

## **PARTICULARITIES OF ORGANIZATION OF REST AND RECOVERY FOR CHILDREN IN DIFFICULTY IN THE SUMMER SEASON IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

*Mihail Ciobanu*

*Scientific researcher, PhD student,*

*National Institute for Economic Research from Republic of Moldova*

*E-mail: ciobanu.mihail.s@gmail.com*

***Summary:** In this paper will be analyzed the special provisions regarding the recreation and recovery for children in difficulty in the summer season in the Republic of Moldova. The purpose of the paper is to identify the changes in organization of recreation and recovery for such a group of population during the post-independency period of the country. The main sources of information used are the legislative and normative acts of the Republic of Moldova and the statistical data from the National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova. The results of the research show that although the state support regarding recreation and recovery for children in difficulty in the summer season increases year by year and covers many groups of such children, the capacities of summer camps are not used to the full potential, which shows room for other future potential state support.*

***Keywords:** camp, children, rest, support, Moldova.*

Each child has the right to get rest and free time and to participate in recreational, ludic, cultural and artistic activities according to his or her age. However, due to material poverty or other unfortunate circumstances there are groups of children that find difficult to exercise these rights, children that have a lack or insufficiency of parental support. Usually, the state legislation contains provisions to identify such children and measures oriented towards supporting them, including aid to exercise the right to recreation for these children. In order to ensure this right the state offers material support for creation of a series of facilities (extracurricular ones, clubs, rest camps, stadiums, sportive edifices and other institutions that participate in health recovery of children) and establishes incentives for attending cultural and educational institutions, sports, leisure and rest institutions during the holidays, especially necessary to vulnerable groups of children. This is, also, the case with Republic of Moldova. Each year the Government of Moldova establishes the conditions for the organization of the summer rest of the children and adolescents in the summer season which are published as Government Decisions in the Official Gazette (in Romanian language: Monitorul Oficial). Also, these Decisions establish the groups of children that receive state support for summer camp rest. The content of the provisions of these Government Decisions, including the list of children groups has seen a number of changes during the post-independency period of Moldova, it was expanded, or to be more precise, the list was more specified.

In 1991 the Government of Moldova decided on an agreement with the Council of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Moldova on applying the mechanism of social protection of the population, which, in particular, stipulated: the development of social normative acts to ensure the population with recovery camps for children; centralized provision for summer rest period to recovery institutions with staff and special allocation of funds for soft, hard, sport inventory etc. and, also, partial financing of the sports schools for children and adolescents.

In 1993 Moldovan Government established urgent measures to organize the summer rest and the maintenance of children and adolescents. Ministries, state departments, executive committees of districts, city mayors, trade unions, businesses and organizations had: to elaborate among others concrete measures of social-economic support for camps, recovery institutions, sanatoriums, tourism bases and guesthouses for children and adolescents; to organize, according to the needs, camps for children with day stays, camps with profile based on general education schools; to satisfy operationally the orders for materials, inventory and equipment for child recovery institutions, to allocate as a priority resources for their capital construction, reconstruction and repair; to find the means necessary to fully or partially compensate for the expenses of treatment tickets for children from families with many children and those who are socially vulnerable, orphans and children without parental guardianship; to not allow cases of lease, privatization, sale or use for other purposes the children's camps and institutions or the buildings, constructions, machines and plots of land, for the demand for payment for land and other natural resources. Ministries, state departments, trade unions committees (councils), local self-administration bodies were allowed to give free treatment tickets, especially to children from families with many children and socially vulnerable ones (up to 25% of the total number of children sent in the recovery camps), and the other treatment tickets were to be sold at prices of 10-20% of their cost. It was established that the financing of children's camps is carried out on the account of the funds of the special social insurance fund, provided for such a purpose, the local budgets and the republican budget, the means of the union committees, companies, institutions and organizations, the amounts paid by the parents, as well as from other extra budgetary means. The norms of the daily money expenses for feeding a child in the recovery camps (taking into account the norms of the recommended food products) were to be elaborated in the same year.

In the years 1993-1996 the transition to the market economy, insufficient supply of delivery facilities for children with food products, industrial goods and medicines, increased tariffs for passenger traffic and other services have created difficulties in organizing summer rest and the recovery of children and adolescents. The increase in the cost of the treatment tickets, the lack of the necessary staff, the unsatisfactory material base have led in the 1993-1996 years to a reduction of the number of the aforementioned institutions by 6 times, and the number of children attending them has decreased by about 10 times.

