

Foreword

In 1998, the mandate of the International Bureau of Education was redefined with a view to providing support to UNESCO member states in the management of processes curricula change and of renewal of school curricula. Building the professional, technical, institutional and managerial skills of curriculum developers is a central component of this new mandate. It is in light of this that a process of regional consultations was initiated in 1999 among national curriculum departments around the world in view of taking stock of national experiences of curriculum change. Over fifteen regional seminars and workshops organised in all major regions of the world have focused on a host of curriculum development issues ranging from policy and practice in such areas as social inclusion, language issues, HIV/AIDS prevention, citizenship, teacher education, and science education.

In documenting context-specific challenges in ensuring the quality and relevance of school education to the multidimensional social change associated with globalisation, the International Bureau of Education has also focused on the unique experiences of countries in transition. Consultative seminars have been organised jointly with the Open Society Fund in Lithuania for the Baltic States (Vilnius, December 2001), with the Centre for Educational Policy Studies (CEPS) for countries of South East Europe (Bohinj April 2002), as well as with the Network of Pedagogical Universities in the South Caucasus (Prometheus) and the International Institute for Education Policy, Planning and Management (IIEPM) in Tbilisi (June 2003). The sub-regional seminar organised jointly with the Belarus National Institute of Education for Russia and the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine (Minsk, June 2003) is at the heart of this exploration.

There is a great deal to be learned from the challenging process of educational transition within the region. How to find the right balance between the positive aspects of the Soviet educational heritage, on one hand, and the methods, contents and processes of curriculum development that need to be introduced, on the other? What are the challenges of educational reform in a context of simultaneous processes of economic, political, and technological change? The dual processes of globalisation and of political and economic transition make the process of educational transition within the region particularly challenging. The comparative analysis proposed here traces the way in which the four national systems have evolved separately out of the same Soviet model. While many of the challenges of structural reform are shared, there are specific challenges related to the adaptation of educational processes to newly defined civic and political identities and national economic spaces.

IBE hopes that the publication of this volume will contribute to a better understanding and, particularly, to open more questions and to promote debate on the ongoing changes in the four countries involved and also in others going through similar challenges.

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Summary seminar report

Challenges of Curriculum Development in the XXI Century Perspectives from Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine 22-23 June 2003, Minsk

I. Background and rationale

Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine inherited a fairly well-developed, mature educational system from the Soviet Union. Most school age children had access to formal education and literacy was almost universal. The literacy rate in Soviet times was nearly 98/99 percent except in some areas dominated by ethnic minorities, where the rate may have been considerably lower. Despite generally high levels of educational attainment, transition exposed weaknesses in the system. The significant changes in the politics and the economy of Eastern Europe over the last ten years have done a major impact on educational access, attainment, and achievement. The essence of the new model of education is decentralization and democratization of administration of education, of diversification of educational plans and curriculum content that could provide people with updated and more relevant knowledge, values and skills. The whole sphere of education is oriented towards the priority of development of personality.

Over the last decade with transition in Eastern Europe several conferences and workshops have been organized with the aim of establishing and improving the former links between these countries. The seminar in Minsk that was organized by the National Institute of Education, Belarus Ministry of Education in co-operation with International Bureau of Education UNESCO (Switzerland) was a step in this direction.

All participants of the seminar representing regional governmental and national educational institutions confirmed that the school curriculum in the XXI century should maintain the positive aspects of the heritage of the Soviet school such as: stability, accessibility and fundamentals of knowledge, and spirituality. On the other hand, it should be a new education system based on student-oriented approaches that could promote democratic values, knowledge and skills that are important for life in a pluralistic political system and market economy. The new education paradigm is based on such principles as flexibility and adaptation to change, freedom of choice and creativity.

Curriculum development is an essential component of educational reform and quality improvement. Plans for curriculum reform initiated in the post Soviet era were developed and implemented very slowly as a result of the economic crisis experienced within the region during the 1990s. In such a context, dialogue is important to develop a common understanding of the challenges experienced in each national context with regard to educational reform. The sharing of national experiences and their evaluation against the backdrop of international trends and strengthening regional of networking mechanisms are essential contributions to building regional capacity for curriculum development.

II. Objectives

The general objective of the seminar was to contribute to capacity building in the field of curriculum development in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine through the exchange of information and the sharing of experiences on national processes of curriculum review and reform. The specific objectives of the seminar were the following;

1. *To identify common and specific challenges* in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine in the area of curriculum renewal through the sharing of national experiences.

It is essential to learn from promising examples and practices in reforming the educational system, as well as from the mistakes made, it would strengthen the further development of reform or modernization of education in Eastern European countries.

2. *To develop a shared vision* of the needs encountered in the process of European integration

3. *To explore the relevance of strengthening regional networking and cooperation mechanisms.*

The seminar aimed to probe interest in strengthening networking in Eastern European countries by reinforcing cooperation among experts from Ministers of Education, National Educational Institutions and integrating networking in Russian (language) into a global Curriculum Development Network.

III. Participants

There were representatives from the Ministry of Education, from the educational institutions and from educational NGO from the following countries: Belarus, Moldova, Russian Federation, and Ukraine. Additional participants were from the National Institute of Education (Minsk); representatives from the Embassy of Republic of Moldova in Belarus, Embassy of Russian Federation in Belarus, Embassy of Ukraine in Belarus. The Director of the International Bureau of Education and the Head of National Commission of UNESCO office in Minsk also participated in the seminar. Mass media were present at the press conference. (See List of participants enclosed).

IV. Working methods.

The working languages of the seminar were English and Russian. Workshop sessions were organized around:

- presentation of world trends in education and the need for a new “glocal” curriculum;
- presentation of national reports of processes of curriculum change in participating countries;
- exchange of experiences and strategies in curriculum development;
- discussion of the topics of drafting, public debate, and problems and issues concerning implementation of the curriculum process.
- identification of main themes for regional/international cooperation.

V. Issues raised during the discussion.

- **Paradoxes** of globalization

Following the welcoming speech by the Director of the National Institute of Education, Belarus Ministry of Education Dr. Vladimir Parkhomenka and the Director of the International Bureau of Education UNESCO, Dr. Cecilia Braslavsky (Switzerland) delivered a keynote highlighting:

- the impact of the paradoxes of globalization to the human societies;
- the challenge of education is in finding a balance between global and local content through the building of new “glocal” identities in a multi-ethnic world and a multicultural global society.

Dr. Braslavsky stressed that the creation of “glocal” identities worldwide requires a new concept for worldwide multi-ethnic and multicultural education promoted through a new “glocal” curriculum that is able to deal with global and local challenges at the same time (Braslavsky, 2003). She identified the pillars of glocal curricula for inter-ethnic and multicultural education as being: global comprehensiveness; local openness; novel approaches in individual subjects; crosscutting issues and methodologies and ownership.

- **Challenges** in the process of reforming (modernization) education.
 - top-down structure of decision making;
 - inadequate involvement of key stakeholders and teachers in particularly in the process of curriculum development and inadequate preparation of school administration and teachers for curriculum changes;
 - there is a dilemma between the need to update the curriculum with new learning areas and attempting to reduce the overall curriculum load;
 - there is still not well developed mechanism for monitoring and self-evaluation;
 - all countries are faced the lack of financial support for the educational system.

- Another important issue explored at the Minsk seminar was the development of the *state educational standards*. The standards are considered as a means of modernization of education in the process of European integration;

All participants of the seminar agreed that educational standards for basic general education are of special importance. In Ukraine, for instance state educational standard is a tool for modernization of content of education. The use of these standards in education must guarantee that graduates of basic schools master the necessary minimum of knowledge that provides them with all possibilities of further education and specialization. The process of development of state standards for secondary education is at very different stages in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

State educational standards for 11-year general secondary education in Belarus have been developed and adopted and are still there in process of correction of the standards for 12-year school. (Presentation of the delegation of Belarus at seminar in Minsk).

In Russian Federation on the other hand a project entitled: "On the State Educational Standard in the elementary, basic and secondary (complete) general education" has been developed. It includes the main definitions, aims, status, structure (basic components), and explanations of the stages of realizations, and budget for implementation.

The process of implementation of the state education standards is expected to start in 2005 at the grade I-V of secondary schools. (Presentation of the delegation of RF at the seminar in Minsk).

- *Role of teachers:*

Teachers' understanding of the changes in content and skills expected of them is often quite different from that of policymakers, largely because they receive only brief and superficial training and guidance. It was also agreed that separate teachers guides and supplementary materials should be developed with the purpose to help teachers in the process of the implementation of the renewed curriculum.

Leaving teachers out of the design and development of curricular change is likely to result in little, if any, real change. Teacher involvement in curriculum development can be a motivating factor for the teachers themselves ... raising their morale and giving them a sense of „ownership“ of the curriculum.

- new *assessment techniques* of students academic achievements

An important issue in all four countries is the best models and/or system for pupils' knowledge assessments. Some of techniques discussed at the Minsk seminar:

- common state examination;
- test system and
- advantages and disadvantages of the new point-scale system

A brief presentation by the Ministry of Education of the RF described a pilot project for establishing a common state exam started in five regions of the Russian Federation

in 2001. This experiment will be continued until 2006. The common state exam will be passed once and it will substitute schools' and universal exams.

The advantages of new point-scale system for the student's academic achievement were discussed. A new system would be more effective than previous one. And a 10-point scale in Belarus and 12-point scale system in Ukraine have already been adopted.

- **textbook development** (new textbooks to be written to support the new curricula).

Development, publication and distribution of new textbooks are among the most important tasks in the sphere of education in providing learners and students with high-quality textbooks at the reasonable price. (National Report: RF, 2000:31). This perspective reflects the major presumption, inherited from the socialist system of education, that the textbooks are the most important items in the education system... (Textbooks & learning materials. 1990-99:44).

In Soviet times, many very good textbooks were developed and republished a few times in all subjects, which were worked out by the best Soviet scholars and teachers and were characterized by high scientific and methodological quality. The usage of all those educational documentation and materials was obligatory for all educational institutions in the USSR.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, former Soviet republics faced the problem of textbook development. First of all, they lacked professional authors and/or collective, and secondly there were inadequate subsidies from the government for publishing new books. It is possible to say that much work have been achieved in the four countries in textbook development and publishing. The main changes include renewal of textbook content and changes in methods of payment and distribution.

In Belarus the agency in charge of textbooks development is the National Institute of Education (NIE). It has departments for each of the academic subject (math, languages, sciences, etc.). These departments work with authors or a group of authors, whom may be researchers from these departments, from other research institutions, professors from Belarus universities, teachers, etc.). (from presentation of Belarussian delegation at the seminar, June 2003).

Moldova adopted a system of the competition between the draft copies of the textbooks that helps to find the best quality of textbooks. In the 90-s was a problem with the authors for textbooks developing; the lack of experience, but now it has been solved. There is a rent-system for textbooks - it is 35% of price for first year, 30% -2 -d years, 28%- 3-rd year etc. This price for rent should cover, at list, of half of price of next publishing of textbooks. (from presentation of Moldovan delegation at the seminar, June 2003).

For the last years, the significant number of educational books in a history and social science were published in the Russian Federation. The complete Federal set of textbooks contains more than 40 names of history textbooks... The problem of history textbooks and social science content repeatedly was debated on different conferences, seminars, and meetings. This issue, for the last few years, frequently became a point of issue in committees and commissions of the State Duma and Council of Federation, and inn mass media. (from presentation of Russian delegation at the seminar, June 2003).

