



**STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY-BASED
INITIATIVES IN HIV/AIDS AND FAMILY
VIOLENCE IN ROMANIA**

Final Narrative Report



JSI RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE



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HIV/AIDS AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN ROMANIA**

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“Strengthening Community-Based Initiatives in HIV/AIDS and Family Violence in Romania”
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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	–	acquired immune deficiency syndrome
BCC	–	behavior change communication
CC	–	community coordinator
EU	–	European Union
HIV	–	human immunodeficiency virus
IEC	–	information, education, and communication
IOCC	–	International Orthodox Christian Charities
JSI	–	JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc.
M&E	–	monitoring and evaluation
MOERY	–	Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth
MOLSSF	–	Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity, and Family
MOPH	–	Ministry of Public Health
MOU	–	memorandum of understanding
NACPA	–	National Authority for Children’s Protection and Adoption
NGO	–	nongovernmental organization
PLWHA	–	people living with HIV/AIDS
RFHI	–	Romanian Family Health Initiative
ROC	–	Romanian Orthodox Church
SC	–	school coordinator
TA	–	technical assistance
TOT	–	training of trainers
USAID	–	United States Agency for International Development
VCT	–	voluntary counseling and testing
WHO	–	World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

In the post-communist era, Romania is confronted with important political, social, and economic challenges. As a new member state of the European Union (EU), it must pay additional attention to solving social problems and reducing inequalities among various population groups. Although the political will to address these difficulties exists and several Ministries are involved, including the Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family (MOLSSF) and the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), there is still room for other state institutions to join this effort to improve the lives of all Romanians.

The faith community is a key player in Romanian society¹. The Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC), of which 86 percent of Romanians are members, is a major driving force for changing perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes towards key social problems. Since communist-era restrictions were lifted in 1995, the ROC has made a concerted effort to build and expand its outreach programs to all sectors of society. As a result, the ROC is recognized by the Romanian government, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and, most important, by Romanian citizens as being a caring and effective provider of social services. Its strong influence and extended network of contacts at the national level enable the ROC to achieve results that would be extremely difficult for other organizations.

In addition, the ROC is uniquely poised to develop a comprehensive social advocacy approach that can effectively address the needs of Romanians, support their greater access to social services, and an amplified voice in civil society. Drawing upon its historic mandate, engaging the already committed people within the Church structure and committing resources to this effort, the Church could have a significant impact on meeting both the spiritual and human needs of Romanians.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The goal of the “*Strengthening Community-Based Initiatives in HIV/AIDS and Family Violence in Romania*” project is to promote responsible social behavior among Romanians, especially among youth, by strengthening communities to better address HIV/AIDS, family violence, and other critical social problems. The project incorporates community involvement and capacity-building approaches to promote social awareness, tolerance, and proactive strategies among Romanians regarding social issues affecting their communities. It aims to develop the “social capital” and civic responsibility necessary for such significant social change.

¹ In a Gallup Survey in 2003, the Church was cited as *the* most trusted institution in the country by 88 percent of those surveyed.

The project expected to have a significant impact by engaging the largest faith-based institution in Romania, the ROC, as well as other professionals in jointly planning and implementing social service programs. The expertise of international NGOs complemented the ROC’s local experience and countrywide access to increase the effectiveness of these priority social programs.

Selected topics

As per the IOCC presentation of the project the reasons for selecting the two issues are the following:

Why AIDS? Because:

- The HIV/AIDS infection rate in Eastern European countries is growing at an alarming rate;
- The first signs of such an increase have recently appeared in Romania;
- Most youth are only informed about certain prevention methods.

Why domestic violence? Because:

- “Domestically” speaking, Romania has one of the highest violence rates in Europe;
- The phenomenon is perceived as almost “normal” in Romanians’ minds;
- The problem plagues Romanian society at all levels;
- It is kept under a “conspiracy of silence” within a community and between the victim and her community.

Partners

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)

IOCC is the official humanitarian aid and development agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas. IOCC, a nonprofit, nonsectarian humanitarian relief organization, works in cooperation with Orthodox Churches worldwide for the survival and well-being of refugees, displaced persons, and others at risk.

IOCC had formal responsibility for project management and developed the project implementation strategy together with Romanian Orthodox Church. In addition, IOCC provided technical, financial, and program support to ROC and its implementing partners, monitored program activities, evaluated results, and produced activity reports for USAID.

Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC)

The ROC is able to inspire significant grassroots attitudinal changes, as it has facilities and staff in every segment of Romanian society. The ROC structure consists of some 11,000 parishes, more than 12,000 priests, 10,000 religion teachers in high schools and middle schools (reporting to the Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth), and eleven

social assistance departments in universities located throughout Romania. This breadth of coverage allowed project implementation and information dissemination to reach a national audience.