The Government Decision from 1996 for the first time approved the amounts of the full cost of the distributed tickets for various types of rest and recovery institutions for children and adolescents, financed from the budget. For organizing the summer rest and recovery for the orphans, children left without guardianship of parents and children from socially vulnerable families an amount of 1 million MDL (~217.9 thousands USD at that year) was allocated. Also, another 1 million MDL was allocated to offset partially the expenses for the feeding children, conditioned by the liberalization of prices for food products. The markup for the commercial units that will deliver to food recovery institutions for children was limited to 10%.

In 1997 the new Government Decision provided to ensure that for the rest and recovery of the children from socially vulnerable families, each district executive committee and municipal town hall will have at least one budget camp to maintain. It was allocated from the Government an amount of 2.5 millions MDL (~540.0 thousands USD), of which: 0.5 mln MDL (~216.0 thousands USD) - for the organization of rest and recovery of orphaned children and those left without guardianship of parents, who study in boarding schools; 1 million MDL (~108.0 thousands USD) - for organizing the rest of children and adolescents from socially vulnerable families and 1 million MDL - for partial compensation of the expenses for the feeding of the children, conditioned by the liberalization of the prices for the food products.

The provisions from 1998 included only 0.5 millions MDL (~93.0 thousands USD) for the organization of rest and recovery of orphaned children and those left without guardianship of parents, who study in boarding schools and 0.5 millions MDL for paying the General Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Moldova for the outstanding debts from 1997, as a result of 1997 debt crisis caused by suspension of financing from IMF and World Bank, requiring first a series of socioeconomic and administrative reforms.

In 1999 were allocated 1 million MDL (~80.6 thousands USD): 500 thousands MDL (~40.3 thousands USD) for organizing the rest and recovery during the summer period of the orphaned children and those left without the guardianship of the parents, who study in boarding schools and 500 thousands MDL for county councils, Chisinau City Hall and the Executive Committee of the Autonomous Region Gagauzia for organizing the rest of children and adolescents from socially vulnerable families.

In 2000 were given 2.5 millions MDL (~201.6 thousands USD) to ensure children and adolescents with tickets for rest and recovery in camps. In 2001 this amount was increased to 2875 thousands MDL (~223.4 thousands USD). From 2001 the age of child/adolescent is stated to be from 7 and 16 years old.

In 2002 the amount has grown to 3500 thousands MDL (~257.9 thousands USD), in 2003 and 2004 – to 6000.0 thousands MDL (~430.4 thousands USD in 2003 and ~486.6 thousands USD in 2004). This amount has

grown constantly in the following years: 2005 – 13923.2 thousands MDL (~1105.0 thousands USD); 2006 – 17678.0 thousands MDL (~1346.4 thousands USD); 2007 – 18262.6 thousands MDL (~1504.3 thousands USD).

In 2005 and 2006 were reserved 500 tickets for the pupils from socially vulnerable families from educational institutions from the left side of the Dniester river and city Bender, subordinated to the Ministry of Education. In 2007 10% of the total number of tickets is issued free of charge to children from socially vulnerable families. From 2005 onwards 10% of a ticket for rest and recovery in a camp is paid by the parents.

In 2008 was approved the Regulation regarding the use of financial means from the state budget for the purpose of organizing the rest and recovery of some categories of children in the summer season that detailed some aspects regarding organization of summer camps, from which can be mentioned: a more detailed list of beneficiaries from some categories of children, the duration of the rest period and the official definition of the term “rest camp”. The list of beneficiaries contains such groups of children from 7 to 16 years old: children from low-income families; children from single parent families; children from disadvantaged families; children from large families (with 3 and more children); children under guardianship/curatorship; children placed in family-type services; children placed in temporary placement centers; children from families in which both parents are disabled; children from families in which both parents are retirees; children who have obtained performance in studies or are winners in the school and extracurricular olympiads. The duration of the rest period is considered the period spent in the rest and recovery camp by children in the summer period, in a change that is 10-12 days. The rest camp is considered the institution constituted by the authorities of the local public administration, the general/municipal directorates of education, youth and sports, the union committees, the economic agents and the non-governmental organizations for organizing the activities of rest and recovery of children during the summer period. From 2008 onwards of the total number of tickets 5% are distributed to the children who have obtained performance in studies or are winners in the school and extracurricular olympiads.

From 2009 children from low-income families were excluded and orphan children were included, but the exclusion is a juridical artifice, because children from low-income families can be included in the group of those from disadvantaged families.

