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## Moldova June Edition 2013

Photo collage made by Maxime Westbrook.



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Inside and Out

### Pottery

By Eugenia Doros, Social Assistant.

Such an insignificant and usual thing at the first sight, ceramics are in fact some of the most important “messengers” of ancient civilizations. Besides practical functions, it is considered to be one of the earliest domestic industries, and still survives today. The processing of clay, as well as wood, stone, textile and plants has had a remarkable evolution over time, and led to the formation of Traditional Folk Civilization dating from the Neolithic period. Though pottery has a primarily practical function, ceramics are still used in decorative purposes, both in construction, and in certain rituals. A rustic “traditional” house contains many clay pots including pitchers, cups, bowls, and plates, as well as pots for milk keeping, large pots in which food is prepared for religious holidays, flower vases, statues, whistles, and toys, among others. Before firing, the clay should be prepared through cleaning, fermentation, kneading, shaping, drying, and ornamentation. These are the stages that transform the simple clay into true pieces of art. From the beginning the clay of the best quality is brought into court and left for “leavening” for several weeks. During this process, the clay is crumbled and sprinkled with water from time to time. Then clay is cut into large pieces, beaten and watered. The next stage takes place in the potter’s workshop, where the pieces of clay, occasionally called “cakes”, are placed on a wooden platform, mixed with legs for prepare the material, and then with hands until it has a greasy appearance. Afterwards, the clay is sliced with a large knife and mixed again to give it a smooth paste, which is then divided into round equal-sized pieces. When the work comes to the modeling wheel, a close attention must be paid to the interior part of the vase. For the walls’ smoothing and finishing a piece of leather and one of wood, traditionally called “comb” is used. For simple dishes, this phase takes not more than a minute. After the modeling phase, the earthenware is dried for a few days. The dry dishes are soaked in a white or red solution, made from water and humus, and commonly known as “whiteness”. Plates are covered with decoration, and then put in the oven. When the enamel is used, they have to be burned twice. Although there are a lot of tools used for pottery processing, still the most important and representative is the “Potter’s Wheel”. The wheel is made of two discs; the smaller one is situated on the top, and the larger one on the bottom side. The two are connected by a vertical axis. The piece of clay is put on the top disk, and the lower disc is moved by the potter by his foot a circular motion fast enough. Thus, the wheel spins, obtaining circular shapes with regular shape. A true potter uses a rich repertoire of forms and symbols for ceramic decoration, which frequently are of great artistic refinement. Using the horn or brush, on the slip surface a tree branch, eagle wing or feather, an eye of a rabbit, snake, or field flowers may be painted in white, blue, or brown shades.



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In the end, the dishes are impregnated with a translucent layer of quality enamel. The colors of the ceramic can give us certain information about the origin of its primarily users; the red ceramic is well known to have an Roman origin, while the yellow, green and white ones belong to the Byzantine tradition. The important thing is that all the colors are obtained through natural methods.

Many researchers believe that in fact, pottery has always had, besides its practical and artistic functions, another, more spiritual one. As proof of this statement they point to the myths and legends connected with the “clay”, some of them only with a Romanian local meaning, but others of a wider importance. Even the Divine Creation was imagined at many nations as pottery art. For example, Adam was a piece of clay with a soul. The same goes for the first Babylonian man, Enkidu, who, according to Akkadian mythology, was created by the goddess Aruru from a piece of clay. Romanian legend says that the potter has stolen this handicraft from God, but as people don't have a “divine breath”, they have to put the clay into the oven.



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### Volunteer Corner Medical Project

#### My experience in Chişinău city

By Rebecca Johnson from USA.

My first week in Chişinău, Moldova has been incredible. When I first arrived, I was very nervous because I was so far away from home and I did not speak the language here. I did not personally know any volunteers before arriving here, and I was unsure what I was going to experience through my project. However, it did not take long for me to fall in love with this unique city and its culture. I soon met other volunteers along with Projects Abroad workers and we became fast friends, and this strange city that I was once so afraid of is slowly beginning to feel like home. I signed up for the medical project here in Moldova and I could not be more pleased with my working situation. During the first week, I was stationed at the Children's Hospital in the burn unit. Closely following Dr. Calmatui and Dr. Sergey, I was able to see children of all ages and experience firsthand how their burn wounds are treated. What was most exciting to me was that on the very first day (Monday), I was allowed to assist with treatment. I helped the physicians remove bandages, and by Wednesday they were allowing me to work alone with the burnt child – I was allowed to remove and re-bandage burn wounds, which was very exhilarating. On Tuesday and Thursday of the first week, I was allowed to watch surgeries. The first surgery that I saw was a young boy, aged nine years old, who had an electrical burn to his finger and needed extra skin from his stomach to help repair the wound. They achieved this through creating a flap of skin on the stomach and sewing the wounded pinky to this flap of skin, so that as the pinky finger would heal, it would have sufficient skin to do so. The second surgery we saw was a young boy who had once burned his hand, and the resulting scars on his hand prevented a full range of movement of his fingers. Thus, the physicians made small incisions into his hand in order to alleviate this stress. Considering I come from the United States where there are numerous restrictions on which patients a student is allowed to see, it was really fulfilling for me to not only be able to see the treatment of these patients, but also to assist in their healing process. The experience I have gained in this past week is priceless, and I look forward to the weeks to come in the Emergency Hospital and the Mother & Child Hospital.