The Romanian Patriarchate managed the implementation of activities through a Project Coordinator appointed by the Holy Synod and through Social Counselors at the central and local levels; trained and assisted priests and teachers through local project coordination teams hired from participating parishes; and implemented prevention activities, community training, and education through the involved priests and teachers.

The equal IOCC/ROC partnership benefited both organizations while bringing assistance to people most in need. IOCC brought proven technical expertise in designing and implementing highly effective development and relief program activities to the ROC and the ROC contributed its unmatched credibility and networks.

Ministry of Education, Research, and Youth (MOERY)

The MOERY played a key role in the development and implementation of this program, both at the national and local levels. Specifically, it facilitated the participation of religion teachers in project activities as well as project activities within schools. Religion is a mandatory course in the first to eighth grades. In high school, 75 percent of students each year opt for religion class. Therefore, the impact of any public health message disseminated through this network of teachers can be substantial.

JSI Research and Training Institute (JSI)

JSI is a US public-health management consulting firm with headquarters in Boston and with more than 60 international office sites, named in honor of Dr. John Snow, “the father of modern epidemiology”. His work represents a continuous source of inspiration for JSI.

The mission of JSI is to improve the quality and accessibility of medical services around the world, to develop and implement improved management systems and to increase organizational efficiency and efficacy. JSI’s multidisciplinary, international staff of over 400 specialists has managed an extensive array of long-term multinational and country-specific programs.

From 2001-2007, JSI implemented the “Romanian Family Health Initiative” (RFHI), a USAID-funded program, based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed in November 2001 between U.S and Romania governments. The program aims to increase access to and use of reproductive health services across Romania, and to expand the availability of these services at the primary health care level. To this end, RFHI supports the MOPH and a number of NGOs in capacity-building efforts to improve the effectiveness of services for underserved populations.

Based on its expertise and knowledge of the current environment in Romania and RFHI results, JSI/Romania was selected as a partner for the project to develop human

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resources, design curricula, provide training materials, and provide further technical assistance, as needed.

This report presents the main achievements and lessons learned from this effective partnership.

TIMELINE

DATE	EVENT
June – December 2005	preliminary discussions between IOCC and JSI regarding future collaboration and strategy
September – October 2005	Training needs assessment completed
October – December 2005	TOT curriculum developed and workshop prepared
December 2005	first TOT workshop organized for Community Coordinators (CCs) and School Coordinators (SCs) from Region A ² and contract signed
March 2006	second TOT workshop for Region A coordinators organized
March – May 2006	curricula for training of priests and religion teachers developed and submitted to IOCC for approval
June 2006	technical assistance (TA) provided for the development of the teachers’ guide on implementing HIV/AIDS and family violence awareness and prevention activities
July 2006	second TOT workshop prepared
August 2006	TOT workshop organized for CCs and SCs from Region B ³
August – September 2006	teachers’ guide printed and distributed
October 2006	follow-up “refresher” meeting organized with the local coordinators from Region A (first group of trainers)
November 2006	international consultancy provided and recommendations formulated for developing and incorporating an advocacy strategy into ROC social development efforts
January 2007	follow-up “refresher” meeting organized with the local coordinators from Region B (second group of trainers)
February – March 2007	TA for preparing guide for priests
May 2007	no-cost contract extension granted
April – June 2007	training curricula revised, prepared for printing, and translated into English
June 2007	guide for priests printed and disseminated
June 2007	revised training curricula submitted to IOCC
July 2007	training curricula printed

² Region A (parishes / counties) – activities started during the first year of the project: Bucharest (1st district), Iași (Iași county), Timișoara (Timiș county), Craiova (Dolj county), Tomis (Constanța county), Roman (city of Bacău and commune of Stănița), Slobozia (Ialomița county), Severin (Mehedinți county).

³ Region B (parishes / counties) – activities commenced in mid-2006: Bucharest (4th district), Roman (expansion to the entire parish), Huși (Iași county), Dunărea de Jos (Galați county), Sibiu (Brașov county), Alba Iulia (Alba county), Cluj (Cluj county and city of Bistrița).

INTERVENTIONS/DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Establish the Contractual Relationship between IOCC and JSI

In order to build ROC capacity to promote social awareness and develop proactive strategies for social change, the team sought to instill positive attitudes in ROC representatives and parish members through training and instruction. The aim was that they become agents of social change in developing community response for the prevention of HIV/AIDS and family violence, and assist in the social integration of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and family violence victims.