- *multicultural education*

The importance of the multicultural education was also discussed during the seminar. Dr. Cecilia Braslavsky in her presentation mentioned the following rationales for multicultural education:

- recognition of the need to respect each individual's personal right to diversity;
- the existence of a variety of cultures that should be understood and recovered in order to enrich humanity and
- the fact that integration or articulation with the more dynamic sectors of the world economy demands intercultural knowledge, skills and values.

The risks are to paradoxically promote the "Westernization" or "Northern-Americanization" of the world or, on the contrary, to devote a lot of time to a "romantic folk-oriented" teaching and learning of cultures through what may be a superficial incorporation of folk songs, regional food and similar elements.(C.Braslavsky, 2003:4)

All post-Soviet countries have various ethnicities, linguistic groups, religions, and cultures. This multi-cultural aspect of the post-Soviet countries has important implications for contemporary state- and nation-building. As new countries attempt to construct a civic culture, democratic mechanisms, a functioning market, and a sense of national identity, issues such as minority rights, inter-ethnic conflict, and the interaction of various perspectives and cultural traditions challenge them. (Multicultural Legacies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, BRAMA, September 24, 2001).

The challenges inherent to multi-cultural societies have been further exacerbated by phenomena associated with the process of globalisation. Economic interdependence, growing transnational cooperation, complicates attempts to build states and consolidate national identities. New cultural groups, in the form of migrant workers, immigrants, and refugees, have been introduced into regions where they did not formerly live. Changing borders and citizenship policies have also led to the creation of new minority groups. (Multicultural Legacies...BRAMA, 2001).

The participants of the seminar agreed that multicultural education is a way of organizing the content and methods of education in a way that pupils from both the majority and minorities are taught that there are different cultures, ethnicities and other groups in their country. Multicultural approach makes the educational process free of biases and simplifies the world picture. Multicultural ideas are reflected in such policy documents: "Concept of 12-years general education in Ukraine" and "Concept of civic education".(from presentation of Ukrainian delegation at the seminar).

VI. National proposal for regional and international cooperation

The following topics for the co-operation were proposed:

1. Mechanisms for creation and renewal of *educational standards* in the process of European integration.
2. The techniques for *assessment* the students academic achievements.
3. *Multi-cultural education* in the context of European integration: language, history, and art.
4. Profiles (professionally oriented) education in the rural areas of Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

Existing matches of institutional cooperation at national, regional and international levels are listed in appendices 5, table 1.

After the seminar a questionnaire was developed in order to identify interest and opportunities in strengthening regional networking mechanism among national curriculum making bodies in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine (see appendices 5, table 2). The questions concerned all types of cooperation in field of education at the different levels that exist: regional, national and international levels the responses indicate that at the regional level co-operation is fragmental and more often is a result of joint projects/ conferences, workshops and exchange of experiences and information.

At the international level;

- formal and informal co-operation;
- it's more often when people have individual membership in some international organizations, such as ICSEI, EEFA, ENIRDEM, ISTE, IANSA
- joint projects are one of way for the co-operation at the international level.

The following priorities and topics of interest in strengthening regional networking among curriculum developers, and in integrating a Global Curriculum Network of national curriculum-making bodies coordinated by the UNESCO International Bureau of Education are:

- Research of international values, standards and approaches in the process of curriculum development, educational and management technologies with aim to integration into the European and World educational community.
- Research of main trends in development of education in the world;
- Creation of a common regional educational space, and development of common approaches.
- Joint project about the challenges and problems of curriculum development

The answers to the questions concerning the priorities in curriculum development in each countries and contribution by the local institution into the activities of a regional and international network could be looked in the additional tables in the annex.

BELARUS

The main trends of curriculum development in Belarus

*Vladimir Parkhomenka,
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Ludmila Khudenko*

Abstract

The priority directions of the content of education in the Republic of Belarus are given in the article. Key tasks of the secondary school reform conducted in the country are revealed, fundamental principles and priorities of the renewal of the content and structure of curriculum for general secondary education are given, with an accent on the specialties of its construction.

Special attention is paid to the aims, tasks and the description of the experimental work on testing the model of the 12-years school providing general secondary education, the school which is characterized by personal oriented direction of the educational process, compulsory 10-years basic education , by the beginning of school education from the age of 6, by the transition to the 5-days study week, and by the introduction of the profile education on the senior stage of school.

The list of the most meaningful normative legal and conceptual program documents providing functioning and the development of the system of general secondary education in the conditions of its evolutionary reformations are given.

Curriculum Reform in the Republic of Moldova

Viorika Gorash-Postica and Vladimir Guzu

Abstract

The article offers an analytical description of the educational reform in the Republic of Moldova in the field of curriculum development, as a central component and at the same time as a guarantee of the success of the global national education reform. For that concept, the present reform aims at organizing an ultimate separation of the Moldovan educational system from the uniform and rigid model of the Soviet time and is designed to respond adequately to unprecedented changes and challenges that our century prepares for the pupils who are now in schools. The authors briefly describe the specific character of the curriculum reform at all the levels of school education, emphasizing its advantages and disadvantages from the point of view of scientists, teachers and pupils. At the final part of the article, they referred to the contribution of the Educational Center „Pro Didactica” as a civil society representative in supporting the curriculum reform in high school.

RUSSIA

The main trends of curriculum development in Russian Federation. Curriculum in the system of state educational standards.

Lidiya Ribchenkova and Olga Aleksandrova

Abstract

This article presents the main aims and trends of modernization of the education system in the Russian Federation in the field of curriculum development. The authors give main characteristics of state educational standards; explain the basic approaches towards the process of curriculum development. The learning areas and school subjects according to the each grade have been presented in the article. At the last part of the article authors describe the pilot project of improvement of structure and content of general education.

Paradoxes in curriculum development

M. Rizakov

These remarks are about the paradoxes of curriculum development that were delivered by the author at the seminar “Challenges of Curriculum Development in the XXI Century Perspectives from Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine in June 2003, Minsk, Belarus.

The multicultural approach in the modern school education in Ukraine.

Ludmila Golik

Abstract

The thesis is devoted to the problem of the multicultural approach in the modern school education in Ukraine. It gives analyses of basic tendencies of development of the multicultural education. The urgent problems of the multicultural education in Ukraine, theoretical fundamentals and specifics of the multicultural approach in school education in Ukraine are presented. The author describes the basic ideas of curriculum development and organization of school education process on the principles of the multicultural approach.

Key words: school education, multicultural approach in education, multicultural education, curriculum and education process.

The strategies of the reform of education in Ukraine

Ludmila Masol

Abstract

The strategies of reforming school education in Ukraine are analysed in the paper. The basic regulations of the conceptions of general secondary education (12-year secondary school) and profile education in secondary school, as well as the state educational standards of Ukraine (basic curriculum structure and components) are characterized. There were considerations of different approaches to processes of curriculum development, in the educational area of 'Art' - 'Aesthetic culture' in particular, on the basis of the conception of artistic-aesthetic upbringing in general secondary school, worked out by the author of the paper and approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

Challenges of curriculum renewal in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine

Natalia Yakavets

Abstract

This paper discusses the processes of curriculum change in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine based on a comparative analysis of trends observed during the period of rapid social, economic and political change since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In so doing, the paper identifies commonalities and differences in curricular responses to global, regional and national processes of change in the four countries. The effort to compare the processes of curriculum development in the four countries reveals that, despite their common heritage, each country has adopted its own course of political, economic and educational reform. The paper is based in part on the proceedings of a regional seminar organized jointly by the Belarus National Institute of Education and the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (Minsk, June 2003), and is supplemented by a review of existing literature. It begins by outlining the various dimensions of the global and regional context of change, and the challenges of curricular responses to different facets of social change. It then goes on to present the common heritage of the Soviet school model that constitutes the point of departure of educational and curricular reform initiated in the four countries in the early 1990s. The following sections provide a comparative overview of post-Soviet educational reforms in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, including issues of decentralization, educational standards, restructuring curriculum and redefining content. Individually, educational institutions in each of the four countries are struggling to meet the challenges resulting from new economic and political systems and it appears that greater international cooperation may help them to more effectively adapt to their changing societies.

1. SOCIAL CHANGE AND EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES

Change is an essential characteristic of life in the contemporary world. The changes affecting the various spheres of social life are increasingly rapid and intertwined. (C.Braslavsky, 2003(a)). This phenomenon has been recently referred to as globalisation. Educational reform in general, and of renewal of school curriculum in particular, is seen as essential means of adapting to such processes of social change. Rationales for curriculum change in any given society are grounded in the acknowledgement that there is a gap between a changing vision of society, on the one hand, and the educational processes that society organizes for its children and youth, on the other. Curriculum change is deemed necessary when existing content, methods and structures of school education do not seem to be responding to new social demands resulting from cultural, political, economic, and technological changes. A particular challenge in the current context of rapid and interdependent processes of change is how to balance responses to simultaneous and sometimes conflicting global and local changes. The key aspects of the social changes in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine after the dissolution of the Soviet Union may be characterized by political transformation, economic transition, the movement of individuals and ideas, changes in social structure and the development of new technologies.

Political transformation is characterized by the sometimes-challenging shift from authoritarian, single party system to democratic political systems, introducing new democratic values and human rights. As forms of governance and policy decision-making are changing, so too are the possibilities of direct participation in voting that lends new aspects to the form and content of democracy. Within this context of political transition, all former Soviet countries faced economic difficulties associated with the transition from state centralized economic organisation to free market-oriented economies. Rapid economic liberalization, massive privatisation, “shock therapy”, painful transformation accompanied at times by economic stagnation and high inflation, unemployment, social discontent and opportunities for corruption have led to a circumstance in which millions of ordinary people are struggling to survive in an economy that is neither capitalist nor communist. It is important to stress that the intensity and the suddenness of political and economic transformations have been overwhelming. It was almost a new “culture shock” for the Soviet citizens who become ex-Soviet.(Zajda & Zajda 2003:364).

The combined effects of these changes have caused people to lose their “socialist” ideals and, with the erosion of their worldview, an increasing sense of instability has grown with an accompanying loss of confidence in the future. The labour market is also changing with the merging of patterns of part-time work, of the combination of several jobs and of short-term employment contracts etc. Though there have been small improvements in the overall economic picture since the mid-1990s, especially in Russia and other European countries of the former Soviet Union, a huge gap remains between the wealth of the new upper class in many of these countries and those who largely live at a subsistence level with increased numbers of homeless people and children. Eastern European countries currently face the task of ensuring the social well-being of children and students and retraining the unemployed. As the result of the economic crisis, teachers’ conditions and real income levels have been declining, and increasing numbers of qualified teachers are leaving education for better-paying jobs. For example, in 1995 general education schools in Ukraine lost 46,000 teachers due to the lack of social protection (The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country Reports: Ukraine).

Globalisation also implies greater ‘openness’ of borders and enhanced opportunity for joining international networks and traveling. The forms of transnational, multicultural relations and criteria of development are changing. Cultural patterns are also changing from textual to a more visual and image-based one. As a result, youth appear to be reading much less, although this trend has not been properly evaluated and necessary conclusions for education have not been drawn. New information and telecommunication technologies provide both new opportunities and challenges for teaching and learning. The 21-st century has witnessed the rapid development of new technologies of information, engineering and energy. New information technologies are of key importance and their use may help to strengthen economic and social links. They are also improving the economic competitiveness of non-service industries and enhancing the education systems in each country.

