

Fighting Educational Corruption in Moldova



Ihab Bennar - Morocco (American University of Beirut)
Margaret Gottlieb - United States (University of Maryland)
Sandra Nyanchoka - Kenya (University of Maryland)
Ramz Sahuri - Jordan (American University of Beirut)

A proposal for the United Nations Development Programme by the 2014 Salzburg Academy on Media & Global Change



INTRODUCTION

UNDP country offices in Moldova, Serbia, and Armenia have partnered on an international effort to reduce corruption across sectors. Called Youth Bridge, it is conceived as a platform for anti-corruption programs in all three countries, targeted specifically at youth between the ages of 15-24. It will be comprised of multiple projects, from games, to social media campaigns to mobile applications. The Salzburg Academy for Media and Global Change was tasked with creating specific ideas and processes that could contribute to the Youth Bridge platform.

PART I: FRAMING THE PROBLEM

Country: Republic of Moldova

Issue: Corruption in the Education System

Rationale

According to a study carried out by the National Anti-Corruption Center in 2013, the most common corruption crimes in Moldova are influence padding (32%), passive corruption (26%) and abuse of power or abuse of service (16%). Less common crimes include falsifying public documents (8%) and appropriation/embezzlement by use of official position (6%). Active corruption is rarely found in the documented criminal cases. Thus, only 3% of corruption cases are filed on active corruption, and 0.4% on taking bribes. Educational corruption is an issue everyone can find engaging because education is, for the most part, a universal experience.

Corruption in the Republic of Moldova has become imprinted within society to the point of normalization. Everyone knows it occurs, but no one speaks of it or its consequences. It is so widespread that it is no longer committed just by a minority. The majority must also use corrupt practices in order to remain competitive in school. It is a means of survival for some and a means of enrichment for others. Teachers have also become so accustomed to bribery to the point that some teachers demand bribes for grades, thus becoming the initiators of the corruption in the first place.

Despite public perceptions of corruption and knowledge of individuals who engage in corruption, very few incidents are actually investigated by the system.

A study done in 2008 analyzed the Moldovan media's coverage of domestic corruption, based on the results of monitoring 16 media outlets for 14 months. The majority of coverage involved high-ranking officials being accused of corruption and of some novel anti-corruption programs. Criminal cases of corrupt individuals who are not public figures received less attention according to the study. Educational corruption is not frequently covered by the media because it is seen as a normal part of life. It is not questioned. It is not "news." In addition, it is seen as less important than other forms of corruption because students are still passing and graduating. Thus,

externally, the education system appears to work. However, most people know that the system itself is corrupt.

PART II: THE SOLUTION

Our game, **Bribe?**, is a unique tool that creates a transparent and safe environment for open discussion, acting as a thought-provoking icebreaker. By taking on a role that they may have not experienced in real life, players begin to understand the motivations of corrupt teachers, students and parents. Thus, after playing the game, players may feel safer and more comfortable talking about and reporting incidents of bribery and corruption.

This game targets students, parents, teachers, school administrators, corruption officials as well as everyday citizens with no direct connection to the school system. By encouraging dialogue about bribery in the educational system, we hope to break the taboo. Encouraging this discussion leads to deeper thinking about how a corrupt educational system can affect everybody in a negative way (even people who are not involved in the system directly). Once people realize the gravity of the situation, we believe that stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, government authorities, etc.) can work within their real life roles to behave ethically to tackle the problem in corruption in everyone's best interest.

Implementation

In our development of **Bribe?**, we tested the game repeatedly in an effort to analyze the various outcomes a particular game play could create. The design is strong and stable enough to ensure different outcomes that will generate player discussion after the conclusion of the game. Youth Bridge will sponsor facilitated game sessions in which parents, teachers, students and anyone else who is interested can play the game. This can have a spill-over effect, attracting further attention on the game. There are a few civic games used in Moldova, but they do not tackle corruption within the education system specifically. Youth@Work is an online civic engagement game, which focuses on unemployment in Moldova (currently 16%) and in which players must make a series of choices that affect the quality of their life. This game addresses an important problem, however educational corruption has become so normalized in society that a game like **Bribe?** has not yet been designed.

