academic results. Absence of data does not allow us to make further scientifically-based assumptions on whether further improvements would be produced by increasing the rate curriculum-infrastructure investment (for example, instead of the current ratio of 1 to 5, a ratio of 2 to 5).

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IX.1. Conclusions

The Child-Friendly School Initiative is relevant to the Moldovan educational system as its objectives are in line with national priorities and the international objectives of economic and social development. Furthermore, it acts synergistically with other educational programmes implemented by a range of governmental and non-governmental institutions. Its planning was guided by an initial evaluation of the readiness of the educational system to adopt the CFS model. Its effects – overwhelmingly positive -- can be observed at both the national level and at the local level of schools that have fully implemented the model.

The Child-Friendly School Initiative has contributed to the establishment of a more robust framework for educational policy and the implementation of activities that better address the overall social expectations and specific needs of students, parents and other stakeholders. Thus, the new regulations adopted by the Government of Moldova on inclusive education, teacher training, curriculum and student assessment provide a favourable framework for educational transformation.

The relevance of the Initiative to the needs of students, parents and teachers

is very high and is acknowledged as such by all involved. For students, the Initiative stands for: a more comfortable and safe school environment (especially where higher material investments were made); increased attractiveness of education, and closer teacher-student relationships.

Against the backdrop of these overall benefits, the changes in student behaviour reflect:

- better school participation (attendance and involvement in activities), particularly for the children from vulnerable groups and for children with disabilities;
- higher academic achievement for more children: children who had previously had poorer outcomes increased their performance by 16 per cent in experimental schools;
- development of cross-cutting skills such as problem solving and 'learning to learn';
- improvement in terms of attitudes and behaviours such as higher self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities; better communication and relationship-building; expression of opinions, and involvement in decision-making. In addition, greater levels of tolerance, responsibility, and reductions in violence were observed in

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experimental schools, along with better integration of children with special needs, those from poor families or children in other vulnerable situations.

The schools' transformation depends mostly on the teachers. Studies have demonstrated the importance and influence of the teachers on students' performance, the school's climate and organizational culture, the attractiveness and relevance of learning, inclusiveness, equal treatment, and so on. The most consistently appreciated component of the CFS Initiative has been the training of teachers; the well-organized, practical, relevant and highly effective courses have proven their usefulness. The changes in teaching practices as reported by teachers and students alike, and confirmed through classroom observation, included improved work with students with special educational needs, or belonging to ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities groups; greater gender equality; a better approach to the students (awareness of their needs, interests and concerns, placing the children at the centre of school activities); and concern for the applicability of knowledge (the connection between what has been learned and daily life).

The comprehensive implementation of the Initiative in the experimental schools has demonstrated the viability of the model and its ability to generate notable outcomes in a short time, as attested to by the data gathered in focus groups, surveys and direct observation.

The most profound changes were observed in Molesti, but it should be

noted that the Molesti School had already benefited in previous years from numerous educational programmes and investments that provided excellent material conditions. It was the only school that did not always raise the issue of material deprivation. In contrast, in the Crocmaz High School, which benefited from the smallest level of investment, there was less progress towards adapting education to the students' needs.

What is significant here is that the Initiative demonstrated its potential to generate the desired changes under a wide range of circumstances, notwithstanding the significantly different conditions prevailing within and between the groups of schools that were involved in the pilot programme.

IX. 2. Lessons learned

At the national level, CFS has created a favorable legal and political framework for supporting the transformation of education in line with the CFS principles. Although the regulations that were approved do not directly or automatically lead to changes in educational philosophy and practices at the grassroots level, they do represent a basic element of the change process which needs continuous support. **The CFS Initiative has resulted in comprehensive improvements at the level of the experimental schools,** due to actions implemented on several fronts simultaneously.

These include:

- improved physical environments in the schools;
- teachers who are better trained and

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- more open to the children;
- parents who are more involved in school life;
- better school attendance;
- higher quality education;
- greater inclusiveness and gender equality;
- happier students and teachers;
- less violence in the schools;
- and greater support from community and local authorities.

It is unlikely that implementing only one dimension of the CFS Initiative would have generated the same results. The data compiled as part of this evaluation suggest some of the key reasons why the CFS Initiative, with its holistic approach, was able to achieve such wide-ranging results:

- a comprehensive educational approach, which regards the school as a whole and places the child at the centre of every proposed intervention;
- the training of all school teachers -- in areas such as child-centredness, inclusive education and school-community collaboration -- which has had three strengths: 1) involvement of the entire staff in trainings, thus creating a critical mass for significant change in teaching practices; 2) relevance of topics and 3) high quality and practical orientation of the courses;
- the participatory assessment of schools, a learning and reflection exercise which has brought together the three key categories of people involved in the school: students, parents and teachers;
- the emphasis on creating a decent, comfortable physical environment (demonstrated in two of the four experimental schools) and its close

relationship with health, safety, dignity, aesthetic sense and responsible behaviour; and finally,

- The valuing and cultivation of closer student-teacher relationships and placing the child at the centre of all activities.

On a somewhat more intangible level, school visits enabled the evaluation team to feel the different atmosphere in the schools that benefited from an improved physical environment and consistent investments, compared to in those that received more modest material support. In the schools that received the additional support, the whole social environment was friendlier and one could see the greater motivation and openness on the part of teachers, students and parents. Using the Maslow pyramid of needs, the process can be more easily visualized: after ensuring that basic needs for a decent environment are met, it is possible to then move towards the upper levels of the pyramid, progressively addressing other personal and collective needs. Of course, the whole process of modernization involves substantial resources and efforts on the part of all stakeholders. The result of these joint efforts: a genuine partnership among parents, teachers, local authorities and other stakeholders (donors, central authorities).

IX.3. Recommendations

Overall, the experimental schools had better results compared to the control schools in terms of effectiveness, attractiveness and relevance of learning. This does not mean all problems were solved or that the schools have attained an ideal situation. The recent interventions

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implemented under the CFS Initiative need to be supported, strengthened and expanded. In this context, the key, overarching recommendation of this evaluation is that any extension or integration of the model in the educational system must take into account **the importance of implementing all CFS dimensions simultaneously and as a whole**. Improvements in certain areas only (e.g. teacher training) may permit a certain degree of progress, but impact would be small if unaccompanied by improvements in all areas covered by the CFS model.

Two possible scenarios for extending the CFS Initiative have been considered: 1) scaling up or 2) mainstreaming the model into the educational system. Under the first scenario, a growing number of schools would receive support and guidance in

order to adopt the CFS model, progressively expanding the Initiative over time, eventually including the entire country. The second scenario envisages the official adoption of the CFS model by the Ministry of Education at the national level and its full integration into curriculum, teacher training requirements and support for school improvements throughout the country. Based on the analysis of the data gathered and the overall evaluation of the progress obtained in the experimental schools, the mainstreaming option clearly offers greater advantages than the scaling up approach, given the assumption that the modes of action would remain the same as the ones used in the 2007-2011 CFS Initiative.

In order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the two scenarios, a brief SWOT analysis has been conducted:

IX.3.1. Scenario One: Scaling-up the CFS Initiative

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existence of a favorable legal framework and an updated curriculum. Deployment utilizing know-how transfer between schools and ease of predicting the evolution of the model in schools included in the project. Feasibility, based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> better chances to identify funding sources to support a given number of schools, at least to the same extent as for the experimental schools in this study; the capacity to implement and monitor the Initiative in a limited number of schools, while maintaining the standards of this experimental stage Participation of schools would be voluntary, based on their own assessment of needs and potential benefits – which was how the experimental schools were selected and what proved to be an important factor for success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Islands” of impact: risk that the Initiative remains an isolated intervention without widespread impact. The extended length of time needed until all schools in the country would come to be included in the CFS Initiative. Difficulties in finding sufficient funds to enable all the selected schools to reach the same standard in terms of physical environment.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High probability of generating authentic and sustainable changes in participating schools, due to the fact that a critical mass from all stakeholder groups are engaged. Experimental schools can share their best practices and transfer their expertise to other schools, becoming resource or magnet centres. In order to involve many schools and draw on the experiences gathered during the first experimental stage – while also ensuring minimum material conditions – a scaling up of CFS should link synergistically with other initiatives (educational, rehabilitation and other school-improvement programmes) that could facilitate the transfer of expertise between schools. Encouragement of other institutions and schools to embrace and build on the CFS experience; stakeholders’ involvement based on their belief in and experience with the CFS concept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of inequities among schools. Redundancy -- selection of schools that have previously benefited from other projects and support Failure to achieve a satisfactory number of schools that have adopted the CFS model

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The following recommendations assume the adoption of Scenario One.