Based on the preliminary discussions with IOCC and on the project goals and objectives, JSI agreed to the following **Scope of Work** and signed a contract in December 2005:

a) Core Activities

- Develop, organize, and implement two series of TOT workshops for Community and School Coordinators;
- Develop a comprehensive curriculum for training priests and religion teachers; consisting of three modules: HIV/AIDS, family violence, and community mobilization;
- Conduct one follow-up meeting with each group of new trainers.

b) Technical Assistance

- Assist in developing and printing separate guides for priests and religion teachers on implementing HIV/AIDS and family violence awareness and prevention activities;
- Assist the ROC in developing a social advocacy strategy through the assistance of an international consultant with experience in HIV and faith-based programs.

CORE ACTIVITIES

Develop, organize, and implement training of trainers (TOT) workshops for Community and School Coordinators

Training Needs Assessment

An important preliminary activity—the **training needs assessment**—was conducted using two main tools: focus group discussions and self-assessment questionnaires. The IOCC organized and conducted focus group discussions with priests and religious teachers and shared the preliminary results with JSI experts. Based on those results, some important items were identified with relevance for future training activities:

- Priests’ attitude toward family violence was very permissive (it is “normal” and acceptable)
- They associated AIDS with immorality: most of the priests considered it a punishment from God for people’s sinful behavior and that it was not an issue to be approached in the Church

- There was a lack of basic information on HIV/AIDS (means of transmission, prevention, and care of PLWHA)
- Priests cited a lack of institutional support from the ROC in addressing social issues within their parishes and a lack of collaboration with specialists and technical experts in approaching the two issues of concern in the project
- Priests thought there were many other social issues more visible and more important than HIV/AIDS and FV in their parishes
- The group of religion teachers was heterogeneous and felt a “lack of professional identity” and that they were treated as less important than teachers of other subjects
- Motivation to attend training was mainly an external one (to obtain additional credits and diplomas)
- Religion teachers were also often responsible for organizing extracurricular activities for their students
- Only a few teachers were aware of the importance of their work in the child’s overall education; most of them considered themselves “only teachers”, with no special mandate for moral education
- There was a very low knowledge level among teachers about HIV/AIDS and no information on their role and responsibilities in relation to cases of family violence
- Many religion teachers act as counselors for children confronted with different problems, despite not being prepared for this. (They often replace the inexistent school counselors.)

After the 32 local coordinators were hired for Region A, they each completed a self-assessment questionnaire. Responses received from 25 coordinators served to identify learning needs, which were structured into three main categories: HIV/AIDS and domestic violence, training, and managerial needs the local coordinators had for completing the work. JSI prepared appropriate training materials to respond to the first two categories of learning needs. The project also covered other topics to be able to complete their work, including program management, fund-raising, and building partnerships. In addition, JSI and IOCC staff had together previously defined the main responsibilities of those involved in the project, which was a valuable contribution in defining the future training goals and objectives.

The TOT Curriculum

Based on the training needs assessment, JSI proposed a framework for organizing training specifically for the project’s CCs and SCs to become trainers (Training of Trainers). The CCs’ and SCs’ role was to organize training seminars in each diocese for priests, other local ROC representatives, and religion teachers. The development of coordinators’ ability to instruct priests and teachers was intended to increase awareness of the importance of the two problems in parishes, local communities, and schools, and to contribute to community mobilization on those issues. The TOT was aimed at enabling IOCC coordinators to implement these training activities by transferring knowledge related to HIV/AIDS and family violence, and also the necessary skills and attitudes required for adult learning.

JSI prepared a training package (HIV/AIDS, Family Violence, and Training Methodology modules) based on existing training materials and previous experience, involving specialists recommended by the National Coalition of NGOs Fighting Against Domestic Violence and

master trainers with extensive experience in TOT. The curriculum developed for this TOT was tailored to the needs of the project and the participants, using interactive participation and experiential learning methodologies such as group discussions, small group work, case studies, simulations, role plays, brainstorming, energizers and icebreakers, and video projections followed by discussions.

TOT Workshops for CCs and SCs

The first TOT program (for coordinators working in Region A) was organized in two modules:

- A three-day workshop focused on teaching participants basic information about HIV/AIDS and family violence and exploring their attitudes and thoughts about the two major themes of the project
- A second seven-day workshop focused on training methodology and practical training skills.

From December 14–16, 2005 the first training workshop took place in Sinaia. In addition to the 32 regional coordinators present at this event, two IOCC national coordinators and a USAID representative also expressed their desire to participate in this module as trainees.



*Small Group Working
TOT, Sinaia, December 15, 2005*

Trainers split the group of 35 trainees into two smaller groups, one of 18 persons and another of 17. Each group received training for one and a half days on the two issues (see Annex 1 for detailed agenda). Two trainers facilitated each part of the workshop.