Possible Costs

In the gamebox, there are B-coins, cups, dice, transparency cards, a score pad and pencils. These items are not very costly, and once the game gains popularity, the profit from sales will pay for continued manufacturing. We estimate the total cost of the game box to be around \$40,000. It is envisaged that the facilitated game sessions will not incur significant additional costs, as we will be reaching out to public cultural centers, community centers and the schools themselves so as to incorporate the game into community and PTA meetings.

Timeline

Playtesting and Iterating the Existing Concept in Countries - Jan 15 to Feb 15

Refining and Pursuing Publication - Feb 15 to March 15 (published March 15)

Coordinate play sessions and evaluate game play through outcomes - March 15 to May 15

Nationwide Distribution - May 15 to May 30

Facilitated Workshop for Moderators - May 17 & 18

Begin Facilitated Sessions - May 19 & Ongoing

Potential Sponsors and Partners

Potential partners include organizations that have already been working to end corruption, to promote successful education and those who have ties to the media. These parties may include the National Endowment for Democracy, Independent Journalism Center, the Center for Media and Democracy, Transparency International, the Ministry of Education and Youth in Moldova, the Directorate of Education in Moldova and many others.

We would consider **Bribe?** a successful game if it facilitates dialogue about bribery. After playing the game, we expect participants to have developed a more nuanced perspective about the complex system of decisions and dilemmas involved in corruption in schools. The game's impact will be assessed by a series of reflective questions answered by participants after game sessions.

Visualization

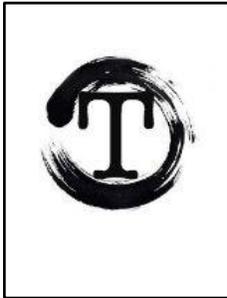
Game Box:



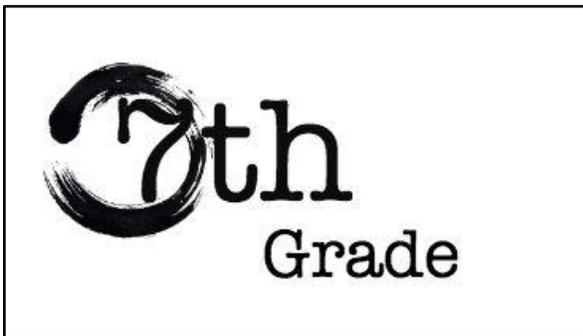
B-coin:



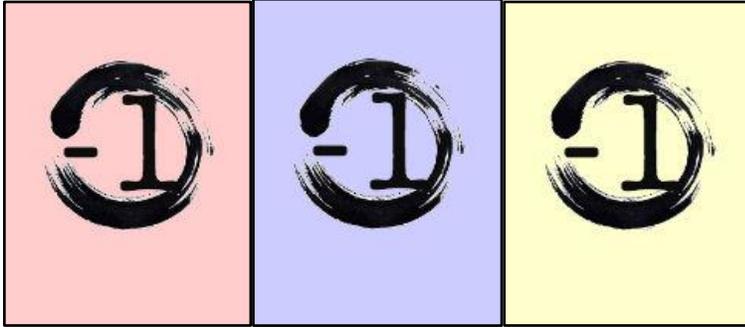
Transparency cards (transparent plastic material):



Cards for each round in the game:



+ 1/ - 1Cards: (Translucent/ Plastic Material, Colors of Youth Bridge Logo)



Score Sheets Booklet:

$E_{A,B} = A_B - B_A$
 $\langle \psi | \hat{H} | \psi \rangle = \langle \psi | H | \psi \rangle$

