MINUTES
of the second meeting of the Sector Council on External Assistance
February 28th, 2014, 11 AM

Venue: Government Building, Conference room, (6th floor), Piața Marii Adunări Naționale 1, MD 2033 Chișinău, Republic of Moldova

Participants:
1. SANDU Maia - Minister of Education, Chair
2. Handrabura Loretta - Vice-minister, Deputy chair
3. Draguța Oxana - Senior consultant, Division for Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policies, secretary
4. Cojocaru Tudor - Head of Division for Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policies
5. Sirbu Andgela - Head of General Division of Economy, Assets and Finance
6. Velișco Nadejda - Head of Division for Higher Education
7. Rîșcanu Cornel - Programme Coordinator Health and Education, UNICEF
8. Olefir Anna - Operation officer, World Bank
9. Stîrcea Lilia - Vice representative of Liechtenstein Development Service LED
10. Schaumberger Gerhard - Head of Office, Austrian Development Agency ADA. Coordination Office Chișinău
11. Zbanca Tatiana - Programme officer, Austrian Development Agency ADA Coordination Office Chișinău
12. Crivoliubic Olga - Programme director, Soros Foundation Moldova
13. Malanciuc Irina - Director, Lumnos Foundation Moldova
14. Pogolșa Lilia - Director of the Institute of Education of Sciences
15. Ciocanu Gheorghe - Dean, State University of Moldova (SUM)
16. Cotici Victoria - Director, Center for Continuing Training, Chamber of Commerce and Industry
17. Sabourin Amandine - Attachée de Coopération, Embassy of France in the Republic of Moldova
18. Roman Kwiatkowski - Coordonator, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie in Moldova

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSIONS ACCORDING TO THE AGENDA

1. Priorities of the action plan of the Ministry and external assistance needs for 2014

The Minister of Education, Ms Maia Sandu welcomed all participants at the Second Council on External Assistance Meeting. She started her presentation with expressing gratitude for the assistance provided in 2013 and belief in the continuing the good cooperation in 2014. In her presentation, the Minister underlined the main areas, where the external support would be needed:

1) Evaluation in pre-university education - developing national PISA type tests for the pilot testing in 2014;
2) Curricula revision - follow up to the support of the Soros Foundation for 2015, including training of teachers and other support in the implementation of the revised curriculum;
3) National Programme for Teacher’s Development - Soros Foundation is covering some elements, but a comprehensive vision is missing; a new salary system for teachers is opened for donors;
4) School Inspection - Training of school inspectors as a follow up of the Inspection creation with Soros Foundation support;
5) Education network management – feasibility study update, transportation system (public-private partnership), adjusting the financing formula for schools, developing of a new financing formula for pre-school institutions; feasibility study for pre-school institutions;
6) Capacity building for the new National Agency for Quality Assurance in Professional Education to be created in 2014;
7) VET reform – support in the developing the concept for public-private partnerships in VET system, systems of monitoring the employment of graduates;
8) Professional orientation in schools – teaching materials, teachers’ training, partnerships with economic agents;
9) ICT in education – IT infrastructure, distance learning for teachers.

Mr. Ciocanu G., Rector of SUM, thanked the Minister for the comprehensive presentation. He said that as a parent and grandfather is annoyed by the term – revision of the school curricula.

The Minister replied that the term „revision” scientifically is not grounded. A dialogue with parents is necessary in order to understand the reasons for complaints on the overloaded curricula.

Ms. Pogolsa L. (IES) added that the Institute for Education Sciences is in the process of evaluation of the curricula. This exercise is organized every 5 years. The implementation and monitoring of the new curricula are very important stages of the curriculum management. The quality depends on the teachers’ training, development of the textbooks, teacher’s materials, laboratory endowment, etc.

Mr. Ciocanu G. mentioned that the initial and continuing training of teachers should also be correlated with that process.

Ms. Malanciu I. (Lumos Foundation) raised the question about inclusive education.

The Minister replied that residential and inclusive education remain a priority for 2014 and it is included in the work plan of the Ministry.

Mr. Răscanu C. (UNICEF) thanked the Minister for the comprehensive presentation. The UNICEF Programme of cooperation work plan for 2014-2015 is to be agreed with the Ministry in the following days. The potential support of the presented priorities will be included in the mentioned work plan.

The Minister added an important issue, which was not mentioned in the presentation. The Education Code will be soon proposed for approval to the Government and Parliament. Based on the new Code around 100 normative acts/secondary legislation are to be developed/revised. This is also an important area where the Ministry is looking for the donor’s support.

Ms. Velisco N. communicated that as far as higher education is concerned the research and setting up the cycle III – Doctoral studies is also an area to be considered by the donors.
Mr. Ciocanu G. (SUM) expressed his view on the relation between research and university education. The Republic of Moldova should follow the European trend that puts strong accents on the research conducted in universities. The Ministry of Education should present a clear message in this respect.

Ms. Malanciuc I. (Lumos Foundation) asked that for Lumos would be useful to receive from the Ministry a list of priorities, covered and uncovered by other internal/external resources.

Mr. Schaumberger (ADA) thanked for the detailed presentation. Austrian Development Cooperation is focusing mainly on professional education. In this respect, the creation of two Sector committees and the concept of Public-Private Partnership in VET is most welcome and appreciated. Based on the experience in other sectors, the communication on PPP should be carried out very carefully. ADA is open for cooperation with the Ministry in other areas as well. Mr. Schaumberger also raised the question about the potential co-financing from the EU Budget Support Programme for the ADA professional orientation project.

The Minister answered that it is possible from the 2015 budget.

The Vice-minister Handrabura L. asked ADA to help Ministry with the implementation and monitoring the EU Budget Support Programme.

2. Questionnaire for evaluating the Official Development Assistance to education sector in 2013

Ms. Draguta presented the questionnaire on Official Development Assistance that has been sent to donor's organizations. Based on the collected data an annual report on external assistance in education will be developed. Its main aim is to provide a full picture of external assistance to the education sector, improving the information available for sector coordination and strategic decision-making; helping to attract additional investment and assistance in medium term.

Considering that the State Chancellery requested all development partners to contribute to improving of the quality of data of the Aid Management Platform (AMP), she asked to fill out only the chapters that are missing in the AMP. The education development partners, which don't have access to AMP, are asked to complete all the fields of the questionnaire. The deadline for submitting the questionnaire is March 15, 2014.

Conclusions:

1. The development partners are asked to adjust their work plans for 2014 to the presented priorities in education as much as possible;
2. The deadline for filling out the questionnaire for evaluation of ODA in education sector in 2013 is 15 March 2014.

Chair

Maia SANDU
Ministru