Recommendations (in order of priority)	Who?
1. Identify the resources needed to scale up the Initiative and the dimension of scaling: how many schools can be included in a second phase of implementation? What material resources -- both human and procedural -- can be tapped?	MoE, UNICEF, implementing partners
2. Monitor and support experimental schools in order to identify their expectations, opportunities and difficulties faced. Detailed knowledge of their CFS experience would be particularly valuable in two respects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> it would facilitate transfer of expertise to other schools; it would serve as an ex-ante evaluation, enabling new schools to learn from past experience with the Initiative and make necessary adjustments during implementation. 	MoE, implementing partners
3. Provide ongoing support to the experimental schools, including mentoring of teachers to consolidate their achievements and sustain their commitment to the CFS approach.	MoE, Raional Departments, IES
4. Help develop schools' ability to design and manage projects so they can more easily access funding sources (include topic in teacher training curriculum).	Implementing partners, teacher training providers
5. Integrate ICTs into the teaching and learning process as new CFS come on stream. Based on the experience of the experimental schools, in which students and teachers alike wanted greater access to computers and the Internet, it is clear that, in order to be child-friendly, schools must keep pace with the technological and socio-cultural changes represented by ICT. Needs include: training for teachers in the use of ICTs in teaching and learning; educational software development; equipping schools with proper technology (computers, projectors, Internet connections, software). Methodological guidelines are also needed to ensure a robust, pedagogical approach toward ICTs rather than merely using the technology for PowerPoint presentations, documentation, typing or editing.	MoE, UNICEF, implementing partners
6. Promote greater parental involvement not only in the life of the school but in their children's education more broadly. This will require clarification of what meaningful involvement means, because currently there is no widely shared understanding of what parental involvement should consist of. As became clear during the CFS Initiative, parental involvement should be understood broadly -- not just in relation to school but also in relation to children -- through educational activities at home, support, encouragement, setting standards, creating a healthy family environment, as well as in relation to other parents (forms of association, communication and mutual support). Parental involvement is not just about attending the parents' meetings, celebrations or other extracurricular activities, or even making financial contributions to the school. Parents need to be consulted and empowered to participate in decision-making. For this to occur, however, the framework, form and content of such cooperation need to be developed and regulated.	MoE, UNICEF, implementing partners, headmasters, teachers, parents
7. Establish training programmes for parents in schools , aimed at improving family educational practices -- the at-home "curriculum". Research suggests that parental involvement in children's education at home may have a greater impact on learning achievement than parental participation in school activities ¹⁶ .	School and local communities
8. Promote national and international inter-school partnerships , a need perceived by both groups of schools covered by the evaluation. Students and teachers benefit from communication and cooperation with peers and colleagues from other schools. In this regard, new technologies offer greater opportunities for such interaction, saving time and money (e.g., the eTwinning project of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme: www.etwinning.net).	MoE, Regional Departments, schools and local authorities

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IX.3.2. Scenario Two: Mainstreaming the CFS Initiative

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of a favorable legal framework, which already provides a foundation for CFS implementation in schools. • Updated curriculum and new assessment standards. • The experience gained by the experimental schools that can be shared and built upon. • Revised and updated curriculum for pre-service and in-service training of teachers. • A good partnership between UNICEF and MoE, universities and teacher-training institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sufficient resources to fully and simultaneously implement all components of the CFS Initiative, including the renovation and equipping of schools – an important condition for success as shown by this evaluation. • The difficulty of ensuring that all teachers receive the same training at the same time – an important contribution to the success of the Initiative that quickly leads to a critical mass of prepared educators. • The difficulty of adequately monitoring the entire school network and providing schools with ongoing support. • The perception that CFS is a nationally-imposed, mandatory program as opposed to one chosen by schools based on their own needs and local conditions.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extends the impact of the Initiative to the entire nation; generates far-ranging changes in the educational system. • Educational reform that is based on solutions already tested in a real-world context and evaluated positively in actual schools in Moldova. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runs the risk of becoming “form without substance” (T. Maiorescu), of being perceived as a cliché. The gap between what is said and what is actually done can be huge, and the whole concept could lose its value. • Unanticipated outcomes caused by rapid and across-the-board change. • The risk of “push back”, resistance to change; e.g., teachers feeling they must retrain and assimilate vast changes.

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

The following recommendations assume the adoption of Scenario Two.

Recommendations (in order of priority)	Who?
1. Conduct a thorough review and feasibility study of mainstreaming all components of the CFS Initiative simultaneously (including making material improvements) identifying needed and available human and financial resources	MoE
2. Continue modernizing pre-service and in-service teacher training. In addition to specialized training, teachers need excellent skills for communicating with both students and adults (parents, authorities, the community, partner organizations). Furthermore, teachers need counselling skills, especially since they work with many children whose parents work abroad, or with children with special needs who require more advice and support. Improved training will also require greater balance between the cognitive dimension (specialized training, pedagogical training) and the moral, affective, relational dimension, which can be addressed through workshops and tutorials. The goal of such training is to ensure that all teachers, regardless of the subjects they teach, respect children's rights and know how to create a secure environment based on trust, balance and mutual respect. To this end, teachers need training of a very robust, practical nature. Training programmes should also include a module on the preparation and management of proposals in order to increase schools' fundraising capacity. In addition, training must build skills for integrating ICTs in teaching and learning (see the justification for this in the previous section).	MoE, Raional departments, teacher training providers, NGOs, schools
3. Establish incentives and develop tools to motivate teachers , both in terms of salaries and professional development opportunities. Professional development is a key motivating factor, leading to professional satisfaction and improved performance. Professional development does not mean just training or teaching degrees, however; rather, it comprises all activities aimed at improving skills, from formal courses to peer learning, individual studies, exchange of experiences, communities of practice, and so on. Mobility is very important for professional development; it is needed for encouraging and supporting pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. Mechanisms are also needed to recognize teachers' non-formal and informal learning – a growing concern at the European and global level – even in cases where certificates are not awarded.	MoE, UNICEF, other institutions able to support teachers' professional development, local authorities
4. Continue efforts to improve the physical conditions of schools. The school and its surroundings must be a safe, attractive environment, arousing curiosity and supporting a focus on school activities. Some improvements will require significant funding: heating, lighting, water, sanitation, indoor toilets, and so on. Students can participate in decorating classrooms and improving the school yard, so that they take some ownership in their school.	MoE, MISF
5. Increase school autonomy in financial terms, human resources and curriculum. Autonomy entails responsibility and a greater concern for ensuring the quality of education and its appropriateness for the needs of its beneficiaries. Upgrading the standard curriculum is an important step, but flexibility in its application will enable it to be more adaptable and relevant to the various school situations that will be encountered.	MoE
6. Promote national and international inter-school partnerships , a need perceived by both groups of schools covered by the evaluation. Students and teachers benefit from communication and cooperation with peers and colleagues from other schools. In this regard, new technologies offer greater opportunities for such interaction, saving time and money (e.g., the eTwinning project of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme: www.etwinning.net).	MoE, Raional departments, schools, local authorities
7. Review and clarify the role and responsibilities of parents in relation to the school: school/teacher expectations of parents; opportunities for meaningful parental involvement; best international practices development of a proper legal framework and educational materials on the basis of a common understanding of parental involvement, along with specific suggestions to support communication and real collaboration between school and family.	MoE, UNICEF, implementing partners

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

8. Analyse the situation of children whose parents work abroad, with a view to providing them with the kinds of support they need.	MoE, MLSPF, UNICEF,
9. Develop a framework and related mechanisms for the education of current and future parents: educational programmes, materials, school-based curriculum; elective subjects for preparing youth for their family life and being parents.	MoE, UNICEF, NGOs, schools and local communities
10. Develop national social and economic policies that enable and support the mainstreaming of the CFS model. The school is strongly influenced by the society in which it operates, and influences the society in turn. Therefore, the principles promoted by the Child-Friendly School Initiative need to be supported by appropriate policies in both the social and economic spheres. Here, the goal is: <i>a friendly school in a friendly society,</i>	The Government of the Republic of Moldova and its partners (World Bank, UNDP)

In conclusion, there are more reasons to mainstream the Initiative than to simply scale it up. The Child-Friendly School model has shown itself to be viable and very relevant to education in the Republic of Moldova, as suggested by the experts who were interviewed and by the data that was collected from the schools covered by the evaluation. **Large-scale implementation will require extensive preparation and the allocation of appropriate resources.** Important steps have already been taken by updating the policies and curriculum of basic education; by supporting the modernization of pre-service and in-service teacher training and by introducing a module on child-centredness into the core curriculum.

In addition, the Ministry of Education has established a favourable framework for inclusiveness in education and its adaptation to the needs of children, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups and children with special needs. These achievements have laid the foundation for all schools to become child-friendly. Nevertheless, considerable efforts are still needed. Looking forward, priority actions include renovating school buildings to create physically safe, comfortable, welcoming environments; stepping up teacher training and, above all, professional development, and integrating CFS principles into the management and teaching practices of all schools.

ANNEX 1. Evaluation Methodology

“Data sources” representing all categories of evaluation audience have been identified and several methods and techniques of data collection have been used in order to obtain complete and accurate information. The evaluation covered both the schools supported in implementing the CFS model (called experimental schools) and a control group of schools selected compliant with standards of a quasi-experimental approach (corresponding schools, as similar as possible to the ones participating in the initiative, but not having benefited from similar projects over 2007-2011).