The content, methods and structures of formal education are changing in order to adapt to the multiple facets of social change. Curriculum change is the crux of educational reform. The need for school education to simultaneously contribute to the formation of new workers and citizens to be able to function in this context of rapid change has led to substantial governmental efforts towards educational and curriculum reform. Curriculum development may be perceived as the permanent search for qualitative improvement in response to changes in society (Bude, 2000(a):54). Curriculum must be responsive to the rapid social changes in order to equip the learners both to cope with and contribute to further social developments. The aim of curriculum change may be seen as a society’s adaptation process or response to changes occurring within the education system or in society at large. The experience of such changes often corresponds to perceptions of existing inadequacies of the education system, particularly the content that it transmits. This may be made explicit in order to give curricular reform a motivation or rationale. What is the state of curriculum development in former Soviet countries? What is the impact of globalisation and internationalisation on educational reform in these countries? In examining types of reforms in relation to globalisation, and in particular changes in the world economy, Carnoy (1999:37) has identified three kinds of responses in the education and training sectors:

1. Competition-driven reforms respond to shifting demand for skills in both the domestic and world labour markets and to new ideas about organizing achievement of production and work skills.
2. Finance-driven reforms respond to cuts in public sector budgets and private company incomes, reducing the public and private resources available for financing education and training.
3. Equity-driven reforms attempt to improve education’s important political role as a source of social mobility and social equalization.

In the regional context of the Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the first of these three responses appears to be the most prevalent. The “human factor” or “human capital” is fundamental to economic activity, competitiveness and prosperity, whether manifested as knowledge and skills or in the less tangible forms of flexibility, openness to innovation and entrepreneurial culture. As employment patterns and workplace processes evolve rapidly, the topography of relevant knowledge and skills and hence on the capacity of individuals, young and old, men and women, to participate in economic life also change (Carnoy, 1999:38). The competition-driven approach and the general labour market focus in educational reforms that are clearly reflected in the 2001 National Education Reports submitted to the 46-th International Conference of Education:

educational reform should ... meet state's interests and society expectations in regards to the national's *economic growth* (National report 2001, Russia);

education should meet the requirements of young people in profession and *demands of labor market*... (National report 2001, Belarus);

the labor market changes quickly, dictating the need to elaborate short-term teaching programs... (National report 2001, Ukraine).

But education is also seen as an important instrument capable of contributing to democracy and integration of the society. The traditional curriculum that focused on the preparation of students for entry into university no longer meets the challenges and needs of the future. In some of the former Soviet block countries, transition toward market economies and more democratic political systems has redefined the visions of national citizenship and of social and economic integration. This transition inevitably requires profound changes in educational content. Changes of values associated with the shift from solidarity to autonomy and individualism, and the general collapse of former social mores, have impacted the process of curriculum development in countries in transition such as Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. By working more closely together, educational leaders in the four countries might more effectively meet the challenges arising from the transitions they are experiencing.

2. SOVIET HERITAGE AND 1980s CRISIS

Despite the independence of educational systems in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine in the 1990s, there are a number of common historical and cultural factors. These include the heritage of the Soviet education system and its underlying structural and organizational model, the widespread use of Russian as a common language of culture, science and communication, as well as the existence of scientific, regional and national networks. Before examining educational change within the four countries, it is necessary to recall the main characteristics of the Soviet school system developed during the last century, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses. What were the characteristics of the Soviet school model?

It should be stressed that we consider a definition "Soviet school system" first of all as the structure of the educational system, content and methods of teaching.

Characteristics of the Soviet school model

A number of Russian, Western-European and American researchers have looked into the history of education in the USSR and especially of the late Soviet period (see , for example, Mackel, Jones, 1994; Kerr Steven 1990, 1994, 1995; Read, Holmes, & Voskresenskaia, 1994; Stephen L. Webber 1999, Wolfgang Mitter and others). S.T.Kerr (Head of the Department of Pedagogy at Washington University in Seattle) stated that the Soviet school system had some positive characteristics that are worth analyzing (Narodnoe obrazovanie, 2003:32).

The main characteristics of the Soviet school model relate to equality of opportunity, high levels of academic attainment and achievements, centralized management, standardization and ideological content of learning.

Educational access and attainment

Soviet education was characterized by high levels of access. The non-elite character of school system ensured that each student had equal opportunity to receive a good quality

education. Most school-age children had access to general education and literacy was almost universal. This reflects, “a society that valued education and in which the teachers’ job was respected in Soviet time” (Kerr: Narodnoe obrazovanie, 2003:32)

Educational achievement

Levels of academic achievement were high, particularly in such subjects as sciences, languages and mathematics (W.Mitter, Narodnoe obrazovanie, 7/2003:26). An independent examination of the knowledge and skills of 14 year old students from many countries by the International Commissions of UNESCO at the end of the 1980s testified to high levels of knowledge of the students from USSR in mathematics and science. (The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country Reports).

Content of learning

The content of Socialist ethics stressed the primacy of the collective over the interests of the individual. Therefore, creativity and individualism were discouraged for both teachers and students and Marxist-Leninism theory was a major element of school curriculum content. It was presented in authoritarian teaching styles that were reinforced by the organization of the school as a whole. There was a pleasing consistency between school instruction (obuchenie) and socialization or upbringing (vospitanie) and what happened in society at large. Official statements from government officials, the mass media and the public behavior of most adults reinforced what children were taught in school. Children were prepared to accept authority and hierarchy (Vaillant)

Education in the Soviet time always carried an ***ideological agenda***. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union defined the socializing function of education thusly: “Upbringing must inculcate in the schoolchildren a love of knowledge and work and [a] respect for people who work; it must shape the communist world outlook”. (Zajda and Zajda, 2003:370)

But according to the most analysts, ideological- political education could not be seen as positive achievement of the soviet school (Mitter, Narodnoe obrazovanie, 2003:25).

Pedagogy

The underlying philosophy of learning of Soviet schools was that the teacher’s job was to transmit standardized materials to the students and the student’s job was to memorize those materials. The ‘normal’ method of teaching in Soviet schools was frontal exposition of fact or skill with heavy reliance of teachers on the official textbook. In Soviet time it was impossible to have any discussion of important questions and/or problems in schools outside centralized curriculum. In Soviet textbooks more attention was paid to learning facts. (Mackel, Narodnoe obrazovanie, 2003:30).

Standardisation

The Soviet system had maintained some traditions from Tsarist times, such as the five-point grading scale, formal and regimented classroom environments, and standard school uniforms. The high effectiveness of education of that period was ensured by the rapid control of the educational managerial bodies for the usage of scientifically proved state “standards” – standard educational plans, programs of school subjects, examination tickets transferring and current tests in all subjects, which were worked out by the best Soviet scholars and teachers and were characterized by high scientific and

methodological quality. The usage of all those educational documentation and materials was obligatory for all educational institutions in the USSR.

Centralised management

Soviet educational management was highly centralized. There was no tradition of teacher-generated curriculum development. The curriculum was developed in the centre and disseminated through the bureaucratic structure. In the Soviet Union, curriculum was an area of total control by the central educational authority. (Kerr, *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 2003:32)

Crisis and reform of Soviet education in the mid 1980s.

The reform in the post-Soviet era can be traced back to attempts at reform in the 1950s, the mid 1960s and the mid 1980s. The reform of the 1950s, following the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR in 1956, centred on changes in curriculum content. This included the reduction of time allocated to the humanities in secondary education, the introduction of theoretical and practical production training together with enterprise-based work, the re-establishment of foreign language teaching in basic schooling, and the introduction of the teaching of social theory in view of strengthening the ideological bases of education. The reform of the mid 1960s (1964-1966), however, was the last effort in systematic reform of school curriculum up to the present time. The core of the curriculum commission, composed essentially of scientists, introduced high academic pressure and unrealistic academic standards.

In the mid 1980s the leadership of the Soviet Union realized that the education system was going through a crisis that made it impossible to achieve its intellectual potential. Schools and universities failed to supply adequately skilled labor to almost every sector of the economy and overgrown bureaucracy further compromised educational contribution to the society. The national economy increasingly manifested symptoms of stagnation and critical attitudes spread throughout the society, particularly among students and young intellectuals. The diagnosis of this crisis marked the beginning of a shift in the conceptualization of education in the USSR. According to the last report from the USSR (*Public education in the USSR*, 1990:53-55) the most substantial shifts in the Soviet perception of education problems were related to both pedagogical and economic considerations.

Pedagogical considerations included the interpretation of the nature of knowledge and the conceptualizations of the purpose of school education. Official pedagogical thought reduced education to the transfer and acquisition of knowledge, skills and experience. This led to a one-sided “gnosiological” understanding of individual development, the technocratic attitudes and the disregard for cultural values, personal meaning and emotions (*Public education in the USSR*, 1990:53-55). As for the theoretical foundations and the purpose of pedagogy, the Soviet pedagogical theory saw Marxism-Leninism as its theoretical basis and this, as a result of deformation and dogmatic interpretation, became a fossilized ideology. The essence of the former pedagogical theory and practice was most starkly revealed by attempts to create a strict hierarchy between teachers and learners and between educational instructors and their administrative superiors. This regime of strict authoritarian discipline underlay the tendency to reduce the school to bureaucratic institutions and attenuate any autonomy it might have. At the

same time, however, it sharply separated educational institutions from other fields of social activity. The school was an isolated and immobile world.

As for economic considerations, there was an increased focus on the link between education and the economy. One of the most durable stereotypes of dogmatic thought was the stress on the non-productive nature of education. In this way education was one-sidedly excluded from the economy: it provided industry with technical and workers but was not in turn supplied by industry itself. The consequences were not only the miserly financing of educational institutions but also the extremely weak development of the teaching professions, the lack of a labor market, etc. (Public education in the USSR, 1990:51-53)

The conventional and somewhat dogmatic Soviet educational theory rejected the need for drastic upheavals in education. It was believed that only the contents of the teaching process should evolve, reflecting changes in the body of theoretical knowledge and in the division of labour. The existing model of school was declared to be near to perfection. The very possibilities of conducting large-scale educational experiments were denied and petty innovations in methods took their place. The educational reform of 1984-85, the forerunner of the soon-to be-initiated “perestroika”, was doomed to failure as it did not coincide with the reforms in other sectors of the society and economy. It is interesting to note in this respect that most teachers held the view that schools cannot be transformed qualitatively without general social and political reforms (Batsyn, 1995: 5). The period of 1986-90 was a “calm before the storm” in which the conservative attitudes prevalent in the educational establishment (the Ministry and the Academy of Education) were at an uncertain balance with the steadily growing radical reformist trends (Batsyn, 1995:5).

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF REFORM IN THE 1990s

At the beginning of the 1990s Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine declared their independence following the collapse of the USSR. These countries have developed their own concept of reform or what is more commonly referred to as “modernization” of education, basing the development of new curricula on national and historical traditions. The main task was to establish new democratic systems of education aimed at the implementation of fundamental human rights and values of a civic society. In assessing the weaknesses of schooling, curriculum reform immediately emerged as the most important and difficult task because it determined what schools we would like to have – the school of the past or the school of future.

