

**The Impact of US Educational Programs on the
Post-Communist Democratization Process
In the Republic of Moldova
Compared with Armenia**

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Abstract

This paper is a comparison which analyzes the effectiveness of the US democracy consolidation through the prism of educational programs implemented in the Republic of Moldova and in Armenia after the collapse of the communist regime. For the process of democratization in Armenia I refer to the thesis of Liana Mikayelyan, a CEU student from the Political Science Department, who wrote her thesis on the topic “The Impact of US Government Funded Organizations on Educational Development in Armenia” two years ago.¹ We both refer to the literature of democracy promotion and process of democratization, to the so-called “transitional literature”. I also compare the educational institutional arrangements of this strategy of US foreign policy in Moldova and Armenia.

My thesis examines the graduate, undergraduate, and high-school programs and argues that the knowledge of Moldavians gained during the studies in US educational institutions later contributes to the democratization of their country. The thesis on Armenia analyzes graduate programs which are aimed to help Armenians to obtain Western education. At the same time I analyze the educational and exchange programs in Moldova for the professional level, sponsored by the US Government and performed by various structures of the US State Department and by American international NGOs. In both countries, in the majority of cases, graduates do not return to their homeland, and even if they do, they are employed by international organizations, rather than local institutions. Through conducting an interview-based research with the alumni of some American educational programs, my paper examines if their career choices correspond to the purposes of these programs and compares them with the Armenian case.

¹ Liana Mikayelyan, Thesis on “The Impact of US Government Funded Organizations on Educational Development in Armenia”, submitted to Central European University, Department of Political Science, 2006.

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List of Abbreviations

ACCELS	American Council for Collaboration in Education and Language Study
ACTR	American Councils of Teachers of Russian
ACTR/ACCELS	American Council of International Education
APP	American Practicum Program
ARC	Alumni Resource Center
CEU	Central European University
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPP	Citizen Participation Program
CPP	Citizen Participation Program
EAC	Educational Advising Center
ECA	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of US Department of State
ETRC	English Teaching Resource Center
FLEX	Future Leaders Exchange Program
IATP	Internet Access and Training Program
IJC	Independent Journalism Center
IO	International Organization
IREX	International Research and Exchange Board
ISPRI	Institute of Political Studies and International Relations
JFDP	Junior Faculty Development Program
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PAS	Public Affairs Section
RSEP	Regional Scholar Exchange Program
UGRAD	Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program
USAID	the United States Agency for International Development
USIA	the United States Information Agency

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Introduction

One of the main purposes of the American foreign policy in the post-communist period was consolidation of democracy abroad, mainly in the former communist countries, which gained independence and needed assistance in this matter. The main agency in this direction was the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which began functioning in Moldova in 1993, the time of Bill Clinton's presidency. For his administration, as Liana Mikayelyan asserts in her thesis,² the main direction of the US foreign policy was the implementation of the principles and values of democracy abroad.

The US State Department contributed to developing the process of education and school instruction in Moldova and provided programs to educate in a Western style the human capacity of the country. The US Government strategy for Armenia is emphasized mainly by the strategies of USAID, with a stress on the role of education. The teaching practice in Moldova was a legacy of the communist times. The Moldavian Government, aware of the fact that transition to democracy has to begin from the scholarly process, welcomed the US Government funded educational organization offering programs of Western educational methodology. Even if this is an issue with long term outcomes, those being educated through these programs sooner or later promote the values of democracy, civil society, and the rule of law. In this regard Mikayelyan quotes the US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings: "Education is the basis for social development and economic growth, and every country has a duty to provide its children with the tools they need to succeed in the global-knowledge economy".³

² Liana Mikayelyan, Thesis on "The Impact of US Government Funded Organizations on Educational Development in Armenia", submitted to Central European University, Department of Political Science, 2006.

³ US Secretary of Education address to the Group of Eights, Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt, May 2006;
<http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/Archive/2006/May/24-765717.html>

Chapter 1 will present the theoretical framework of this paper, mainly reviewing the written works of the transitional process to democratization and democracy consolidation. The literature will be similar for both pieces, though mine will concentrate more on some authors and will analyze the papers of others as an addition to what was already written by Mikayelyan. This will include the literature on US primacy in the spreading democracy, as well as the review of the countries' actions and efforts in this mission through USAID. The USAID funding for democracy promotion, as we both found out, rose to about \$100 million annually by 1999. Thomas Carothers in his collection "Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion" analyses the four categories of the USAID democracy programs, which are: rule of law, governance, elections and the civil society. Mikayelyan talks generally about the whole USAID mission described by Carothers, I will mainly study the last one, as it includes the *civic education* type of aid. Carothers pays special attention to the role of the civil society aid in the mission of US foreign policy and writes about assistance provided by US government in the 1990s. He argues that with the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union, aiding democracy abroad became of the primordial interest for American policy makers.⁴

These assessments are of direct importance for this part of this thesis and I intend to study them in detail. Like Mikayelyan, I will proceed from general to specific and will analyze the strategy of democracy promotion of the US Government to the Republic of Moldova in the post communist period in terms of the educational process development. I will also trace a comparative line between US foreign policy strategies for Armenia, based on the study conducted by Mikayelyan.

Chapter 2 will examine the US organizations and programs operating in Moldova, which are supported and funded by the Government. There are several such organizations and programs

⁴ Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004.

in Moldova: the American Council of International Education ACTR/ACCELS, International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) with the Fulbright Programs and the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program and other programs, along with projects and centers operating in Moldova under the supervision of the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy. I will briefly reveal the activity and aims of each program. I will also attempt to present the effects and opinions on the education provided by them. These programs also operate in Armenia, and Mikayelyan describes some programs which don't function in Moldova. In my turn, I examine some centers and projects which are not mentioned in her thesis. Their similarities and differences will be examined in this chapter of my thesis.

Chapter 3 will be an effort to acknowledge the results of the interview-based research, conducted specifically for this thesis. I intend to correlate my findings with those of Liana Mikayelyan. The *basis* for this comparison has been the interest to find what the outcomes of US educational projects in Moldova are. However, in contradiction to Mikayelyan, I consider that the alumni of these programs who work for an international organization contribute to the democratization of their country. For comparing the findings and the effects of the American educational curriculums, I will use the same methodology of interviewing as Mikayelyan, but a different case selection, consequently my questionnaires include some similar questions with hers. New questions are included due to the fact that I want to reveal some innovations of the direct impact of the US studying programs, such as building the human related and instructive capacity of Moldova.

The questions I intend to include in the questionnaires have the same purpose as Mikayelyan's – to identify the career paths of the programs' graduates in order to see whether they have been employed by international or local organizations, and which have been the key issues determining their career choices. Unlike Mikayelyan, who met personally some respondents of her interview, I did not have the opportunity to do so, and therefore my

questionnaires were sent by electronic mail to my target groups by the Director of Alumni Resource Center (ARC) and I have received their replies by electronic mail as well. I was not in a position to benefit directly of their contact data as Mikayelyan, moreover she interviewed some students from CEU, where she was studying at the moment of her research.

Liana Mikayelyan states that the employment within IO or outside the native country of the US sponsoring programs alumni means a failure of their programs' mission. To support her paper's main argument, Mikayelyan focuses on career paths of 24 Armenian graduates from two sponsoring programs: Edmund S Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program and the Central European University sponsored by the Open Society Institute. One of my paper's scopes is to argue that her claim is not applicable if the US alumni are working in international organizations. I describe in detail my data sample and the findings of the research to carry out this task and support the main argument of my paper – that *the alumni, who studied in the US and now work for international organizations in Moldova, do contribute to the democratization process of the country*. An interview research is conducted with 23 Moldavian graduates from only US Government sponsored program, since I focus my paper on American programs only. The programs are: Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program, the Fulbright Faculty Development Program, the Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program, and the Future Leaders Exchange Program, all provided by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The undergraduate and high-school participants of the last two programs return home more often, being given their young age and inability to get professional employment abroad.

I have received replies not only from those who came back to their native countries after graduating from their programs, but also from those alumni who did not return, or left it again. The questions for the second group of my respondents have been aimed to determine the factors that affected the graduates' decisions and to compare the reasons with those of the Armenian colleagues. Through the interviews with participants of the named programs it is possible to

examine their career options and to answer the main research questions of this paper – *What career paths did the respondents opt for and to what degree do their choices correspond to the missions of the US Educational programs to democratize Moldova?*

Both papers identify important findings. Hence, my *hypothesis* was that the results of the survey will not be significantly different. Differences were expected not to be significant because the programs implemented in Moldova and Armenia by the US Government are similar due to both countries' political situation of transition to democracy. These situations of political, economical and social instability may have analogous influence on the decisions of respondents to choose other countries than their native and other institutions than the national ones to be employed in. The main point is not just identifying differences in absolute numbers, but what is the *significant* difference in results and findings of both surveys. I found out that unlike their counterparts in Armenia, most of Moldavians contribute to the democratization of the country even if they are employed by international organizations. Recommendations and incentive ideas for further research projects will also be presented.

Chapter 1: US Democracy Promotion and Civil Society Aid

The first sub-chapter of this chapter will present the theoretical framework of the paper, notably reviewing the written works of the transitional process of democratization and democracy promotion. It focuses on the civil society. Preceding from general to specific, in the second sub-chapter certain strategies of democracy promotion of the US Government to the Republic of Moldova in terms of the educational process development will be reviewed. It will be shown that the strategies for Moldova and Armenia are implemented through USAID, and even if the objectives might not be formulated in the same way, the aims are identical. The directions of assistance for Moldova will be described in more details and will briefly be compared to those being implemented in Armenia.

1.1 Literature Review and the Theoretical Overview

One of the most outstanding examinations of the studies of transitions of the authoritarian regimes and with reflections on democracy consolidation are the volumes of essays of Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead: *Transition from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*. The main theory lies in the desire of the countries to liberate from the authoritarian regimes and provides the corresponding case studies. This is a collection of case studies of authoritarian regimes, but it also includes fundamentals for future studies on democracy assistance in these regimes. This collection concentrates on countries of Southern Europe and Latin America, but the cases in which a country was willing to release from the communism regime and step on the path of democracy settlement and consolidation can be associated to Moldova as well. In this new task, Moldova did not refuse to appeal to the assistance of the

United States. The assistance of the US is mainly discussed by Whitehead, who asserts that since their welfare is connected with old traditions in democracy, Americans wish to make other nations benefit of their system.⁵

With regard to Michael Cox, who observes the American efforts during Clinton in changing the international order by its own political view, one may debate that the interests of American attempts to promote democracy is deposited in its interest to make the world safe for the dollar, though US also delivers the principles and uprightness of its political system (and educational in the context of this paper). In the referred collection of essays Cox discusses democratization of the post-communist region, but I focus my attention on the same issue as Mikayelyan does. As she observed, if the United States manages to keep their promises in the respect of democratization (no matter of the regions of the world), then the efforts abroad are likely to succeed; if not – democracy promotion strategy will fail and the claims for a safer and more peaceful world will prove to be groundless. Moreover, I would highlight the point of Cox that the United States shall have a more collaborative and less exploitative approach while exporting their forms of democracy.⁶

Therefore, such concepts as *transition*, *democracy consolidation / promotion* and *civil society* are frequently used through my thesis; likewise the concepts of transition, democratization and consolidation are frequently met in Mikayelyan's thesis. In order to compare the similar concepts, I consider the inclusion of their definitions here necessary. O'Donnell and Schmitter define *transition* as the period between strong settlements from one political regime to another. According to them in the modern world transitions are defined, on one hand, by the initiation of the process of dissolving an authoritarian regime, and, on the other

⁵ Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead, *Transition from Authoritarian Rule / Prospects for Democracy*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986.

⁶ Michael Cox and G.John Ikenberry, *American Democracy promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p.238-239.

hand, by setting up of some forms of democracy.⁷ Mikayelyan also points out their reflections on “return to some form of authoritarian rule, or emergence of a revolutionary alternative”⁸. One might suppose that nowadays it is less likely for an authoritarian regime or a (cruel bloody) revolution to burst into a democratic regime. However, if looking around in the post-Soviet territory, Georgia might give the disapproval of this supposition.