GRADE

10

$[\hat{L}_x, \hat{L}_y] = i\hbar \hat{L}_z$
 $\hat{L}_x = \hat{L}_y = \hat{L}_z = \hat{L}$
 $\hat{L}^2 = \hat{L}_x^2 + \hat{L}_y^2 + \hat{L}_z^2$
 $\hat{L}^2 |l, m\rangle = \hbar^2 l(l+1) |l, m\rangle$
 $\hat{L}_z |l, m\rangle = \hbar m |l, m\rangle$
 $\hat{L}_x |l, m\rangle = \hbar \sqrt{l(l+1) - m(m \pm 1)} |l, m \pm 1\rangle$
 $\hat{L}_y |l, m\rangle = \mp \hbar \sqrt{l(l+1) - m(m \pm 1)} |l, m \pm 1\rangle$

Free Particle:
 $\hat{H} = \frac{\hat{p}^2}{2m}$
 $\psi(x) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \tilde{\psi}(k) e^{ikx} dk$
 $\tilde{\psi}(k) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \psi(x) e^{-ikx} dx$
 $\psi(x) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \tilde{\psi}(k) e^{ikx} dk$
 $\hat{H} \psi(x) = E \psi(x) \Rightarrow \hat{H} \tilde{\psi}(k) = E \tilde{\psi}(k)$
 $\frac{\hbar^2 k^2}{2m} \tilde{\psi}(k) = E \tilde{\psi}(k)$
 $k = \pm \sqrt{2mE}/\hbar$

Delta Function Well:
 $V(x) = -V_0 \delta(x)$
 $\psi(x) = A e^{\kappa x} \quad x < 0$
 $\psi(x) = B e^{-\kappa x} \quad x > 0$
 $\psi(0) = A = B$
 $\psi'(0^+) - \psi'(0^-) = -\frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} \psi(0)$
 $-\kappa B - \kappa A = -\frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} A$
 $-\kappa A - \kappa A = -\frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} A$
 $2\kappa = \frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2}$
 $\kappa = \frac{mV_0}{\hbar^2}$
 $E = -\frac{\hbar^2 \kappa^2}{2m} = -\frac{mV_0^2}{2\hbar^2}$

Bound States:
 $\psi(x) = A e^{-\kappa x} \quad x > 0$
 $\psi(x) = B e^{\kappa x} \quad x < 0$
 $\psi(0) = A = B$
 $\psi'(0^+) - \psi'(0^-) = -\frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} \psi(0)$
 $-\kappa A - \kappa A = -\frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} A$
 $2\kappa = \frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2}$
 $\kappa = \frac{mV_0}{\hbar^2}$
 $E = -\frac{\hbar^2 \kappa^2}{2m} = -\frac{mV_0^2}{2\hbar^2}$

Scattering States:
 $\psi(x) = e^{ikx} + R e^{-ikx} \quad x < 0$
 $\psi(x) = T e^{ikx} \quad x > 0$
 $\psi(0) = 1 + R = T$
 $\psi'(0^+) - \psi'(0^-) = -\frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} \psi(0)$
 $ikT - ik(1 + R) = -\frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} T$
 $ikT - ik - ikR = -\frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} T$
 $ikT - ikR = \frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} T - ik$
 $ik(T - R) = \frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} T - ik$
 $ik(T - R) + ik = \frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} T$
 $ik(T - R + 1) = \frac{2mV_0}{\hbar^2} T$

APPENDICES

1. In-depth country profile

Moldova is a small, landlocked country in Eastern Europe, bordering Ukraine and Romania. Originally part of Romania, Moldova was added to the Soviet Union at the end of World War II. After the dissolution of the Union in 1991, Moldova became an independent state and now has about 3,560,000 citizens. While the majority of residents are of Romanian descent from recent generations, about 76 percent identify as Moldovan. Eight percent are Ukrainian, six percent are Russian and only about two percent are Romanian. About 59 percent of the population speaks Moldovan, a language almost identical to Romanian. Russian and Romanian are also spoken prominently in Moldova (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2014). The majority of Moldovans are Orthodox Christians, with a few other Protestant minorities.