The objective of investigating the two groups of schools was to compare the changes emerging at the experimental schools with their possible evolution in the absence of the Initiative, equivalent to the corresponding standing of the control group schools. Data were collected from as many sources as possible and through various methods: a) questionnaire (320 questionnaires for students and 116 questionnaires for teachers were collected at the 8 schools participating in the evaluation), b) separate focus groups with students, parents and teachers (altogether 274 participants), c) semi-structured interviews and consultations with representatives of education authorities, institutions of pre-service

and in-service training of teachers, local authorities, institutions operating in the area of education and school principals (altogether 20 people), d) observation of teaching activities (24 observations in grades 6-9, distributed equitably between the two categories of schools), e) analysis of documents – progress reports, initial evaluation of the education system’s readiness for CFS, UNICEF activity planning papers and reports, legislative documents, educational policies, curriculum documents, studies and surveys, etc.

The evaluation limits derive primarily from the difficulty of selecting schools for comparison, given that a series of national-level activities to promote the principles of Child-Friendly school have been implemented over the recent years. Another category of limits arises from the way of filling out the questionnaires by the students (younger students or the ones with poorer achievements needed more time for filling out the questionnaire and sometimes support from operators) or the teachers offering subjective responses, due to the so-called “prestige effect”. Specific techniques have been used in order to reduce the influence of those factors (control items, collection of data from different sources and by different methods).

ANNEX 2. List of Reviewed Documents

Document name	Author(s), publisher, place and date of publication	Language(s)
Baseline Study on Basic Education in the Republic of Moldova From the Perspective of Child-Friendly Schools	Barbarosie, A., et al., Institute for Public Policy, Chisinau, 2008	English Romanian
Country Analysis – UN Moldova	UNICEF Moldova, May 2011	English
Two Year Rolling Work Plan (RWP) for Equitable Access to Quality Services in the Republic of Moldova	Government of Moldova and UNICEF	English Romanian
Understanding QBE/CFS Standards in the CEE/CIS Region (Field visit Country Report, Moldova)	Clair, Nancy and Nils Kauffman, June 2010	English
Making Schools Inclusive and Child-Friendly (Project proposal, 2008-2011, Republic of Moldova)	UNICEF, 2008	English
Education Law 547 dated 21 July 1995, with its further amendments	Parliament of Moldova	Romanian
The new Education Law (draft)	Working document	Romanian
The Concept on Training the Pre-university Education Personnel	Collegial Council of the Ministry of Education of Moldova	Romanian
Government Decision on the Approval of the 2011-2020 Programme for Developing Inclusive Education in Moldova	Government of Moldova, June 2011	Romanian
Competency Standards – a Tool for Education Policy Implementation	Ministry of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, UNICEF Moldova, Chisinau, 2010	Romanian
The Evaluation of the School Curriculum –Perspective on Modernization	Ministry of Education, Academy of Science of Moldova, Institute of Education Sciences, Chisinau, 2009	Romanian
School Curriculum, grades 1-4 and School Curriculum, grades 5-9	Ministry of Education of Moldova, Chisinau, 2010	Romanian
Making Schools Inclusive and Child-Friendly - Republic of Moldova (Progress and Utilization Report by UNICEF Moldova to Swiss Committee for UNICEF)	UNICEF, March 2010	English
Child-Friendly School (manual)	UNICEF, March, 2009	English
Education and Human Development: Actual and Future Challenges (Policy paper)	Otter, Thomas, Arcadie Barbarosie, Anatol Gremalschi, UNDP Moldova, Chisinau, 2010	English
Education in Moldova (Statistical publication, 2010/2011)	National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova, Chisinau, 2011	Romanian English
Child-Friendly Schools in Moldova: Making schools a better place for children (Progress Report by UNICEF Moldova to IKEA – consolidated funds from National Committees)	UNICEF Report, March 2010 and March 2011	English
UNDAF M&E Matrix 2010	UNDAF, 2010	English
External Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools Project (2002-2007) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Final report)	Pfaffe, Joachim Friedrich, and A.E.M. (Ans) Smulders, PROMAN S.A., Bettembourg, December 2008	English
The Second Millennium Development Goals Report, Republic of Moldova	Government of Moldova with the support of the UN Agencies in Moldova, September 2010	English
Country Programme (2007-2011) (Mid-Term Review)	Government of Moldova and UNICEF	English
Students' knowledge about child's rights	UNICEF, 2010	Romanian
Teacher Quality and Teacher Work Conditions in the Republic of Moldova	Lefter, Liudmila, et.al., UNICEF, IES, IDIS "Viitorul", Columbia University – Teachers College	English

ANNEX 3: Schedule of meetings with experts

Timeframe: 7-16 November 2011

Date	Activity	Experts
7 November 2011	Meeting with the representatives of the MoE	Ms. Eugenia Parlicov, MoE Ms. Mariana Goras, MoE
8 November 2011	Meeting with the representatives of the Psychology and Educational Sciences Faculty, State University of Moldova	Dr. Vladimir Gutu, Dean
	Meeting with the representatives of the Institute of Education Sciences	Dr. Nicolae Bucun, Deputy Director
	Meeting with the representatives of the Institute for Public Policy	Dr. Anatol Gremalschi
	Meeting with the representatives of the Step-by-Step Education Programme	Ms. Cornelia Cincilei Ms. Liliana Simcov
8 and 17 November 2011	Meeting with the representatives of UNICEF Moldova	Ms. Sandie Blanchet Ms. Liudmila Lefter Ms. Elena Laur

ANNEX 4: Tools for data collection

4.1. Questionnaire for teachers

Questionnaire for the teachers in the experimental schools

Dear colleagues,

This questionnaire was developed to collect information on how the Child-Friendly School Initiative has been implemented: the difficulties faced, the changes that have happened and how long those changes took. It is also important to know your opinion on whether the Initiative was relevant to your school and, more broadly, if you think it would be relevant for all schools nationwide.

For this purpose, we would like to ask you to support us by filling out the questionnaire below. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer the questions honestly, based on your own opinions. Your answers will be kept confidential and will be used only to evaluate the Child-Friendly School Initiative.

To fill in the questionnaire, circle the answer that most closely corresponds to your opinion or, where indicated, fill in your answer on the dotted lines. If none of the choices listed are right for you, you can circle "other/something else" and fill in your own answer.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

1. Please circle the code for the school where you teach:

S1. Theoretical Lyceum from Molesti	S3. Gymnasium from Sofrincani
S2. Theoretical Lyceum from Crocmaz	S4. Gymnasium from Valcinet

2. Your gender: 1. Female 2. Male

3. Teaching degree: 1. Senior degree 2. 1st Degree 3. 2nd Degree 4. No teaching degree

4. Employment Status: 1. Full-time 2. Part-time

5. Education level at which you teach: 1) Primary 2) Gymnasium 3) Lyceum

11. For each statement, please, circle the answer closest to your opinion:

	To a very great extent	To a great extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent	DK/ Cannot assess
1. Teachers in our school involve students in setting the learning objectives and working methods.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My colleagues are well aware of the problems of each student and his or her unique learning needs.	1	2	3	4	5
3. In our school, teachers are prepared to integrate children with learning difficulties or with disabilities into the class.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers are trained to work with students belonging to minority ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My colleagues communicate with children's parents and involve them a lot in their children's school life.	1	2	3	4	5
6. We teach students to plan their learning and to consider the way in which they learn.	1	2	3	4	5
7. In our school, students evaluate their own learning achievements, and are encouraged to do self-assessments.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Girls and boys work in groups and learn from each other in an environment based on respect and trust.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Students are advised on what sources of information to use.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Teachers develop learning activities to show students that any gender- or learning achievement-related bias is not justified by giving examples of both female and male mathematicians, novelists, athletes, and so on.,	1	2	3	4	5
11. Teachers design learning activities designed to give their students the understanding that ethnic or other types of bias should not be generalized (for example, not all Roma children know how to sing or dance; children with physical disabilities compensate by other abilities).	1	2	3	4	5
12. Learning often takes place outside the classroom, when the teacher is not present.	1	2	3	4	5
13. When I design lessons, my main concern is the curriculum and what needs to be taught.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Students are taught how to learn and to take responsibility for learning.	1	2	3	4	5
15. When designing lessons, teachers first consider their students' interests and experience.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Teachers have the ability to admit their mistakes, to solve problems and to understand and address complex situations related to the class or school.	1	2	3	4	5
17. It is important for students to develop life skills that are transferable, such as teamwork, in addition to their regular course work.	1	2	3	4	5
18. When they do research, students choose their sources and how to present the information or results on their own.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Teachers always make a connection between what is learned at school and daily life, emphasizing the practical aspects of what is being learned.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Teachers use the computer and other ICT in teaching and learning activities.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Do you believe that child-centredness and the entire Child-friendly School Initiative has had a positive impact on:

	To a very great extent	To a great extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent	DK/ Cannot assess
1. Student participation in classes and their involvement in activities and in the exchange of ideas	1	2	3	4	5
2. Problem-solving skills	1	2	3	4	5
3. Learning outcomes	1	2	3	4	5
4. Increased tolerance	1	2	3	4	5
5. Increased students' self-confidence and improved self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers' attitudes towards students, and better student involvement in learning	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teachers' skill to objectively assess students' performance	1	2	3	4	5
8. The relationships between the school and community	1	2	3	4	5
9. Parents' involvement in school life and in assuming responsibility for their children's education	1	2	3	4	5

13. How often do parents take part in the following school activities?

	Often	Seldom	Not at all	Such activities were not organized
1. Various events (festivals, tours, theatre performances)	1	2	3	4
2. Fundraising (the class fund, the school fund, the repairs fund, sponsorships)	1	2	3	4
3. Courses for parents organized by the school, meetings with professionals in various fields (physicians, speech therapists, psychologists, counselors)	1	2	3	4
4. Sessions on organizational topics	1	2	3	4
5. Individual or small group counseling sessions (discussions with the school psychologist or counselor)	1	2	3	4
6. Assistance during classes; participation in educational activities	1	2	3	4
7. School maintenance/repair (classroom/school renovation, improving the classroom or school yard, furniture repair).	1	2	3	4
8. Decisions on school life, the curriculum, the evaluation and management of resources	1	2	3	4
9. Other types of activities, Give examples:				

14. To what extent do your students or their parents face the following difficulties?

	To a great extent	On average	To a small extent	Not at all	DK
1. Financial difficulties (purchase of school supplies, payment of fees, and participation in the common fund)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Lack of time for their children's education	1	2	3	4	5
3. Large number of children in the family	1	2	3	4	5
4. Family conflicts; violence; alcoholism	1	2	3	4	5
5. Poor housing conditions, inadequate for child care and education	1	2	3	4	5
6. Lack of knowledge about raising and educating children	1	2	3	4	5
7. Long distance to school	1	2	3	4	5
8. Other difficulties, namely:					

15. How do you assess the involvement of most parents in school life?

1. Very good 2. Good 3. Satisfactory 4. Unsatisfactory

16. In your experience, which of the following difficulties or obstacles most affect your collaboration with parents? (Please circle the three most significant ones.)

	To a very great extent	To a great extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent	DK/ Cannot assess
1. The overloaded school programme and the administrative or bureaucratic activities of the teachers that allow for only sporadic collaborative relationships with parents	1	2	3	4	5
2. Lack of adequate room for activities with parents	1	2	3	4	5
3. Major discrepancies/differences in the opinions of parents and teachers on child education	1	2	3	4	5
4. Low interest of parents in cooperation and child education	1	2	3	4	5
5. Parents are overloaded with work and family life (parents lack time, parents go abroad for work)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Lack of recognition of the teachers' work	1	2	3	4	5
7. The minor role parents can have in anything related to the school	1	2	3	4	5

17. In your opinion, should the Child-friendly School Initiative be extended to include more schools nationwide?

- 1) Yes, I think the results this Initiative could have would justify the efforts and costs;
- 2) Yes, even though we don't have any assurance that the results would be worth the efforts made and resources spent;
- 3) No, the possible outcomes or changes it would bring would be too small for the effort and resources needed;
- 4) No, it is not an appropriate model for our schools.
- 5) Don't know.

18. What do you think could impede the expansion of the Child-Friendly School model to other schools?

	To a great extent	On average	To a small extent	Not at all	DK/ Cannot assess
1. Lack of material conditions at school	1	2	3	4	5
2. Lack of financial resources	1	2	3	4	5
3. Lack of managerial support	1	2	3	4	5
4. Low teachers' motivation	1	2	3	4	5
5. Low students' motivation to learn	1	2	3	4	5
6. Low involvement of parents and local community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Incoherence of educational policies	1	2	3	4	5
8. Lack of support from the district and state educational authorities	1	2	3	4	5
9. Specific teacher training need.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Other factors, such as:.....					

19. Which of the following factors might affect your or your colleagues' motivation and involvement to make the school in which you're working be child-friendly?

	Positive impact	No impact	Negative impact	DK/ Cannot assess
1. Current social status of the profession	1	2	3	4
2. Salary level	1	2	3	4
3. Administrative tasks that teachers have	1	2	3	4
4. Requirements for career advancement (additional studies, mandatory professional credits within a certain time frame, teaching degrees)	1	2	3	4
5. Additional activities and the need for documentary evidence for the personnel file	1	2	3	4
6. Job security	1	2	3	4
7. Contribution to shaping the students' personalities	1	2	3	4
8. Other factors, such as:	1	2	3	4

20. Do you think that, as a result of the Child-Friendly School Initiative in your school:

	To a great extent	On average	To a small extent	Not at all	DK/ Cannot assess
1. Students are more open and sympathetic to their colleagues with disabilities or who are from disadvantaged groups	1	2	3	4	5
2. The school has developed ways to integrate and support children with special needs, children from disadvantaged backgrounds or who are at risk	1	2	3	4	5
3. Teachers are more prepared to address issues from a student perspective	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers respect the students' rights and are sensitive to their needs and interests, including of those from vulnerable groups	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teachers are able to integrate their own priorities into a common issues and values framework, and to act based partly on students' decisions	1	2	3	4	5
6. Efforts to include students from vulnerable groups are useless, since they separate themselves from the other students outside of the school	1	2	3	4	5
7. Cases of school violence have decreased	1	2	3	4	5
8. Teachers encourage leadership and independent learning in their students	1	2	3	4	5
9. Parents participate more in school life and in the education of their children	1	2	3	4	5
10. Student academic achievement has improved	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you very much for your support!

The Evaluation Team

4.2. Questionnaire for students

Questionnaire for students

This questionnaire is being given to you because we want to know how well you understand and respect children's rights, how child-friendly you believe your school has become, and what other changes you would like to see in your school.

Whatever you put on the questionnaire is confidential, so please do not write your name on it or sign it. Your answers will not be disclosed to anyone; they will be used only to evaluate how successful, in your opinion, the Child-friendly School Initiative has been in your school. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions below. Please answer them honestly, based on your own opinion.

To fill in the questionnaire, circle the answer that most closely corresponds to your opinion or, where indicated, fill in your answer on the dotted lines. If none of the choices listed are right for you, you can circle "other/something else" and fill it in your own answer.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

1. Please circle the code for your school:

S1. Theoretical Lyceum from Molesti

S2. Theoretical Lyceum from Crocmaz

S3. Gymnasium from Sofrincani

S4. Gymnasium from Valcinet

S5. Theoretical Lyceum from Zimbreni

S6. Theoretical Lyceum from Caplani

S7. Gymnasium from Gaspar

S8. Gymnasium from Unguri

2. Grade:.....

3. Date of birth

4. Gender:

1. Female

2. Male

5. Where have you found out most about children's rights? (Circle up to three sources that you consider most important from the list below):

1. Civic education or other classes that included children's rights-related topics

2. Educational activities organized by the head teacher

3. Discussions with teachers during extracurricular activities

4. Peers or parents

9. Other sources. Please specify:

5. Mass media (television, radio, newspapers, magazines)

6. Internet

7. Books and magazines for students

8. Don't know much about child's rights

6. Is there a Student Council or other student organization in your school?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Don't know

7. If so, how do you rate its activities?

1. Useful for most students in school; our problems are discussed and supported by the council

2. They don't really matter; what they do doesn't affect students one way or the other

8. When discussing issues or classroom organization, decisions are generally: (Circle the one answer that shows the most commonly met situation):

1. Made by the teachers or the head teacher

2. Discussed and agreed upon jointly

3. Suggested by students and supported by the teachers/ head teacher

9. Teachers often have discussions with us and take our views into account on:

	Often	Seldom	Never	Don't know
1. Classroom organization and daily class issues	1	2	3	4
2. Organizing extracurricular activities (trips, visits, sports)	1	2	3	4
3. Topics of head teacher's lessons	1	2	3	4
4. Deciding on additional subjects to study	1	2	3	4
5. Resolving conflicts between the students	1	2	3	4
6. Analysis of cases in which students are treated unfairly	1	2	3	4
7. Homework amount	1	2	3	4
8. How grades are given	1	2	3	4
9. Resolving students' complaints about teachers' behaviour	1	2	3	4
10. Other situations. Please specify:.....				