The general objectives were for participants to be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS and family violence
- Identify their personal values and attitudes toward the two issues
- Identify discriminatory language and attitudes towards persons affected by HIV/AIDS or family violence.

The technical content of the two sections was as follows:

HIV/AIDS:

- Introduction
- Information about HIV infection and AIDS
- HIV transmission and prevention
- Care and treatment of PLWHA
- Impact of HIV infection and AIDS on communication at community level
- Rights of PLWHA
- Community support for PLWHA



*“Bridges of Hope” Activity,
TOT, Sinaia, December 14, 2005*

- Final evaluation

Family Violence:

- Introduction
- Statistics on family violence against women and children
- Personal beliefs and stereotypes: differences, inequality, discrimination
- Definition of domestic violence and abuse: types of abuse, abusive behaviors, myths about domestic violence
- Human rights, relationships, and gender roles of women and men
- Theories of domestic violence
- Characteristics, forms, and consequences of domestic violence
- Dynamics of violence-based relationships
- Aggressor’s and victim’s attitudes
- The impact of violence on women and children
- Individual evaluations of violence
- Community response to violence: Principles of intervention in domestic abuse
- Romanian legislation for intervention for and prevention of domestic violence
- Romanian national strategy and principles for prevention and the fight against domestic violence.

The objectives proposed for the workshop matched participants’ expectations and the results were very good. By the end of the workshop, the majority of trainees expressed their satisfaction with the achievements. The dynamic of the two groups of trainees was good; the large majority of participants demonstrated a high level of interest and participation, positive and constructive attitudes, and willingness to participate in the project. There were only a few exceptions to this, when a limited number of participants expressed inappropriate attitudes toward HIV/AIDS, family violence issues, and their future role as trainers. At these times trainers intervened, and allocated more time for clarifying basic information about the themes and for motivating those people. Trainers interpreted these behaviors as a manifestation of resistance to change, due to the internal conflict between behavior patterns (driven by personal values) and the subjects of the training.

Participants had interesting discussions about the role of the church and religious values—sometimes very contradictory. A few participants considered themselves attacked in their personal values system because of the others’ differing opinions. In general, their attitude was more focused on their needs as individuals, and not necessarily driven by their needs as future trainers. The trainees expressed a desire to discuss more about violence against children. Participants from one group even stated that “domestic violence must be stopped, but some forms of violence against children are “normal’ in the educational process”.

The second seven-day training workshop was organized during March 1–7, 2006, and 33 coordinators attended. The group of trainees was again split into two; two accredited master trainers trained each group. The seven-day module aimed to enable the coordinators to implement training activities with priests and religion teachers, by transferring to them the necessary skills, attitudes, and knowledge for adult learning on the two project themes.

The general objectives of the module were for participants to be able to:

- Describe the application of adult learning theory and the experiential learning cycle for the implementation of training sessions
- Describe the importance of promoting positive group dynamics within a training setting
- Describe how to use the training methods in a workshop, based on the specific needs of the group and on defined learning objectives
- Describe principles of the (co-)facilitation of training sessions
- Describe the process for evaluating personnel performance before, during, at the end, and following training
- Develop a training plan for HIV/AIDS and family violence prevention
- Apply the principles and techniques for implementing a practical session for a specific group

The training program was divided into two parts: four days for teaching training methodology, and three days for practical training, including one day for preparing the practical sessions, and two days for demonstration. On Sunday participants had a half-day free, which allowed them to attend the religious program at church (see Annex 2 for detailed agenda).

Activities: the themes covered during the first four days of the workshop were:

- Adult learning principles
- Experiential learning
- Principles of educational management (training needs assessment, development of training objectives, selection of training methods)
- Communication (verbal and nonverbal communicating, active listening, giving and receiving feedback) and application of transactional analysis for effective communication
- (Co-)facilitation of training
- Evaluation of training
- Workshop logistics

The last two days were dedicated to the practicum. Each team of two participants demonstrated in front of the group how to implement a training session, for 40 minutes. Each demonstration was followed by feedback (provided by the two co-facilitators, other participants, and trainers), and group discussions. During the practical sessions, the master trainers closely observed each trainee and completed an individual evaluation form. The team compiled all observations in a document and submitted them to IOCC for monitoring the future evolution of the trainers. The evaluation questionnaires completed by the trainees at the end of the TOT (see Annex 3) indicated that the training was successful and the objectives achieved. Detailed results of the TOT are presented in Annex 4.

The second TOT program (for coordinators working in Region B) was conducted from August 23 through September 2, 2006 for the 23 new local coordinators hired for implementing the second phase of the project.

Preparatory activities:

1) Trainers’ selection

The two lead organizations completed this task, with IOCC taking a more active role than before.