Even Central European countries like Poland and Hungary might not be considered stable enough as democracies (or liberal democracies), since some of their key intellectuals have left the civil sphere moving to parties. If the majority of key intellectuals do the same (or if they leave for business or international careers), this fact leaves the rest of the society without intellectuals with a progressive mindset. In such a case the process of democratization might be constrained and the government or the opposition might revive the authoritarian traditions of the country. Remaining without intellectuals, the citizens are exposed to any kind of political propaganda, populism or even extreme ideas like fascism. That is why it is important for the United States to be present in a democracy through education too, besides supporting democratic regimes politically. Their strategies are undertaken to contribute to peace and stability of that certain country. The democratization should go through the whole society, using efficient ways for that: education and media.

Reading Linz and Stepan, I have noticed the aspects of *democracy consolidation* connected to the topic of my thesis. They identify five most important “arenas”: political society, economic society, civil society, state organization and rule of law.⁹ Liana Mikayelyan asserts that the authors attach the educational aspect to the economic society; I observed that the authors place education together with civil society, because they refer to the strategy of the US foreign

⁷ Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, 1986, p.1-4.

⁸ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006.

⁹ Juan Linz, Alfred Stepan, *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1996, p. 7-15.

policy, where education comes as part of the civil society section. This question (where to place education) is rather interesting and answering it might start another debate about the definition of civil society.

As to *democracy promotion*, Mikayelyan cites Scmitter together with Brower, who conceptualize it as a process consisting of public and voluntary activities adopted, supported and implemented directly or indirectly by the private or governmental agencies. They are designed to contribute to the political liberalization from the authoritarian regime and, as a result, to the democratization of the authoritarian system. But in specific cases of aid recipient countries, the authors argue that it might be necessary only to consolidate democracy.

Democracy Protection consists of all overt and voluntary activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to consolidation of democracy in specific recipient countries.¹⁰

In the context of my paper it is notable that, along with state agencies, military establishments, interest associations and productive enterprises, these authors of the transitional literature mention educational institutions having a significant share in the process of democratization.

I would like to say more about the origins of the term civil society and will concentrate more on it, since it is the main aspect for my paper's literature review. The term *civil society*, in the words of Thomas Carothers, can be traced back to Cicero and ancient Greek philosophers with the classical meaning mentioned in the same breadth with the state. Carothers asserts that the modern usage of the term appears in the late eighteenth century during the Enlightenment period, reflected in the American and French revolutions. Political theorists as Paine and Hegel defined civil society as the *main parallel to the state, but different from it*. The new significance emerged primarily due to the appearance of the private property, competitive market and wish

¹⁰Philippe C. Schmitter, Imco Brouwer, *Conceptualizing Research and Evaluating Democracy Promotion and Protection*, European University Institute, Italy, 1999, p.14.

for liberty. In a large meaning it was “a realm where citizens associate according to their own interests and wishes.”¹¹ Related to economic development and new market conditions, civil society gained strength during the information revolution and served as an incentive for political and social reforms.

Antonio Gramsci introduced a new meaning of the term *civil society*, separating it from the state. However, he considered employers’ associations and trade unions as institutions of the civil society, together with churches, parties, professional associations, educational and cultural bases. Martin Shaw writes about Gramsci’s term of the civil society – it “was for Gramsci a set of institutions through which society organized and represented itself autonomously from the state... The economic sphere itself, with its functional institutions (firms, corporations), responsible for organizing production, was not, on this definition, the part of civil society.”¹²

The civil society still plays an active role in consolidating democracy by getting involved in the process of making political decisions and by requesting accountability from the government. American aid civil programs for Moldova are aimed for capacity building¹³ in communication - at the level of governance and accountability. Though capacity building is not always related to civil society, but to the state capacity, Robert Putnam in 1995 argued that a weak civil society would result in lack of “civic engagement” and “social trust”.¹⁴ Consequently, a democratic regime would have to ensure a healthy civil society which would collaborate with the state. If the issues are inter-related, democracy promotion through strengthening the civil society was a right choice for nations engaged in this process.

¹¹ Thomas Carothers, *Civil Society: Think Again*, 1999, in Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004, pp. 99-106.

¹² Martin Shaw, from Lester Kurtz ed., *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict*, San Diego, Academic Press, 1999, pp. 269-78.

¹³ *Capacity-building* (or capacity-development) focuses on improving the expertise and skills of the [citizens] in relation to the responsibilities and tasks which they will carry-out. It is generally considered to be a specific part of institutional strengthening activities. Source www.mos.gov.pl (accessed in May, 2008).

¹⁴ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital*, *Journal of Democracy* 6:1, Jan 1995, 65-78.

In the 1980s and 1990s the notion of *civil society* gained popularity among political analysts, as well as among presidents and politicians, especially in the United States. It was connected to as democracy building primary in the former Soviet countries and former colonial as well as in dictatorial / authoritarian countries. Therefore, Office for Democratic Initiatives as part of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was established by the US state Department in 1984. The main purpose of the new attached Office was “democracy enhancement” on the inter-governmental level.

Later, in 1989 the Congress adopted the Support for East European Democracy Act mainly designed for Hungary and Poland. Next year was the year when the Secretary of State James Baker declared “democracy promotion and consolidation” as the primary task of the US foreign policy. Stepping on the same path, the Clinton administration reformulated in 1993 the strategy for USAID where democracy consolidation abroad was one of the four priorities of the foreign policy. This objective was formulated toward four targets: to consolidate rule of law and respect for human rights, to formulate a legitimate political process, to build up more transparent and comprehensive governmental institutions, and to set up principles for the development of the civil society and for increasing its political activity.¹⁵

Thomas Carothers writes several works about democracy promotion in general. He also pays special attention to the role of the civil society aid in this mission of US foreign policy and writes about the assistance provided by the US government in the 1990s. He mentions that with the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union, aiding democracy abroad became of primary interest for American policy makers.¹⁶ Moreover, this was the period of the “third wave of democratization” or “worldwide democratic revolution”.

¹⁵ Peter Burnell, *Democracy Assistance: Origins and Organization*, in Peter Burnell (ed.), *Democracy Assistance* London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 34.

¹⁶ Thomas Carothers, *Western Civil-Society Aid to Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, 1999, in Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004, p.113.

Carothers indicates the main programs and agencies through which American Government fulfils the mission of democracy assistance. He centers on the United States Agency for International Development, whose aid to Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union extends from \$50 billion to \$100 billion in the 1990s. Though it might seem to be a huge number, Carothers states that it is only from \$10 to \$20 per a person of these countries per year.¹⁷ Other agencies involved in the process are Defense Department and Justice Department, National Endowment for Democracy, the Asia and the Eurasia Foundations. The largest share of funding for democracy consolidation, however, is at the disposal of USAID.

The Western role is defined by Thomas Carothers in several dimensions which contribute to democracy consolidation in the countries of Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union. One of them is the diplomatic role with the inter-governmental actions among US and countries receiving aid for economic, political and social reforms. The economic issues directly involve trade relations; indirectly it is about spreading “Western economic principles and practices”.¹⁸ The same characteristic can be addressed to the social dimension with Western movies, music, and television, but the most significant in the role of civil society aid are educational programs providing scholarly exchange, opportunity to study abroad and learn from the democratic experience of the United States.

Finally, as Thomas Carothers states, Western aid performs a positive role, but he also addresses some questions, like “where does official aid work, that is, where governments and major institutions make good use of it? Where it is really needed?”¹⁹ From the perspective of civil society aid implementation through education opportunities provided by US funded programs and organizations this paper attempts to answer these questions. One may ask why civil society type of aid should be paid most attention to? Because formally democratic institutes

¹⁷ Thomas Carothers, 1999, p. 112.

¹⁸ Thomas Carothers, 1999, p. 111.

(like parliament and regular elections) are not enough to defend the new democracies from a potential fall under attacks by extreme political forces growing on the soil of economic problems, tensions between nationalities, typical in transitional countries. On the other hand, even the formally democratic ruling parties might ignore democratic principles if the civil society is not strong in that country. Therefore, civil society aid assures direct participation in the political activity of the country and [pluralistic] party system development, strong and functional NGOs, market economy development and institutional consolidation of democracy.

Educational possibilities offered to thousands of individuals from the countries receiving the aid might be categorized as the most important achievement. It offers development and skills which later can be shared by the graduates of US educational programs within their native country through the intermediary of NGOs on human rights and civic-education they can be part of. Either they can be members or employees of environmental organizations or mass media and reveal their ideas in newspapers and journals, or new programs. Unfortunately, the independent media sometimes is absent in the countries passing through transition.

Liana Mikayelyan is saying in her literature review that despite the wide attention of transitional literature paid to the US democracy promotion and consolidation, the role of education in consolidating, or even formation of democratic values and a democratic society has been paid less attention. I intended to disagree with her, but in conclusion I discovered that indeed she was right. Only a few authors write about the role of education in democratization of CIS countries or in the countries in transition and the most notable in my point of view is Thomas Carothers. That is why my thesis will analyze the democratization process in the Republic of Moldova from the schooling perspective and will attempt to investigate the role of educational programs funded by the US Government in the described process, in comparison to Armenia (both CIS and in transition countries). The next sub-chapter will consider the US

¹⁹ Thomas Carothers, 1999, p. 115.

educational projects and agencies which recruit students and faculty from Moldova and which are aimed to contribute to the process of democracy consolidation in this country and correlate them with those from Armenia.

1.2 The USAID Strategic Plan for the Republic of Moldova

The Republic of Moldova, which gained independence in 1991, is an agricultural country. After the break up of the Soviet Union it was among the countries that were most committed to democratization and economic reforms. Substantial reforms and democratization have been carried out, though challenges in establishing a market economy, improving the private entrepreneur growing, promoting the values of democratic regime (through education mainly), and creating social security remain unsolved. The USAID opened its office in Moldova in 1993 and has delivered more than \$300 million in technical assistance, targeting primarily the land and energy sector privatization, health and humanitarian needs, strengthening the rule of law, business development, and financial reforms. In this transition, Moldova faces great obstacles, which are the lack of natural resources, indelible support of the old regime type of governance and the social fatigue, which inevitably go together with political and economic transformations.²⁰

The USAID's Assistance Strategy for Moldova for the period 2001 – 2006 which still serves as a fundament, includes help for establishing a *market environment* that fosters ample growth, that has to create the economic conditions necessary to increase employment in a competitive *private enterprise growth* and to provide Moldavians with the chance to find sustainable employment, to improve the income and services to the population (as providing high-quality healthcare services). The third goal is to establish a *social safety net* in order to

reach vulnerable groups like disabled or elderly people and the unemployed or the poor as part of short-term objectives, with long-term benefits. The last but not least task is to stimulate and promote basic values and principles of *democratic governance and citizen participation*, which is accompanied by more accountable institutional governance and increased participation in the civic life of the country.²¹

The educational objectives of the USAID strategy for Moldova are part of the last mentioned task, which is of particular interest with regard to the main argument of the thesis and its research questions. The American exchange programs and trainings provide Moldavians with experience in leadership, every day functioning of a democratic system and market-based economy. Up to 2005, USAID through the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs had funded travel costs for 3,080 Moldavian citizens to the United States on programs related to NGO development, management, and social service provision. To this date, over 2,500 Moldavians have participated in US government funded educational programs.²²

Professional and academic exchange, education and cultural programs, press and information activities are headed in Moldova by a Public Affairs Officer. The US Embassy in Chisinau, through the Public Affairs Section (PAS), promotes studies of American thoughts, civilization, history and values through a series of projects, including:

- Support of the American Studies programs at the undergraduate level at the Institute of Political Studies and International Relations (ISPRI), the Center for American Studies at the Master level at Moldova State University, as well as promotion of the American civilization model in other university courses.