From 2012 onwards a number of tickets were reserved for some other categories of children: 100 tickets for pupils from Romania (with covering round-trip travel expenses) and 300 tickets for pupils from educational institutions from the left side of the Dniester river and city Bender, subordinated to the Ministry of Education. In 2014 to this list were added 100 tickets with covering round-trip travel expenses for pupils from other educational institutions from the left side of the Dniester river and city Bender. In the following years the number of tickets and the categories of beneficiaries has grown and became more diversified, without reducing previous incentives, also tourist packages were added. In 2015 was offered a tourist package (an internal tourist route for visiting the objectives and tourist localities) for 100 students from Romania, in order to promote the image of the Republic of Moldova as a country that has an interest both for international tourism and for cultivating respect for national cultural values. In addition to this, as a measure to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary from the accession of Moldova in International Organization of La Francophone, only in 2016 were given 45 tickets for organizing the Francophone Summer Camp with coverage of transportation costs from the airport to the camp site and expenses for the tour package. Also, in the years 2017-2019 were given each year a tourist package for 150 pupils from Ukraine from the conflict zone in the eastern regions of Ukraine and for pupils learning in Romanian-language institutions and yearly 150 tickets for pupils of this category, as well as covered expenses for round-trip transportation on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Based on the current project of Government Decision for the year 2020, no changes were made from 2019, apart from new indicative amounts of the costs in the summer camps financed from the budget.

In 2013 the list of beneficiaries of free of charge tickets was extended to include: the children of the asylum seekers, the refugees recognized in the Republic of Moldova, the beneficiaries of humanitarian protection and the persons who were recognized as stateless in the Republic of Moldova, as well as the children from disadvantaged families in which one of the parents falls in one of the mentioned categories; children with disabilities and their attendants. In 2015 this list was completed with the children of the participants in the actions to fight for the territorial integrity and independence of the Republic of Moldova, which in 2017 was generalized to children of war veterans and this classification remained in force until currently.

During the period 1996-2020 the indicative costs in the summer camps for children and teenagers, financed from the budget of Republic of Moldova changed yearly, with few exceptions (**Table 1**). If, for the period 1996-2008 the indicative costs were given for the whole period of stay of a ticket to a summer camp, then, beginning from 2009 they were given by day of stay.

It must be mentioned that the total indicative cost of the tickets is calculated on the basis of the tariff and function salaries in force, of the expenses for feeding the children and for the payment of the thermal energy services, as well as of other expenses, which were estimated according to the price forecast for the main types of agricultural products and consumer goods.

In the **Table 1** are presented the indicative costs in the summer camps for children and teenagers, financed from the budget of Republic of Moldova. It should be noted that in the legislative acts the amounts are given in national currency (MDL or Moldovan Leu). The amounts in USD (US Dollars) were put in the table to give a rough estimate of prices in the respective years at the respective yearly average exchange rate between MDL and USD.

**Table 1**

*The indicative costs in the summer camps for children and teenagers, financed from the budget of Republic of Moldova*

Type of camp	Recovery camps with day stay		Rest and health recovery camps		Sports camps of sports schools for children and juniors		Camps for work and rest for pupils, including touristic camps (from 2009 - touristic only)		Sports camps for upper class pupils	
	MDL	USD	MDL	USD	MDL	USD	MDL	USD	MDL	USD
	<b>Indicative cost per stay</b>									
<b>1996</b>	248.20	54.07	344.78	75.12	371.85	81.01	324.78	70.76	335.59	73.11
<b>1997</b>	215.00	46.44	345.00	74.51	320.00	69.11	270.00	58.32	285.00	61.56
<b>1998<sup>1</sup></b>	215.00	39.96	345.00	64.13	320.00	59.48	270.00	50.19	285.00	52.97
<b>1999</b>	283.33	26.93	362.70	34.48	390.08	37.08	340.80	32.40	350.00	33.27
<b>2000</b>	283.33	22.85	362.70	29.25	390.08	31.46	340.80	27.48	350.00	28.23
<b>2001</b>	306.00	23.78	400.00	31.08	431.00	33.49	376.00	29.22	386.00	29.99
<b>2002</b>	327.00	24.10	424.00	31.25	457.00	33.68	402.00	29.62	410.00	30.21
<b>2003</b>	430.00	30.85	510.00	36.59	521.00	37.37	450.00	32.28	442.00	31.71
<b>2004</b>	453.00	36.74	537.00	43.55	549.00	44.53	477.00	38.69	467.00	37.88
<b>2005</b>	522.00	41.43	615.00	48.81	632.00	50.16	555.00	44.05	542.00	43.02
<b>2006</b>	674.00	51.33	780.00	59.41	807.00	61.46	720.00	54.84	708.00	53.92
<b>2007</b>	715.00	58.90	1000.00	82.37	1050.00	86.49	980.00	80.72	1000.00	82.37
<b>2008</b>	780.00	75.07	1100.00	105.87	1150.00	110.68	1070.00	102.98	1100.00	105.87
	<b>Indicative cost per day of stay</b>									
<b>2009</b>	71.00	6.39	100.00	9.00	105.00	9.45	105.00	9.45	105.00	9.45
<b>2010</b>	75.00	6.06	108.34	8.76	116.67	9.43	125.00	10.11	116.67	9.43
<b>2011</b>	80.83	6.89	116.67	9.94	125.00	10.65	133.00	11.33	125.00	10.65
<b>2012</b>	89.17	7.36	133.33	11.01	141.87	11.72	150.00	12.39	141.87	11.72
<b>2013</b>	92.08	7.31	137.73	10.94	145.32	11.54	155.98	12.39	144.09	11.44
<b>2014</b>	92.57	6.59	138.32	9.85	145.94	10.39	156.24	11.13	144.09	10.26
<b>2015</b>	97.82	5.20	142.65	7.58	151.80	8.07	160.26	8.52	148.26	7.88
<b>2016</b>	119.44	6.00	153.37	7.70	182.94	9.18	168.75	8.47	156.35	7.85
<b>2017</b>	128.47	6.95	163.68	8.85	195.43	10.57	179.60	9.71	167.24	9.04
<b>2018</b>	137.84	8.20	175.63	10.45	209.70	12.48	192.71	11.47	179.45	10.68
<b>2019</b>	165.41	9.41	210.76	11.99	251.64	14.31	231.25	13.15	215.34	12.25
<b>2020<sup>2</sup></b>	174.80	9.92	222.77	12.64	265.98	15.10	244.43	13.87	227.61	12.92