2) Preparation of training curriculum

JSI reviewed and updated the training materials developed for the first phase of the project.

3) Trainers’ meeting

On August 11–12, 2006, JSI organized a meeting with the selected trainers for the TOT, aimed at:

- Introducing the trainers.
- Familiarizing them with the project, the group of future participants, and the training curricula.
- Deciding the exact roles and responsibilities of each trainer during the training workshop.
- Clarifying logistical aspects.

Organizers shared the training materials prepared by JSI with the trainers and discussed their feedback during the meeting. The trainers felt that the curriculum covered participants’ learning needs and would allow them to achieve the objectives proposed for the TOT. They only proposed a few changes aimed at implementing the content in a very practical way, emphasizing the applicability of the new knowledge and skills gained by trainees to their future work as local trainers.

Based on the agreement between IOCC and JSI, the ten days of training was a single event, split into three consecutive modules: Family Violence (two days), HIV/AIDS (two days), followed by a day off on Sunday, and ending with Building Training Skills (six days). The first two modules were conducted with the 21 participants present. Two trainers experienced in domestic violence and HIV/AIDS, respectively, facilitated each of the two modules. For the third module, two new participants joined and participants split into two smaller groups (11 and 12 participants), as this module focused more on skills and attitudes. Two master trainers facilitated each group. (See Annex 5 for detailed agenda).

The **Family Violence** module had the objectives to:

- Improve participants’ knowledge regarding family violence.
- Develop abilities for identifying violent behaviors.
- Identify barriers to providing support to victims.



TOT, Cozia, August 23-September 2, 2006

- Identify potential key players to involve in preventing and combating family violence, their possible roles in communities, with a special emphasis on church representatives.
- Help participants identify their personal values and attitudes toward family violence.



*Video Projection
Family Violence Module, August 24, 2006*

These objectives aligned with trainees’ expectations expressed at the beginning of the module and were achieved by the end of the training module.

The climate was appropriate for training and effective communication. The trainees demonstrated interest and a constant constructive approach. Some participants with professional experience in family violence were involved by the trainers as resource persons, and they were an important contribution to the success of the training. Attitudes demonstrated during the training

were appropriate for combating family violence: opposition to family violence, empathy with the victim, motivation to provide support, results-orientation.

The objectives stated for the **HIV/AIDS** module were for participants to be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS.
- Identify their personal values and attitudes toward the issue.
- Identify discriminatory language and attitudes towards persons affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Describe their role in preventing HIV/AIDS and combating the stigma experienced by PLWHA.



*Role Play
TOT, August 2006*

The expectations expressed by participants at the beginning of this module matched the objectives above and were completely met by the end of the module. Trainees with a higher level of information about HIV/AIDS were valued and contributed as resource persons, supporting their colleagues to improve their knowledge. The trainers paid attention to the relationships established among group members, in order to facilitate the necessary team-building process. With a singular exception, they were successful, and the group dynamic was conducive to personal development and learning. The general atmosphere was positive, and trainers approached the most sensitive subjects (related to sexuality) carefully in order to avoid negative reactions from participants who may have difficulty discussing them.

After a one-day break (on Sunday), the last module of the **TOT** started on August 28 and continued until September 2, 2006. Taking into consideration the importance of developing practical skills, and in order to create enough space for each participant to express himself, the team decided to split the group into two smaller groups with 12 and 11 participants, respectively.



*Small Group Working
TOT, August 2006*

The purpose of the six-day module was to enable the coordinators to implement training activities with priests and religious teachers, by transferring to them the necessary skills, attitudes, and knowledge for adult learning. The objectives were the same as for the first TOT program. The module had two parts: three days and a half for teaching Training Methodology, and two days for simulation of training sessions, preceded by a half-day preparation of practical sessions. During the last two days, the trainees implemented practical training sessions followed by feedback sessions, which was of great importance for strengthening

training skills.

The final evaluation of the training indicated that it was highly appreciated by the trainees in terms of content, methodology, and trainers’ performance (see Annex 6 for results). Both participants and trainers considered that the goal and objectives of the TOT were successfully achieved and the new local coordinators would be able to put into practice the knowledge and skills gained during the ten-day workshop.

Participants’ motivations and interests, their continuous contribution, and active participation contributed strongly to the success of the TOT. The thoughtful process of selecting the new coordinators, which was carefully planned and based on eligibility criteria, also was a key factor in the results.

Conduct follow-up meetings with the new trainers

As was previously agreed, organizers conducted follow-up meetings (“refresher” courses) for CCs and SCs to discuss effective teaching methods, lessons learned, difficulties encountered, results achieved, future plans, suggestions, and partnering opportunities with other community-based resources.