²⁰ USAID / Moldova, <http://moldova.usaid.gov> (accessed in May, 2008)

²¹ The USAID's Assistance Strategy for Moldova for the period 2001 – 2006, <http://moldova.usaid.gov> (accessed in May, 2008)

²² U.S. Assistance to Moldova – Fiscal Year 2005, Fact Sheet, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, Washington, June 21, 2005.

- Support for the organization of in-country seminars, trainings and workshops on American Studies, by offering grants to Moldavian institutions for organizing these events. Representatives from the US Embassy and the US Fulbright Scholars are invited to these events to share their experience and knowledge.
- Support for participation of junior and senior faculty in American Studies workshops, trainings, seminars and conferences abroad – in Ukraine, Romania, Poland, USA and other countries.
- Donations of American Studies materials to schools, universities, and libraries. Materials of American Studies are also offered for various conferences, congresses and other events organized by or with the support of the Public Affairs Section.²³

While implementing educational, exchange and faculty programs, USAID has been continuing to design and focus, through its various offices and agencies, on the educational quality relevant to the demands of the new economic conditions since it opened its office in Moldova. It also provides equitable access for the people in need in primary, secondary and high-level education. Contribution to the reformation of the educational system in Moldova leads to sustainable job creation, development of a democratic civil society, and long-term poverty reduction. More detailed information about the mentioned support and programs, administered by USAID in Moldova, will be provided in the next chapter.

As for Armenia, the American AID also targets five main areas, says Liana Mikayelyan. She describes them in details in her thesis, but I will only name them briefly. They are: secure access to water and energy resources; create sustainable employment; improve democratic governance by increasing citizens participation in the decisional process; improvement of social protection; “cross-cutting initiatives and program support”.²⁴ The last objectives are very similar to those for

²³ Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in the Republic of Moldova, PAS Brochure, 2005.

²⁴ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p. 13.

Moldova, something I expected since both countries have to face very similar challenges. The first principle differs by content, while in Armenia it is about energy and water resources, in Moldova it is about market environment, but they both are aimed to support and foster the economic growth of the countries. Liana Mikayelyan places education as the last goal, while in Moldova it comes together with citizens' political participation. But the essence is not the place of education's within the Strategic Plans, it is about impacts that this aspect has on the national level. It is aimed for all the educational levels (primary, secondary and higher). And the next chapter will analyze the programs implemented at all levels.

Chapter 2: The US Educational Organizations and Programs operating in Moldova and their impacts on the democratization of the country

This chapter will examine the American non-governmental organizations and their various programs, as well as other projects which are supported and funded by the US Government and implemented for strengthening the democratization process in Moldova. Most of the strategies of these organizations and programs are aimed to improve the quality of education in Moldova and to provide incentives for the democratic consolidation of the country. In Moldova specifically one of these branches is the Public Affairs Section of the Embassy of the United States, which administers or monitors the US educational organizations, programs, and projects.

The chapter will briefly reveal their activity and aims and will attempt to present their effects and impacts on the educational and democratic development in Moldova, as well as some critiques from the participants of US learning programs, Moldavian and American officials. Some of these programs are described in Liana Mikayelyan paper, but she also describes some programs which do not exist in Moldova, such as Academy for International Development and Project Harmony. I will compare the institutional arrangements for both countries and the activities of the same programs and will examine some centers and projects which are not mentioned in my colleagues' thesis.

2.1 American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELES

American Councils for International Education: *ACTR/ACCELES* is an international non-for-profit organization administrating study, exchange and knowledge development between the United States with Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

Founded in 1974 as an association for area and language professionals, American Councils has focused its expertise on the design and implementation of academic exchange, professional training, distance learning, curriculum and test development, delivery of technical assistance and consulting services, research and evaluation, and institution building.²⁵

At this is done to fulfill the mission of the American Council, which is to promote independence and democracy building / democracy consolidation by leading education and research in the areas it operates; improving leadership by investing in individuals' learning and institutions' empowering; developing partnership and collaborative programs between them in the United States and in the countries of Eurasia and Eastern Europe and "providing consultations on project design and education innovation programs".²⁶

The abbreviation ACTR emerges from the initial name of the organization – American Councils of Teachers of Russian – "which was working to develop research and training; to provide materials in the fields of Russian and English; to strengthen communication among scholars and lecturers in language, literature, and area studies of the United States and the former Soviet Union". In 1987 the ACTR Board of Directors adhered to the American Council for Collaboration in Education and Language Study (ACCELS), "which quickly became a leader in

²⁵ American Council for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, *American Council Staff in Chisinau* <http://www.americancouncils.md/> (last accessed in May 2008).

²⁶ American Council for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, *Mission and History*, <http://www.americancouncils.md/> (last accessed in May 2008).

the design and administration of exchange and training programs funded by the U.S. government”.²⁷

The American Council opened its office in Moldova in 1992, conducting its activity by administering various exchange and alumni development programs together with the US Department of States’ Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Participants from Moldova have been in forty six states of the United States of America. The Office for Armenia was established later, in 1996. One of the most popular and important program, administered by the Council is the *Future Leaders Exchange Programs* (FLEX). It is aimed for high-schools pupils who spend one academic year in the US studying in an American high school and living with an American host family. Recipients of FLEX scholarships are selected on the basis of merit demonstrated in application materials by an independent panel of experienced educators in the United States.²⁸

For contributing to the statement of Liana Mikayelyan I suppose that despite the positive effects of the above program on contributing to the development of leadership skills for Armenian participants and cultural exchange and education in accordance with democratic principles, there are some negative aspects as well (a statement based on her interview with an official from the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science). One of the negative aspects is the provocation for young psychology of the participants of FLEX program, to be sent away from home for quite a long period.²⁹ The environment in the US is entirely different and they might face difficulties in this new environment, and what is more important, with re-accommodation to their countries upon return. According to several discussions with the Moldavian FLEX alumni, they might face depression either when arriving to the US, or when

²⁷ American Council for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, *Mission and History*, <http://www.americancouncils.md/> (last accessed in May 2008).

²⁸ Embassy of the United States / Chisinau, Moldova, Offices and Departments, Public Affairs Section, *Academic, Professional, and Cultural Exchange Programs*, www.usembassy.md (accessed in May 2008).

²⁹ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p. 22.

coming back to Moldova; or even worse, feeling the same as their Armenian counter-parts during both periods. Such negative aspects can be avoided by organizing pre-departure and post-departure sessions where alumni can share their experience and feelings. Other negative features in some cases are the inability to re-accommodate and the imprints of the American lifestyle due to which alumni of FLEX seek again for new studying opportunities or jobs abroad. The US programs, thus, prepared these young people in order to contribute to the human capacity-building³⁰ of their country and to share the values of liberty in the process of consolidating its democracy.

The *Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program* is a one-year scholarship offered to mid-career professionals who prove having leadership capacities, readiness to be active as public servants in either the public or the private sector, and the capacity to fully benefit of a self-defined program of independent study at a leading American university. The program is not designed to deliver an advanced degree; its participants instead receive a certificate from the US Government stating that they conducted their research in a certain field, each year identified by the US Embassy in Moldova.³¹ This program is not well rooted in Moldova and during the last two years only one participant per year has benefited of this program.

Another interesting educational and training program implemented in R. Moldova, but not mentioned in Mikayelyan's paper, is the *American Practicum Program* (APP) offering academic or professional internships in the US for three to eleven months. The motto of the program is offering "a chance to gain professional experience in the US directly related to

³⁰ The Human Capacity Building program purpose: to assist developing countries in building institutional and organizational capacity through human resource management & development and organizational development activities. Source International Telecommunication Union, BDT Human Capacity Building Programme, <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/hrd/> (accessed in May, 2008).

³¹ Embassy of the United States / Chisinau, Moldova, Offices and Departments, Public Affairs Section, *Academic, Professional, and Cultural Exchange Programs*, www.usembassy.md (accessed in May 2008).

academic and career interests”.³² This program recruits internship participants in the following categories: agriculture, architecture, computer sciences, engineering, finance, health-related occupations, hospitality and hotel management, industrial occupations, journalism and communications, law, management, business, and public administration.

A significant program in the general mission of the American foreign policy to consolidate democracy in Moldova is *The Open World Program*, administered by the American Councils. This program was designed by the US Congress in 1999; it invites emerging political and civic leaders from Moldova (and other former Eurasian countries) to the United States for short-term professional visits. Its goal is to promote mutual understanding between Moldova and the United States by giving the chance to Moldavian leaders to experience American political and civic life and to express their ideas and expertise with their American counterparts. In 2007, after the local elections, eight newly elected mayors left for North Carolina, taking part in the Open World exchange program. The value of their trip consisted of the fact that they were able to see the American system of governance and apply the gained knowledge to their village, city or region, at the same time sharing their attitudes with American people about Moldova. The participating mayors from small towns in Moldova, over the ten days in North Carolina met state, local and federal government officials who shared their experience of the role of government and partnership. The mayors were living within an American family in order to experience the civic and cultural life of the country; they attended a college basketball game and a Christmas Parade and watched the lighting of the town’s Christmas tree.³³

³² American Council for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS, Exchange Programs, Professional Training Programs, *American Practicum Program*, <http://www.americancouncils.md/>, (accessed in May 2008).

³³ News Archive of the US Embassy in the Republic of Moldova, *Eight Newly Elected Mayors Leave for Exchange Program to the United States*, November 27, 2007, www.usembassy.md (accessed in May 2008).

2.2 International Research and Exchange Board (IREX)

International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) is an international nonprofit organization which provides leadership and innovative programs for improving the quality of education, strengthening independent media, and fostering pluralistic civil society development. It was founded in 1968 and has an annual budget of \$50 million. IREX administers offices in 50 different countries with a staff of over 400 professionals and together with its counterpart IREX Europe provides cross-cutting programs and consulting expertise. It was founded by leading US universities to administer exchange with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But even if the founding papers of this organization cite an “immediate mandate” centered on that region, they also cite that “there is no disposition to limit [IREX’s] jurisdiction geographically”. The same founding documents state that a centered organization was needed “to reflect disparate interests, to be capable of centralizing diverse functions and administer them efficiently..., solicit and attract sufficient funds, be immune to political pressure from all sides, [and] fulfill the sensitive role of clearinghouse for information”.³⁴

The IREX office in Moldova was registered in 1999 and since then it has administered cultural, scholarly and professional exchange programs. In Yerevan it began operating in 1992, therefore more Armenian citizens could benefit of the programs offered by IREX and the number of participants in its programs by Mikayelyan’s paper is much higher than in mine. IREX remains committed to support scholarship and free intellectual inquiry among Moldavian and other scholars (in over 125 cities of Europe and Eurasia) in order to “advance education, support independent media, promote Internet development and build a healthy civil society”.³⁵ The very same goals are described by Liana Mikayelyan as main focus areas for Armenia.

³⁴ International Research & Exchanges Board, *IREX Mission*, www.irex.org (last accessed in May 2008).

³⁵ International Research & Exchanges Board, *IREX Mission*, www.irex.org (last accessed in May 2008).

The goals of the programs administered by IREX are to encourage mutual understanding between the United States and Moldavian (and Armenian) communities through exchanging and training programs; to advance democratic and economic reforms in Moldova by implementing the experience and knowledge that the participants of the programs gain. Participants in exchange programs are selected on merit bases, though each program has additional area requirements; the participants are evaluated on factors such as academic excellence, leadership potential, fields of study and research, preparedness for living in the US and knowledge of English. These programs are funded by the US Department of State and offer equal opportunities to all, without any forms of discrimination.³⁶

The Fulbright Programs, which are under the supervision of IREX, offer non-degree research grants in all academic fields through two sub-programs: the *Fulbright Scholar Program* and the *Fulbright Faculty Development Program*. The Fulbright Scholar Program allocates grants to senior researchers, university lecturers, or experts in different fields with a doctoral degree or equivalent professional experience for conducting research in the U.S. The Fulbright Faculty Development Program awards Moldavian university professors and administrators with at least two years of professional experience and an opportunity to explore curriculum development and teaching methodology in the U.S. The Fulbright Faculty Development Program replaces the Junior Faculty Development Program (JFDP), which has been discontinued in Moldova.³⁷ But JFDP program is still operating in Armenia, and it is under the supervision of the previous discussed organization ACTR/ACCELS. The difference is the minimum period spent in US – one semester, which makes up appreciatively five months.³⁸

³⁶ Press Release 2007, <http://moldova.usembassy.gov/> (accessed in May 2008).