Although it has been independent from the USSR for two decades, Russian military forces have remained in Moldova since then due to a separatist Slavic majority in the Transnistria region of Moldova. The majority is composed of Ukrainians and Russians, hence the military presence in the area. After the conflict in Crimea, tensions between Russia and Moldova have heightened due to the military presence there. There are many Moldovans living in the region in question, which further complicates the issue. The Russian population there has appealed to Russia to annex the region, while the Moldovan president has moved to sign an association agreement.

Moldova is generally seen as having the weakest economy in the European Union, with \$3,800 GDP per capita as of 2013 and very large national debt. The majority of the labor force works in services, however the agricultural industry is one of the most lucrative sectors in Moldova, given the plentiful arable land and abundant skills among the workers. About 26 percent of the labor force works in the agricultural industry, with the country's key exports including grapes, grain, sugar beets, sunflower seeds, tobacco, and other fruits and vegetables. Agricultural machinery, foundry equipment, refrigerators and freezers, washing machines, shoes and textiles are also widely manufactured in Moldova. The majority of exports go to Russia, Romania, Italy and Ukraine. Most imports come from Russia, Romania, Ukraine and China. The trend of exports remaining in Europe indicates a somewhat less globalized and wealthy economy.

The economy of Moldova depends largely on annual remittances, indicating the scattering of Moldovan citizens across Europe. The quality of living and earning potential are higher in other European countries than it is in Moldova, so many citizens or former residents move elsewhere to seek better paid employment to help support their families back in Moldova. The arable land is beneficial due to the moderate winters and warm summers. Water for irrigation is plentiful, and the permanent crops allow for a stable food and industry supply. The use of harmful agricultural chemicals has become controversial in recent years as it is damaging Moldova's environment. Poor farming methods have also caused widespread soil erosion.

2. Media Landscape

While almost all Moldovans have mobile phones, the access to internet via smart phone is quite low. Only about 36 percent of Moldovans have Internet access, the majority of whom live in the capital of Chisinau. Outside of this area, Internet speeds are much slower. Being the capital of industry, diplomacy and tourism, Chisinau holds the majority of Internet hosts as well. The lack of Internet access has proven to be an obstacle in using media to dissolve the institutionalized and normalized system of corruption that plagues education system in Moldova. There are efforts to expand the access to Internet in Moldova, however the progress is lagging. This reinforced for us that a non-digital game was needed for the people of Moldova.

Moldova's broadcast media is government-owned, with the national public radio/television broadcaster operating two television stations and two radio stations. Outside of the government owned media, there are a total of 40 television channels and 50 radio stations. Many devices also pick up Russian and Romanian channels or stations (Moldova: CIA World Factbook, 2014). Due to this global element, the game could spread to these neighboring countries through our brand and marketing.

Due to the government ownership, much of the media is seen to outsiders as biased and inaccurate. There are many existing efforts to increase media literacy in Moldova, including a project by the National Endowment for Democracy, a project cosponsored by the Independent Journalism Center and Radio Free Europe and many others.

If the state of media literacy and access to media significantly increases in Moldova after the implementation of the physical game, YouthBridge recommends that "Bribe?" be transformed into a digital platform as well.

3. Corruption in Moldova

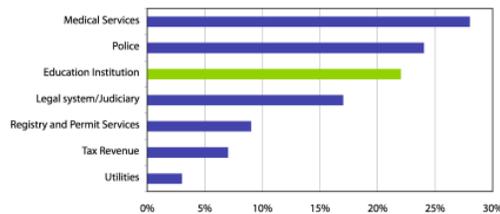
The republic of Moldova is suffering from many social, political and economic problems that serve as a barrier for its development. While most of these problems are intertwined between each other, corruption is a problem that has tremendous effect on all of Moldova's governmental segments. Even though there are plenty of information confirming the excessive use of corruption, there is no governmental response to fight this issue.

While the causes of corruption differ from one country to another, the report about "Corruption and Quality of Governance: The case of Moldova" made by the International organization "Transparency", states that corruption in Moldova has legal, institutional, economic, political, social, and moral causes. (Carascuic,1998).