The goal of these follow-up meetings was to improve trainers’ skills for implementing training activities with priests and religious teachers. Objectives proposed were focused on:

- Strengthening participants’ abilities to receive and provide effective feedback.

- Sharing training experience in order to reinforce existing skills and address common mistakes in delivering training.
- Identifying adequate solutions to common problems.
- Identifying individual areas for improvement and strengthening trainers’ skills on preparing good presentations, facilitating group discussions, processing group activities, dealing with difficult situations, and communicating with and motivating participants.

The **first meeting** was organized October 23–24, 2006 with the local coordinators working in **Region A**. Twenty-eight local coordinators working in region A, trained as trainers during the first year of the project, attended the workshop. They were split into two groups, with two master trainers facilitating each group.

The goals and objectives of the workshop and agenda proposed (see Annex 7) were formulated on the basis of the self-evaluation questionnaires given in advance. Organizers and trainers met the day before the workshop, reviewed the objectives and planned the activities in detail, in order to ensure that both groups benefited equally from the follow-up support and intervention.

The request to the participants to self-assess their abilities and resources as a trainer, to identify areas for improvement, and then to find solutions together with their co-trainer/team member (to develop an individual contract of learning) presented a challenge. A few participants expressed their discomfort in sharing their thoughts with their colleagues, although this group was the most likely to provide them with support. Even though facilitators emphasized confidentiality, participants were not very enthusiastic about this task. Trainers therefore focused on supporting participants who openly expressed an interest in improving their abilities, encouraging the most experienced ones to share their knowledge with their colleagues, and finding solutions to common problems. This was the best way to achieve the goal of the meeting to improve participants’ skills for implementing training activities. Despite these difficulties, by the end of the meeting, some participants had developed their individual contract of learning.

The **second follow-up** meeting took place January 22–23, 2007 and 19 local coordinators from **Region B** attended. Again, participants received and completed a self-evaluation questionnaire in advance and to identify specific issues to address. The organizers and the trainers met the day before the workshop to review the objectives, plan the activities, and finalize the agenda. A new coordinator joined the group who, despite not having attended the initial TOT, still benefited from the training by having the chance to meet her colleagues and be included in their group.

Overall, the atmosphere was very positive. Participants demonstrated a good level of knowledge and skills for implementing training workshops and a positive attitude toward this type of activity. All participants accepted the challenge of self-assessment with enthusiasm and openness and succeeded in developing an individual “contract of learning” for personal development. The objectives were achieved by the end of the workshop and participants’ expectations met. The level of satisfaction was very high, as indicated by the evaluation forms:

95 percent of participants stated that their expectations were fulfilled during the workshop; only 5 percent indicated partial fulfillment of their expectations.

Develop a comprehensive curriculum for training priests and religion teachers

Another essential activity for this project was the design and development of *two curricula for training religion teachers and priests*, respectively. These curricula were to assist coordinators to implement workshops at the community level for training priests, priests’ wives, and religious teachers on HIV/AIDS and family violence prevention.

As agreed with IOCC and USAID, JSI worked on the module related to HIV/AIDS for both teachers and priests, in order to allow local coordinators to start implementing the training activities. The team finalized the first HIV/AIDS training curricula for teachers and priests at the beginning of May 2006 and the local coordinators started training activities at the community level.



Curricula for Training of Teachers

IOCC and JSI technical staff decided that a special module on Community Mobilization should be developed, in addition to the two modules focused on HIV/AIDS and Family Violence. This third module was essential for activities aimed at raising community awareness and eliminating stigma and discrimination against people confronted with the problems addressed by the project.

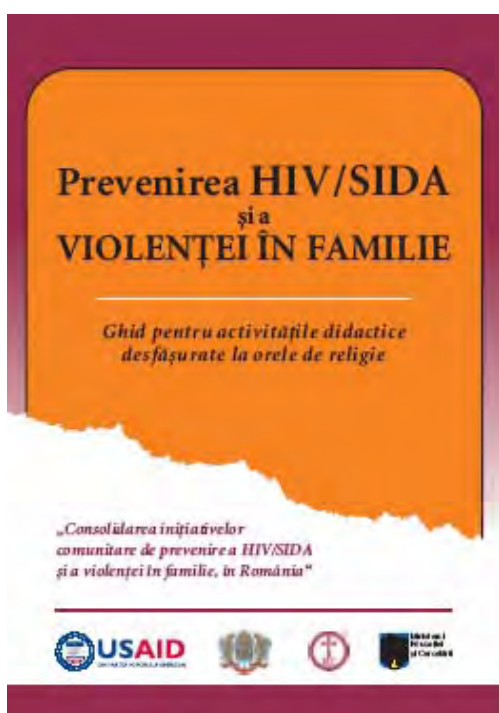
By the end of May 2006, all training curricula were developed and submitted to IOCC, ready for use by local coordinators. The process of finalizing the training materials was a consultative one, involving both organizations. IOCC technical staff and ROC representatives reviewed the drafts proposed by JSI, which took their recommendations into consideration for the final versions of the training curricula. Although this approach caused a short delay in implementing training activities at local level, it had an important contribution to the partnership and the quality and appropriateness of the training for the trainees.