³⁷ Embassy of the United States / Chisinau, Moldova, Offices and Departments, Public Affairs Section, *Academic, Professional, and Cultural Exchange Programs*, www.usembassy.md (accessed in May 2008).

³⁸ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p. 22.

The *Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program* is administered by the International Research & Exchanges Board. The Muskie Program provides opportunities for graduate students and professionals from Moldova for one-year non-degree, one-year degree, or two-year degree study in the United States. Since its establishment this program has provided study grants to over 3000 Eurasians. According to the statistical data obtained in the Alumni Resource Center for this thesis, during 2005-2007 fourteen fellows were selected to depart to the United States. From Armenia only in 2006 seventeen participants were selected for this program. The fields of their study are journalism, public administration, library science, law, international relations, education, non-profit management, and public policy.³⁹ I will return to the Edmund Muskie Fellowship Program in the third chapter, since it has been selected as one of the programs, the participants of which took part in the interview-based survey for both papers.

An alumnus of the Muskie program – Alexander Culiuc – who did his studies at Harvard considers that universities in Moldova are based on “transferring some knowledge”, often old-fashioned, and this is something I agree with. In the majority of cases students are required to represent the materials taught by the professor and nothing more. In USA the process of studying is organized in such a way as, that parallel to learning, to teach students to analyze, investigate, write and talk in public, to negotiate, and to effectively manage his/her time. “The knowledge gets old, says Alexander, and only the habits of work, auto-perfection and communication assimilated at the university continue to be useful during the whole career”. The universities in Moldova, unfortunately, do not offer attention to such aspects. That is why their “graduates are often competitive in disciplines where knowledge is up-to-date (mathematics, for example), but lack skills in domains which request a creative or critical approach (in economy) or aptitudes of communication (management)”. When asked if those who study in USA intend to return to

³⁹ Embassy of the United States / Chisinau, Moldova, Offices and Departments, Public Affairs Section, *Academic, Professional, and Cultural Exchange Programs*, www.usembassy.md (accessed in May 2008).

Moldova, Alexander replied that “many of the alumni remained in US, though the majority plan, or at least hope, to come back to their native country, where one feels the best, no matter how cosmopolitan s/he is”.⁴⁰ The choices of the alumni to return (or not) to their country and the results of their choices will be discussed more in the third chapter of this paper.

A fact worth mentioning in this context is that Muskie programs assume the return of the program’s participants to their native country for at least two years (as well as other programs of studying in the United States). And the quality of Moldavian studies differs from those of US which assume studies in a cosmopolitan medium, where the accent is placed on individual responsibility and capacity to analyze independently or in a group the debated subjects. The desire to leave Moldova might be very strong for a youngster who studied in the West, as well as for a youngster who studied in Moldova, from the point of view of advantages offered: access to information, literature, free mass-media, quality of education and conditions of employment, etc. All of these are linked to not only acquiring a profession or some qualities, but also to undertaking a certain mentality as well. The decision of the young Moldavians to continue the studies or to be employed abroad is determined by the existing opportunities. Those who studied in US do not accept handwork, at least from social injustice perspective – because they studied as well or even better than their co-citizens. Hence, if it is difficult to obtain a scholarship in the United States, it is even more difficult to be competitive on US academic or job market.

The *Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program* (UGRAD) is also administered by IREX in both Moldova and Armenia. UGRAD provides opportunities for first, second or third year undergraduate students from Moldova to spend one academic year of non-degree study in a US host university or community college. There are sixteen fields of study in this program: journalism and mass communication, American studies, accounting, business, agriculture, computer science, economics, criminal justice, education, environmental management, law,

⁴⁰ Interview with Alexander Culiuc, by Silvia Ursu, published in the newspaper “Timpul”, July, 2005.

political science, international relations, hospitality management, sociology and psychology.⁴¹ According to the same data required from the Alumni Resource Center for this thesis, in 2006 and 2007 fourteen fellows took part in this program (seven in each year) and spent one year of study in the United States. Liana Mikayalyan brings a number of 16 participants for only one academic year, the 2006-2007.⁴² Taking into consideration the countries size, that are similar, and the Armenian population, which by official data is twice smaller than Moldavian, this fact may reveal the bigger interest of Armenians to study in the United States and remain there.

A significant program which ensures professional and academic growth for all citizens of the Republic of Moldova is the *Internet Access and Training Program* (IATP). In Moldova IATP was launched in June 1998 and originally was administered by the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Chisinau and funded by the United States Information Agency (USIA). Since USIA has become a part of the US State Department and is now known as the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), IATP is funded by ECA and administered by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX). It is open to everybody, though the main target of this program are alumni of ECA exchange programs as it seeks to encourage them to share their experience gained overseas with the Moldavian population. Moldavians can participate in a series of training courses that IATP offers free of charge.⁴³

It “provides the opportunity to learn about the Internet and about how it can serve as a valuable informational resource in professional and academic settings”. For example, the training courses teach Moldavian lawyers how they can access information about Moldavian legislation on the Internet, or shows journalists how to find on the Internet the information that they can use

⁴¹ Embassy of the United States / Chisinau, Moldova, Offices and Departments, Public Affairs Section, *Academic, Professional, and Cultural Exchange Programs*, www.usembassy.md (accessed in May 2008).

⁴² Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p. 24.

⁴³ Internet Access and Training Program in Moldova, www.iatp.md (last accessed in May 2008).

in writing news and reports. Staff members of NGOs can benefit from the courses of IATP by learning about the activities of other local and international NGOs that have the same mission.⁴⁴

In addition to offering Internet access and training, IATP also attempts to promote the development of resources on the Internet about Moldova by conducting training courses that show how to create various websites. The practical part of this program is providing space on IATP server for hosting the websites created during the trainings. This program cooperates with other international and local organizations to provide specialized Internet related training sessions. These organizations include ACTR-ACCELS Moldova, the US Embassy Alumni Resource Center (ARC), the Association of Independent Press, Dynamic Network Technologies, the Independent Journalism Center (IJC), and the Soros Foundation in Moldova. Four computers at the Independent Journalism Center building are connected to the Internet via IATP, functioning as an Internet access site for Moldavian journalists.⁴⁵ The access site provides journalists with the opportunity to benefit of the informational resources it offers and to progress the free media, which is a significant ingredient of a working democracy.

IATP staff in Moldova consists of 20 employees in eight regions throughout Moldova, but this staff is also completed by Mobile Trainers who provide courses and seminars related to Internet outside the IATP public access sites. Eleven computers at the US Embassy Alumni Resource Center in Chisinau are delivered Internet connectivity from IATP to provide alumni of ECA exchange programs the “opportunity to continue their professional and academic development through information sharing, network building, and collaboration among their former colleagues in the US and other alumni”. Alumni also are granted IATP e-mail accounts and are provided with Internet access from home during specified hours of the day.⁴⁶ Since the persons, who benefit of these services, can learn about polite and democratic methods of running

⁴⁴ Internet Access and Training Program in Moldova, www.iatp.md (last accessed in May 2008).

⁴⁵ Internet Access and Training Program in Moldova, www.iatp.md (last accessed in May 2008).

the political activity, this is a significant contribution in strengthening the political stability and democratization in Moldova.

Liana Mikayelyan briefly names some other programs administered by IREX, which are not present in Moldova. She talks about the programs aimed for school and high-school teachers, administration, officials from educational sphere and curriculum development. She also mentions the educational reforms implied by them. She begins her second chapter by describing the Academy for Educational Development, which is also an NGO operating in her country from 1994. Unlike the other project described till now, this organization operates locally in the host country, having the goal to promote democracy and “humanitarian principles” through its 1100 projects in the areas of improving institutional and economic capacity of the country, as well as in reconstruction. Liana Mikayelyan states that these programs are educational because they include the training component.⁴⁷

The last project mentioned in the paper of Liana Mikayelyan is the Project Harmony. It has some similar goals as the previous program, but also assists the leaders of small business and the environmentalists in designing and administrating their projects. This program offers similar services as the IATP center in Moldova, receiving foundation from US Government and other agencies. As described by Liana, it offers the same internet services to lecturers and students and assists them in organizing conferences and seminars about the “democratic teaching methods as well as utilization of information technologies at schools”⁴⁸, the same tasks as the English Teaching Resource Center fulfills in Moldova. The activities of this project are oriented towards four main areas: “Internet technologies, educational development, community development and professional development”.⁴⁹ This project has offices only in 5 countries of the post-Soviet

⁴⁶ Internet Access and Training Program in Moldova, www.iatp.md (last accessed in May 2008).

⁴⁷ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p.25.

⁴⁸ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p.26.

⁴⁹ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p.28.

territory, and Moldova is not among them. Project Harmony also seems to be an addition to IREX; it administers very similar programs to what IREX itself does in Moldova.

The table below shows how many students participated in some of the mentioned programs during the last years and the fields of their activity. The data was specially requested from the Alumni Resource Center to be presented in this paper:

Table 1: Number of participants in US Educational programs in 2005-2007

Program	Year	Number of participants	Fields of activity
Fulbright	2007	7	Biology Education
Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship	2007 2006	1 1	NGO Legal Aspects Human Resources
International Visitors	2007 2006 2005	22 27 21	Law Sociology/Social Work Communications/Journalism Political Science Education International Relation
UGRAD	2007 2006	7 7	Education Economics International Relation Communications/Journalism Computer Science Business Administration Environmental Science Psychology Linguistics
Muskie	2007 2006 2005	6 6 2	Journalism Public Administration Law Library Science International Relation Education Nonprofit Management Public Policy Public Health Business Administration

2.3 Projects and centers activating in Moldova under the supervision of the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy.

The US Embassy *Alumni Resource Center* (ARC) acts to assist the alumni of US government funded exchange programs in sharing and implementing the experience and knowledge the participants of the programs have accumulated during their studies in US with other Moldavians, therefore adding to human and instructive capacity development of the country. The Center supports those alumni who are able to directly make Moldova a more prosperous and consolidated democracy by providing them logistical assistance in planning events, offers premises for conferences and discussions initiated by alumni, promotes networking among alumni of all US Government funded exchange programs, provides information about chances for professional development in the US, Central and Eastern Europe, and advertises monthly job openings in Moldova.⁵⁰

ARC also publishes and distributes the quarterly Alumni News, containing information about alumni events and success stories of alumni who are contributing to positive changes in Moldova, organizes professional development seminars and activities, organizes social events and movie screenings, offers some small grants to alumni and well-equipped computer room with internet and email access, also provides them with access to copying, scanning, and faxing equipment. Public Affairs Section does the following grant programs: Democracy Commission Small Grants Program (Annual budget: \$230,000-\$245,000) and the Alumni Small Grants Program (Annual Budget \$40,000-\$50,000). Between 2001 and 2006 PAS issued 280 grants with a total value of about \$1.4 million.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Embassy of the United States / Chisinau, Moldova, Offices and Departments, Public Affairs Section, *Alumni Resource Center*, www.usembassy.md (accessed in May 2008).

⁵¹ Information obtained from the Embassy of the United States in Chisinau, Moldova especially for this thesis.