## My experience in Moldovan hospitals

By Pranjal Singh from USA, one month.



I was very excited to have the opportunity to work as a medical intern with Projects Abroad in Moldova. This trip represented the ultimate chance for me to experience what healthcare is like in a developing country. When I arrived here, I was filled with a little bit of anxiety, and I had a slightly hard time dealing with all the cultural idiosyncrasies. However, as a few days passed by, I slowly began to ease into life in Moldova. I was able to spend my first two weeks in the “E.Coțaga” Republican Pediatric Hospital. I spent my first week in the Oral-Maxillofacial department watching Dr. Lupan change

bandages of all the young children that walked through the door. A lot of kids had relatively small cuts on their forehead, but there were a few more severe cases. Some of the kids had a cleft palate. For them, the pain is a lot more severe, and their screaming definitely made their displeasure apparent. I got to spend my second week alongside another volunteer Rebecca, who is also from the United States. This week, we decided to go the Burns Department. For me, watching cases here was extremely eye opening. It seems as if pediatric burns are extremely common. I was able to count at least seven or eight kids that came in one day because they had spilled hot water or tea on themselves. The toughest thing about adapting to this department is the smell of burnt flesh, and it is also very difficult to listen to crying children. Rebecca and I had the opportunity to do some real hands on work. Dr. Calmatu and Dr. Sergei both offered us the opportunity to help change the bandages of the younger kids that came in. At first I was a little hesitant because I wasn't sure if I was going to hurt the kids or not. Even though I couldn't understand what Dr. Sergei was saying, he used hand gestures to guide me through the process of removing the bandages on the first patient. From there, I was able to take over, and remove and reapply the bandages to the rest of the patients. Here, I saw that most of the patients were being treated with a topical ointment called Levomicol. It is used to help speed up the natural healing process of the body. It acts almost like a collagenase, which helps break down and remove any dead skin cells. I also went to the Reanimation department, where there were even more severely burned victims. I saw a young boy aged who had extensive burns all over his body. His burns were the result of mixing alcohol and fire. The doctors had to carefully remove his wound dressings, and I could hear the resistance of his skin peeling off as they removed his old bandages. I have never felt a greater sense of ambivalence after seeing this child.



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On one hand, I was overcome with sadness to a young child which suffered such horrific injuries. However, I was also introduced to the reality of how gruesome medicine can actually be. I also had the opportunity to see a lot of major surgeries in the Burns Department. One of the first surgeries I saw was for a young boy who had been the victim of electrical burns on his hand. The power had gone out, and he had tried to see if he could fix it. His right hand had become completely unrecognizable, with two of his fingers becoming almost fused together, and his pinky was almost non-existent. The purpose of the surgery was to take skin from his abdomen, and help rebuild his pinky finger. In order to make sure the pinky remained straight, they put in a small metal rod when they surgically uncurled his finger. So far, I have had the best experience here, and I can't wait to continue interning at the Emergency Hospital as well as the Mother and Child Hospital in the near future.



**Volunteers at Mother and Child Hospital**



**Anatol Calistru, Chief of Microsurgery Department at Emergency Hospital,  
Cristina- translator, Rebecca and Pranjal, Medical volunteers.**

## A Britain in Chişinău

By Maxime Westbrook from UK, one month in Moldova.



