

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a brown sweater, is sitting at a desk in a classroom, focused on writing in a notebook with a blue pen. In the background, other students are visible at their desks, some also working. The classroom is brightly lit with natural light from a window.

## ANALYTIC NOTE

# Time Use by Young Moldovans for School Studies

Secondary and high school education sets the foundation for personality development and determines the level of further education of population, which, in turn, defines the competitiveness and long term development of any country. This note analyzes the time spent by young Moldovans of 10 to 18 years old for secondary and high-school education, highlighting the difference between girls and boys, villages and towns, as well as between high and low income families.

For this purpose we will use the results of the Time Use Survey, carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics.

### Who allocates more time for study: boys or girls?

One of ten people of 10 years and older from the Republic of Moldova (i.e. 10.5% of the country

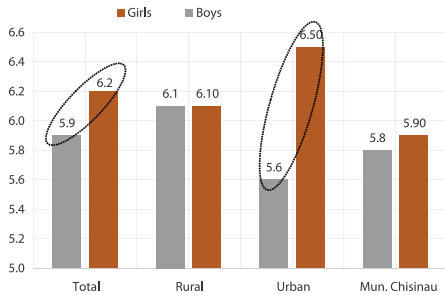
population of this age) is enrolled in a form of training in an educational institution in the country. These people spend 5.9 hours/day at classes/lectures or doing homework.

The sample of the Time Use Survey (people of 10 years and older) had the following age structure for people who practiced the “studying<sup>1</sup>” activity: 50% people aged 10-18 years; 41.6% people aged 19-24 years; 7.5% people aged 25-29 years; and 0.8% people aged over 30 years. The time spent by young Moldovans of 10 to 18 years old for education differs by genders. Thus, girls allocate more time for lessons at school and homework compared to boys of the same age (6.2 hours vs. 5.9 hours per day). The biggest difference is noticed in the urban area, where girls allocate 0.9 hours more for studying than boys (Figure 1).

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Activity Classifier of the Time Use Survey, the activities in “studying” category include the following: (i) school or university, which includes courses and lectures, homework; (ii) studying in the free time.

**Figure 1. Time spent by people of 10 to 18 years old for studying at “school or university”<sup>2</sup> by area of residence and sex, hours per day**



Source: NBS

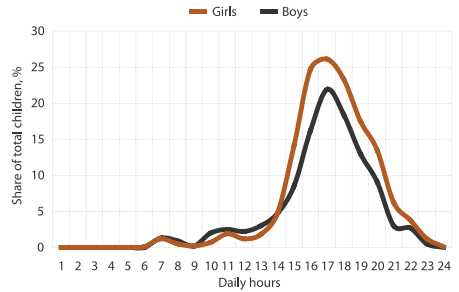
Generally, the girls of 10 to 18 years old spend more time doing homework compared to boys (2 hours compared to 1.7 hours in rural area; 2 hours compared to 1.8 hours in urban area; and 1.9 hours compared to 1.8 hours in Chisinau municipality). Moreover, a larger share of girls start doing their homework earlier and a smaller share of girls do their homework late in the evening or early on the next day, as opposite to boys.

Figure 2 reveals a quick increase in the share of girls of 10 to 18 years old, who do their homework after 2.00 pm, after coming home from school and lunch break. However boys start massively doing homework after 4.00 pm. Moreover, a large share of boys spend more time on doing homework in the first half of the day, compared to girls.

The longer time spent by girls at lessons at school or university and homework is correlated with somewhat better school achievements they have compared to boys. Thus, the average grade obtained by girls at the 2012 high school exam was 7.39 compared to 7.01 obtained by boys. At the same time, the boys' share in high-schools and universities is much lower than their share in mandatory education. Thus, in 2012/2013 the share of boys in the 5-9 forms was 51.5%, while in the 10-11/12 forms and higher educational institutions their share goes down to 44.2% and 44.0%, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Time spent at lessons/lectures and time spent doing the homework.

**Figure 2. The share of children of 10 to 18 years old, who “do their homework”, by sex and time of the day<sup>3</sup>**



Source: NBS

### Where do young people study more: in villages or towns?

There are some differences, however insignificant, in the time spent for “school or university” by young people of 10 to 18 years old per day, depending on the area of residence: 6.1 hours per day in rural area, 6.0 hours per day in urban area and 5.8 hours per day in Chisinau municipality (Table 1). Actually, more time for “school or university” spent by the young people of the aforementioned age in villages is due to more limited opportunities of extracurricular activities and entertainment. Moreover, another explanation could be related to the higher motivation of young people in villages, taking into account the lower standard of living in countryside than in towns or the capital city.

At the same time, the young people of 10 to 18 years from cities spend almost twice less time for household and family activities compared to young people in villages (0.7 hours vs. 1.3 hours per day). As a result, the time spent by young people in rural area for social life and entertainment is by 22% lower than the time spent by urban youth of the same age for the same purpose.