At the end of April, the Alumni Small Grants Program Selection Committee composed of Alumni Board Members and PAS Staff met to discuss the submitted proposals. The following 6 projects were selected for full or partial funding:

- Three FLEX alumni received financial support for organizing a series of trainings for last year university students on career development and for organizing a university student's workshop by local business companies in the frames of a career development project.
- Another girl, representing a group of FLEX alumni - for organizing the Charity Ball that will contribute to equipping a computer class in the orphanage for mute children.
- A Fulbright alumna - for a series of presentations for Moldavian English teachers given by guest speakers from the US.
- A Community Connections alumna - for organizing day summer camp at the public library in a region of Moldova, for children whose parents are outside of the country.
- Another Community Connections alumnus - for organizing a conference on developing volunteer movement in Transnistria.⁵²

The ARC cooperates closely with the Alumni Board, which is elected by the alumni community annually. The Alumni Board includes a President, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Director, Northern Regional Representative, Central Regional Representative and Southern Regional Representative. Domain Leaders are elected by domain alumni and representing each of the ten fields of alumni professional activity, such as agriculture, business and economy, civil society, health care and social assistance, public administration, human rights and legal issues, mass media, education and science, students culture, tourism and environmental issues. Through the Alumni Board and Domain Leaders, alumni work together in planning and implementing activities of these fields regionally. By collaborating in this way, alumni "are able to make a greater impact in their chosen areas and to bring about more improvement in Moldova than if each person were to work alone".⁵³

⁵² Embassy of the United States / Chisinau, Moldova, Offices and Departments, Public Affairs Section, *Alumni Resource Center, ARC News* www.usembassy.md (accessed in May 2008).

⁵³ Embassy of the United States / Chisinau, Moldova, Offices and Departments, Public Affairs Section, *Alumni Resource Center*, www.usembassy.md (accessed in May 2008).

Educational Advising Center (EAC) has the mission to “encourage the educational mobility of Moldavian students and graduates” by providing comprehensive, unbiased and faithful information regarding opportunities to everyone who is interested in educational undergraduate or graduate, degree or non-degree programs, as well as trainings and research at colleges and universities in the US, Europe and other countries. EAC offers the possibility for students, researchers, university teachers, administrators and professionals to participate in various competitive studying programs carried on in academic environments, in order to promote the values of an open civil society.⁵⁴ This program also exists in Armenia and it has the same objectives in all the countries that it has offices in.

This center provides regular consultations on US Government sponsored exchange and educational questions, such as scholarships, inquiries about education, English Language Courses, and summer study opportunities for interested persons, of which I have benefited personally. EAC staff helps visitors to look for US colleges, universities and learning programs and to choose an appropriate institution, further assisting in communication with the institutions’ admissions offices and in completing and sending the application materials, in consulting on financial issues, visa and pre-departure. The center provides information about the dates and places of TOEFL, GMAT and other exams, as well as access to a library and CD-ROM databases regarding preparation materials for these exams and tests. Another services offered by EAC is free of charge Internet access and delivery to subscribers of electronic lists with information and news on learning opportunities.⁵⁵

The Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy develops and supports a series of *English Teaching Programs* to enrich the teaching of English Language in Moldova, these Programs are:

⁵⁴ Educational Advising Center, *EAC Mission*, www.eac.md (last accessed in May 2008).

⁵⁵ Educational Advising Center, *EAC Mission*, www.eac.md (last accessed in May 2008).

The English Teaching Resource Center (ETRC) – a non-profit and non-governmental organization that was established in 1998 by the US Embassy and State Pedagogical University “Ion Creanga”, in collaboration with the British Embassy in Moldova. The idea of its creation belongs to a group of English language teachers who had the desire to contribute to the improvement of English teaching aptitudes. At the moment ETRC is a multi-media center founded to help teachers of English to improve their knowledge, to consult them in developing their lessons and teaching methods, and to maintain a communication network among teachers of English language throughout Moldova. These missions are ensured by organizing forums for colleagues to meet, share and discuss the professional techniques and ideas.⁵⁶

English Language Specialist Program is aimed to assist in improving the techniques of teaching English language in selected institutions all over Moldova (especially in villages), by sending English language professionals from the US to these institutions for a period of ten months. This program in Moldova is also conducted in collaboration with "Ion Creanga" Pedagogical State University and headquartered at the English Teaching Resource Center.⁵⁷

The English Language Fellow Program enrolls American specialists in the field of TEFL/TESL and Applied Linguistics for short-term assignments (two to six weeks) or as speakers for video or teleconferences outside US for foreign audiences. These specialists are enrolled by the Office of English Language Programs and at the request from an American Embassy overseas are sent to fulfill their missions. A specialist's field of activity depends on the request from the Embassy; they may work on curriculum projects, teacher-training seminars, English for Special Purposes, textbook development, program evaluation or other short projects. In requesting procedure, an American Embassy may suggest a candidate; if they do not, then the

⁵⁶ Internet Access and Training Program in Moldova, *The English Teaching Resource Center*, www.iatp.md (last accessed in May 2008).

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs, *The English Language Specialist Program*, <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/specialists.htm> (last accessed in May 2008).

Office of English Language Programs contacts and enrolls an English language specialist from among well-known academics in this field.⁵⁸

In November 2006 the Center for Consultancy in Education guessed John Balian and Elizabeth Lewis – the representatives of the Public Affairs Section of US Embassy in Moldova. They talked about the possibilities to study in the United States in the most preferred domains of Moldavian students, such as business, engineering, and mathematics. “A studying year in the US out-values between \$ 16 and 46.5 thousand, but there is the chance to win grants or to participate in diverse exchange student programs”, stated Elizabeth Lewis. She also said that they would like the young participants to return home and bring the gained knowledge after finishing their studies in the US. In most cases, unfortunately, they prefer to remain in America.⁵⁹

Other facts that influence decisions to study and stay abroad are the old-fashioned quality of the Moldavian education system, the poor conditions for further research and the low stipends offered to those students who study on basis of a governmental scholarship or grant. These stipends per month may cover only the travel expenses of a student and some meals at the student canteen. A scholarship abroad is higher and allows covering more necessities, but the students abroad have to study hard, maybe harder than their colleagues in Moldova. Therefore, one should understand that Moldova is a post-communist country and reforms in the educational system are realized slowly and depend mainly on the economic development of the country. Moldova is not among very developed countries and still steps on the transitional path of political, economic and social domains.

⁵⁸ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs, *The English Language Fellow Program*, <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/fellows.htm> (last accessed in May 2008).

⁵⁹ Interview with Elizabeth Lewis for *Ziarul de Garda*, Nr 105 of 9 November, 2006.

Chapter 3: Career Options of Moldavian Graduates from US Educational Programs compared to those of Armenians

In this chapter I compare the findings of my survey with those of Liana Mikayelyan. For this purpose I interviewed 23 alumni of several US sponsored programs. The questions in my questionnaires have particularly the same purpose as those of Mikayelyan – to identify the career paths of the graduates of the programs in order to see whether they were employed by international or local organizations. The choice of employment has been the key issue determining the career paths of Moldavians and Armenians. I add the undergraduate and high-school level in order to identify some innovations for the research. I found out that given their young age and inability to get professional employment abroad, the undergraduate and the high-school participants return home more often. Therefore, they bring a higher contribution to the sharing of democracy principles in their countries. I provide a detailed description of my data sample and major findings and compare them to those of Mikayelyan, and argue that, in contrast to Mikaelian's findings, I find that working for IO-s contributes to the democratization of the country.

3.1. Case selection: Alumni of the Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program, the Fulbright Faculty Development Program, the Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program, and the Future Leaders Exchange Program

For the interview-based research I selected the alumni of three different categories (graduate, undergraduate and high-school programs) as main respondents and divided them into

two groups: of those who returned home and of those who reside abroad, after graduating from their American educational programs. One reason for selecting these particular programs is the ability to compare the results of graduate, undergraduate and high-school projects in Moldova. Besides, it also makes possible the comparison of the research outcomes for Armenia and Moldova. The graduates of the American institutions have a clear advantage over their undergraduate counterparts, who still have to continue their studies for obtaining a higher degree, and over their high – school fellows, who still have to cover a long distance on their study paths to become professionals. Generally, alumni from both countries received their diplomas from more than one hundred American educational institutions cooperating with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State, and were consequently hosted by mentioned institutions.

Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program and Fulbright Faculty Development Program are administered by the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) and are funded by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State. These programs offer studies for the Master's degree in the United States to the citizens of European, Asian, and CIS countries, including Moldova and Armenia. Since its establishment in 1992, the Muskie Fellowship Program has offered study grants to more than three thousand Eurasian participants. According to the statistical data provided by the Alumni Resource Center in Moldova, over the last three years 14 participants benefited from the studies offered by this program, while in Armenia the number of beneficiaries of the same program for only year 2006 was seventeen⁶⁰; and seven Moldavians went to the US through the Fulbright program in 2007.

The second category of respondents for my paper is formed by alumni of the Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program (UGRAD), also administered by IREX. It operates in the same countries as do the programs described above and gives opportunities for the first, the

second or the third year undergraduate students to study for one year in a US host university or in a community college. Unlike the previous programs, UGRAD offers a non-degree study. The fields of study in this program have been mentioned in the second chapter. According to the same data acquired from the Alumni Resource Center for this thesis, in 2006 seven other participants were pursuing their studies in the United States.

The third category of respondents is represented by the participants of the Future Leaders Exchange Programs (FLEX), a program monitored by ACTR/ACCELS. This program addresses the high-school pupils and offers study for one year in the United States in an American high school and accommodates the program participants in American host families. FLEX does not offer any official degree, but rather provides an opportunity to gain study experience abroad. Hence, I have selected this program due to the fact that even if most of the participants in this program tend to participate in the US undergraduate and graduate programs after finishing their high-school studies, they contribute to the democratization of Moldova considerably, since they stay home longer and their civil surrounding is the future growing generation of the country.

Liana Mikayelyan also interviewed the group of students from the Central European University (CEU), who obtained their grants through the Open Society Institute in Armenia. This Institute is a global network, created and funded by George Soros, with the focus on shaping the public policy of the countries it operates in. It also administers educational programs, providing the opportunity to study abroad. Liana Mikayelyan tries to draw a comparison between this Institute and the American programs, though such comparison is irrelevant for the topic of her thesis. The studies in CEU are aimed to be the American type studies, but the environments inside and outside it differ substantially, as the university is placed in an Eastern European country. Hence, I think that a considerable share of the impact of the US programs on their participants comes for the outside environment, i.e. lifestyle and customs of the country.

⁶⁰ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p. 33.

3.2. Data Sample and its Comparison with the Data from Armenia

The statistical data for my analysis is based on the interviews with 23 alumni of the programs mentioned in the previous sub-chapter. 14 of them, coming from different regions of the country, returned to the Republic of Moldova after graduating from their universities and almost all of them are residing in Chisinau at this point. 9 respondents live and work abroad: three of them are in Germany; one in the United Kingdom; one in Bucharest, Romania; one in Kiev, Ukraine; one in Canada, one in Italy, and only one in the USA.

Liana Mikayelyan interviewed 24 respondents, 12 of which reside in Yerevan and 12 abroad. In other words, for the Armenian case the ratio is 50% - half of respondents reside at home and half are abroad; whereas for Moldavian case about 61% are at home and 39% are abroad. As a result, the ratio of the number of the returned graduates to those unreturned in Moldova is almost 11% higher than that for Armenia. However, this difference is not very significant in statistical terms, because of the small sample size. The solution of this problem is to increase the sample size. But for my case no more data has been available and getting the data from the alumni has been difficult because of their unwillingness to take part in surveys not required by their programs.

At this point I agree with Liana on the fact that those who left Moldova or Armenia or did not return to their home country upon graduation did not accomplish the initial requirements and missions of their funding programs, which require that graduates return to their home countries and contribute to democratization by consolidating their local institutional capacity. A wide exposure to democratization of education and cultural exchange programs provided by US Government to Moldova is based on human- and instructional-related capacity-building, along

with the institutional strengthening.⁶¹ Therefore, the objective of the survey for this category is to determine the main reasons for the graduates not remaining or not returning to Moldova, but continuing their careers abroad, compared to those identified for Armenia.