*Source: Elaborated by the author on the basis of the Decisions of Government of Moldova [4]*

In the recovery camps with day stay the children spend the nights at home, while in rest and health recovery camps they stay overnight in the camps. Because of activities oriented towards fighting against child labour in 2009, the camps for work and rest for pupils, where the children could participate in work activities had to change their activity, leaving in this category only camps oriented towards touristic activities. The Moldovan law differentiates between sports schools by the age of pupils: for children and juniors and for upper class pupils.

As is seen in the **Table 1** the indicative costs have grown constantly year by year. In general, the indicative costs were higher in the sports camps and touristic camps than in the recovery camps with day stay and rest and health recovery camps. According to the data from National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova [1], consumption price index has grown 5.7 times in the period 1996-2008, while the indicative costs per stay have grown only 3.1-3.3 times based on type of camp. Another situation is in the period 2009-2020 – the consumption price index has grown 2.0 times in the period January 2009-March 2020, while the indicative costs per day of stay has increased 2.2-2.5 times based on type of camp. This might be one of the reasons, besides choosing other rest and recreation opportunities, why the demand of summer camp tickets decreased in the last years, a situation that determined the reduction

<sup>1</sup> In 1998 the price was for 21 days of stay, in 1996-1997 – the number wasn't specified, in 1999-2002 - 12 days, in 2003 - 10 days, in 2004-2008 – 10-12 days, from 2009 onwards – the cost is given by day.

<sup>2</sup> The Government Decision for the year 2020 that contains the amounts for this year is still in the process of approval.

of summer camps in these last years (**Table 2**), especially the ones with day stay. In the **Table 2** are presented some indicators regarding accommodation in summer camps for children in Republic of Moldova, 2004-2018.

**Table 2**

**Indicators regarding accommodation in summer camps for children in Republic of Moldova, 2004-2018**

Year	Number of summer camps for children, as of December 31	Existing capacity of summer camps for children, as of December 31		Number of children placed in summer camps for children		Number of overnight stays in summer camps for children		Indices of net use of capacity in function of summer camps for children, %
		Number of rooms	Number of places	Total	of which, non-residents	Total	of which, non-residents	
2004	53	1869	12346	42798	248	457163	3500	51.4
2005	56	1992	12680	54040	641	546276	12040	64.3
2006	69	2365	14782	60460	341	588450	2130	58.8
2007	77	2641	16345	69450	234	635729	1368	63.9
2008	82	2777	17022	71712	239	681891	1997	70.3
2009	79	2663	16525	60897	350	546241	2590	53.5
2010	77	2623	16251	63350	195	603705	1910	47.5
2011	71	2527	15456	62945	35	574362	350	45.4
2012	76	2454	15716	53044	35	501690	350	35.7
2013	75	2435	15489	53642	46	497866	460	46.9
2014	76	2602	16168	47211	45	473251	450	54.8
2015	59	2134	13617	52641	67	492160	702	55.5
2016	58	2022	12716	47192	23	433399	230	42.3
2017	61	2283	13393	50898	23	435000	230	45.8
2018	59	2242	13048	50969	89	479676	914	44.2