10. How often did you notice the following in your school?

	Often	Seldom	Never	Don't know
1. Students who do well in school always get good marks, even when they are less prepared for certain lessons than other students	1	2	3	4
2. Students from wealthier families get higher marks more easily than do other students	1	2	3	4
3. Students from families of intellectuals are liked by teachers more than other students	1	2	3	4
4. Some students are discriminated against because of their ethnicity	1	2	3	4
5. Some students are discriminated against because of their religion	1	2	3	4
6. Some students are discriminated against because of their disabilities	1	2	3	4
6. Teachers treat all students equally	1	2	3	4

11. I believe that:

	To a very great extent	To a great extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent	Don't know
1. In my school, teachers collaborate with students to establish ways of working during class and/or to decide on some of the topics to study	1	2	3	4	5
2. Teachers know the problems of each student and how she or he learns best	1	2	3	4	5
3. In our school, teachers have no problem working with students who have learning difficulties or disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers work easily and well with students belonging to minority ethnic groups	1	2	3	4	5
5. Teachers talk with our parents and involve them to a great extent in school life	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers show us how to plan out our class assignments, and to consider our way of learning	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teachers are very focused on the lessons they choose and don't take into consideration other topics that would be of greater interest to students	1	2	3	4	5

	To a very great extent	To a great extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent	Don't know
8. In our school, students are engaged in the evaluation of their achievements and are encouraged to do self-assessments	1	2	3	4	5
9. Girls and boys work together in groups and learn from each other in an environment based on respect and trust	1	2	3	4	5
10. Teachers recommend what sources of information we can use to do our work	1	2	3	4	5
11. Teachers are open and communicate with students on various topics	1	2	3	4	5
12. We've learned at school that students have equal rights regardless of ethnicity, religion or gender, and can succeed in any field	1	2	3	4	5
13. At school, we learn 'how to learn'	1	2	3	4	5
14. In addition to our regular classes, it's important for students to develop life skills such as teamwork and time management	1	2	3	4	5
15. When we do research, we choose the sources and how to present the information or results on our own	1	2	3	4	5
16. When teaching, teachers always make a connection between what we learn and our daily lives, showing us how to apply what we've learned	1	2	3	4	5
17. The school is equally open to all children, and those who are facing difficulties are supported	1	2	3	4	5
18. During the lessons, the teachers use computers and information and communication technology (the Internet, PowerPoint presentations, simulation models).	1	2	3	4	5

12. What would you most like to improve in your school or classroom? (Circle up to three areas that you consider most important.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. School conditions (running water, heat) | 6. The way some students treat other students (disrespect, intolerance, lack of understanding) |
| 2. How teachers communicate and how they treat students | 7. How students with disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds are discriminated against and not supported |
| 3. How teachers teach | 8. Parents' participation in school life |
| 4. Subjects that are not very interesting | 9. Recognition of the importance of the school by the community |
| 5. The lack of modern facilities, resources and technology (need computers, laboratory equipment, a gymnasium, and so on) | 10. Other areas. (You may list more than one):.....
..... |

13. What do you like most about your school?

.....

Thank you very much for your support!

4.3. Facilitators' guides for focus groups

GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUPS WITH STUDENTS

Note: The focus groups are to be conducted with gymnasium students, and the number of students in each group discussion should be between six and twelve.

Introduction: I'm wondering how I might describe your school in a few words. Would you help me?

1. How would you describe your school in a few words to a new person? What do you like most about your school? What do you **not** like?
2. What are your reasons to come to school? Are there children in your locality who do not come to school? Why not?
3. What could be done so that all students would want to come to school?
4. Lately there has been talk about child-friendly schools. What do you think those schools are like? Do you think your school is child-friendly? If so, in what ways? If not, what could be changed to make it more so?
5. How do teachers here behave with students in general: Are they warm? Close? Distant? To what extent are your teachers interested in your opinions? Do they take your views into account when deciding on something? Can you give me some examples?
6. Are the lessons the same as you had two years ago? If some things have changed, what are they? Please give examples.
7. What difficulties do your peers with disabilities or who come from poor or incomplete families or are in other very difficult situations have with the teachers? What difficulties do they have with other students?
8. Are your parents interested in what you do at school? What do they ask you most often about concerning school? What do they think of your teachers? How often do your parents participate in school activities? (Have them give examples.) If they are not interested or do not participate, what do you think is the reason?

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Experimental schools

1. How would you describe the Child-Friendly School in a few words?
2. How has this approach helped the students in your school to learn better? What are other advantages of this approach for the students? Has student attendance and enrollment improved?
3. Some people say it is too difficult to make schools child-friendly, that it takes lots of effort and resources. What do you think?
4. How did you implement the principles of a child-friendly school? Can you give an example to show how you acted as a teacher?
5. A child-friendly school requires good participation on the part of parents and local public officials. How did you manage to involve them, and in what activities? What difficulties did you face?
6. What advantages do you think child-centred education has; what added value does it bring to students? Does this approach have disadvantages, too? If so, what are they?
7. What difficulties do you have in integrating children with disabilities or those from vulnerable backgrounds (e.g., poor children, children from ethnic or linguistic minorities, children from incomplete families or whose parents are working abroad)? What steps have been taken at the school and at the local public administration level to help you work better with these children? What has been done to support these students?
8. How has the training you've received over the past two years helped you?
9. Would you recommend that other schools become child-friendly? If so, why? What would you say to convince them?
10. Do you think it would be desirable for all schools to become child-friendly? If so, do you think it would be possible? What would be needed for it to happen?
11. What would you like to change in your school? What should it look like five years from now?

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Control schools

1. Have you heard about the Child-Friendly School model? How would you describe it in a few words?

If they ARE familiar with the CFS model:	If they are NOT familiar with the CFS model:
2. Do you think that this model would be useful in and relevant to your school? Would it help student attendance? Learn better? What other advantages to this approach would there be for students?	2. What could be done to improve school attendance and to enrol all children in your community in school?
3. Some people say it's too difficult to make a school child-friendly, that it takes lots of effort and resources. What do you think?	3. What is needed at your school in order for students to learn better?

4. How satisfied are you with the involvement of parents/community in school life? How and in what types of activities or decisions do they get involved? If they do not, what do you think the reasons are? What strategies have you adopted to overcome these difficulties?
5. What advantages do you think child-centred education has; what added value does it bring to students? Does this approach have disadvantages, too? If so, what are they? Do you think you need training in order to integrate the principles and methods of child-centredness into your classroom?
6. What difficulties do you have in including children with disabilities or those from vulnerable backgrounds (e.g., poor children, children from ethnic or linguistic minorities, children from incomplete families or whose parents are working abroad)? What steps have been taken at the school and at the local public administration level to help you work better with these children? What has been done to support these students?
7. What would you like to change in your school? What should it look like five years from now?

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Note: These focus groups are to be conducted with parents of students in basic education. The number of participants in each group discussion should be between six and ten.

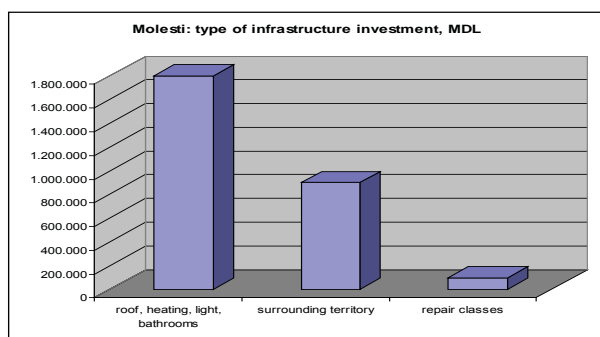
1. How would you describe your child's school, in a few words, to a stranger? If you were asked by an acquaintance of yours whether to enrol his or her child in this school, what would you say? What's good about it? What isn't?
2. Is your child eager to come to school? If so, why? If not, why not? How do you motivate him/her to learn? What do you ask him/her most often about school?
3. What do you think a child-friendly school is? Do you find this school child-friendly? If so, why? If not, how should it change?
4. Have you noticed any changes in the way your child learns, or in the way in which lessons have been taught over the past year? What changes have you noticed?
5. How do teachers behave with the students in general: Are they warm? Close? Distant? To what extent are the teachers interested in your opinions? Do they take your opinions into account when they make decisions? Do you remember a certain situation as an example?
6. What issues do you think parents and children from poor families or from those in difficult family situations face in terms of school attendance? What issues do you think they have in their relationships with the teachers, and with other students? Are they helped in any way? If so, who helps them?
7. How often do you take part in school activities? Give examples. If you have not participated, what are the reasons? How would you like to participate more in the school life; in what activities or in what decisions would you like to be consulted?

ANNEX 5: Infrastructure investments in each of the schools

Molesti

Investments in the infrastructure included repairs of the roof, upgrading of the heating system, the electrical system and the lavatories, façade and school courtyard as well as the classrooms. The major contributors were UNICEF, City Hall and the parents' association. The estimated total investment was 2,8 mln MDL.

Fig. 30. Molesti School: types of infrastructure investment, MDL

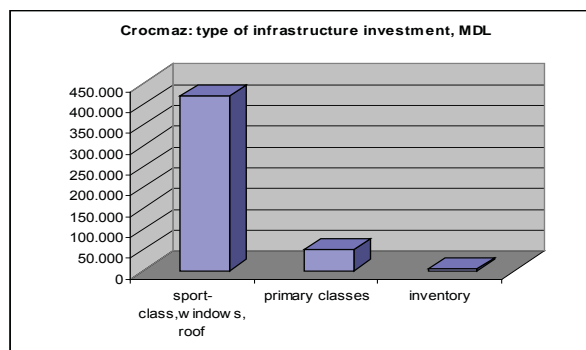


Investment in the Curriculum included the cost of the training on child rights and participation of school community in the school self- assessment and training of all the teachers in child centered education. The estimate is about 90 000 MDL. The school chose 30 teachers, 30 pupils and 30 parents to participate in the school self- assessment and all the teachers of the school were trained in child centered education in several training sessions. Overall, there have been 90 direct beneficiaries of the project activities.