The rolling hills and greenery on the edge of Chişinău which I see when I get up every morning are dramatically different to the paved streets of a UK city. We do not have grand parks filled with large trees which are useful shade in the summer heat. The heat is also unknown in the UK where it is mainly wind and rain even in the summer with the occasional week of warm sun in summer. The lakes of the area are also a change from the UK where most of ours are in one region. The multiple types of transport into the city is only matched in the UK by the transport of London, where the

famous red busses are the main transport and though we do have taxi's they are not used by most people. The other most popular transport there is the train, which most people use due to the traffic of a city. In the trains people are often crammed in and they run as often as the buses in Chişinău. The London buses are often late and get stuck in the city traffic which is why the train is the most popular transport for regular people. When I arrive in Chişinău the most obvious part is the park of Stephen the Great, and also his statue, the size and greenery are incredible compared to those parks we have in the UK. Most of ours have smaller trees and are smaller in size as well; the larger parks are located out in the countryside. Those parks we do have in the cities have the grass covered over by tarmac in part. These areas contain children's rides within them such as slides and swings where parents will often take their kids after school or on weekends. When I need to go shopping in Chişinău the supermarket Elat has all the shops I could need for most of my needs, although the open market is where I would go for anything else. In the UK we do not have large outdoor markets during the week. We have some on weekends in towns where mostly farmer's products are sold. In the cities we have few open markets and none that could match the scale of Chişinău's. The supermarkets we have in the UK are very similar with the type of products we can buy in them; this has led to less open markets and smaller shops shutting down in the UK. We also have shopping centres, similar to the local hypermarkets, which are much larger than our supermarkets and consist of at least two floors of large shops which sell foods, clothes, phones and most types of technology. The shopping centres in the UK are usually located both in and out of the cities where most people will spend an entire day of their weekend buying furniture, food and clothes.

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For my leisure time here in Chişinău I would do similar activities to that in the UK. Watching films on weekends with friends and family is very popular in the UK. We go to cinema's similar to those in Chişinău such as the Patria. Many people also go to listen to modern and classical music on an evening similar to that seen in the Stadionul Republican and Sala cu Orgă. Particularly the concert currently on at the Sala cu Orgă. After going to the cinema or concerts we would usually go out to eat at places such as McDonalds and other restaurants where the food is very different to that of Moldova. We have mostly pizzas and different types of meat in our restaurants. Indian and Italian food such as pasta is greatly loved in the UK. On a night out we go to disco-bars such as the Military Club. Places in the UK often open at 10pm and play dance music until three or four in the morning.



Overall, life in the UK while being very different to that in Moldova is also in many ways very similar. The cultures are different but not necessarily better. Chisinau has many great places that we could not match in the UK. The people here are also friendlier than those in UK cities. Moldova has given a great impression and I hope that while people may visit. I also hope that more people from the UK visit Moldova and see the beauty of Chisinau that I have and take it back home with them.



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Donation page

### A friend in need is a friend indeed!

**By Margarita Bohnearscaia, Director and Pedagogue of the «Fantastic» Daily Care Center.**

The Moldovans have a saying: “a friend in need is a friend indeed”. On Easter holidays, the International Organization Projects Abroad found a way to help our daycare center for Children and Teenagers from «Fantastic» in solving some complex problems that had affected us the last period. The fact is that this winter our center was, for several times, filled with water, and it resulted in swelling of the walls, to washability of the wall paint, but also to cracking them, as can be seen in the photographs. As our country is situated in a zone of earthquake activity, every year several earthquakes occur here. After another earthquake, a big crack was formed at the entrance of our center. Knowing our needs, on the eve of the biggest holiday for the native population, this volunteer organization gave us the necessary funds and resources for the repair. We bought the necessary and qualitative construction materials and actively began to carry out the repair work. This activity you can see in the following pictures.

As the 1st of June Child Protection Day is celebrated in our country, a really important present from the organization was the completion of the repair. All the children, the entire teaching staff of the center, as well as guests who came to a party at our center, highly appreciated the gift made by Projects Abroad. We are actively cooperating with the organization since 2008 and we want to note that this is not the first financial assistance provided to us.



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In 2011, Projects Abroad and Appleby College a current repair was carried out in the center. Moreover, the volunteers from Projects Abroad helped us not only financially, buying construction materials, educational games, sports equipment, but also intellectually, teaching our children foreign languages, playing with them and doing different creative activities.



Projects Abroad's volunteers, by their actions and their smiles, their stories and their skills, are making our children happier. The volunteers of this organization from different countries, like the UK, Holland, Canada, USA, Australia, China, Italy, France and Germany, have visited our center and made a significant contribution to the care and education of our young generation. Since our focus is an aesthetic one, the volunteers of these countries have tried to develop in our children a sense of aesthetic education through national dances, an introduction to martial arts, yoga classes, etc.

Such volunteers as Menda and Vicky (Holland), Theis (China), Clint (Australia) and many others will remain forever in the memory of our children and the chronicles of our center. Our kids are looking forward to the arrival, this summer, of more than 10 new volunteers from different countries. We are very excited about it and proud of such partnership.