The interviews with respondents were conducted through email. The respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire provided to them and to send it back upon completion. The questionnaires addressed to the alumni of both groups include almost the same type of questions as those of Mikayelyan, together with some additional ones - what field did the alumni choose to develop their careers, particularly why do they have chosen to work in international, national, state or an educational institutions; do the respondents who reside in Moldova intend to stay in the country or they consider any opportunities to be employed abroad; whether the respondents who work abroad plan to return to their homeland, etc.⁶²

The questions were also aimed to collect the data on interviewees' age, gender, and place of birth, present place of residence and rather technical information which can be useful in identifying the arrangements of their career development. Like Mikayelyan, as a result of the survey carried out with 23 graduates, the factors determining why the respondents chose their certain career paths (whether to work for an international or national, state or an educational organization or other options) were identified jointly with their plans for future career development, and with other information which will be presented in detail throughout in this chapter.

Replies from 6 participants of other programs than those on which I focused the survey for the thesis were also received; these programs are Community Connections and Contemporary

⁶¹ *Institutional Strengthening* - is a general term used to describe projects which improve the working of institutions to perform their existing or new tasks. Institutional strengthening produce can include policy and legislative reform, organizational restructuring, training, education, information, provision of additional personnel, etc. Capacity-building is generally considered to be a sub-part of institutional strengthening which focuses on improving the expertise and skills of personnel. Source www.mos.gov.pl (accessed in May, 2008)

⁶² The full model of the questionnaires for respondents residing in Moldova is presented in Appendix 1; the full version for residents abroad is presented in the Appendix 2.

Issues – programs for professionals who already work in a certain domain. They are taken into consideration in determining the results of US programs, and their replies are similar to those of others from their group of respondents residing in Moldova. The age range of the respondents in my survey is 35 - 53 years.⁶³ They are engaged in the educational and scientific sectors and they are those who contribute directly to the democratization of their country by having gained Western experience and sharing it through their work. They are those who have fully complied with the missions of the US educational programs which funded them by contributing to the instructional capacity-building in their country.

A disappointing issue revealed by the survey is the ratio between genders of participants – only 5 out of 23 respondents are male, while in Mikayelyan’s survey they are 8 out of 24. When asked about this issue, the Director of the Moldavian Alumni Resource Center pointed out that as their “experience shows that female alumni are much more active than male alumni” and this did not surprise her. For the category of respondents from Moldova the age ranges from 20 to 43, the average age being 28.1 years (in Armenia it is 31 years). In my sample for the category of respondents from abroad the range is from 25 to 32, the average equaling to 27.1 years (and 29 for Yerevan). Therefore, the average ages for Armenian participants are higher in both groups.

3.3 Findings

This sub-chapter presents the results of qualitative data evaluation of the two groups of interviewees for the two theses from a comparative view. The investigation provides more details about the career choices of Moldavian graduates from American universities and compares them to those of Armenian graduates, consequently leading to several important conclusions for this

⁶³ The full data on this category of respondents is presented in Appendix 9.

thesis. It is important to mention that the analyzed career paths refer only to the period after graduating from Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program, the Fulbright Faculty Development Program, the Eurasian Undergraduate Exchange Program, and the Future Leaders Exchange Program, (and CEU for Armenia). However, the career related experience of the graduates before taking part in US educational programs is not important for this analysis.

3.3.1 First Group: the Alumni, who returned to Moldova and Armenia

The evaluation of the data obtained from the interviews conducted with alumni residing in Moldova (N=14) showed that only 2 of them are employed by commercial international institutions, though 5 are working in American projects providing learning opportunities for citizens of the country. 6 are engaged in educational and scientific fields, and one alumni of FLEX is a student of international economic relations, willing to further be employed by an international agency. In Armenia 8 out of 12 respondents were working at the time of their interviewing in international organizations. The reason why Armenia has more graduates employed in IO-s might be the fact that the employment in local universities or the local government is low. A fact worth mentioning here is that none of Moldavian respondents is a private entrepreneur. The motivation for this can be the inability to develop a healthy private business in Moldova because of still persisting economic and political instability. Whilst, in Armenia one respondent was a private entrepreneur even if his country has (almost) an open conflict with Azerbaijan in Karabachos and it can not be considered as more stable than Moldova.

A bit more than half of Moldova respondents (N=9) are generally satisfied with their current employment and are not seeking job opportunities abroad. Two of the respondents have families and would rather not consider the chance to work abroad, since it would be “difficult to

preserve a healthy relationship” within their family. However, one of the participants considers herself “over-qualified” for Moldova after gaining scientific experience in the United States. Another alumnus is moving very soon to the US. Another person would benefit from the opportunity to leave for a different country, though if she has similar chances for career development in Moldova (which she believes is “less likely”) she will consider “staying as well”.⁶⁴ Consequently, five of the participants in the survey are willing to work abroad, and although the sample is small, not allowing major conclusions, still this is a significant percentage of the total sample size (almost 22%) and even more for the sub-group of respondents who returned home (almost 36%). For the case of Armenia this co-relation is 50%, and once again the desire to have a private business was noticed by Liana Mikayelyan.⁶⁵

When asked about the opportunity to choose between an international, a national, a state or an educational institution, 10 Moldavian respondents would prefer to work within an IO (same does the majority of respondents from Armenia), mainly because of “transparent management” and “decision-making system”. In a specific case, a participant in two American educational programs (Fulbright 2008 and RSEP 2000), is combining the full time work for a state educational institution (the Moldova State University) with the part-time work in an international project. She participates in a project which provides assistance to Moldova in its economic development.⁶⁶ Her activity thus supports the main argument of this thesis. Another responder is pleased with her work at the National Library of R. Moldova. And the most optimistic case is of the respondent whose “choice would be in favor of a national institution which would contribute to the international level as well”.

⁶⁴ The citations are taken from the replied questionnaires; hence some of them will be attached as Appendixes to this thesis.

⁶⁵ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p. 38.

⁶⁶ The full version of this replied questionnaire is attached as Appendix 5.

I would like to note here again that none of the survey participants from Moldova mentioned the desired career path for entrepreneurship. The most common motives of preference to work for an IO are identical in both countries, such as high salaries, compared to those offered by local sector employers, “more opportunities to diverse and interesting types of work” and for career growth, appreciation of initiative and creative thinking, desire to contribute to the welfare of the country by assistance projects, professional and cultural environment of the international organization, low level of corruption, gender equality and personal interests. Last, but not least, is the specificity of the Western obtained education, as it refers to the fact that sometimes it is designed specifically for continuing their career in the international sector. One of the respondents says about this that her “program is based on a professional exchange between leaders from two countries: USA and Moldova”.

The responses of the sub-group of interviewees, who are already employed by international or American agencies, provide several reasons for preferring to work for an IO. Half of respondents work for these institutions due to the financial advantages in forms of higher salaries; for the same reason 9 respondents from Armenia also chose IO. Nevertheless, as Mikayelyan states, with regard to this, not only the high remuneration counts, but also the regularity of salary payments, because the local Armenian and Moldavian employers may not pay their staff for several months. There are other financial and social benefits (i.e. medical insurance) as well in the IO-s. Another factor is the proper application of professional education.

As one of the respondents indicates, she would “choose to work only for an international organization if the option is to work in Moldova”, based on her experience working with local agencies, “the organizational capacity, financial instability, lack of managerial expertise required to run an organization, low investment in building and helping personnel grow and acquire new skills prevent employees from advancing in their career”. Therefore, working with international institutions can ensure more stability, professional growth, good reputation, respect for the rights

of employees, and additional services or benefits. Similar responses were recorded by Mikayelyan. In addition, working with IO can make my previous respondent “to contribute to the development of the local organizations that lack these competences”,⁶⁷ as a result contributing to the institutional strengthening of the country.

To my specific question, all the respondents of the first group answered that they *do contribute to the democratization of Moldova by possessing a Western education*. A FLEX alumna states that even if her education was limited to one year of high school, a fact which influenced more her thinking pattern and motivation than her academic performance is the “Western mindset”, which is a key element in the process of democratization. Another participant at this program answered “yes”, because Western education teaches one to be flexible, disciplined, have “out-of-the-box thinking” and have a broader vision. The youngest, but optimistic FLEX alumni says “yes” because she implements her experience on a “day-to-day basis” and this is the way she shows others what a real democracy is.

Therefore, I base my conclusions more on what they do than on what they say, since their statements indicate more of what they believe about their impact on democratization of Moldova (moreover their responses might be biased, since the survey was conducted through the Alumni Resource Center of the US Embassy in Moldova). For instance, the FLEX respondent working as an Open World Local Coordinator contributes to the development of Moldavian civil society, giving the specifics of her job in organizing exchange programs to the US for the political incumbents of the country.

A participant in the Muskie program works for the American Councils and in her words “working through international organization’s education programs and employing different methodology of teaching, [she] sets a different kind of standard”. This is another case that contributes to the educational capacity-building in Moldova. A participant at the same program

⁶⁷ The full version of this replied questionnaire is attached as Appendix 4.

had achieved significant personal and professional success only because she had the opportunity to pursue her higher education degrees abroad, “being exposed to the diversity of different cultures, educational methods, information, thinking, lifestyle, etc”, all still to this moment contributing to who she as a professional is and to her perspectives and thinking up to this moment.

A respondent from Fulbright and RSEP programs contributes to the process of democratization in Moldova by applying the expertise gained through participation in the US Government sponsored programs. Being a state university lecturer she disseminates the ideas, concepts, and shares her experience accumulated during collaboration and communication with her American counter-parts at her host institution and other US universities. In her classes she uses authentic and updated materials, as well as various methods of teaching and research, so that her students and colleagues “would be at the level, keep up the time and processes going on worldwide” and “the sharing of the best practices always leads to democratization process improvement” – finishes her reflection one of the most open-minded respondents of my survey. This is the most notable example when American programs have an impact on human and instructive capacity construction in Moldova.

As to the main research questions – *do alumni’s career choices correspond to the goals of their US programs to democratize Moldova* – I draw conclusions from their choice to work for a national or an international agency. The goal of most US programs is to share the gained experience and professional skills with citizens and leaders in Moldova and Armenia who would bring a positive addition to the local community and, because of the same reason, they would like their alumni to be placed in a national or state institution. But the reality of living and working in these countries makes the alumni search for jobs that provide them with at least minimum wage.

For some respondents from Moldova it makes no difference in which sector they work – international or national – as long as the work is for the benefit of the country and as long as the organizations do Moldova-related activities. Following this idea, employment in a national, as well as in an international institution, is accepted as long as the gained experience is applied in the implementation of certain projects at the country level and as long as this employment has a positive impact on the democratization of the country through its institutional and instructional capacity-building. Most of the alumni of this group work in US agencies and national or educational institutions providing learning opportunities to Moldavian citizens. These institutions themselves promote democratization and, therefore, the people working in them do contribute to the process of democratization and they are directly involved in it.

As said before, only two respondents of this group work in IO-s and even if these are economic IO-s, not directly related to the democratization of the country, they lead to the stabilization of a market, to introduction of higher standards of doing business, etc. Economic IO-s strengthen and improve the market environment. Besides, all private and public organizations have stimuli to protect the fruits of their efforts from expropriation, to help modifying the legislation in a way to improve contractual and property rights to better fit the contemporary complex business environment. Therefore, the increase of the number of economic IO-s in a country means more expenses (on average, by that IO-s) on improving the contractual and property rights, thus contributing to improving the rule of law, which is the indispensable part of democratization of a country.

3.3.2 Second Group: the Alumni, who reside Abroad

Out of the 9 interviewees who were aboard at the time when this research was conducted, 8 returned to Moldova after graduating from their US sponsored educational program and left the country at a later stage; 1 boy did not return to his home country at all, he continued his studies in US and got employed there. Out of 12 Armenian respondents 7 left the country and 5 did not return at all.⁶⁸ In turn, 5 out of 8 Moldavians who temporarily returned to Moldova were employed there: two were employed by national agencies (but quit their jobs soon and searched for working opportunities abroad), and three were employed with the American Councils for International Education and Work and Travel Agency. From the 4 employed Armenians 3 were working for the international sector.⁶⁹ 3 Moldavians, participants of UGRAD and FLEX, continued their studies. One of them was too young to be employed, when returning home, so she continued her studies and began to work when she was in her first year of college, but she left the country after being offered a good position in Ukraine.