Crocma

Infrastructure investment included gym, windows and roof improvements as well as repairs to primary school classrooms. The major contributors were UNICEF, City Hall and the parents' association. The estimated total investment was 0,48 mln MDL.

Fig. 31. Crocmaz School: types of infrastructure investment, MDL

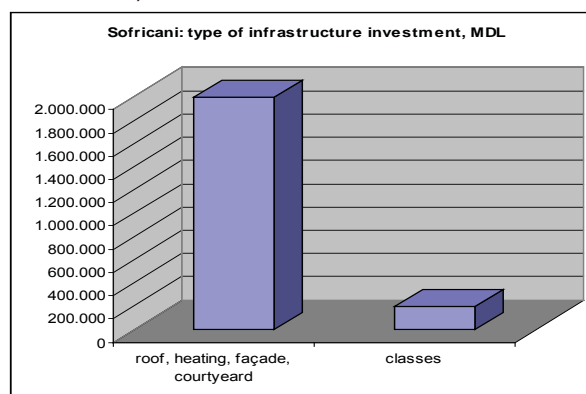


Investment in the Curriculum included the cost of the training on child rights and participation of school community in the school self- assessment and training of all the teachers in child centered education. The investment came to about 95 000 MDL. The school chose 33 teachers, 33 pupils and 33 parents to participate in the school self- assessment and all the teachers were trained in child centred education. Overall, there were 99 direct beneficiaries of the project activities.

Sofrincani

Infrastructure investment included repairs to the roof, upgrading of the heating system, the electrical system and the lavatories, façade and school courtyard as well as the classrooms. The major contributors were UNICEF, City Hall and parents. The estimated total investment was 2.2 mln MDL.

Fig. 32. Sofrincani School: types of infrastructure investment, MDL



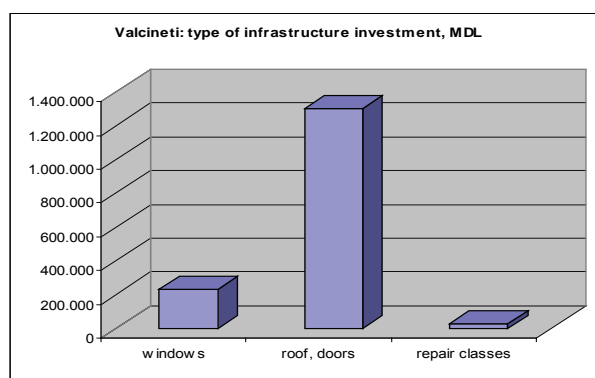
Investment in the Curriculum included the cost of the training on child rights and participation of school community in the school self- assessment

and training of all the teachers in child centered education. The estimate is about 90 000 MDL. The project chose 30 teachers, 30 pupils and 30 parents to participate in the school self-assessment and all the teachers of the school were trained in child centered education in several training sessions. Overall, there were 90 direct beneficiaries of the project activities.

Valcinet

Infrastructure investment included repair of the windows, roof, doors and classrooms. The major contributors were UNICEF, City Hall and the parents' association. The estimated total investment was 1,58 mln MDL.

Fig. 34. Valcinet School: types of infrastructure investment, MDL

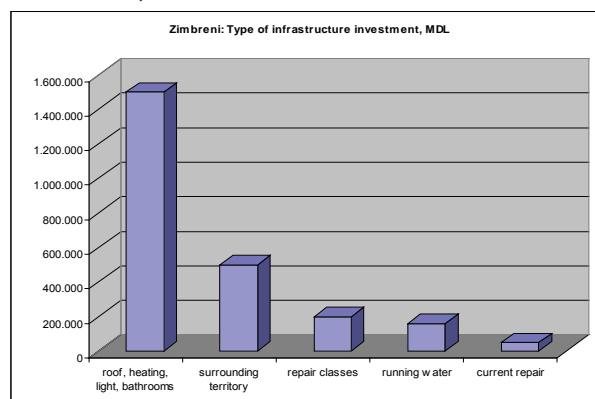


Investment in the Curriculum included the cost of the training on child rights and participation of school community in the school self-assessment and training of all the teachers in child centered education. The estimated investment was about 90 000 MDL. The project chose 30 teachers, 27 pupils and 18 parents to participate in the school self-assessment and all the teachers of the school were trained in child centered education in several training sessions. Overall, there were 75 direct beneficiaries of the project activities.

Zimbreni

Infrastructure investment included repairs to the roof, heating system, façade and school courtyard as well as classrooms. The major contributors were FISM, City Hall and parents. The estimated total investment was 2.2 mln MDL. There were no investments in teachers' or school community training.

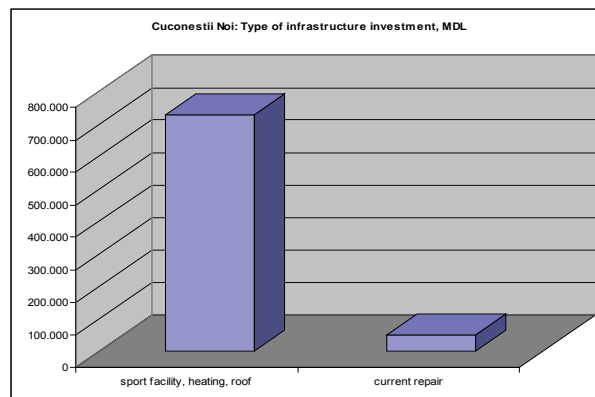
Fig. 33. Zimbreni School: types of infrastructure investment, MDL



Cuconestii Noi

Infrastructure investment included improvements to a sports facility, heating system and school classrooms. The major contributors were FISM, Government, City Hall and parents. The estimated total investment was 1 mln MDL. There were no investments in teachers' or school community training.

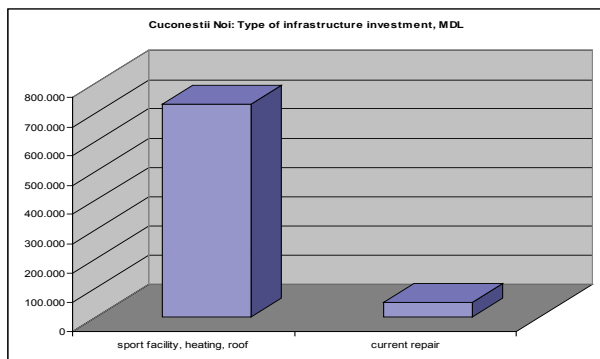
Fig.35. Cuconestii Noi School: types of infrastructure investment, MDL



Caplani

Infrastructure investment included improvements to a sports facility, heating system, roof as well as classrooms. Major contributors were FISM, IREX, City Hall and parents. The estimated total investment was 1 mln MDL. There were no investments in teachers' or school community training.

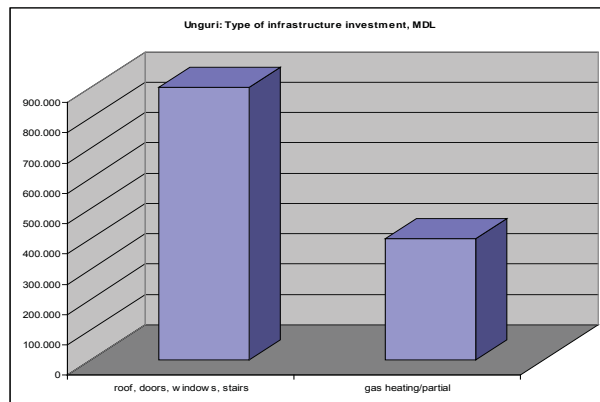
Fig.36. Caplani School: types of infrastructure investment, MDL



Unguri

Infrastructure investment included improvements to the roof, heating system, windows, sport facility and classrooms. The major contributors were FISM, City Hall and parents. The estimated total investment was 1.2 mln MDL. There were no investments in teachers' or school community training.

Fig.37. Unguri School: types of infrastructure investment, MDL



ANNEX 6: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools Initiative (2007-2012) in the Republic of Moldova (CEE/CIS Region)

BACKGROUND

The Child-Friendly School Initiative is part of the Equitable Access to Quality Services Programme of the Republic of Moldova Common Country Programme for 2007-2012. It started in 2007 with the aim of promoting appropriate policies and standards for inclusive and quality basic education to prepare pupils to acquire skills relevant to global labour markets.

The Initiative was designed based on the global CFS concept and findings of the Baseline Study on Basic Education from the Perspective of the CFS to promote the CFS framework as a nation-wide initiative that would integrate a range of reforms in the basic education sector, acting as an entry point for addressing school level and systemic issues and for shaping the policy environment to make it more open to CFS principles and frameworks.