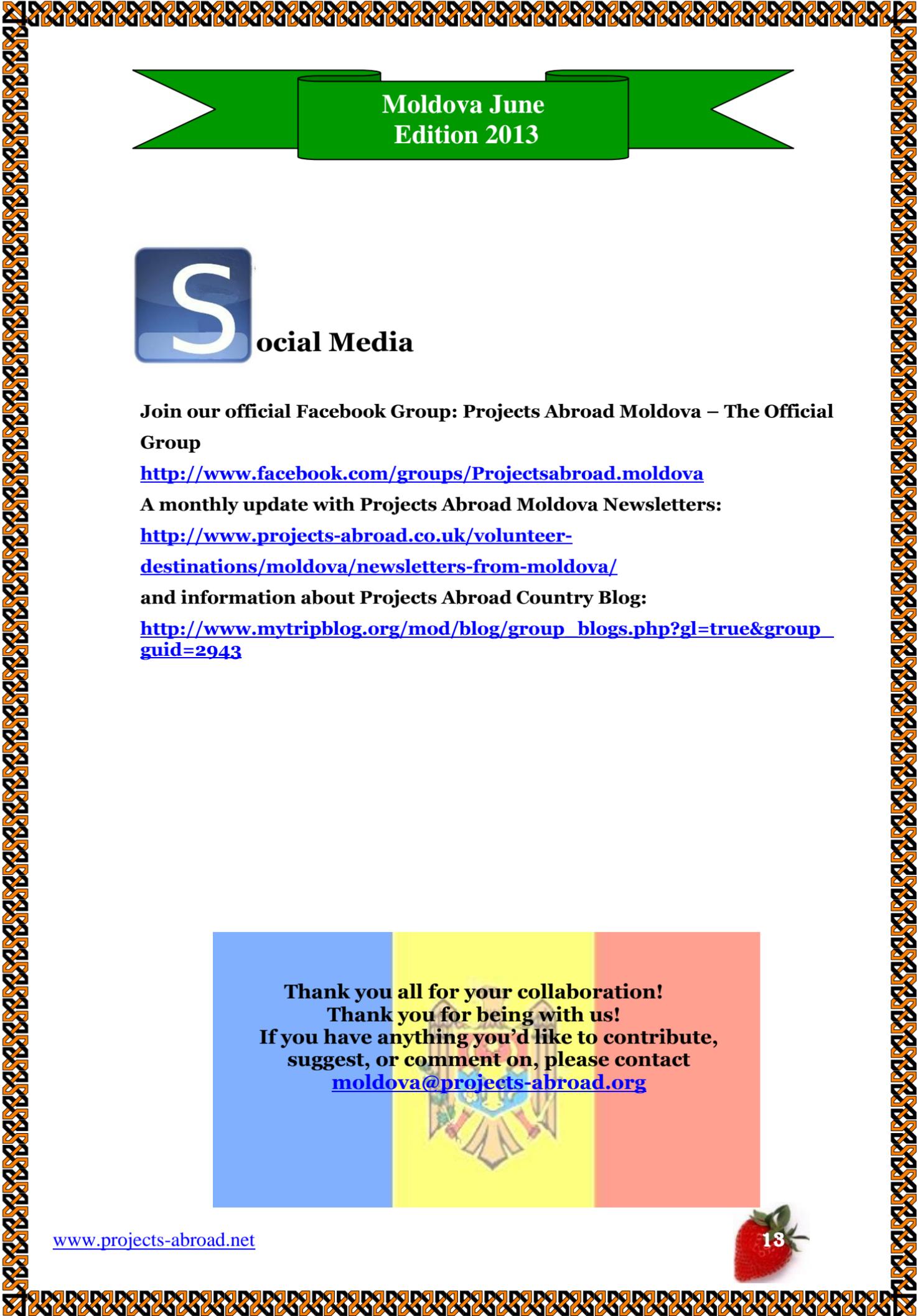
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[Photos page](#)

### Volunteers' Happy Moments

Photo collage made by Maxime Westbrook.





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**Join our official Facebook Group: Projects Abroad Moldova – The Official Group**

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/Projectsabroad.moldova>

**A monthly update with Projects Abroad Moldova Newsletters:**

<http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-destinations/moldova/newsletters-from-moldova/>

**and information about Projects Abroad Country Blog:**

[http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group\\_blogs.php?gl=true&group\\_guid=2943](http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group_blogs.php?gl=true&group_guid=2943)



**Thank you all for your collaboration!  
Thank you for being with us!  
If you have anything you'd like to contribute,  
suggest, or comment on, please contact  
[moldova@projects-abroad.org](mailto:moldova@projects-abroad.org)**