As was previously agreed, IOCC staff members provided feedback and comments based on forum discussions, field visits results, and direct observations of the training workshops organized and implemented by the Local Coordinators between May 2006 and January 2007. They formulated a series of recommendations and suggestions for improving the modules developed by JSI for training ROC representatives. During the final months of the contract, JSI analyzed these suggestions and most recommendations were included in the revised training curricula, which were prepared for printing (Romanian version).

The third training module, dedicated to Community Mobilization, required additional work for revision and improvement. Although this was an additional project component not included in the original scope of work, JSI considers this training module extremely important for the success of the project. The revised training package was also translated into English and will be disseminated in electronic format (CDs).

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Assist in developing and printing two guides for priests and religion teachers



Guide for Religious Teachers

JSI served as one of the technical advisors for the development of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials to be used in schools and communities. For instance, JSI provided feedback on a draft guide for priests on implementing HIV/AIDS and family violence awareness and prevention activities.

IOCC developed a guide for teachers on implementing HIV/AIDS and family violence awareness and prevention activities, which JSI revised. The guide was printed and distributed in August 2006.

The development of the guide for priests was a long process. Although the initial plan was for IOCC to develop it for use by the priests as soon as possible, based on the feedback provided by the CCs and by the priests involved in the project, the finalization of the guide was postponed for the last year of the project, in order to allow for inclusion of lessons learned. The

Priest’ Guide was finalized and printed in June 2007.

On May 4, 2007 a meeting was organized to determine the necessary steps for completing the JSI contract. Based on the budget analysis and the activities planned, the following decisions were made:

- Finalize the Priests’ Guide and print 1,500 copies
- Reprint 300 copies of the Teachers’ Guide
- Print 100 copies of both training manuals for priests and teachers (in Romanian)
- Translate training curricula to English and prepare for dissemination in electronic format (40 CDs).

The team adapted the workplan for completing these activities and agreed to a one month, no-cost contract extension through June 30, 2007.



Guide for Pastoral Activities

Assist ROC in developing a social advocacy strategy

Although the project initially planned two visits of an international consultant to provide technical assistance, based on the project evolution and identified needs, staff only requested one consultancy visit.

The international consultant selected to provide technical assistance for this project visited Romania from November 13–22, 2006. As initially conceived, this consultancy was to examine the feasibility of the ROC including an HIV/AIDS advocacy strategy in its social development efforts. Discussion with local stakeholders, including representatives of the IOCC and the ROC, led to the decision that the scope of work should be extended to examine the ability of the Church to develop, implement, and monitor a broader social advocacy agenda including HIV and AIDS, family violence, and other social issues facing the people of Romania in the early 21st century. The Church, from community-based priests to the Patriarchate, is facing a wide range of unprecedented social challenges and demands. So, it was more relevant to look broadly at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges that face the Church in its efforts to address social change and provide recommendations on how various levels of the system could play a contributing role in social advocacy.

Four primary activities emerged from this **revised scope of service**:

1. **Gather information:** Through a series of focus groups and key informant interviews, gather information regarding current social advocacy activities undertaken within the Church. Using focus groups and key informant interviews, invited members of the clergy, social counselors, lay people associated with Church activities, and

representatives of NGOs working in HIV and AIDS would provide information and impressions about current Church social advocacy activities and identify opportunities for the Church to broaden its participation in this area.

2. **Synthesize findings:** Review and analyze the qualitative data would to identify common themes.
3. **Develop recommendations:** Based upon the synthesis and identification of strengths and barriers develop recommendations for the Church to consider in its social advocacy agenda.
4. **Presentation:** Meet with representatives of the Patriarchate and social counselors who are responsible for supporting social advocacy and support activities at the diocese level to share the analysis and recommendations and gather additional feedback.

The consultant interviewed internal and external stakeholders and opinion leaders in order to gather opinions about the role of the Church in social advocacy. He posed a series of standardized questions to elicit individuals’ impressions about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with the ROC implementing a broad-based social advocacy agenda. Information was gathered both from those within the Church structure, as well as from NGO representatives working in the areas of HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and child services. The IOCC and ROC selected all participants.