Legal causes, because of all the out of date laws, that the legislative body created. The institutional causes of corruption are mainly the weak law enforcement, and lack of transparency when it comes to decision-making and public policy. The problem has also economic implications mainly because of the late payments and low wages that citizens in Moldova get, and which pressures them to find other ways to get money. Corruption is also triggered by the political situation of the country where parties have conflicting interests and some groups trying

to get back to the authoritarian regime Moldova had before. Concerning the social and moral causes, Corruption in Moldova has high public tolerance, and mass media don't put sufficient effort to raise awareness about it.(Carascuic,1998) The table below shows the proportion of households that have paid bribes and the domain they bribed on.

Figure 1 Proportion of households that have paid bribes in the past 12 month



Source: Global Corruption Barometer 2006

As we can see from the table, education is one of the highest domains people bribe on. If we take a closer look at the situation in Moldova right now, one would easily understand why education in Moldova is such a corrupt domain. First of all, the student quality in Moldova is really low. The research made by Transparency international confirms that low type students are more likely to bribe. Statistics show that 56 percent of students who require more than two attempts to pass an exam have already engaged in bribery, whereas only 34 percent of students passing the exam within two attempts have bribed. Secondly professors salaries in Moldova are extremely low. Teachers are trying to make more money by establishing direct bribery relationship with the students in order to get money and have an acceptable salary.

4. Related or similar initiatives, successes/challenges

Youth@Work is an online civic engagement game targeting unemployment in Moldova developed by the United Nations Development Programme along with Engagement Lab at Emerson College and the National Council of Youth from Moldova . The game targeted unemployment where over 1,200 people from 97 communities in Moldova used it. Players had to engage with questions related to social and the economic situation, as well as the legislative framework, and strategic policy frameworks. Through the fun context of a game, players learned about serious issues and contributed to the bigger process of policy making. \$2,000 were raised to use for local issues. Although the game was limited to only three weeks, it was considered a successful initiative as decision-makers collected valuable data from players that they used for the policy input process. Also, the top four causes that have been chosen by the players were looked into for implementation (United Nations Development Programme, 2014) .

In Bolivia, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Ministry for Institutional Transparency and the Fight against Corruption worked on a series of seven games that aimed to raise awareness about corruption and to promote the right to information access. Also, the series was employed as a method to promote transparency towards ending corruption. The goal of the games was to create preventive public policies that tackle corruption through the process of social participation. After playing those games, players were equipped with information on tools and concepts available for them to fight corruption. The series has been used in public places in Bolivia such as parks, fairs, schools, and squares. The game

received positive feedback from various age groups: children, youth and adults (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2011).

5. Proposal Details

Budget

Materials - \$5,000

Publish 100 shippable games including cards, dice, coins, cups and other materials (see ___)

Game Design, Balancing Refinement - \$5,000

50 additional hours to perfect the game

One Day Game Facilitator Training - \$7500

Leaders throughout the country to facilitate the game (travel, accommodations, etc.)

Local Coordinators - \$15,000

Money directly to organizations within country to build and maintain community of players

Pilot Study and Evaluation - \$7,000

Pilot game in a few localities and study the outcomes before scaling it to countrywide

Total: \$39, 500

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Instructions

4 or more players

12 years or older

Game Materials

Dice, B-coins, cups, hiding folders, +/- cards, Transparency Cards, Reduction Rules Card, Grade Cards, Score Pad, Pencils

Premise

Game time: appr. 30 minutes

One teacher/moderator

Everyone else is a parent of a child in the class.

Game is parent vs parent but also parents collectively vs teacher.

Goals

Parents:

To have their child go on to university after the six rounds, by earning a score of 30 or better AND having one of the two highest scores out of all the players.

Teachers:

To collect bribes and get goal # of B-Coins before the end of the six rounds, thus winning the game ---> $((\# \text{ of players} \times 10) - 10) = \text{Teacher's goal \# of beans}$

Game Setup

The teacher/moderator has a score card, pencil, the bank (full of b-coins), the +/- cards and his/her own cup.

All parents receive 1 cup, 1 hiding folder, 10 B-Coins, 1 Transparency Card

Game Play

-There are 6 rounds, representing the six years of schooling (6-12th grade).