The watchwords of education reform were:

- democratization,
- humanitarianism and
- decentralization.

The most important goal of the reforms of the education system has been to place the individual at the center of the learning process. The system that was primarily suited to serve the interest of a centralized, authoritarian state has turned into a system meeting the needs of learners, various social groups and communities. The most significant task in that time was to change the vision of education and conceptualisation of curriculum. Through education it is possible to change the mentality and to develop a mentality capable of providing a new model of cohabitation of the nations.

However, economic difficulties put a rapid end to reform in financially challenged educational establishments, which expected financial and methodological support from the states. The difficulties inherent to the transition stage slowed down the solution of a number of important problems - updating the content of education does not completely meet the demands and trends of the development of society. (National reports 1996: Belarus, Russia, Ukraine)

Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine have developed their own education concepts. The main premises guiding educational reforms are:

- creation of a new society inevitably calls for changes in ideology, content and methods of learning.
- education is not only one of the first and foremost factors of human development, but it is also the key condition of social progress, the motivating power behind all the reforms at all stages of life (National reports, Russia, Belarus).

Among the various *principles* guiding reform in the four countries it is important to note the following:

- establishing democratic system for public management of education;
- establishing state educational standards, in order to improve teaching content and organizational and teaching methods;
- integration into European education space;
- consideration of both national and world trends in reforming school education;
- establishment of socio-economic conditions permitting enforcement of citizens' constitutional right to education;
- provision of legal, social and economic guarantees for the development and operation of education system;

Education is reoriented to meet the needs of human development as well as the interests and abilities of individuals, implying a flexible educational system that enables everyone to find a way of realizing his or her capabilities. In addition to curriculum and textbook development, the main characteristic features of the educational reforms in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine are the following:

- humanization
- humanitarionisation
- de-ideologisation
- decentralization
- democratisation
- differentiation/diversification

Humanisation translates into greater emphasis on the needs of the individual and the consequent improvement of teacher-pupil relations.

Humanitarionisation implies a humanitarian approach to education with priority being given to human values, human life and the free development of individual. In terms of school curriculum, this means greater emphasis on the humanities (Webber. 1999:132).

Adherence to humanitarian values and meeting the needs of all every learner. (National Report, RF 2001:8)

Humanitarian approach to education, priority of human values, human life and free development of individuals. Children should be taught in the spirit of patriotism, diligence, respect for the law and human rights, love for nature, homeland and family. (National report, Russia, 2001:8).

Improving the content of education making it more humane and humanitarian... (Ibid., p. 9)

Education policy of the state is based on principles of humanization, accessibility, adaptation, creativity and diversity ... (National report, Moldova 2001:3)

Humanism, democratisation, priority of social and spiritual value are the strategic tasks of the educational reform in Ukraine... (National Report Ukraine, 2001:41).

De-ideologization – removing the possibility of promoting one ideological viewpoint (Marxist-Leninism) to the exclusion of others. De-ideologization is almost impossible to implement, for the school cannot be divorced from the reality of the world.

Removal of dogma in learning and teaching, that hamper the process of development (NR, RF:7)

One of the positive changes in the system of compulsory education is real de-ideologisation of education (the EFA 2000 Assessment country report: Ukraine)

Differentiation/ diversification or the breaking of state ‘monopoly’ and control of education, for example with the introduction of ‘choice’ in provision of schooling, included the establishment of non-state schools.

Free choice and pluralism of educational opportunities..(NR, RF:8).

Reduction of the state monopoly rights in the sphere of education, with a broad network of educational establishments with non-governmental forms of ownership... (National report Ukraine 2001:41)

Decentralization – ...where municipalities and, in some places, schools, are given greater educational autonomy in decision-making. The purpose of such reforms is to increase the control over curriculum and teaching methods of local communities and the teachers and principals of the schools themselves - this on the assumption that increased flexibility and control allows for a better fit between education methods and the clientele served, as well as greater accountability for educational results.

... mixed governmental and public management, involvement of the society in discussion of the most important problems.. (National report, RF:10)

If the local education delivery, reformers reason, educational quality will improve. (Carnoy, 1999: 37).

4. DECENTRALISATION

Changes in state-level political structures, social and economic life of the countries demand a radical improvement of the education system. Such radical improvement is an important task and reform of management and administrative structures becomes essential. The degree to which this is actually taking place depends on a number of factors. As a result, the four countries have different patterns of decentralization. However, despite these differences, one of the major common areas of current debate in Belarus, Russia, Moldova and Ukraine is about what constitutes the appropriate balance between centralisation (top-down) and decentralisation (bottom-up) of the school system. Within this debate, a certain degree of centralization is seen as

necessary because it is associated with the development of national educational quality standards, corresponding indicators of schools' effectiveness, and the establishment of national assessment or evaluation systems to ensure quality.

Rationales for decentralisation within the region are of three types:

Economic: Forming the multi-variant investment policies in the sphere of education

Educational: Improving the quality of education

Political: Democratisation – the introduction of the greater public accountability; giving parents and the local community a greater say in the running of the schools, including the provision of educational opportunities for ethnic minorities.

The table below identifies the degrees of decentralization and the changes taking place in the management and governance of the educational structure in the four Eastern European countries.

Table 1. Degree of decentralization.

Country	Changes in management and structure of national curricula
Belarus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized system of education where both desirable and undesirable initiatives come from the top to the schools; • Because of economic problems, there has been the need to reduce the quantity of local, regional and central educational bureaucracy • School directors got greater autonomy within a context of more school-based management after the National Congress of Teachers (2001)
Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralisation of system of education with great autonomy of educational institutions; • No clear statements on the functions of and relations between the different region (judets) and the municipalities (CCNM/DEELSA/ED(2001)8; • Lack of a clear policy in distribution of the responsibilities and some mechanisms of cooperation between all stakeholders in educational policy development and implementation. (National report, Moldova 2001)
Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralization has positive results such as the end of uniformity in education institutions, the opportunity of choice for all participating in the educational process and favourable conditions for initiative, creativity, etc. • Decentralisation has created a number of problems, making the system virtually unmanageable: no areas of joint responsibility have been established • Management staff at the all levels acutely recognise the need under conditions of decentralization to create monitoring analysis, evaluating, forecasting and database services for the education system (National report, RFs, 2001:10) • Mixed governmental and public management, involvement of the society in discussing the most important problems of education, creating councils of experts, supporting school self-government and public initiatives in educational field (National report, RFs, 2001:10)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial transfers from the federal to regional governments have decreased, both in absolute and relative terms and relative to what the regions themselves spend. • Many regions with ethnic minorities sought to establish their own education systems and launch their own education reforms, creating dissonance between key elements of the federal and regional approaches. • There are tensions in Russia between central nation building function of schooling and national curricula and decentralization of curriculum content and development in multicultural society. For example, the inundation of bottom-up initiatives has also resulted in chaotic, unsystematic aspects of innovative activities. Efforts made to introduce innovations in particular elements of the pedagogical system are often worthless because they provoke no significant change in the quality of general secondary education as whole. Many innovations touched upon form rather than content.
Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational management unites both elements of centralized and decentralized system with horizontal and vertical ties between different levels and subjects of management; <p>The main ways of further reform of education management are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rational unity of activity of central, regional and local bodies of education management with the introduction of double subordination; • Funding of a system of state-public assessment of the activity of teaching – educational establishments and quality of special training of specialists; • Elaborating innovation models of branch management and managerial decisions, and carrying out experiments at the regional and local levels.

Over the past few years, there have been positive changes in the organization of administration of education. Each national system of education includes bodies of education system management — the Ministry of Education (Belarus, Russia) or Ministry of Education and Science (Moldova, Ukraine), subdivisions and departments of education and executive committees of federal, municipal, regional and local territorial administrations and subordinated instructional-methodical establishments.

The major trends in the reform of the system of educational administration have been as follows:

- Educational establishments have gotten more autonomy, but their responsibility for the final results of their work increased (accountability).
- The system of education changed from authoritarian administration to regulating administration.
- State and public forms of administration of education have been developed;
- Special mechanisms at the national and local levels that would treat problems regarding creation of equal chances in access of the education for all children have been developed

As a result of these changes, educational establishments have become free from petty bureaucratic custody, authoritarian heritage from the Soviet-time and a legal basis for their administrative independence has been established. As these changes are common to each of the four countries, educational leaders might adapt more effectively through regional and international dialogues in which they can share their experiences.

5. THE PROCESS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Here we shall address the following questions: What are the main approaches to curriculum development in the region? What is the degree of participations of stakeholders in the four countries? How are curricular paradigms shifting?

What is meant by “curriculum”?

Before describing the processes of curriculum development it is essential to define the meaning of the term “curriculum”. Curriculum can be characterized in a number of ways:

- Curriculum as a content – the topics and subjects to be taught.
- Curriculum as cultural reproduction – the passing on of the accepted knowledge, values and behavior of a discipline, profession or society to the succeeding generation. (Code of Practice, web. page).

Curriculum includes the principles, underlying educational philosophy, goals, content and concrete functioning of the “instructional program” in the classroom, as well as the written and other materials needed in support of the institution. It also includes the testing and evaluation regimen used for assessment and evaluation of the success in attaining curriculum objectives (CCN/DEELSA/ED (2001)8 p.29).

Notions of curriculum development differ according to educational theories and practices, it could be:

- A plan of operation based on an existing syllabus (including the development or selection of textbooks, teachers’ guides and other instructional materials);
- A way of prosecuting a syllabus and all the accompanying materials needed for teaching/learning in the classroom;
- Evaluation instruments for examining the attainment of the program goals (U.Bude, 2000:55).

Curriculum development takes place not only at the national level, involving policy-makers, curriculum developers – and some teachers. Depending on the definition of curriculum development activities, the scope of school-based decisions about the curriculum varies across countries and across schools within a country, covering mostly from 10% to 30% of the total school curricula (Lewy, 1991:36).

The fundamental purpose of curriculum development is to ensure that students receive integral, coherent learning experiences that contribute to their personal, academic and professional learning and development.

Curriculum development is not a “product” but an ongoing process: it does not end once a certain curriculum is in use (CCNM/DEELSA/Ed(2001)8:38). We can therefore use the term of curriculum development to designate both processes and products.

Regional curriculum development process

The first efforts to develop a new curriculum in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine were taken in the beginning of the 90’s. Changes in the Eastern Europe, in the global society, globalization and internationalization have an impact on regional curricula development processes. Changes in the methodological basis of education in the process of reforming,

forming flexible school system have given rise to demand for more active school curriculum based on the following principles democratization, humanization, humanitarization.

Generally, curriculum development is a part of education policy, which remained largely centralized. The basis for the changes of the conceptual approach to the school curriculum is the orientation and inclusion of educational aims. Previously dominant political and ideological references were deleted from course content and textbooks.

Before the curriculum was introduced across the education system in each country, a trial period was used to give the regions and the schools an opportunity to discover its strengths and weaknesses and to suggest modification.

