

SUCCESS STORY

NEW SKILLS ALLOW YOUNG MOLDOVAN DESIGNER TO FIND WORK AT HOME

Victoria Andries is just 23 years old, but already she heads up a three-person design team at Moldovan shoe company OldCom, using Computer Aided Design (CAD) to create fresh, casual shoes destined for customers in Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. “I have been passionate about fashion since I was a child”, she says, “and soon my achievements will be on sale in stores.”



Photo credit: Andrei Sochirca, MCP
Photo caption: Victoria using CAD to design shoes at OldCom

Thousands of young Moldovans emigrate each year due to a lack of quality jobs, and an education system which doesn't meet the skills needs of Moldova's key industries, including apparel manufacturing. Globalization offers many opportunities for the Moldovan apparel sector to grow into a fully-fledged export industry, but to take advantage of them companies need workers who can operate modern equipment and create up-to-date designs.

Targeted design, technology and business knowledge training

The Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP), funded by USAID and Sweden, invests in targeted design, technology and business knowledge training for workers in the fashion industry, addressing education gaps and equipping them with creative and technical skills to increase the competitiveness of companies like OldCom.

Empowering youth with critical skills

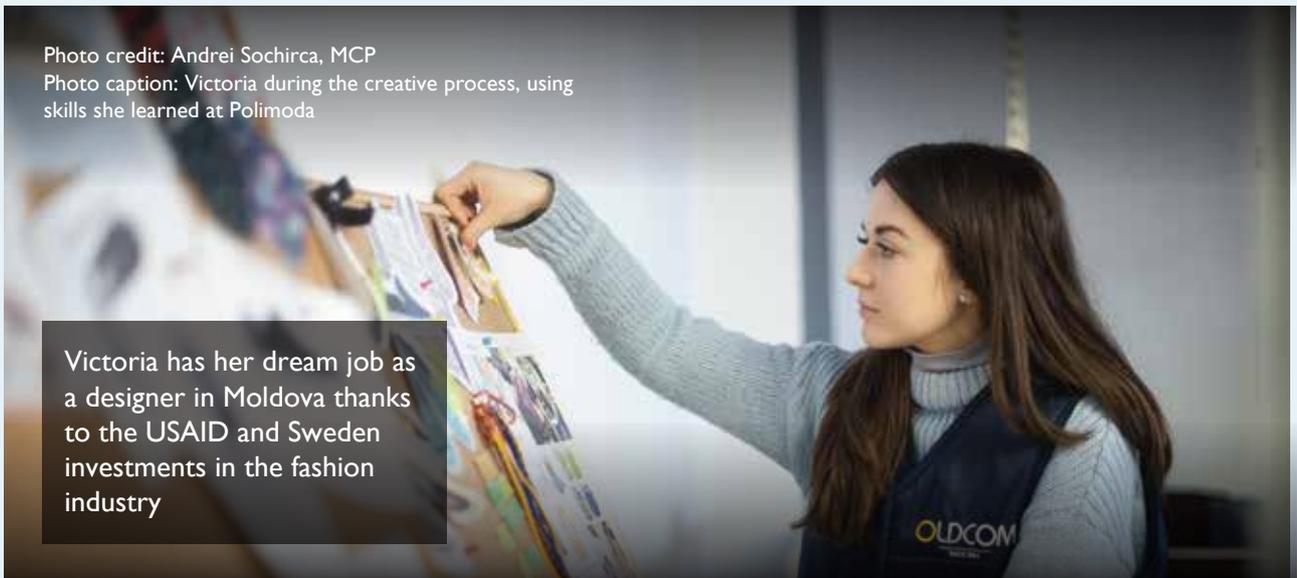
Victoria's passion allowed her to find her dream job in her home country, at Moldova's leading shoe company OldCom. "In Moldova, it takes a lot of ambition and double the work to reach your goals.

My greatest achievement is that I have this job, in Moldova". Victoria now leads a team of three designers using Computer Aided Design software, technology bought by OldCom with a grant from MCP. "OldCom is a company with a modern vision, that's why I got this chance" says Victoria.

The combination of her new skills with the CAD technology, provided to OldCom by MCP grant and other companies' investment in automatization equipment, has revolutionized OldCom's manufacturing processes, reducing the product development cycle from 80 days to 20. This improved the company's ability to respond to customer needs and create modern designs which can command higher prices. Own-brand products, like OldCom's shoes, generate 6.8 times more revenue than the traditional stitching and assembly services traditionally provided by Moldova's light industry, which in turn improves salaries across the whole company.

MCP helped Victoria attend a training course at a leading fashion university, Polimoda, in Italy. "Even though it was a short, two-week course, it has influenced me enormously. I learned to think out of the box", she says.

Photo credit: Andrei Sochirca, MCP
Photo caption: Victoria during the creative process, using skills she learned at Polimoda



Victoria has her dream job as a designer in Moldova thanks to the USAID and Sweden investments in the fashion industry

“These two weeks helped me to change my approach to many things or processes. At Polimoda, they are not limited, they have no [creative] barriers, and most importantly, they taught us to escape ours”.

Victoria Andries,
Designer at OldCom

Productivity enhancements via equipment upgrade

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MCP is funded by USAID and Sweden, and supports competitiveness gains in Moldova’s apparel industry, to create a sustainable and thriving economy in the poorest country in Europe. Victoria is one of 12800 apparel Industry employees from over 170 companies who have received advanced training in product quality, efficiency, and fashion management, critical for the industry to be able to shift toward value-added business models and create more, better quality jobs for Moldova’s women and youth.

Victoria heads up a three-person design team at Moldovan shoe company OldCom, using Computer Aided Design (CAD) to create fresh, casual shoes destined for customers in Moldova, Romania and Ukraine



Photo credit: Andrei Sochirca, MCP
Photo caption: Victoria and her team of young designers