Strengthening Educational Reforms through Social Accountability Activities

www.ScoalaMea.md
January 2014: Official launch of „Școala Mea”

Implementation period: December 2013 – December 2018
About the organization

„Școala Mea” was implemented by Expert-Grup (www.expert-grup.org), a think-tank specialized in economic and public policy research.

The mission of the organization is to promote the public interest and to develop efficient and innovative solutions for the development of the Republic of Moldova.
Project’s philosophy:

**A better school for a better country**

The more involved the students are in the school community today, the bigger chances are for them to become active citizen in their community and their country tomorrow!
Empowering Moldovan citizens to engage local, regional and national authorities in evidence-based policy and budget dialogue regarding educational reform, quality of services, and development priorities of primary, secondary general, and upper secondary schools and to enable an environment in which social accountability initiatives thrive and develop
- 100 beneficiary schools (20 each year);
- 100 local coalitions trained (members of the school boards and members of the community);
- 3 Social Accountability tools implemented in 112 schools: public hearings, school card reports, independent school budget analysis;
- Support from the Local Public Authorities;
- Involved citizens deciding on the school development priorities;
- School profiles published on the knowledge sharing platform www.ScoalaMea.md
Partnerships

- Ministry of Education Culture and Research
- Network of 5 regional partner CSOs carrying out work on the ground;
- Project Advisory Board strategically guiding the project;
- MoUs signed in 30 out of 35 districts/municipalities;
- 12+ media partnerships and 400+ news items on the project
Școala Mea: Key results to date
- 100 schools engaged thus far; 64 of them implementing one or three of the Sacc instruments independently after the projects’s closing;

- 100 local coalitions mobilized and have undertaken SAcc exercises;

- Over 1300 members of School Administration Boards obtained skills to apply SAcc tools and analyze school budgets;

- Thousands of stakeholders have been surveyed to assess the education services satisfaction;
In 2014 – 2018, over 30,000 brochures describing the school budgets in a more comprehensive way, were distributed.
Public hearings lead to results

- School budgets discussed in 100 public hearings over the last 5 years with over 30,000 attendees;
- School management heard first-hand about student and parents concerns & suggestions;
- Issues raised to the attention of public authorities who have responded with:
  - Allocations for school equipment;
  - Assistance with student transportation;
  - Increased school financial autonomy;
Feedback through the Report cards

Over 30,000 stakeholder report cards completed to pinpoint main areas in need of improvement in target schools.
ScoalaMea.md – one stop shop for SACC in EDUCATION

- Profiles of all 1,300 schools with budget and performance information;
- Advanced filter according to a set of criteria:
  - Location;
  - Number of students;
  - Performance (grades);
  - Budget spending;
- Over 24,000 unique users in 2018
Other products in the project

- Open Data Readiness Assessment 2014-2018
- “Success Stories” about the beneficiaries published in the professional and mainstream media
- Policy notes on: the budgetary process in Moldova, participatory budgeting at the school level, analysis on the education expenditure in the country
Challenges and Adaptation

1. Adapting to changes in government
2. Adaptation of the SAcc Tools to the national context
3. Maximizing learning and information generation
4. Sustaining SAcc efforts in all participating schools
Lessons learned and Adaptation:

- In a moment of transition, the absence of a formal project agreement caused the project to lag;
- To prevent this from reoccurring an MoU was signed with the MoECR in 2015;
Challenge 1: Adapting to changes in government

MoECR responsibilities
- Delegate contact person;
- Provide annual data;
- Disseminate good practices of the project;
- Participate in events and present the state of education reform;

Expert-Grup responsibilities
- Keep the MoECR informed on project progress;
- Consult with MoECR on the design of the SAcc tools;
- Train School Administration Boards according to the Education Code;
- Include MoECR in project activities;
Adaptation:

- Language was simplified;
- After surveying 5-12 grades in the first year, next year we changed the respondents to 7-12 grades;
- Balanced use of objective and subjective survey questions;
- Each regional partner was asked to work with online and printed report cards;
Lessons learned:
- Need to convene Regional Partners for more regular information exchange sessions;
- Need to find more useful ways to frame insights and lessons learned;

Adaptation:
- Defined a draft structure for case stories (key messages, audience, purpose);
- Organized a training session;
Challenge 4: Sustaining SAcc efforts in participating schools

Lesson learned:
- Project did not envision keeping track of schools engaged in previous years;
- There was no incentive system for the schools to sustain their use of SAcc tools and methods;
Challenge 4:

Sustaining SAcc efforts in participating schools

Adaptability:

- Invited partner CSOs to survey the previous year schools and learn about their experiences;

- ScoalaMea.md as a visibility platform;

- Newsletter updates;

- Package with updated SAcc tools provided yearly;

- Certificates for schools at project completion;

- Honorary title of “Scoala mea” Ambassador
Vrei să aplici instrumentele de responsabilizare socială în școala ta și ai nevoie de ajutor?

Contactează unul dintre cei 30 de Ambasadori „Școala Mea”!

„Școala mea” Ambassadors
The project established a national network of 30 Ambassadors that are voluntarily sharing their experience in the implementation of Sacc tools.

- 1000 printed guides were shared

- All the instruments are available on the knowledge sharing platform scoalamea.md
“My School”
After 5 Years of Implementation: Outcomes and Lessons Learned
National Conference