We tried to identify the common trends in structure, management of curriculum development and participation, concerning the distribution of responsibilities between the national, regional, local and school levels in four countries. These changes have implications for the participation of stakeholders. The structure is quite centralized with varying degrees of decision-making at regional, local and school levels. The functions are distributed among different levels of governing the educational sphere as follows:

At the state level:

Particularly, the Ministry of Education elaborates the core curriculum – or “basic (typical) education plan of the general secondary education establishments” (there are different types of terminology in each country), which is the major document on the content of education and is stating the following parameters:

- the list of disciplines and subjects,
- quantity of hours set for studying them, distribution of the hours among the years of education,
- correlation of the obligatory and changeable parts in various forms, and the maximal load of pupils per week in various forms.

Levels of region and district:

Local departments for governing the educational sector define the regional component of education and work on the regional books, which have to be approved by the Ministry of Education.

Level of education establishment:

On the basis of Core curriculum educational establishments of general secondary education create so-called “working plans for the year”, in which they show some specific sides of the educational process in the particular education establishment. The timetable, as well as the schedules of daily, weekly and annual work of the establishment is attached to it. The school component exists in the form of extra subjects, extra hours for some specific subjects, optional disciplines and special courses.

There does not exist any mechanism through which pupils may influence the school’s choice of the subjects to be taught within the ‘school component’ in order to make their optional choice of subjects to study.

There are some differences in the schools of different types, there are some extra possibilities for distribution of time between the changeable and obligatory part of the core curriculum. The specialized general secondary education establishments, including gymnasiums, lyceums,

colleges, and specialized institutions are permitted to redistribute up to 10% of the academic time designated for the obligatory part of the of the core curriculum and to adopt the academic hours designated for such subjects as ‘creative work’ and other technological subjects to the profile subjects.

The following challenges in the processes of curriculum development have been identified for the four countries¹:

- A top-down structure of decision-making.
- Inadequate involvement of key stakeholders and teachers in particularly in the process of curriculum development and inadequate preparation of school administration and teachers for curriculum changes.
- There is a contradiction between the need to update the curriculum with new learning areas and attempting to reduce the overall curriculum load and focusing on the teaching of skills and attitudes, rather than on encyclopedic knowledge;
- There is still not well developed mechanism for monitoring and self-evaluation;
- All countries are faced the lack of financial support for the educational system.

These challenges are similar in each of the four countries and they might be more effectively met through more contact and communication among educational leaders and experts in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

6. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

For a long time state standards and standard programs in the USSR were the main tools for ensuring quality and uniformity of education. They proved their efficiency both in the USSR and in other countries such as France, Italy, and Austria, which all have centralized management of the state educational sector.²

Currently, the development of state educational standards is a major priority for reform of the content of education in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. The challenges resulting from globalisation and recent political and economic changes demand a new approach to the development of state educational standards. The main purposes of state educational standards may be seen to be:

- to ensure *quality* of educational provision through instrumental pedagogical organization of learning based on the norms strictly determined for every stage of education, making it possible to evaluate the quality of education and the level of staff training;
- to ensure a common (*uniform*) educational space in a country, and thus to expand opportunities (and *mobility*) for further education.

The basic principles of development of educational standards are:

- preventing content overload and creating conditions differentiated education which is responsive to local needs;
- ensuring a balance between central and local authorities in the definition and provision of quality education;

¹ This information is from the National reports and presentation at the seminar in Minsk in June 2003.

² The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country Reports, Ukraine, p.10.

- helping to create coherence in educational practices by aligning teacher education, instructional materials, and assessment practices.

Despite this, there are currently broad public discussions about the degree of usefulness of state education standards in the four countries. Those in favor see the development of educational standards for general education to be of special importance. The use of these standards in general education guarantee that graduates from basic schooling master the necessary minimum levels of knowledge and skills that provide them with possibilities of further education, training or employment. The process of development of state standards for secondary education is at different levels in Eastern European countries.

In Belarus state educational standards for 11-year general secondary education have been developed. The educational standards for general secondary school define the basic curriculum content and levels of acquisition of knowledge and skills for all grade levels and school types. Before the implementation of the standards, the Ministry of Education has to approve them. There is currently a process of extending these standards to the new model of 12-year schooling. In Moldova educational standards serve as a basis for the objective evaluation of the level of general education and of vocational training of graduates for all grade levels and school types³. In Ukraine the Ministry of Education and Science conceives of standards as a tool for the modernization of educational content. The first “generation” of standards for primary and general education was developed in Ukraine in 1996 and served to create favorable conditions for differentiated education according to the type of educational establishments. The state educational standards are defined both for the national core curriculum (*Basisnii uchebni plan*), as well as for school-based curriculum. Current standards are defined according to the following learning blocks: languages and literature, social science, aesthetic culture, mathematics, natural sciences, health and physical education and technology.

The main aims of state educational standards in the Russia are to improve the quality of education and to promote consolidation of Russian society. The basic principles underlying the development of educational standards are the following:

1. Modernizing curriculum in accordance both with the needs of modern society, as well as with the preservation of the best traditions of Russian schooling;
2. Reducing the overload in the content of curriculum and ensuring the protection of the psychological and physical health of learners;
3. Ensuring correspondence between the curriculum content and the levels of training and individual interests of learners and students;
4. Reinforcing student-oriented pedagogy;
5. Developing practical learning skills and competencies of learners.
6. Providing diversified education opportunities based on free choice

Current standards cover the main levels of education: basic education (4 years), general compulsory education (5 years) and upper secondary education (2 years), and are structured according to learning areas and subjects. The main components of educational standards in Russia include: the core curriculum, the compulsory minimum of content of basic educational program, a detailed description of the necessary minimum level of knowledge and skills to be acquired by graduates. It is hoped that state education standards shall promote better integration

³ The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country Reports: Moldova.

of all key concepts and subjects, proper balance between theoretical and practical components of the curriculum, and a reduction in overlap in content and subjects and subsequent overload. The process of implementation of the state education standards shall start in 2005 at the grade I-V of secondary school. As each of the four countries is confronted with a common concern regarding the establishment of standards, progress might be enhanced through more cooperation and dialogue among policy makers, experts and educational leaders at a regional level.

7. LEARNING CONTENT AND CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

Extensive curriculum revision has been underway in all countries of the former Soviet Union guided by a new pedagogical paradigm. The content of all subjects has been revised considerably, and particular attention has been paid to the humanities, social sciences and arts. As a result of the emergence of diversified secondary education in the form of gymnasium and lyceum, a separate curriculum has been developed. The new trend in curriculum structure in the four countries is the transition from subject-based curricula to a more interdisciplinary curriculum structure organized around learning areas, the differentiation between national core curriculum and regional (state-based) or local (school-based) curricula.

The core curriculum is accompanied by the sets of state *educational standards*. The central *state component* includes those parts of the curriculum which are deemed to relate to universal cultural issues or to matters of national (state) importance. It covers languages (national, Russian and foreign), mathematics, natural and social sciences and information technology. The *regional component*, on the other hand, is intended to meet the particularity of various ethnic and linguistic minority groups (essential in the multi-national countries), and covers such matters as ethnic languages and literatures, regional history and geography. Finally, the *school component*, which covers both compulsory choice-based studies and optional studies, is intended to allow each individual establishment to draw on its own specific strengths to enrich the curriculum offered to pupils, within the overall framework established in the state and ethnic-regional components. Schools develop and approve core curriculum in compliance with the national and local curriculum while taking into consideration students' demands and needs, and the schools' capacity to implement, monitor and evaluate.

Changes in curriculum content

The main learning areas in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine are the following:

- languages and literature;
- mathematics and sciences (mathematics, sciences, biology, physics, chemistry, computer studies);
- humanities (geography, world and national history, civic);
- arts (music, fine arts);
- technology;
- physical education, health and safety.

New subjects that have appeared in last years in the post-Soviet countries include economics, civics, health, environmental studies, computer sciences, culture studies and ethics. Religion is not studied at schools as the church is separated from state and schools in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

Based on the comparative analysis of subject curricula of each country it is possible to say that science and mathematics curricula show a certain deviation from extreme abstractions and that

they focus on application, experiment, and integration on an interdisciplinary basis thus creating an integrated picture of the world.

Priorities in content of native and foreign language courses have been revised. The major focus is on studying the state language(s) and there is also a possibility for national minorities to receive education in their own language. A separate curriculum for national minorities has also been developed in the four countries. It is interesting to note that in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine 9th grade curriculum are allocate more time to the study of languages and literature than in the Russia (30%, 28%, 27%, and 22% respectively).

In the four newly independent post-Soviet states the content of school education in the area of geography courses has been revised to introduce ethnographic, ecological and social issues into such courses. Geography has become a link that helps to develop an awareness of the close connection between scientific and social disciplines, nature and society. Cultural approaches towards countries and regions are gaining momentum. The focus is on the history of the region/territory and its influence on the present situation, a comprehensive study of nature, population, economy of separate territories and the world in general. Further focus on newly defined national, cultural identities can be seen in the greater importance placed on the role of arts and aesthetic education of students. Courses such as “Arts and Music” are included in school curriculum in all four countries. There are some courses that look at the country in the context of world and European history: My Motherland -Belarus, I and Ukraine, Russia and the world.

Since the beginning of the 90’s the policy of prompt replacement of socialized and political textbooks has taken places in history. A new concept of education based on the democratic values was developed.

There are some new courses about Law that have been introduced in the schools. Within the framework of this course students study the Constitution of their country, major international acts, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as fundamental principles of democracy and law.

Such courses as Religious Studies, Ecology, Economics, Introduction to Economics, Fundamentals of Business, World Religious, Human Values of European Civilizations and the Modern World, Folk culture, Choreography, Sporting and Art activities have also been introduced as optional subjects.

Changes in time allocation

How has time allocation changed since the Soviet period?

Duration of schooling is different in primary and secondary schools in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. It is 33-35 weeks that or approximately 175 or 180/190 working days a year with different duration of semesters and the holidays.

Table 2: Intended instructional time (in annual hours) during the first nine years of formal education

Country/system	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	1st–9th
Belarus (max.)	578	604	630	756	783	810	837	864	864	6,726
Russia	545	638	638	638	791	816	867	893	893	6,716
Ukraine	545	569	569	569	743	817	866	916	916	6,509
Moldova (max.)	536	587	587	612	689	714	791	816	816	6,146
Average	551	600	606	644	752	789	840	872	872	6,524

Note: The total number of hours may not equal the actual sum due to rounding. Ranked from the highest to the lowest amount of hours. (IBE)

In the next table we compare the number of school hours per week from the Soviet time with the current situation:

Table 3: Comparative overview of school hours per week.

Country/system	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	1st–9th
Totally weekly periods										
*USSR (1986-1988) minimum	20	22	24	24	30	30	30	30	31	241
Maximum	-	23	25	25	32	32	32	33	33	267
Belarus (2003) five-day week minimum	20	21	22	26	27	28	29	30	30	233
Maximum	22	23	24	28	29	30	31	32	32	251
Russia (1998) five- day week Maximum	20	22	22	22	28	29	31	32	32	238
Ukraine (2002) five-day week minimum.	19	19	20,5	20,5	24,5	27	29	30	31	220.5
Maximum	21	21	24	24	29	32	34	36	37	258
Moldova (2003) Maximum	19	21	21	22	25	26	29	29	28	220
	21	23	23	24	27	28	31	32	32	241

Source: Public education in the USSR (1986-1988), Moscow 1989 and the timetable for general education in four countries.