The survey also identifies several factors influencing the decisions to leave Moldova or not to return after the completion of studies and compares them to those identified by Mikayelyan. The most common responses are respondents' desires to continue their studies abroad. 2 respondents mentioned the expensive life while salaries are low, lack of comfort (i.e. bad situation of Moldavian roads), unfair job competition (i.e. nepotism) and high corruption, the last two being common for Armenia as well. One respondent has chosen to have "an international career". Generally, only three respondents plan to return to Moldova (and 5 planned to return to Armenia), 4 of them wish to stay in their current host countries (7 for Armenia), and 2 did not yet make a decision in this regard. As one of interviewees said, she is not planning to

⁶⁸ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p.42.

⁶⁹ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p.42.

return to the Republic of Moldova in the nearest future, unless she gets a job offer that she “will not be able to refuse”.

To the question in case they return to Moldova or Armenia, which career-related options will they prefer, 5 Moldavian and 4 Armenians respondents would prefer to be employed with an international agency. In Moldova the main reasons are: “correct working policy”, the opportunities to do more in a more professional environment, to be responsible for big budgets and having subordinates, interesting work with a high level of independence, higher salaries, matching career goals, and because Moldova has not established a business culture or, more important, there are no business ethics yet. Liana Mikayelyan names the following responses to the same question: “matching career goals” for two respondents and “higher salaries” for the other two.⁷⁰

Unlike the respondents from the previous first group (of those who reside in Moldova), two alumni expressed the desire to open an own branch of the company, as a girl said: “I would prefer to work for myself by setting up my own company / organization”; one of the boys from this category would like to open a branch of the company he is working with today and he stated that there are no relevant companies currently in Moldova that would fit his consulting management career development plans.⁷¹ An encouraging fact worth noted is that none of the persons refused to answer this question, meaning that they probably do consider the opportunity to return to Moldova one day, while 3 Armenians did not reply to such a question since they did not plan to return to their home country.

I intended to include in the survey the question about whether the respondents thought they were subject to “brain-drain”⁷², as Mikayelyan did, but I thought that it might put them in an

⁷⁰ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p.43.

⁷¹ The full version of this questionnaire is attached as Appendix 6.

⁷² “Brain-drain” – the loss of skilled intellectual and technical labor through the movement of such labor to more favorable geographic, economic, or professional environments. Source: Answers, Library, www.answers.com (accessed in May, 2008).

uncomfortable situation or that I might receive unpleasant responses. Instead, the final question addressed to this group had the same meaning as the one addressed to alumni from the group of Moldavians, who came back to their country after finishing their foreign education. The question was whether they consider that their decision not to return to Moldova after graduation / or to leave the country at a later stage corresponds (or not) to the mission of their US sponsoring program. I addressed this question in order to see what reactions will be identified for the argument that the mission of US programs fails if the respondents reside in a country other than their native one. Only three respondents agreed that their choice does not conform to the mission of their programs to return to Moldova and contribute to the development of the Moldavian society, therefore creating incentives for democracy consolidation of the country. And only two out of 12 Armenians agreed with Mikayelyan about the fact that they fail the mission of their programs if they work abroad, others saying that they “represent their country culturally and somehow contribute to its development”.⁷³

The majority of my respondents also consider that they contribute to the development of their country by representing it culturally where they are. A respondent states that he “helps” the mission of his American program more by being in the United States. A part of the program (“not officially stated part” as he says, but which I would relate to “brain-drain”) is to prove for those who are seeking for a better life abroad, that the States is a much better place to live in. The second, official part of the program is to assist Moldova in its development, says the respondent. Moldova is too small, has no natural resources and the market is not strong, so it can not manage by itself, it needs support from outside. The interviewer also considers himself a Moldavian “ambassador”, tending to be the best at everything he does, showing in that way that “Moldova is worthy to do business with and has a lot of potential”.

⁷³ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p. 43.

Hoping that she did not fail the mission of her program completely, the FLEX respondent from Ukraine considers this question tough. She does not think that leaving Moldova is in line with the mission of her US sponsoring program, however, she also thinks that most alumni of American programs are very active in the first years after returning from the States, as she was (through the alumni activities described in the second chapter). Afterwards, the alumni are concerned about their “adult lives”, and only those who are active in a social, political, educational or ecological area follow truly the mission of the US programs. Talking about private entrepreneurship, the alumna says that those who choose it are usually unsuccessful, and she is one of them. A last interesting assessment in her response is that she thinks that “Moldova now is at such a stage, that not much can be done by simple people”.

An interesting answer is of the interviewee residing in Canada, who says that her US educational program has nothing to do with her decision to leave the country, though the program did prepare her to live in her native country and implement what she had learnt. Unfortunately, in her words, the values they are taught to live by in the US are not the ones that people live by in Moldova and the majority have to leave “either because they are not understood or because of the bad working environment”.⁷⁴ Following the same idea, a resident from the United Kingdom agrees that the official mission of her program was to prepare her become a better expert so that she returns to her homeland and “help it become a better place”. She considers that she had done little for fulfilling this mission, but she plans to do more after her permanent return to Moldova. Like her previous fellow, she also stresses that Europe and USA offer “more opportunities for highly qualified people and provide a lot of incentives”, and this plays a crucial role in taking the decision whether to work in Moldova or in a Western country.

Nevertheless, in the case of this sub-group I also base my conclusion on what the respondents do rather than on what they say. From the perspective of the first group, whose

respondents contribute to the US mission to fabricate the institutional, human and instructional capacity of Moldova locally, the choices of this group to leave the country is a failure of the US educational grants. So the argument of Mikayelyan is applicable for this group of my respondents. A final statement I support Liana Mikayelyan on is that all the decisions and conclusions of the respondents of this second group may be related to the “era of globalization” and from this perspective the application of knowledge obtained in a Western institution should be seen in the broad context of utility for any society they live in. It might be possible that this experience, knowledge and skills which are not demanded in a given society, are more in need in another country, and the fact that the given society does not need them (at least at certain moments) results in the movement of highly-educated human capital analyzed above. However, this thesis examines the impact of the American programs granting education to Moldavian citizens on the democracy development of the country and to Armenians on the educational development of their country. Therefore, analyzing global trends is not in the scope of the present work.

Findings in a nut shell

The interviews revealed that most of UGRAD participants tend to obtain a graduate level study abroad after finishing their studies at home and the participants of FLEX eager to participate in US undergraduate and graduate programs after their high-school studies. I have selected the UGRAD and FLEX two programs because they contribute to the democratization of Moldova more than others. One of the reasons is that the alumni of these two programs stay home longer, therefore spreading their liberal ambitions. Another reason is that they share their “Americanized” views (of rule of law, active civil society in political life of the country, etc)

⁷⁴ The full version of this questionnaire is attached as Appendix 5.

within their environment, which is formed by the future generation of the country. From the perspective of human-related (and even instructive) capacity-building this group is the most eminent – though only one person is trained, the information will be perceived at least by his/her colleagues, relatives, friends.

The three named categories (of graduate, undergraduate and high-schools) were divided into two groups – the alumni who returned home upon their graduation and those who did not or who left it at a later point, following the model of Mikayelyan, since I wanted to compare the results for our countries. It was identified that Moldavians who work for international organizations do not contribute to the failure of their program's mission. As shown, the majorities, being employed by American institutions, work on countries' development projects and develop relations connected to the economic, social and economic consolidation of the country.

It is an interesting finding that majority of respondents from the discussed countries prefer to work within an international organization for better work conditions and their internal policies. The reasons were similar for both Armenia and Moldova. Different results were identified for the question for the first group – if respondents are considering the opportunities to work abroad: the majority of Armenians responded affirmatively, while the majority of Moldavians would prefer to work and live in their home country. The last question for Moldavians from this group was whether they consider that they contribute to the democratization of their country. All of them answered positively and explained why they consider that they do. In fact, their activity, occupation and work were the most important tools aimed to support my papers' main argument – that their activities contribute to the democratization of Moldova.

Liana Mikayelyan from the start considered the respondents of the second group of graduates, those who reside abroad, as the ones, who do not follow the missions of their

programs, simply because they do not reside in Armenia and do not contribute to its “institutional capacity development”.⁷⁵ However, she has never shown that the alumni not residing in Armenia don’t contribute to the country’s democratization in any other ways (for example, providing any kind of assistance to institutions that help democratize Armenia.

⁷⁵ Liana Mikayelyan, 2006, p. 45.

Conclusion

This thesis revealed how US State Department contributed to developing the process of education and school instruction in post-Soviet countries. This thesis focused on Moldova and compared it with the Armenia, which was presented by Liana Mikayelyan in her thesis written in 2006. She suggested as further research projects possible comparisons of the impacts of the US programs in post-soviet countries. The US Government Strategic Plans for these countries were embraced mainly by the strategies of USAID, with a stress on the role of education.

This work began with presentation of the theoretical framework by reviewing the written works of the transitional process to democratization and democracy promotion. The literature was similar to the one in Liana Mikayelyan's thesis, though the papers of some authors were reviewed from the civil perspective and analyses of the papers of other scholars were included as an addition to what was already written by Mikayelyan, such as those of Thomas Carothers, Robert Putnam, Martin Shaw etc. This included the literature on US primacy, actions and efforts in the named mission through USAID. Mikayelyan talked in general about the USAID missions; I mainly studied the civic education type of aid. Proceeding from general to specific I have studied the strategy of democracy promotion of the US Government to the Republic of Moldova in the post communist period in terms of the educational process development. I also compared it with US foreign policy strategy with Armenia, based on the study within the paper compared.

Information on the US organizations, programs, projects and centers operating in Moldova, which are supported and funded by the US Government, was provided. I described their activity and aims, and tried to present the effects and critiques of the education provided by them. Some of these programs also operate in Armenia, but I examined some centers and

projects which are not mentioned in Mikayelyan's thesis, she as well described some programs which do not exist in Moldova (e.g. Project Harmony). Similarities and differences of the American institutional arrangements for the two countries were analyzed and from their comparison, it was found that they are different by content, but the goals and the activities of the American programs are similar.

The last chapter of this thesis was an effort to acknowledge the results of the interview-based research, conducted specifically for it. I correlated my findings with those of Liana Mikayelyan, that's why my questionnaires included some questions similar to hers. New questions were added because I wanted to reveal some innovations of the impact of the US studying programs. For comparing the findings of both papers and the effects of the American educational curricula on Moldova and Armenia, I used the same methodology of interviewing as Mikayelyan did. However, my research was based on a different case selection. I described in detail my data collection and the findings of the research and found that the main argument of my paper should be reformulated as follows – *the alumni, who studied in US, contribute to the democratization process of Moldova if they reside at home and work for the institutional, instructive and human related capacity-building of the country.*

Several impacts of US educational programs on the democratization in Moldova were identified. The results of the survey were compared with Mikayelyan's findings. The questions I included in the questionnaires had the same purpose as Mikayelyan's and they identified the career paths of the US programs' graduates. The reasons why they were employed by international or local organizations, and which were the key issues which determined their career paths' choices were also identified and compared to the Armenian case. Interesting findings were revealed by both papers: the majority of respondents from the two countries prefer to work for international organizations because of better work conditions and the internal policies. The reasons were similar for both countries. Therefore, different results were identified for the

question addressed to the first group if respondents are considering the opportunities to work abroad: the majority of Armenians responded affirmatively, while the majority of Moldavians would prefer to work and live in their native country.

