

The average U.S. Peace Corps volunteer spends about 800 days serving in a foreign country.

October 2016

News and activities in Rîșcani, Republic of Moldova • Mark Gilchrist, U.S. Peace Corps volunteer.

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## Libraries lead to Rîșcani's future!

Moldovans love to read, and they love to learn, and, for Moldovans of all ages, few places are better than a library.

The Soviet occupation here saw closings of most churches, and the building of hundreds of libraries, albeit libraries filled with communist propaganda. Today, those libraries are entering the digital age, and more.

Thanks to the Novateca program, 30 libraries in the Rîșcani district have, or will soon have, 90 computers. They, and others across Moldova are giving patrons resources that had once been available only to those in more developed areas.

Librarians are also working to improve opportunities, creatively building programs and resources to enrich many people's lives in more interactive environments.

Visitors to some libraries in Moldova can experiment with electronic assembly kits or robotics, and children can exercise their imaginations with Legos or 3D pens, helping them to build a better future for Rîșcani.



Testing a science kit.



Visitors to the Zăicani Public Library can work on computers, or read books and magazines, all in a beautiful, inspiring and creative environment, thanks to Director Lilia Popa, right, her library staff, and Novateca. Photos: [Click](#)



Director Galina Sparrow, left, loves the Mihaileni Public Library, its staff and patrons. Photos: [Click](#)

## Moldova votes for a runoff election

On October 30, for the first time in 20 years, Moldovans voted for their next president, but the race between the two leading contenders was close enough that they must compete in a second round of voting on November 13.

A Moldovan presidential candidate must have 51% of votes to win during the first round, in a process much simpler than the electoral college of the U.S.

Igor Dodon, a minister of parliament, won 48% of the votes, and Maia Sandu, a former education minister, won 38.7%. In this republic, sandwiched between Europe and Ukraine, Dodon favors ties with Russia, and Sandu, with Europe.

For the past two decades, the president has been appointed by parliament, with powers pretty much limited to appointing judges and directing foreign matters.

About a half-dozen political parties are active in Moldova, and in most elections, (except for mayors and the president,) people vote for the parties, which then appoint people to fill the positions.

In the U.S., political parties select their candidates in primary elections in the spring. Only two parties have historically been viable; Democratic and Republican, thus, the U.S. election in November is usually a race between only two candidates.

Sources: [BBC](#), [eDemocracy](#), [Wikipedia](#) Photos: [Unimedia](#)



Dodon



Sandu



Children in the city of Rîșcani can build amazing things with their hands, imaginations and Legos.



"A library is a feast to which we are all invited."

Katherine Paterson

Imagini RÎȘCANI

In October, I posted photos for the villages of Duruitoarea, Avrameni, Petruseni and Branîște.

Photos: [Click](#)

MOLDOVAN OF THE MONTH



NICOLAE MOSCALU

Nicolae Moscalu, 58, is passionate about helping the people of northern Moldova, and he loves living in Duruitoarea, where he is helping to rebuild a history museum.

A teacher and father of two girls, he runs an ONG, Moștenitorii, in Balți, and helps educate youths and adults, focusing on ecology and community development. He also tirelessly works to build tourism in Rîșcani.

## Moldovans celebrate autumn

If Moldova were in the U.S., it would be about as far north as it could get, touching Canada, so the days get short quickly here, and the people, plants and animals prepare hard for winter.

The last big crop to leave the fields is grapes, and the country celebrates the fruit and its favorite product, wine, with a huge party in the capital.

The Oct. 1 harvest festival was an exciting day for the country, as thousands of people enjoyed food, drink, music, and displays of local crafts and wine making. Grapes have been grown here for millenia, and many families grow their own grapes and make their own wine.

Also in summer and autumn, Moldovans prepare for winter, making sure their sheds are stocked with enough wood and other fuels to light the fireplace all winter, and that the barns have enough hay for the animals. While many Moldovans still burn tree leaves gathered from yards, many are learning to compost them, and use them to fertilize gardens.

I haven't seen many red leaves here, but the fall foliage is a vibrant display of yellows, with which Moldovans like to make beautiful decorations, as if to celebrate their changing of seasons, and to brace themselves for the upcoming long months of short days and long nights.



Cooking pork ribs for Wine Day visitors in Chisinau.



Photo illustration

Photographs and Videos, at:

[www.Markstrail.com](http://www.Markstrail.com)