When comparing school hours per week in the Soviet period with the recent situation it is observed that the number of school hours has been reduced: Moldova and Ukraine have approximately the same duration of school hours per week which is less than in Soviet times. There is some reduction in school hours since the end of 80-es in Belarus and in Russia as well.

Belarus

Belarus schools are in transition to a 12-year period of study with 5-day training week, which gives wider possibilities in respect to individual pupil's requirements and interests, and the peculiarity of each educational institution, regional, social and cultural surroundings.

One of the important trends in the content of educational renewal is the design of integrated courses for the upper level of secondary school.

For example, the new curriculum (2002-2003) includes only 17 teaching subjects instead of the 20-24 subjects that earlier (see annex 1, table 1: "Belarus: weekly lesson timetable for general educational establishments"). The state component of curriculum includes 15 educational areas (from presentation at the Minsk seminar).

The maximum study load is from 28 to 32 class hours a week on basic and senior school stages that corresponds to average levels around the world. It is being done for the cost of realization of the ideas of integration of educational content, structuring of basic and auxiliary study material according to levels of school, its new aims, objectives and functions.

Moldova

National curriculum includes the following components: 1. Basic curriculum (including aims of education, aims of subjects, aims of learning areas, basic plan and curriculum standards); 2. Subject curricula (concept of subject, common aims of subject, content of education, methodological guidelines, recommendation for assessment and bibliography).

The new national curriculum has two main components: the *core curriculum*, compulsory for all students, and – for the first time in Moldova – a clearly defined *school-based curriculum*.

A 70% compulsory core is complemented by a 30% locally (generally school) determined component. At present the 'curriculum' is completely different from the previous "programmes of study" that encouraged rote learning and content-based education. (see annex 1, table 2: "Moldova: weekly lesson timetable for general educational establishments"). The new national curriculum is open and flexible and promotes student-centred approaches, active learning and higher order learning skills, critical thinking and encouragement of a questioning attitude among students. (CCNM/DEELSA/ED(2001)8 :31).

In contrast to the past, the new curriculum has an evident creative character that puts an emphasis on learning objectives and not contents, skills and competences and not reproductive knowledge, and integration of learning content.

The new curricula include the following learning areas: language and communication, mathematics and sciences, humanities, technology, arts and sport (see annex 1, table 2: "Moldova: weekly lesson timetable for general educational establishments"). The curricula for all subjects are translated in the languages of minorities (Russian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian etc.). The maximum study load is from 21 to 32 class hours a week in basic and gymnasium and lyceum stages that corresponding to the average world level.

There has been significant debate in Moldova about the teaching of history and mother tongue, two subjects that previously had a clear status in the national curriculum: Romanian versus Moldavian. Today Romanian language and literature and Romanian history are included in the national curriculum.

Russia

Improvement of the content of education is one of the priorities of the Russian education system. During the process of reforming the content of curriculum the main aim was to make it more humane and humanitarian. (National report, RF.2001). The new basic curriculum has become a basis for developing regional and school educational plan, a key normative document providing a diversity of kinds and directions of development of school within the framework of unified educational space.

Modernization of education, first of all is giving a personal sense, functioning character and practical orientation. That is why content of learning areas and separate subjects includes possibilities for development personal skills and abilities of the students according to their interests, inclinations and their own educational trajectory. The core curriculum of 1998 in Russia included the following learning areas: languages and literature, math, natural science, social science, arts and physical training (see annex 1, table 3 and 4: "Russia: weekly lesson timetable for general educational establishments").

Duration of school year in Russia is 34 weeks. The maximum study load is from 20 to 32 class hours a week in basic and secondary schools.

According to the decree of the Government of Russia, schools are expected to carry out an experimental work (pilot project) aiming to improve the structure and content of general education.

Ukraine

The Standard Curricula of General Educational Institutions include necessary explanations for educational institutions of different types and appropriate languages of schooling and a six-day time and five-day time mode of schooling. "The Explanatory note" specifies the procedure of elaboration of the working curricula on the basis of the standard ones, and also their sanction by the appropriate bodies of authorities. The core curriculum consists of fixed and optional components. The role of the variant component is increasing from grade to grade: 8-10% of school time in the basic school, 15-20% in secondary school and 35% in upper secondary school. The maximum study load is from 21 to 37 class hours a week. The school year consists of 35 working weeks for the stage I and 38 working weeks for the stage II-III. There are the following learning areas in curriculum: languages and literature, social science, aesthetic culture, mathematic, natural sciences, physical culture and health, and technology.

The main subjects in the Ukrainian school are: Ukrainian and foreign literature, history of Ukraine, foreign language begins from the 5-th grade, world history, geography and biology - from the 6-th, physics - from the 7-th, chemistry - from the 8-th grade. (see annex 1, table 5: "Ukraine: weekly lesson timetable for general educational establishments").

Belarus, Moldova, the Russia and Ukraine are obviously confronted by common concerns regarding the re-structuring of curricula and their ability to address these concerns might be enhanced through mechanisms that would enable more international contact and dialogue.

7. TEXTBOOK DEVELOPMENT

The development, publication and distribution of new textbooks is one of the most important tasks in the sphere of education for providing learners and students with high-quality textbooks at the reasonable price. (National Report: RF, 2000:31). This perspective reflects the major assumption, inherited from the socialist system of education, that textbooks are the most important inputs in the education process⁴.

In Soviet times, many very good textbooks were developed and republished a few times in all subjects, which were worked out by the best Soviet scholars and teachers and were characterized by high scientific and methodological quality. The use of all such educational documentation and materials was obligatory for all educational institutions in the USSR. (Public education in the USSR, 1989:52)

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, former Soviet republics faced the problem of textbook development. First of all, they lacked professional authors and/or groups of authors, and secondly, there were inadequate subsidies from the government for publishing new books. Since the content of all subjects has been revised considerably the need to change, renew and publish new textbooks became obvious. It is possible to say that much work has been achieved in the four countries in textbook development and publishing. The main changes include renewal of textbook content and changes in methods of payment and distribution.

Table 4: Textbooks publishing ownership, distribution and funding

Country	Ownership of publishing companies	Distribution	Methods of payment (access)
Belarus	Mixed	State	Loan (rent)
Moldova	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Russia	Mixed	Mixed	Loan
Ukraine	Mixed	Schools	Subsidized

Source: World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal 26-28 April 2000, UNESCO:2000:46, the table was adopted based on the up-to date sources.

Belarus

In Belarus the agency in charge of textbooks development is the National Institute of Education (NIE). It has departments for each of the academic subjects (math, languages, sciences, etc.). These departments work with authors or a group of authors, who may be researchers from these departments, from other research institutions, professors from Belarus universities, teachers, etc.

The developed textbooks then are tested in experimental schools for some 4 years and after that are recommended for all schools in Belarus. For the compulsory part of the curriculum only those textbooks that are approved by the special council at the NIE and also Belarus Ministry of Education are allowed for use in Belarus schools. It is up to the author to decide whether to print the textbook through the funding

⁴ Textbooks & learning materials. 1990-99:44

provided by the government or do this independently through a commercial firm. In that case it is done through the government channel Center Textbook that is part of the NIE, which receives funding from the government for printing the textbooks approved by the council (the budget for this year is 8 billion Belarus rubles). Then it signs a contract with a publishing house. There is a list of publishing houses that is approved by the Ministry of Education. Center Textbook, which also signs a contract with the agencies for delivering the books to schools. There are two agencies that do this in Belarus: agency Globus that belongs to the Ministry of Education and an agency that belongs to the Ministry of Information. The textbooks are delivered to schools (libraries) and become property of these schools. They are further rented by parents for certain fees (maximum 50% of the textbook cost). For certain groups of children textbooks are rented free of charge. When textbooks are printed through a commercial channel they are sold by bookstores for their full cost (Zagoumenov Y. 2004)

“Revolving” system in Moldova

The Ministry of Education and Science plays an important role in supporting the production of school books by developing programmes to publish textbooks and teaching aids and, as this provides business for private publishers, many Ministry orders go to the state-run publishing house⁵.

Publishers are free to increase the print runs specified in contracts and make more money by marketing the extra copies. They may also produce and market alternative textbooks. Based on a World Bank project, the first books were produced in 1998 and the project also covers textbooks for national minorities. The Ministry of Education distributes these textbooks through its own outlet, Mold Didactica, which marked other schools books also – and thus competes with private distributors.

The Ministry of Education and Science is setting up a database of teaching materials and resources, and is considering the application of this new technology to new forms of book production and distribution. Its potential usefulness for textbook production needs to be carefully explored.

As of November 2001, a total of 123 textbooks and teachers’ guides have been published in 59 subjects for the grades 2-9, with a further 37 titles under contract and 114 titles out for bid, covering grades 1-9 - a total of more than 5 million books. Books for Ukrainian, Gagauzian and Bulgarian language students are also include. This is a remarkable achievement, especially as a “revolving” system has been devised to ensure that initial investment is recovered through rental fees which in turn are used to replace the books in due course. (CCNM/DEELSA/Ed(2001)8). The Ministry of Education sets the rental price: it is 35% of price for first year, 30% for the second year, 28% for the third year, etc.

In the 90’s there was a problem with the authors for the writing of textbooks concerning a lack of experience, but now it has been solved.

Introduction a new generation of textbooks in Russia

For the last few years, a list of textbooks offered for use in general educational establishments was considerably refreshed and new textbooks in literature, history, social science were issued⁶.

For the literature textbooks produced recently, the inclusion of a new layer of art works is characteristic: poetry of "silver century", the literatures of the Russians living abroad, folklore themes, the Old Russian literature, and in V-VII grades foreign literature is included.

However it is necessary to note that the teaching of literature in the majority of textbooks that are valid now does not always promote implementation of educational and ideological school functions. They develop cognitive interest poorly for an educational subject and the succession in training insufficiently carried out.⁷ Textbooks in physics, chemistry and biology provide the differentiated approach to training,

⁵ Moldova-Government Loves Books, <http://www.budobs.org>

⁶ The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country report. Russian Federation.

⁷ The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country report. Russia Federation.

correspond to the compulsory content minimum and are presented as completed courses for the basic school students. Despite all obstacles, the quality of books in general is being improved through competition and consumer demand.

Much importance is attached to the printing of literature for the education institutions in the languages of the aboriginal population in Siberia, Far East and Extreme North, financed from the Federal Budget.

The Ministry of Education worked out a system of distribution of textbooks by cutting down the number of go-betweens and reducing the final price of the book. The first step in this direction was establishing an integral system of publishing with a view to providing all participants of teaching literature market with reliable and full information about the books under print. Active work is being carried on to launch and develop a telecommunication network of educational book-publishing under the World Bank project: "Information system of educational book-publishing" (National report, RF, 2000:32)

Ukraine

In Ukraine, during the years of independence more than 500 textbooks have been published. (National report, Ukraine., 2001: 46). The volume of the state financing allocated for this purpose grew three-fold in 2000.

Under the condition of full financing, now for the first time during the existence of the independent of Ukraine, two textbooks will be published per one pupil (in previous year it was 1 textbook per 4 pupils). Children with special needs, among them children with the eyesight problems and those from special schools for handicapped children, have been fully provided with textbooks (National Report, Ukraine, 2001: 47).

The government controls the selection and issuance of every textbook but lacks the funds to meet all requirements (World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal 26-28 April 2000, UNESCO: 2000:45). In Ukraine private publishers are beginning to get a share of the educational market.