*Source: Elaborated by the author on the basis of the statistical data from Statistical Yearbooks of National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova [1]*

As is seen in the aforementioned table, the number of children placed in summer camps has grown together with the number of summer camps and their rooms and places each year in the period 2004-2008. This growth of number of summer camps was followed by some years of small reduction in 2009-2011 and a rebound in 2012-2014, after that followed a significant reduction, which is determined by the decrease of the demand during the period 2011-2014. The indices of net use of capacity in function of summer camps for children show a similar evolution – a high use in 2004-2008 and a decreased use in the following years with some exceptions. The growth of the number of children placed in summer camps in the 2016-2018 can trigger a growth of summer camps in the next years. It can also be seen that the period 2004-2010 has known a relatively high number of non-resident children, which has decreased in the following years, but with legal provisions related to support for children from Romania, Ukraine or other countries this number may grow again in the next years. The number of overnight stays in summer camps has also grown in the period 2004-2008, high was also the number for non-residents. In the years after that, with few exceptions, these numbers have shown a decrease. To understand the reasons of these changes the large context must be taken into consideration, too. The period of 2004-2008 has been one of constant economic growth. The economic crisis from 2008 and new political forces in state structures that came in 2009 had triggered an uncontinuous period of growth with a relative stability in the last few years.

Returning to the children in difficulty, because of lack of statistical data for every group of children in difficulty that receive state support for summer camp rest it's very difficult to estimate the impact of total number of children in difficulty on the accommodation capacity of the Moldovan summer camps. According to the data from National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova [2, p.169] the registered number of children without parental care was 2111 in 2005 and has doubled to 4172 in 2015, the majority of them being from 7 to 16 years old [3, p.492]. Towards 2019 this number decreased to 3800 children [1], but in the last years it oscillated around 4000 children. Even if it isn't known how many children in difficulty were placed in summer camps yearly, comparing the quota of 25% with the data from the **Table 2** on number of children placed in summer camps and with the registered number of children without parental care, it can be said that at least this group of children in difficulty can be covered with places in summer camps and with yearly new measures of state support, the number of children that benefit from summer camps services may further increase.

**Conclusions**

The rights to rest, free time, recovery and to participate in activities according to his or her age are important rights for each child. Not every child has favourable circumstances to exercise these rights, even though they are not insurmountable barriers, but potential risks. Acknowledging this, the state authorities provide various measures of support for such children. In the case of Republic of Moldova the measures include: a quota of up to 25% of tickets to summer camps to be reserved for children in difficulty; indicative costs per ticket or per day stay in summer camp, that are calculated based on tariff and function salaries for staff in summer camp, alimentary expenses for children, expenses for thermal services and other expenses which are estimated according to the price forecast for the main types of agricultural products and consumer goods. Also, each year a few hundred of tickets is reserved for pupils from socially vulnerable families from the region of the left bank of Dniester river, from conflict zones of Ukraine, from Romania, and a few tourist packages with covering round-trip travel expenses. Although the state support regarding recreation and recovery for children in difficulty in the summer season increases year by year and covers many groups of such children, the number of summer camps, including the number of rooms and places reduced a little in the last 4 years and, at the same time, the net use of the capacity of summer camps for children in function has also a small reduction, which shows unused reserves and room for other potential state support, which should be taken in consideration in future support measures.

### **Literature**

1. Anuarele Statistice ale Republicii Moldova, 2005-2019, Biroul Național de Statistică al Republicii Moldova (English translation: Statistical Yearbooks of the Republic of Moldova, 2005-2019, National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova)
2. Children of Moldova: statistical publication, National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau, 2017, 254 p., ISBN 978-9975-87-225-6
3. Ciobanu M., Glinyana K. Copiii aflați în dificultate: istoric, definiții și unele aspecte legale și sociale în Republica Moldova. (English translation: Children in difficulty: history, definitions and some legal and social aspects in the Republic of Moldova). In: Proceedings of International Symposium "Experience. Knowledge. Contemporary Challenges. „Innovative economic-social Approaches in the Knowledge Society”, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, December 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Bucharest: University ARTIFEX, 2019, ISBN 978-606-8716-50-3, 836 p., pp. 478-499
4. Hotărârile Guvernului Republicii Moldova cu privire la organizarea odihnei și întremării sănătății copiilor și adolescenților în sezonul estival (anii 1991-2020), publicate în Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova (English translation: Decisions of the Government of the Republic of Moldova on the organization of rest and health recovery of children and adolescents in the summer season (1991-2020), published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Moldova.