-A player must guess how much he/she will need to bribe the teacher before he/she knows the given grade.

-To bribe, a player puts beans under the cup (while hiding it behind the folder) and slides it to the teacher, without the other players knowing how many beans, if any beans, are underneath.

Teacher counts down 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and players must have handed in their bribes. Each player then rolls the dice, representing the raw grade in the class. The teacher discretely adds the bribing

amount and the dice amount together and gives a grade back to the player without other players seeing. The teacher keeps the beans used to bribe.

-After all parents do this, the teacher indicates that it is a new school year.

*****At the onset of each new school year, parents receive one new bean as salary payments*****

The goal of each school year is to receive as high of a grade as possible (scale is 1-10). To win the whole game, you must have at least 36 cumulative points, and also be one of the top two highest scoring parents.

Corruption Officials' Inspection

The moderator has to check to see if there will be an inspection of the corruption at the school during every school year. After the bribes for that school year have been handed in:

The moderator rolls the dice. During the 7th, 8th and 9th grades, if the moderator rolls a 5 or a 6, the school will be inspected. During the 10th, 11th and 12th grades, if the moder rolls a 4, 5, or 6, the school will be inspected (greater chance of inspection in the second half of the game).

If an inspection is happening:

The players all roll the dice. Whoever rolls the lowest value, must lift up their cup and reveal whether they have bribed or not. If they have bribed, the beans go back to the bank and the player receives a -1 card. If they have not bribed, they receive a +1 card.

Transparency Cards

-After the bribes are handed in for a school year, players can attempt to expose each other.

-If a player believes another player is bribing, they accuse that player and use their transparency card. The player must then lift up their cup and show everyone if they have bribed. If they have bribed, the beans go to the bank and the player receives a -1 card. -If they have not bribed, the player who called them out must lift up his/her cup and reveal if they have bribed that round. If they haven't, then they don't lose or gain points and if they have they have, they receive a -1 card.

Moderator's script:

Hello Parents, your kids are students in my class.

It might not be obvious, but you determine if they pass.

Each one of you has 10 B-coins, a cup, and a transparency card.

If you want to support your kid's grade, choose to give me a little extra or not.

Hide some b-coins under your cup; this might give your kid a shot.

Each B-coin represents one grade; teaching is a free trade.

The number of beans will be added to the number on the die.

If you think this is not ethical, you do not have to comply

You can use your transparency card to expose a player only one time.

If you suspect another player is giving the teacher a dime.

You can also use your transparency card to expose the teacher's score.

You can choose to share that information with other players, they could believe you or decide to ignore.

All parents lose if the teacher manages to get (Number of B-coins = Number of players x 10 - 10)

Parents can form alliances among each other , you decide whether you want to bribe the teacher or not.

Parents will be rewarded +1 for not bribing the teacher. Every player should stick to that agreement, however if someone is caught bribing when cups are uncovered, this breaks the alliance, no one gets a +1 and the briber's bribe is accounted for .

Welcome to the 6th grade parent-teacher assembly . I'm glad you decided to join us specially that exams are approaching. You're kids will get the grade represented on your die, but I need to emphasize that your kids need good grades, I can help them out but a little extra is always appreciated (gesture to cup and B-coins)

If you want to give me a little extra, place some B-coins under your cups and slide them to me in 5... 4... 3... 2... 1..

Great Round everyone,

Welcome to 7th grade. Exams are approaching and you should consider boosting your kid's grade. Does anyone want to form an alliance? you have 10 seconds to decide.

You have five seconds to place a little extra under your cups and slide them to me. 5... 4... 3... 2... 1..

Corruption officers have heard that our school is corrupt and they are cracking down.

(Rolls die, losing number) You got lucky this time! Officials did not visit the school, however, they might come later...

(Rolls die, winning number) The corruption officials are here, roll your dice and the parent with the least number has to reveal what's under their cup.

- (nothing under cup) Congratulations! You have not bribed, you are a good citizen.
- (B-coins under the cup) You're busted, get a -1 and give your B-coins back to the bank.