<sup>3</sup> The conclusion that most of the girls tend to do their homework earlier than boys is confirmed by the skewness coefficient, calculated for both time series. Thus, in the case of boys the time series is more inclined to the right, compared to the girls' (the skewness coefficient is 1.6 for boys, compared to 1.4 for girls).

**Table 1. Average duration of the “school or university”, “social life and entertainment” and “taking care of household and family” activities in case of young people of 10 to 18 years old, by area of residence, hours per day**

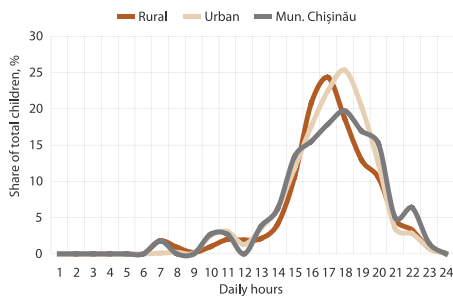
	School or university	Social life and entertainment	Taking care of household and family
Rural	6.1	2.8	1.3
Urban	6	3.6	0.7
Chisinau municipality	5.8	2.6	0.7

Source: NBS

Though young people in villages spend more time attending the schools, they spend a little less time for doing their homework, compared to young people in towns (1.8 hours vs. 1.9 hours per day). However, this difference is not significant.

At the same time, the Figure 3 reveals that most young people of 10 to 18 years old in rural areas start doing their homework at about 5.00 pm, while young people in urban areas - at about 6.00 pm. In Chisinau municipality, young people of the same age start doing their homework at even later hours.

**Figure 3. Share of children of 10 to 18 years old, who “do their homework”, by area of residence and time of the day**



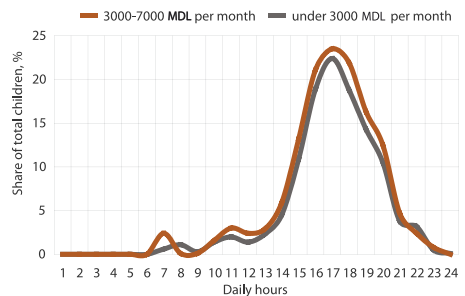
Source: NBS

The cause could be related to the fact that in many towns school days are often divided in two shifts (morning and afternoon), which influences the period of time when pupils do their homework. As a result, in urban area and, particularly, in Chisinau municipality we notice a rise the share of young people doing homework around 10.00-11.00 am, as well as in late hours (in Chisinau municipality).

### To what extent does the level of family welfare influence the time allocated for education?

Children of 10 to 18 years old from low-income families (under MDL 3000 per month) spend a little less time studying at school/university, including the time for doing their homework (Figure 4). One reason could be the fact that these children, especially in villages, have to help their parents with household chores, to the disadvantage of time allocated for education. Thus, young people from families with an income under MDL 3000 per month spend about 8% more time to take care of household and family, compared to young people from families with an income over MDL 3000 per month.

**Figure 4. Share of children of 10 to 18 years old, who “do their homework”, by household income level and time of the day**



Source: NBS

Moreover, the fact that children from low-income families are less inclined to study can be influenced by the lower level of parents' education (there is an inverse relationship between the level of education and level of income<sup>4</sup>). This reveals how important it is to raise the level of education both for children and for their parents, particularly by lifelong training.

### Conclusions:

- Young people from Moldova spend less time for education and more time for entertainment, compared to other European countries;
- A larger share of girls included in the research sample start doing their homework earlier and more seldom postpone their homework to late evening or early next day, as opposite to boys;
- There are no significant differences in the time allocated for education by children in rural and urban areas;
- Children from low-income families spend less time studying, which can expose them to the risk of poverty, taking into account the inverse relationship between the level of income and level of parents' education.

### Recommendations:

- Diversifying the curriculum, upgrading the school programs and developing extracurricular activities in schools could motivate pupils to be more interested in studying and make them to allocate more time for these activities;
- Communication between teachers and pupils' parents is very important for raising the responsibility and discipline of pupils. Thus, schools should encourage school partnerships, stronger interaction among teachers, pupils and their parents during the cultural events, organizational sessions or individual meetings;
- It is necessary to ensure better educational conditions for the entire population, including young people from low-income families. In order to develop a more inclusive educational system, the Government can use several leverages. Thus, the social assistance system must be better targeted at the ones who really need Government's help. Besides, it would be appropriate to consider the possibility of introducing a social scholarship system for pupils from needy families, so that children could have equal educational opportunities, regardless of their parents' level of income. Another leverage is related to a clearer regulation of contributions to the so-called "school funds" or "class funds", paid regularly by children's parents.



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<sup>4</sup> "Relationship between Human Capital Development and Equity in the Republic of Moldova", European Training Foundation, 2011, <http://www.erisee.org/downloads/2013/2/Human%20Capital%20Development%20Review%202011%20ENG.pdf>.