In each of the four countries the problems with textbook development and publication are quite similar and it is likely that these problems could be more quickly solved if leaders and educators from each country had more opportunity to share their experiences and approaches to innovation.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper examined the processes of curriculum change in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine based in part on proceedings of a regional seminar in Minsk, Belarus in June 2003 and on a review of some of the existing literature. In evaluating the process of curriculum development in the four countries we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Political, economic, social changes associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union, combined with new demands for education associated with the development of new technologies and of new forms of trans-national, multicultural relations have all had a significant impact on the conceptualization of school education and have led to significant processes of renewal of school curriculum. In the transition from authoritarian
-

to more democratic systems, Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and other countries of the former Soviet Union have had to deal with a number of contradictions and challenges which are also reflected in education.

2. The Soviet school model inherited by the four countries at the beginning of 90's had both strong and weak points. The positive elements of the Soviet heritage have been identified as high levels of academic attainments and achievement.
3. While building on these positive characteristics, the weak points have informed the educational reform in the four independent states in the 1990's. These can be characterized as humanization, de-ideologisation, decentralization, democratization, and differentiation.
4. Decentralization, in particular, has been a key dimension of reform of educational governance and has had an important impact on the structure and content of school curricula. There is still a challenge for these countries to find a balance between decentralization and centralization. A certain degree of centralization is seen as necessary because it is associated with the development of national educational quality standards, corresponding indicators of schools' effectiveness and the establishment of national assessment or evaluation systems to ensure quality.
5. The educational systems of Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine now have both some commonalities and differences. Similarities include such aspects as the new legislative base, new types of educational establishments (gymnasium, lyceum), new teaching methodologies (student-oriented), new subjects that have been introduced in learning processes in general education establishments, and new textbooks that have been developed and published. There are some differences in the structure of educational systems in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, differences in duration of compulsory secondary education and assessments system of students' academic achievements.
6. State educational standards have been developed to ensure quality of education and to create a common education space in each country, thus facilitating mobility of students and European integration. The basic principles of educational standards are preventing content overload, ensuring balance between central and local authorities in provision of quality education and helping to create coherence in educational practices by aligning teacher education, instructional materials and assessment practices.
7. The curriculum has been renewed and old dogmatic material has been removed from the content of subjects. New learning areas have been introduced in the curriculum such as civic education, economics, etc. There is also much more attention paid to teaching national languages and national history. Nevertheless, there is a challenge for all countries from the region to overcome curriculum overload with the integration of new learning content associated with a context of rapid economic development, globalisation, and internationalisation.
8. Since the content of all subjects has been revised considerably, the need to change or renew and publish new textbooks has become obvious. Much work has been achieved in the four countries in textbook development and publishing. The main changes include renewal of textbook content and changes in methods of payment and distribution.

The difficulties inherent to the transition stage delayed the solution of a number of important problems – as a result, the current pace of updating the content and methods of education does not completely meet the present demands and trends of the development of society. In this perspective, regional and international cooperation might be an appropriate strategy for overcoming the challenges and resolving the contradictions associated with the reform (modernization) of education.

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ANNEX 1. Timetables for general secondary educational establishments Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine

Table 1. Belarus: weekly lesson timetable, Belarusian (Russian) language of instruction

Curricular area/discipline	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
<u>Language and communication:</u>									
Belarusian language	6	6	7	3	3	4	3	2	2
Belarusian literature				2	2	2	2	2	2
Russian language	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2
Russian literature				2/1	2/1	1/2	2	2	2
Foreign language	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	2
<u>Mathematics and sciences:</u>									
Mathematics	4	4	4	5	5/4	4/5	5/4	5/4	4/5
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	2
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	–	1/2	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
Computer studies, information technologies	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1
The world	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
<u>Humanities:</u>									
Geography	–	–	–	–	1/2	2/1	2	1	2
History of Belarus	–	–	–	0/1	0/1	1	1	1	1
Universal history	–	–	–	1	1	2/1	1	1	2
Man, state, society	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
My Motherland Belarus	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Man and the world	2	2	1	1	1	–	–	–	–
<u>Arts:</u>									
Music education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–	–
Arts	1	1	1	1	1	1	–	–	–
World artistic culture	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0/1
<u>Technology:</u>									
Practical training	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	0
<u>Sports:</u>									
Physical education	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total weekly periods (min.)	20	21	22	26	27	28	29	30	30
Elective subjects	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total weekly periods (max.)	22	23	24	28	29	30	31	32	32

Source: Ministry of Education of Belarus, Decree of 18.02.2003 No. 63 *About timetables for general educational establishments for 2003-2004 school year*. Each teaching period lasts about 45 minutes, the school year consists of 35 working weeks in Grades I-III and 36 weeks in Grades IV-XI (five-day school week).

Table 2. Moldova: weekly lesson timetable for general educational establishments

Curricular area/discipline	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	First stage				Second stage				
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
<u>Language and communication:</u>									
Romanian language and literature	8	7	7	7	6	6	5	5	5
Foreign language	–	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Russian language	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2
Elective subjects	0–2	0–2	0–2	0–2	0–1	0–1	0–2	0–2	0–2
<u>Mathematics and sciences:</u>									
Mathematics	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sciences	–	1	1	1	1	–	–	–	–
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2	2
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2
Computer studies	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1
Elective subjects	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–2	0–2	0–2	0–2	0–2
<u>Humanities:</u>									
Geography	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	1
Romanian history	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	1	1
Universal history	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	1
Moral and spiritual education	1	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
Civic education	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	1
Elective subjects	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1
<u>Arts:</u>									
Music education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–
Plastic arts	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–	–
Elective subjects	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1
<u>Technology:</u>									
Technology	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Elective subjects	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1
<u>Sports:</u>									
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Elective subjects	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1	0–1
Total weekly periods (min.)	19	21	21	22	25	26	29	29	28
Total weekly periods (max.)	21	23	23	24	27	28	31	32	32

Source: Ministry of Education. *National curriculum 2003-2004*. Chisinau, Moldova, 2003. Each teaching period lasts about 45 minutes; the school year consists of 34 five-day working weeks.

Table 3. Russia: weekly lesson timetable for basic education (framework)

Curricular area/discipline	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
<u>Language and communication:</u>									
Russian as the official language	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Languages and literature	6	6	5	5	8	7	7	5	5
<u>Mathematics and sciences:</u>									
Mathematics, informatics	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5
Biology, Physics, Chemistry	–	–	–	–	2	2	4	6	6
<u>Humanities:</u>									
History	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	2
Social Science	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
Surrounding world	1	1	1	1	2	–	–	–	–
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
<u>Arts:</u>									
Music	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–
Fine arts	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–
<u>Technology:</u>									
Technology, manual labour, technical drawing	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
<u>Sports:</u>									
Physical education, safety life	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Elective subjects	–	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Total weekly periods (max.)	20	22	22	22	28	29	31	32	32

Source: Ministry of Education of the Russia, Decree No. 322 of 09.02.1998. The timetable above applies to five-day school weeks. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes; the school year consists of 34 working weeks.

Table 4. Russia: suggested weekly lesson timetable for general educational establishments using Russian as medium of instruction

Curricular area/discipline	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
<u>Language and communication:</u>									
Russian language	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	3	2
Literature	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	3
Foreign language	–	–	–	–	3	3	3	3	3
<u>Mathematics and sciences:</u>									
Mathematics, informatics	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
<u>Humanities:</u>									
History	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2	3
Social Science	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	1	1
Surrounding world	1	1	1	1	2	–	–	–	–
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
<u>Arts:</u>									
Music	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–
Fine arts	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	–
<u>Technology:</u>									
Technology	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Technical drawing	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
<u>Sports:</u>									
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Elective subjects	2	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5
Total weekly periods (max.) (six-day week)	22	25	25	25	31	32	34	35	35

Source: Ministry of Education of the Russia, Decree No. 322 of 09.02.1998. The timetable above applies to six-day school weeks. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. Degree of the RF No.196, 19.03.01 the school year consists of 33 for grade I and 34 working weeks.

Table 5. Ukraine: weekly lesson timetable for general educational establishments (four-year elementary education program)

Curricular area/discipline	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
<u>Language and communication:</u>									
Ukrainian language and literature	8	7	7	7	6	5	5	5	4.5
Foreign literature	–	1	(2)	(2)	2	2	2	2	2
Foreign language	–	–	–	–	4	3	3	3	3
<u>Mathematics and sciences:</u>									
Mathematics (including informatics)	3	4	4	4	4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	1.5
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2.5
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
<u>Humanities:</u>									
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
History of Ukraine	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	1	2
World history	–	–	–	–	–	2	1	1	1
Me and Ukraine, environment	1	1	1.5	1.5	1	–	–	–	–
Science of law	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.5
<u>Arts:</u>									
Music, art education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	–
<u>Technology:</u>									
Work education	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
<u>Sports:</u>									
Physical education	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Health protection	1	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total weekly periods (min.)	19	19	20,	20.	24,	27	29	30	31
			5	5	5				
Optional subjects	2	2	3,5	3,5	4,5	5	5	6	6
Total weekly periods (max.)	21	21	24	24	29	32	34	36	37

Source: Ministry of Education & Science of Ukraine Decree 1/9-235 of 10.05.2002. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes; the school year consist of 35 working weeks for the stage I and 38 working weeks for the stage II-III.

ANNEX I:

Agenda of the regional seminar (Minsk, 22-23 June 2003)

Sunday 22 June, 2003

- 08.45 Registration, coffee (16-301 Korolia Str., National Institute of Education)
09.00 Opening (16-302 Korolia Str.)
09.15 Greetings and expectations:
 IBE Director
 Head of Belarus delegations
 Head of Moldavian delegation
 Head of Russian delegation
 Head of Ukrainian delegation
 Chairman of the Belarus National Commission on UNESCO
10.00 «Learning to live together: challenges of curriculum development in the XXI century» – presentation by C.Braslavsky, IBE Director,
10.30 Question. Discussion
11.00 Coffee/tea break
11.30 Presentation of challenges of curriculum development in Belarus
12.30 C.Braslavsky meeting with journalists
13.00 Lunch
14.30 Presentation of challenges of curriculum development in Moldova
15.30 Coffee/tea-break
16.00 Bus tour around Minsk
19.00 Reception

Monday 23 June, 2003

- 10.00 Presentation of challenges of curriculum development in Russia
11.00 Coffee/tea break
11.30 Presentation of stories and challenges of curriculum development in Ukraine
12.30 Coffee/tea break
13.00 Panel discussion and press-conference (Heads of Belarus, Moldavian, Russian and Ukrainian delegations, Chairman of Belarus Commission on UNESCO)
14.00 Lunch
15.00 Group work (ministries, research institutions, NGOs) on identifying regional priorities and development projects for 2004-2005

 Group 1. Ministries of education (room 302)
 Group 2. Research institutes (room 428)
 Group 3. Civil society (room 425)

17.00 Presentations of developed materials and discussion
18.00 Closing remarks
18.30 Dinner

ANNEX II:

List of participants

Country	Surname and first name	Institution and position	Address	Tel. Fax Email
International				
	Braslavsky Cecilia	International Bureau of Education, Director	15, route de Morillons 1218 Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland	(41) (22) 917 78 00 (41) (22) 917 78 01 c.braslavsky@ibe.unesco.org
Belarus				
	Kuznezova Lidiya	Ministry of Education	9 Sovetskaya Str., Minsk 220010	+375 172 22 64 01 http://minedu.unibel.by
	Schastnii Vladimir	Chairman of National Commission of UNESCO office in Belarus	29 Myasnikova Str., 220050 Minsk Belarus	+ 375 172 20 36 97 su@mfa.org.by
	Parkhomenka Vladimir	National Institute of Education, Belarus Ministry of Education, Director	16-319, Korolia Str., 220004, Minsk Belarus	+ 375 172 20 59 09 + 375 172 20 56 35 nie@mail.br.by http://inst.edu.by
	Zagoumenov Iouri	National Institute of Education, Belarus Ministry of Education, Head of department of Comparative Education and International Relations	16-425, Korolia Str., 220004, Minsk Belarus	+375 172 20 79 81 + 375-172 10 5751 scaf@tut.by
	Elenskii Nikolai	National Institute of Education, Deputy Director	16-428, Korolia Str., 220004, Minsk Belarus	+ 375 172 20 59 09 + 375 172 20 56 35 nie@mail.br.by http://inst.edu.by
	Liseichikau Aleh	National Institute of Education, Deputy Director	16-317, Korolia Str., 220004, Minsk Belarus	+ 375 172 20 59 09 + 375 172 20 56 35 nie@mail.br.by http://inst.edu.by
	Khudenko Ludmila	National Institute of Education, Deputy Director	16-322, Korolia Str., 220004, Minsk Belarus	+ 375 172 20 59 09 + 375 172 20 56 35 nie@mail.br.by http://inst.edu.by
	Dobrinevskaya Anna	NGO “Innovations in education”, Director	20 Nekrasova Str., 220040 Minsk Belarus	+ 375 172 28 78 23 uumz@academy.edu.by

	Shelkovich Ludmila	National Institute of Education, Department of Comparative Educational and International Relations, Senior Research	16-424, Korolia Str., 220004, Minsk Belarus	+375 172 20 79 81 + 375-172 10 5751 lshelk@unibel.by
	Yakovets Natalia	National Institute of Education, Department of Comparative Educational and International Relations, Researcher	16-423, Korolia Str., 220004, Minsk Belarus	+375 172 20 79 81 + 375-172 10 5751 iakovets@yahoo.com
	Zagoumenov Igor	National Institute of Education, Department of Comparative Educational and International Relations, Junior Researcher	16-424, Korolia Str., 220004, Minsk Belarus	+375 172 20 79 81 + 375-172 10 5751
Moldova	Koroi Evgenii	Ministry of Education of Moldova, Head of Department	Piata Marii Adunari Nationale 1, MD-2033 Chisinau	+ 373 22 23 24 69 + 373 22 23 35 15 Coroi@rambler.ru
	Guzu Vladimir	Moldova State University, Head of Department of Pedagogy & psychology	MD 2009, 60 Matievich str., Chisinau	+ 373 22 51 01 12 + 373 22 57 75 97 + 373 22 24 42 48 vgutu@usm.md
	Gorash- Postica Viorika	NGO Education Center "Pro- didactica", Educational Program coordinator	Armeneasca Str.13, Chisinau 2012 MD Republic of Moldova	+ 373 22 54 25 56 54 19 94 +373 22 54 41 99 vpostica@prodidactica.dnt.md
Russian Federation	Ribchenkova Lidiya	Ministry of Education and Science Head of Department of Educational programs & standards of humanitarian education	6/11 Chistoprudnii Bulvar, Moscow 101000	+ 007 925 86 25 avb@miem.edu.ru

	Rizakov Mikhail	Institute of General Education, Russian Academy of Education, Deputy Director	39-3-264, Shipilovskaya Str., Moscow 115573	+ 007 246 19 03 + 007 248 59 58 + 007 395 45 84 (h)
	Aleksandrova Olga	Institute of General Education, Russian Academy of Education, Senior Researcher	7/68 Brusovskii pereulok, Moscow 103009	+ 007 229 33 89 (h) brungilda2003@mail.ru
Ukraine	Vaschenko Lidiya	Ministry of Education & Science, Head of department of Content of education	10 Pobedi Avenue	+ 380 44 216 10 83 ministry@mon.gov.ua gioc@mon.gov.ua
	Masol Ludmila	Institute of Problem of Education, Academy of Pedagogical Science in Ukraine; Senior Researcher	21/77 Golodedovskii Avenue Kiev	+ 380 44 265 58 25 lmamol@ukr.net
	Golik Ludmila	Ukrainian Forum of Educational Administration, president	8.42 Gasheka Str., Kiev 02 160	+ 380 44 573 57 85 8 050 687 25 52 luda@upotel.net.ua sweetrain@mail.ru
Embassies	Miinya Nikolae	Cultural and Educational attaché of Moldavian Embassy in Belarus	Minsk, Str. Belarusskaia nr.2	+ 375 172 89.14.41
	Alehin Oleg	Cultural and Educational attaché of RF Embassy in Belarus	220002, Minsk, 48 Starovilenskaya Str.	+375 172 503-666 +375 172 503-664
	Harishin Mihail	Cultural and Educational attaché of Ukrainian Embassy in Belarus	Kirova Street, 17 220050, Minsk-50	+375 172 27 28 61

ANNEX III:

Evaluation of the seminar by the participants

A. RATED QUESTIONS:

1. Overall, how would you evaluate the workshop?

Highly positive (all respondents)

2. The object of the workshop was to develop priorities for regional and international cooperation on curriculum development in the 21 century. To what extent did the workshop fulfill this objective?

To full extent (all respondents)

3. To what extent did the workshop meet your expectations?

To full extent.

B. OPEN QUESTIONS:

4. How do you intend to use the experience of this workshop back in your home country?

Will use it for the national and regional curriculum development, multi-cultural education, finding a reasonable balance of local and global dimensions of education, in teaching foreign languages, for regional and international integration, for joint projects development, for educational research coordination, for sharing experience with the colleagues, in development of national educational standards.

5. What especially relevant for you and your country?

Possibilities for regional and international cooperation, experiences of other countries in the region in educational reforms after the break-down of the USSR, to learn about the IBE priorities.

6. What was not relevant for you and your country?

Everything was relevant.

7. Please rate the following:

- a. Concept and design of the workshop: **excellent**
- b. Plenary Session – Presentations and Discussion: **excellent**
- c. Small Group Session: **excellent**
- d. Organizational arrangements prior to the workshop: **excellent**
- e. Organizational arrangements at the workshop: **excellent**
- f. Workshop Facilities: **excellent**
- g. Translation Services: answers provided range from “good” to “excellent”
- h. Workshop materials: **very useful, excellent**
- i. Accommodation and Meals: **excellent**

ANNEX IV:

Networking questionnaire

Strengthening Regional Networking in Curriculum Development

Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine

1. What type of co-operation does your department/organisation have with institutional partners at (a) national level? (b) regional (Belarus, Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine....) (c) international? Please specify partnerships and describe type of co-operation (information exchange, conferences, collaborative research, training, joint projects, exchange programmes, other...).
2. Is this exchange part of a network? If so, please describe the nature (informal/formal, individual/institutional members...) and scope (national, regional, international...) of the network
3. How do institutional/individual members of this network communicate? Please describe mechanisms and activities (meetings, seminars, newsletter, other publications, website, electronic discussion fora, databases...).
4. What interest would you see in strengthening regional networking among curriculum developers, and in integrating a Global Curriculum Network of national curriculum-making bodies coordinated by the UNESCO International Bureau of Education?
5. What are your priorities in curriculum development that you would like to be addressed by such a regional and international network?

6. How could your institution contribute to the activities of a regional and international network on curriculum development?

- Organize/host meetings, seminars, conferences
- Lobbying / representation of interests

Provide consultancy services/Technical assistance

Organize training workshops

Cooperation projects (what are the approximate topics?)

Publishing (newsletter / scientific reviews / studies...)

Host electronic database

Communication for the general public

Exchange programs

Research capacity

Other (please specify)

Contact information:

Institution Name

(Website?)

Address (Mailing Address, City, Mailing Code, Country):

Staff Contact

Name:

Position:

Email:

Telephone:

Fax:

ANNEX V:

Synthesis of the questionnaire

“Strengthening regional networking in curriculum development in Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine”

Question1: What type of co-operation does your department/organization have with institutional partners at:

a) at the national level:

Belarus:

- exchange of information, joint research and projects with:
- State Pedagogical University named after M.Tank;
- National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Belarus;
- Academy of Post Graduate (Diploma) Education;
- Regional In-service Institutes;
- NGOs such as “Innovations in education”, SCAF, UNICEF office in Belarus, Women union, Association of parents having many children, NGO “Children not for violence”, National centre for creativity of children;
- UNDP office in Belarus

Moldova:

- cooperation in development of educational standards;
- collaborative research;
- information exchange with the Ministry of Education, Research institutes, local department of education, schools, NGOs

Russia:

- exchange of information between different educational institutions, Russian Academy of Education; Russian Academy of Sciences, etc.

Ukraine:

- cooperation with Academy of pedagogy in Ukraine, Ministry of Education, NGOs;
- conferences, joint projects, trainings.

b) at the regional level:

Belarus:

- exchange of information, joint research and projects with:
- Moscow State University, Department of Educational Management; Institute of Management of Education of the Russian Academy of Education (Moskow);
- Institute of General Education Russian Academy of Education;
- Institute of Correction Pedagogy RAE;

- Moldova State University, Department of Pedagogy and Psychology;
- Ukrainian Forum of Educational Administration;
- NGO Education Center “Pro-didactica” in Moldova;
- Institute of Problem of Education, Academy of Pedagogical Science in Ukraine.

Moldova:

The process of regional cooperation is just started

Russia:

Cooperation with Byelorussian, Ukrainian Moldavian Ministries of education and institutions

Ukraine:

Cooperation with Belarus NGOs: „Innovations in Education“, SCAF; with Russian Forum of educational leaders

c) at the international level:

Belarus:

exchange of information, joint research and projects with:

- International Bureau of Education, UNESCO;
- International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI);
- European Forum for Educational Administration;
- European Network for Improving Research and Development in Educational Management (ENIRDEM);
- International Society for Teachers Education (ISTE);
- Umeo University (Sweden);
- University of Education (Denmark);
- Spinosa Lyceum (Amsterdam, Holland);
- New-York University;
- Long-Island University;
- Texas University;
- Ontario Institute for Studies in Education;
- Institute of the Problem of Education (Toronto, Canada)

Moldova:

There are some joint projects with the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain; Soros network, South-East European network, IQEA –Great Britain, International Reading Association (IRA);

Russia:

All information about networks are available at the Department of International Education, Ministry of Education of Russian Federation

Ukraine:

European Forum for Educational Administration (EFEA), IANSA

Types of contribution to the activities of a regional and international network on curriculum development

- 1 Organize/host meetings, seminars, conferences
- 2 Lobbying/representation of the interests
- 3 Provide consultancy services/ technical assistance
- 4 Organise training workshops
- 5 Publishing newsletters/scientific review/ studies
- 6 host electronic database
- 7 communication for the general public
- 8 exchange programs

- 9 Research capacity

Country	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Belarus									
Moldova									
Russia									
Ukraine									