CFS initiatives target both the central and local levels equally. Mainstreaming the principles of CFS is the goal, one that guides policy development and programming. This includes training, ensuring the improvement of system documents based on the principles of CFS, improving the quality of individual schools and communities through self-assessment, school development planning and management, and mobilizing the community to support education and children's rights.

Advances already made to mainstream the principles of CFS are:

- The New Code of Education, that has specific provisions for inclusion,

child-centredness and democratic participation

- The first-ever concept/programme on Inclusive Education
- The curriculum for primary and secondary schools, revised to ensure competency development and child-centredness. Teachers, school administrations, and Raion departments of education are now trained to apply the new school curriculum.
- QBE/CFS standards that ensure the quality of education throughout the process
- Modules on child-centred education for pre-service and in-service training of teachers

At the local level, CFS models were created to estimate costs, set new standards and requirements for educational services, and to increase the desire of communities to have a better quality of education in their schools. The CFS models promote CFS principles through:

- Awareness-raising and education on children's rights in the schools
- school assessments with the participation of children, teachers, parents and other school community members
- on-site in-service training of all the teachers of the respective schools and all the teachers of Leova Raion on child-centred methodology

The CFS models in five communities now serve as sites for field visits of other schools.

PURPOSE AND USE OF THE EVALUATION

1. To assess potential modalities and strategies for further mainstreaming the three main principles of the CFS framework - inclusiveness, child-centredness and stakeholder participation – in order to document and disseminate best practices within the Initiative and so contribute meaningfully to Education Sector Reform. This specifically necessitates an assessment of the sustainability, degree of ownership by concerned governments, and actual possibilities existing for best practices to be mainstreamed into the educational policies.

2. To make recommendations regarding the future of the CFS Initiative while considering two opposing scenarios: (1) The Initiative and principles of CFS can be further mainstreamed into the educational system within a reasonable timeframe, at a cost that is affordable to the Ministry of Education and that takes into consideration the major structural reforms to the system (2) The Initiative and principles of CFS cannot be further mainstreamed into the educational system within a reasonable timeframe, as the cost is not affordable to the Ministry of Education. Therefore, the Initiative should be phased out.

The main users of this evaluation report are the affected government institutions (Ministry of Education, State Chancellery, Raion Departments of Education, Youth and Sports, pedagogical faculties and institutions), implementing partners (State University of Moldova and Step by Step Educational Programme, pedagogical faculties, Institute of Educational Sciences), UNICEF Country Office in Moldova and other stakeholders. The findings and recommendations of this evaluation of the CFS Initiative will be used for planning the new programme cycle of the UNICEF Country Office in Moldova for the years 2013 – 2017.

SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The main objective of the evaluation will be to measure the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the intervention. The

Initiative will be evaluated in relation to its external environment, particularly in relation to government plans with similar approaches and programme interventions tested by other partners.

The scope and focus of the evaluation takes into consideration the following criteria and questions:

Relevance

- the relevance of the CFS in Moldova with regards to four criteria: availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability of education?
- What is the value of the CFS Initiative in relation to primary stakeholders' needs, national priorities, national and international partners' policies and global concerns such as human rights - in particular, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Concluding Recommendations of the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child made to the Republic of Moldova?
- What is the relevance of the CFS Initiative and its contribution to the Education Reform in the Republic of Moldova?
- What is the contribution of the CFS Initiative to the Education Reform for MoE, Pedagogical Institutes, and other stakeholders such as international development organizations?
- For stakeholders, what is the relevance of the CFS in relation to their involvement in the planning and design of the Initiative, based on their needs and priorities?
- How relevant is the training of teachers for pedagogical faculties and schools?

Effectiveness

At the school level, in terms of outcomes for pupils

- To what extent did the CFS Initiative result in: Greater class participation? More freedom to engage in dialogue and opinion exchange? Improved problem-solving skills? Improved learning achievements? Improved capacity for relationship-building and increased tolerance for differences? Improved self-esteem and improved participation of pupils in their own learning process?

At the school level, in terms of

outcomes for teachers

- To what extent did the CFS initiative result in: Increased satisfaction and ease of teachers with interactive and participatory teaching methods? Increased effectiveness in keeping pupils, both boys and girls, engaged in the learning process and so improving academic achievement? Improved capacity to test and evaluate pupils' learning achievements through unbiased assessment methods?

At the community level, in terms of outcomes for communities and parents

- To what extent did the CFS Initiative result in: Improved school and community relations? Greater involvement from parents in school governance and management?

Efficiency

- How do the actual costs of the CFS Initiative compare to those similar initiatives (Ministry of Education staff-capacity building, teacher and school principals' training, curriculum development or revision)? How do the actual costs of the CFS Initiative fit within the government budget plans over the next three years – MTBF?
- What would the costs be for scaling up the Initiative versus mainstreaming it? What is the most cost-effective way to extend the CFS initiative to the new CPD and Education Reform?

Inclusiveness

- How much did the CFS Initiative promote inclusion in the education system?
- How much did the CFS Initiative address and respond to the diversity of needs of all students through the increased participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent is the CFS Initiative sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and gender?
- Is the CFS Initiative ensuring that students are able to form relationships with and treat all persons with respect and dignity, irrespective of their cultural and ethnic beliefs and orientation and gender?

Sustainability

- Has the CFS Initiative in any way been mainstreamed by the MoE into policy documents, school curriculum, education standards, training of teachers, participatory

and interactive teaching methods?

- Are there any quantitative or qualitative outcomes that can be measured at a national level?
- To what extent has the CFS Initiative complemented, created linkages or had synergistic /multiplier effects with educational projects implemented by other partners?
- Have school principals, inspectors, administrators of educational departments at all levels and Ministry of Education officials all strongly supported the implementation of the CFS Initiative?
- Is there political will on the part of the MoE and Pedagogical Faculties to mainstream CFS principles into the educational system? How is this reflected in MoE annual and/or long-term programme planning and budgetary allocations?
- What are the cost implications for the national education budget of further mainstreaming the Initiative?

In addition, the following approaches and issues should be considered:**Results-Based Management**

In examining the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness of outcomes and sustainability of the CFS Initiative, the external evaluation will explore some underlying questions as to how the Initiative was designed and is managed, and what information stakeholders at different levels have had access to and used to take key decisions in design and implementation.

The evaluation will comment on whether the process was driven by a focus on mainstreaming the principles of the CFS into policy and regulatory framework, curriculum and standards.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming

The goal of the current Moldova country programme is to support the Government in meeting its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. It is specifically aimed at ensuring inclusion of all children, young people and women in basic education, health and child protection services, as evidenced by their increased and genuine participation.

The evaluation will have to show how the CFS initiative contributed to the:

- inclusion of children, especially the most vulnerable, in the basic education process
- improvement of the capacity of policy makers to provide leadership in the development of policies with focus on the most vulnerable
- improvement of the capacity of teachers to provide quality, child-centered and inclusive education
- participation of children, girls and boys equally, parents, and community representatives in the improvement of school life

The evaluation will show how human rights principles and strategies inform the roll-out of the CFS Initiative.

EVALUATION METHODS AND PROCESS

The evaluation methodology will be guided by the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)⁵⁷. The evaluation methodology will be further defined by the Evaluation Team.

- Desk Review of all documents related to the CFS Initiative, and to the UNICEF Programme of Cooperation in Moldova, including: reports and evaluations as listed above, model lessons, teacher guides, student achievement reports, etc. The desk review will not be limited to UNICEF documentation but will take the external environment of the educational sector into account, and will also include the review of national education plans, NDS, reports and publications produced by the UN, World Bank and the EU, existing analyses of the education sector, and evaluations and documentation of similar projects implemented by other partners.
- Field Observations in Moldova where the CFS

57 UNEG Norms: <http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1491>. UNEG Standards: <http://www.uneval.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1496>.

Initiative has actually been implemented at the school level: focus discussions with children, review of school records, interviews with principals, teachers, administrators, pupils, parents, and other stakeholders (local NGOs and community-based associations involved in the project). Necessary tools such as focus-group guides, interview protocols and questionnaires will be developed. Field observations will be conducted in both CFS and non-CFS schools (controls) in order to establish relevant and unbiased comparisons.

- Meetings and Consultations with educational policy makers, planners and administrators (officials from MoE, pedagogical faculties, Raional departments of education, as well as donors such as the World Bank and ADA, and other partners in the field of education, including the Step by Step Educational Programme, Lumos and others).

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

During country visits, local stakeholders -- coordinators, specialists from Ministry of Education departments, teachers, principals and pupils, staff from pedagogical faculties, NGOs and other partners working on the Initiative -- will be involved in the evaluation process, particularly at the planning stage as well as during the validation process. Scenarios for focus-group discussions, questionnaires and interview sheets will be designed by the evaluation team and reviewed by and discussed with the local stakeholders and consultants. The evaluation team will hold meetings with educational policy makers and planners and administrators (officials from MoE, pedagogical faculties) as well as with donors (World Bank, ADA) and other partners in the field of education (Step by Step Educational Programme, Lumos and other NGOs).

EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND QUALIFICATIONS

The evaluation team shall include a locally based institution/consulting firm (institutional contractor) and one international consultant. The evaluation team will, in the inception phase, develop a detailed methodology and a plan of evaluation. The consultants will use the desk review to become familiar with the policy basis and relevant project documents. Existing information sources are listed in this ToR and will be made available to the consultants.

In view of the purpose, scope, and focus of the evaluative work, the evaluation will be conducted by an external consultant with expertise in the evaluation of educational projects, quality of education, teacher and curriculum development, educational policies, formulation of educational sector plans, planning of education programmes and coordination of research work.

The international consultant will be responsible for guiding the evaluation process and will have the following responsibilities:

1. develop the methodology, detailed work plan of the evaluation and tools for conducting observations in the field in order to assess the changes created by the CFS Initiative in:
 - the teaching and learning environment
 - curriculum revision
 - teachers' capacity
 - teaching methods
 - examination and assessment methods
 - school governance and management
 - parent, teacher and student participation.
2. carry out the desk review
3. guide the local consulting-firm staff (interviewers, observers) in the application of the tools and data collection in the field and orientation for the cost-efficiency analysis of the Initiative
4. investigate the potential of the Initiative to be scaled up
5. assess specific elements and best practices within the CFS Initiative to be mainstreamed into government policies
6. ensure the oversight and coordination of the entire evaluation
7. based on feedback provided by UNICEF and other stakeholders, prepare the final report with key findings, recommendations (including prioritisation of key strategic recommendations⁵⁸) and lessons learned following the UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards
8. prepare a summary of the final report
9. prepare a presentation in PowerPoint, and two pages of key findings of the evaluation.

In addition, a national consulting firm will be hired by the UNICEF Country Office to assist and support the external consultant before and during field missions in Moldova and will provide him/her with relevant information about the national educational system.⁶³

Responsibilities of the national consulting firm:

- Assist in the preparatory work of the appraisal in advance of the arrival of the international expert in Moldova
- Assist the international expert in the design of the methodology and tools, including questionnaires for the interviews
- Collect and select documents for evaluation and contribute to the desk review
- Carry out the evaluation activities: focus groups, classroom observations, meetings and so on, based on the tools developed by the international consultant and the cost-efficiency analysis of the Initiative, in order to assess the changes created by the CFS Initiative at in: the teaching and learning environment, curriculum revision, teachers' capacity, teaching methods, examination and assessment methods, school governance and management, parent, teacher and student participation
- Brief the international expert about key relevant issues of the national educational system

58 Prioritization of strategic recommendations:
The following should be clearly stated in the Evaluation report (i) the intended use (how the evaluation process and results will be used and by whom), and (ii) prioritization of key strategic recommendations.
Requirements for effective evaluation recommendations:
1. To ensure programmatic and technical relevance, key stakeholders should be consulted during the development of recommendations.
2. The evaluation team should highlight key strategic recommendations, suggesting an appropriate sequencing in the implementation of recommendations whenever possible.
3. Recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis.
4. Recommendations should clearly identify the specific operational units/offices/divisions responsible for its implementation (If this hasn't been done it should be done in the response).

- Gather relevant information at the school level (school records, enrolment and attendance records, dropouts, tests marks and results, inspector records), and organize this information in English
- Comment on the intermediate and final evaluation reports and provide input as appropriate
- Provide staff with knowledge of the educational system and experience in classroom observation and interviewing
- Provide and organize all logistical support, translation, transportation, meetings, including the one-day validation meeting (conference room, translation, coffee break, resolution, minutes of the meeting, mass media coverage, design of the summary report for placement on the website)
- Accomplish other tasks to assist the international expert, as required

Qualifications

The competencies required of the international consultant will be the following:

- Advanced degree in Educational Sciences
- 8 -10 years of professional experience at the national and international level
- Previous experience in research, documentation and evaluation of educational projects;

Two to three articles in major publications an asset

- Ability to work in an international environment; previous experience of working in CEE & CIS countries and knowledge of Romanian or Russian are considered an asset
- Excellent analytical and report-writing skills
- Familiarity with UNICEF's mission and mandate
- Fluency in English

The competencies required from the national consultants provided by the institutional contractor are the following:

- University degree in a related field
- Technical expertise in the education field
- Experience of conducting project and programme evaluations
- Good communication and presentation skills (ability to express concisely and clearly ideas and concepts in written and oral form)
- Experience in working with UN / UNICEF (desired)

- Knowledgeable of UN evaluation policy
- Ability to keep strict deadlines
- Excellent written and spoken Romanian, fluency in English

ACCOUNTABILITY

The evaluation will be managed by the UNICEF Country Office, by the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and Education Officer. The management of the evaluation will include development of the terms of reference, assignment of the evaluation team, liaising between the evaluation team and partners/ stakeholders involved, as well as quality assurance of the report.

The Evaluation Team will be responsible for conducting the desk review of the Initiative, organizing the technical preparation of the field visits (methodology, tools, scenarios for focus group discussions, questionnaires, interview sheets, observation sheets), and writing the draft and final reports.

The Evaluation Team will take measures and will put mechanisms in place to ensure that the evaluation process is ethical and that stakeholders are protected, and will address any ethical dilemmas or issues that could emerge. These could include an initial process of ethical review of the evaluation design.

The UNICEF Country Offices and MOE will participate in the validation meeting, during which the findings and recommendations of the evaluation will be presented by the external evaluation team. The UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS and UNICEF Moldova Country Office will approve the final product and arrange for its dissemination.

Tentative Timeframe

28 August 2011: TOR finalized by Country Office
30 August 2011: Final TOR forwarded to potential institutions/consulting firms for bidding
19 September 2011: Bids/CVs received from potential candidates and institutions/consulting firms
End of September 2011: UNICEF Internal process for Institutional Contract preparation
Mid-October 2011: Plan, methodology, and technical preparation of the consultancy, including

development of evaluation tools (5 working days)
 End October 2011: *Evaluation work* – Desk Review (6 working days)
 November 2011: *Evaluation work* – Field Visit (8 working days + 2 days travel)
 December 2011: *Evaluation work* – Draft Evaluation Report prepared in English (10 working days)
 End January 2012 – beginning of February 2012: **Draft Report reviewed by Country Office and shared with Regional Office for review and comments**
 Mid February 2012: *Evaluation work* – Comments from Country Office and Regional Office incorporated in the draft evaluation report (3 working days)
 End February 2012: *Evaluation work* - Validation meeting and Presentation of the draft Evaluation Report – (2 working days + 2 days travel)
 Mid-March 2012: *Evaluation work* - **Final Report prepared and submitted by the Evaluation Team to UNICEF Country Office in Moldova** (3 working days)
 April 2012: Final Report translated into local language and designed for placement on the website
 April 2012: Final Report disseminated

Logistics

Office space, cars, meeting rooms, translators, interviewers and drivers will be provided by the local partner contracted by UNICEF Country Office (external evaluator is expected to come with his/her own laptop computer).

Any specific information -- work schedule considerations; special procedures (relationships with the press; security, evacuation in emergencies; benefits and arrangements such as insurance; seasonal constraints; travel constraints/conditions and socio-cultural conditions that may influence data collection; reporting requirements apart from products to be delivered (e.g. invoices for expenses) – will be provided by UNICEF Moldova Country Office.

PRODUCT

By the end of April 2012, the Evaluation Team is expected to provide the UNICEF Moldova Office

and the CEE/CIS Regional Education Advisor with a final evaluation report of 60 pages maximum, divided into three sections. The first part will be devoted to the evaluation of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the CFS Initiative in Moldova; the second part will provide an analysis of sustainability of the CFS Initiative, and its potential to be scaled up or (mainstreamed into the national education system; and the third part will focus on recommendations for future directions of the Initiative. Annexes will provide detailed information collected during field visits (focus discussion reports, summaries of interview sheets, summaries of responses to questionnaires).

DESCRIPTION OF OFFICIAL TRAVEL INVOLVED

The international consultant is expected to take two trips to the country -- one for a total of eight days for the training/orientation of the local consulting firm and for data collection; and the second trip for the validation meeting of the evaluation report. For the mission to Moldova, UNICEF Office in Moldova will issue a Travel Authorization to cover the round trip air fare, DSA for the days in Moldova, and terminal expenses.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The international consultant's performance will be evaluated using the following criteria: timeliness, responsibility, initiative, communication and quality of the product delivered.

UNICEF RECOURSE IN THE CASE OF UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE

In the case of unsatisfactory performance, the contract will be terminated by a notification letter sent five days prior to termination. In the meantime, UNICEF will begin another selection process in order to identify an appropriate replacement candidate.

UNICEF Moldova Country Office
131,31 August 1989 Street, UN House
Chisinau, Moldova

www.unicef.md

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