The compared researches both catalogue important conclusions on the impacts of the American educational programs in Armenia and Moldova. My hypothesis – that the results of the surveys will not be significantly different proved to be partially true. The sample sizes are small in both cases, not allowing me to draw large conclusions, though some differences were identified. The most *significant* difference was found in the case of Moldavians who are employed by IO. Unlike their counterparts in Armenia, most of them contribute to the democratization of the country through their work and the missions of US programs do not fail in their cases, even if they do not work for a national agency. Results were found to be quite similar because the programs implemented by the US Government were almost identical for the two countries.

A possible further research could analyze deeply why the American strategies, programs and projects for these countries (or for all the CIS countries) are different, based on their political, social and economic specifications. It can also examine more negative aspects (beside those discussed in the second chapter of this thesis) of not only educational programs, but also of programs implemented in other spheres as well.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for the Alumni residing in the Republic of Moldova

Your program:

1. **First name**
2. **Age**
3. **Sex**
4. **Place of birth**
5. **Place of residence**
6. **Present employment**
7. **How long have you been working with this organization / institution?**
8. **In case you had the opportunity to choose, which career related options would you prefer: to work for an international, a national, a state or an educational institution? Why?**
9. **What decision do you consider to correspond to the mission of your US sponsored program: to work for an international or a national agency? Why?**
10. **Do you consider any opportunities to be employed abroad?**
11. **Do you think you contribute to the democratization process of R. Moldova by possessing a Western education? Why?**

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for the Alumni residing abroad

Your program:

- 1. First name**
- 2. Age**
- 3. Sex**
- 4. Place of birth**
- 5. Place of residence**
- 6. Present employment**
- 7. Did you return to the Republic of Moldova after completing your study program?**
 - ☐ **No**
 - ☐ **If yes – were you employed there?**
 - ☐ **If yes – who was the employer (an international, a national, a state or an educational institution) and how long have you been working there?**
- 8. Do you intend to stay in your host country in the nearest future or you plan to return to the Republic of Moldova?**
- 9. What factors affected your decision to leave R. Moldova / or not to return after completing your studies?**
- 10. In case you return to R. Moldova, which career related options will you prefer: to work for an international, a national, a state or an educational agency? Why?**
- 11. Do you consider that your decision not to return to R. Moldova after graduation / or to leave the country at a later stage corresponds to the mission of your US sponsored program? Why?**

Completed Questionnaire of the Alumna residing in the Republic of Moldova

Fulbright 2008 and RSEP 2000 program alumna

1. First name Marina
2. Age over 30
3. Sex female
4. Place of birth Chisinau, Moldova
5. Place of residence -the same-

6. Present employment

a) Moldova State University (full time), b) international project (part-time)

7. How long have you been working with this organization / institution?

a) Since 1995 b) since 2005

8. In case you had the opportunity to choose, which career related options would you prefer: to work for an international, a national, a state or an educational institution? Why?

In my case, combining my career, working with both state educational institution (i.e., state university) and international project providing assistance to Moldova in its economic development, is what I'm doing.

9. What decision do you consider to correspond to the mission of your US sponsored program: to work for an international or a national agency? Why?

I consider the decision, i.e., what I am actually doing, corresponds to the missions of the US sponsored programs that I participated in. My both jobs provide me with real opportunities to promote the impact it had on my professional and personal development, going in line with the exchange programs' goals and principles. It is not easy to successfully combine two jobs and very often makes you sacrifice the time you would better spend with your child and family, but I try to do my best.

10. Do you consider any opportunities to be employed abroad?

I do not consider any long-term opportunities to stay abroad, as in this case I would be far from my family, students, and colleagues at both places of work, friends.

I view working abroad very different from participating in the international exchange programs. The latter help you accumulate new knowledge and experience which you can immediately put into practice upon return to your home country.

11 Do you think you contribute to the democratization process of R. Moldova by possessing a Western education? Why?

Yes, I do think so. Applying the expertise gained through participation in the USG sponsored programs here, in Moldova, I disseminate the ideas, concepts, and share the experience accumulated through collaboration and communication with American colleagues at my host institutions and other universities in the US. I use the authentic, updated materials for my classes; as well various methods of teaching and research, so that my students and colleagues would be at the level, keep up with the time and processes going on worldwide. Sharing best practices always leads to democratization processes improvement.

Appendix 4

Completed Questionnaire of the Alumna residing in the Republic of Moldova Muskie 2006

1. **First name** Ina Pislaru
2. **Age** 29
3. **Sex** Female
4. **Place of birth** Moldova
5. **Place of residence** Chisinau, Moldova
6. **Present employment** USAID, CTO for Democracy and Governance Programs
7. **How long have you been working with this organization / institution?**
3 months
8. **In case you had the opportunity to choose, which career related options would you prefer: to work for an international, a national, a state or an educational institution? Why?** - I would choose to work only for an international organization if the option is to work in Moldova. Based on my experience working with local organizations, the organizational capacity i.e. financial instability, lack of managerial expertise required to run an organization, low investment in building and help personnel grow and acquire new skills prevent employees to advance in their career. Therefore, working with international institutions can ensure more stability, professional growth, good reputation, respect the rights of employees (medical insurance, etc.) but also working with Intl org. can help me contribute to the development of the local organizations that lack these competences.
9. **What decision do you consider to correspond to the mission of your US sponsored program: to work for an international or a national agency? Why?** - Don't really understand the question. To me, it doesn't matter who you work for, it matters the impact on the country you live in.
10. **Do you consider any opportunities to be employed abroad?** - Absolutely. I am a career oriented person, I want to continuously grow and achieve successes, and therefore whenever the opportunity will arise to advance in my goals and it will be in a different country, I will leave Moldova. However, if I will have similar opportunities in Moldova (which I believe is less likely) I will consider staying as well.
11. **Do you think you contribute to the democratization process of R. Moldova by possessing a Western education? Why?** - ABSOLUTELY!!!!!!!!!!!! I have achieved many personal and professional successes only because I had the opportunity to pursue my higher education degrees abroad, being exposed to the diversity of different cultures, educational methods, information, thinking, lifestyles, etc etc ALL STILL to this moment contribute to who I am and to my perspectives and thinking. There could not have been a better experience in my life and I am very fortunate to have been given the chance to say this.

Thank you!

Completed Questionnaire of the Alumna residing abroad

Muskie 2006 Program Alumna

1. **First name:** Jana Ciobanu
2. **Age:** 32
3. **Sex:** Female
4. **Place of birth:** Recea, Riscani, Moldova
5. **Place of residence:** Calgary, Alberta, Canada
6. **Present employment?** LINC Instructor, Calgary Immigrant Educational Society
7. **Did you return to the Republic of Moldova after completing your study program?**
 - ☐ **No**
 - ☐ **If yes – were you employed there? YES**
 - ☐ **If yes – who was the employer (an international, a national, a state or an educational institution) and how long have you been working there?**
 1. ULIM, International Independent University of Moldova
 2. UNEX, Univers Exchange, Work and Travel Agency
8. **Do you intend to stay in your host country in the nearest future or are you planning to return to the Republic of Moldova?**

I don't know yet.
9. **What factors affected your decision to leave R. Moldova / or not to return after completing your studies?**

1) Expensive way of life 2) Low salary 3) Unfair job competition 4) Corruption
10. **In case you return to R. Moldova, which career related options will you prefer: to work for an international, a national, a state or an educational agency? Why?**

I would prefer to work for and International Agency because of the correct working policy.
11. **Do you consider that your decision not to return to R. Moldova after graduation / or to leave the country at a later stage corresponds to the mission of your US sponsored program? Why?**

No. My sponsoring program has nothing to do with my decision of leaving my country. On the contrary, it prepared me to live in my country and inspired me to return back and to implement what we have learned there in my country. Unfortunately, the values we were taught to live by in the States are not the ones people live by in Moldova. The majority has to leave either because they are not understood or because of the bad working environment. Also there some other reasons such as an expensive way of life, low salaries, unfair job competition and corruption which influence people's decisions of leaving everything behind and going abroad.

Completed Questionnaire of the Alumnus residing abroad

UGRAD 2002

1. **First name**
2. **Age** 27
3. **Sex** Male
4. **Place of birth** Moldova
5. **Place of residence** USA
6. **Present employment?** Sr. Operations Analyst
7. **Did you return to the Republic of Moldova after completing your study program?**
☐ No
☒ If yes – were you employed there? Yes and Yes
☒ If yes – who was the employer (an international, a national, a state or an educational institution) and how long have you been working there?
National, not too long, returned to the States shortly
8. **Do you intend to stay in your host country in the nearest future or are you planning to return to the Republic of Moldova?**
Plan to stay in the host country
9. **What factors affected your decision to leave R. Moldova / or not to return after completing your studies?**
Financial/ lack of fairly compensated jobs, comfort of living, even if you make good money in Moldova the comfort is not there (from roads to people not smiling)
10. **In case you return to R. Moldova, which career related options will you prefer: to work for an international, a national, a state or an educational agency? Why?**
Most likely work for international, or start my own. At this point Moldova does not have established business culture and what is most important no business ethics yet. All successful Moldavian companies have either foreign ownership or are started/lead by people with Western education.
11. **Do you consider that your decision not to return to R. Moldova after graduation / or to leave the country at a later stage corresponds to the mission of your US sponsored program? Why?**
I believe I help the mission of my US program more by being in US. There are two parts to the program: 1 to Americanize former Soviet states (not officially stated part), by being in the States I prove that it is a much better place to live in and I set an example for those who are looking for a better life abroad, thus mission accomplished. And the 2nd part of the program is to help Moldova develop. Our country is too small to be helped from inside. We have no natural resources and do not have enough wealth to be a market. Most of the people don't even know what Moldova is. By being a Moldavian "ambassador" and striving to be the best at what I do I show that Moldova is worthy to do business with and has a lot of potential.

Appendix 7

Table 2: Collected data on the respondents residing in Moldova

Respondents residing in Moldova		14
Average age (years)		28.1
Gender	Male	2
	Female	12
Place of birth	Chisinau	5
	Regions of Moldova	7
	Russia	2
Place of residence	Chisinau	12
	Regions of Moldova	2
Present employment	IO	2
	American institutions	5
	National institution	1
	Education	4
	NGO	1
	no work	1
Preferences for place of work	IO	10
	National / State institution	2
	Education	2
Place related working preferences	Abroad	5
	in Moldova	9
Opinion on career choices correspondence with the US programs' missions	Corresponds	10
	Doesn't corresponds	3
	No response	1
Claimed contribution to democratization of Moldova	Positive	14
	Negative	none

Appendix 8

Table 3: Collected data on the respondents residing abroad

Respondents residing abroad		9
Average age (years)		27.1
Gender	Male	3
	Female	6
Place of birth	Chisinau	3
	Regions of Moldova	6
Place of residence	Canada	1
	USA	1
	UK	1
	Ukraine	1
	Germany	3
	Romania	1
	Italy	1
Returned to Moldova after finishing studies in US	Positive	8
	Negative	1
Employment after returning home	IO	3
	National agency	2
	Continued studies	3
Future intentions of residence	Moldova	3
	Abroad	4
	No decision	2
Institutional working preferences if returning to Moldova	IO	5
	National institution	1
	Education	1
	Private Business	2
Opinion on career choices correspondence with the US programs' missions	Corresponds	6
	Doesn't corresponds	3

Appendix 9

**Table 4: Collected data on the respondents from professional US programs,
residing in Moldova**

Respondents from professional US programs, residing in Moldova		6
Average age (years)		41.3
Gender	Male	2
	Female	4
Place of birth	Chisinau	3
	Regions of Moldova	3
Place of residence	Chisinau	6
	Regions of Moldova	none
Present employment	IO	2
	National / Scientific institution	4
Institutional working preferences	IO	4
	National / State institution	2
Preferences for place of work	Abroad	5
	in Moldova	9
Opinion on career choices correspondence with the US programs' missions	Corresponds	4
	Doesn't corresponds	None
	No response	2
Claimed contribution to democratization of Moldova	Positive	6
	Negative	none

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