The consultant interviewed, a broad range of people within the Church, including social counselors, school inspectors, school coordinators, and priests. The majority of the information was gathered through focus groups conducted in Bacau in Northeastern Romania. A focus group protocol was developed and implemented with all the groups. (See Annex 8). Focus group discussions were primarily conducted in Romanian, with questions and responses being translated into English.

NGO representatives participated in key informant interviews. The four participating NGOs were: (1) the Romanian Association Against AIDS, (2) Romanian Angel Appeal, (3) Society of Education on Contraception and Sexuality, and (4) St. Macrina, a Church-affiliated NGO for orphans and street children. Interviewers asked representatives, among other things, to describe their social advocacy efforts, their views regarding the Church’s role in social advocacy and service delivery, and to discuss possible areas of collaboration with the Church.

The process had a number of inherent limitations. First, focus groups and key informant interviews are naturally biased. Among the Church groups in particular, participants were selected in part due to their commitment to working with the institutional leadership to develop and implement social programs. Also, many of the individuals interviewed in Bacau also participated in an IOCC-supported program to introduce family violence and HIV/AIDS awareness programs into religious instruction in schools. Furthermore, the interviews among the Church representatives included a geographically biased sample and therefore may reflect concerns that are unique to that region of the country. Among the NGO group, the diversity of organizations represented was limited, and, their main area of interventions may not be in accordance with the Church’s social priorities, as the priority social areas were identified during the Church focus groups. Lastly, bishops; local, municipal, and national leaders; and community members—critical stakeholders—were not part of the assessment. Each of these

groups is likely to have an important role in any consideration of a social agenda by the Church and needs to be part of any future information-gathering and assessment process.

The project presented findings from the focus groups and key informant interviews in aggregate form to representatives of the Patriarchate, social counselors, IOCC, and USAID. Comments were not attributed to any individual or organization. Unless otherwise noted, statements regarding strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities are consensus statements made by a significant proportion of the participants. The findings from the focus group discussions and interviews are presented in some detail in Annex 9.

The project team formulated a set of recommendations based on the consultancy visit and presented them to representatives of the Patriarchate and also to key IOCC representatives during the debriefing meeting held the last day of the visit.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The following lessons learned and challenges emerged from the implementation of collaboration with a faith-based organization:

- Constructive feedback and effective communication between partners is a major contributing factor to project achievements.
- A training strategy for developing the necessary human resources for implementing a program should take into account all the training needs identified, rather than relying on the previous experiences and skills of the persons involved.
- To ensure quality management of the project, a monitoring and evaluation system should be developed, and continuous supportive supervision should be provided to each trainer, based on the individual level of performance.
- The design of a training program addressing sensitive issues, such as family violence, living with HIV/AIDS, and stigma and discrimination should include appropriate strategies for supporting participants to cope with possible emotional reactions generated by personal experiences.
- Organizers should consider all existing resources when planning and implementing a program addressing social issues. An increased involvement of NGOs and institutions with previous experience in the fields of HIV/AIDS and family violence could bring added value to an innovative project like this.
- NGOs felt that the Church was best placed to implement several key technical areas, including support for services for the elderly, prevention of violence, child protection and child rights, and anti-stigma and acceptance related to HIV. The focus of these efforts should be both internal (ROC) as well as external (local government authorities).
- In order to ensure future sustainability and scaling-up of the program, the activities need further attention and adequate planning; partnership with local authorities should be strengthened and efforts linked to broader activities in the community.
- Effective mechanisms to share experiences and communicate results among parishes should be designed.

CONCLUSIONS

- A considerable number of local coordinators met during the training activities, field visits, and interviews conducted by the JSI consultant indicated that the current ROC/IOCC program is a good place to start a large social advocacy effort by the Church. The beneficiaries of the program felt that there was widespread support at the parish and diocese level for the program.
- It is apparent from the focus groups and interviews conducted that the ROC may play a greater role in social advocacy efforts. Systems and structures exist within the hierarchy that allow for the development and implementation of a strategy and specific activities. There are a number of pilot activities underway that could serve as the foundation of a social advocacy framework.
- This project capacitated a pool of professionals committed to social issues through technical and management skills training and clarified their roles and responsibilities. There are a number of social counselors and parish priests poised to take on a greater role in advancing a structured approach to social activism within and outside the Church.
- The activities implemented under this project have also resulted in the development of institutional capacity and team work that could serve as the foundation for wider impact. The impact at the school and community level is already visible in some areas, although the interventions were not uniform, being subject to specific local situations and coordinators’ engagement and skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Extend the experience gained through the project. Plan additional activities and build future interventions on lessons learned, human resources created, and on the new abilities developed among clergy during the project.
- Strengthen ROC positions through replication and extension of social interventions. Broaden consensus concerning the scope of social advocacy efforts and design a long-term strategy.
- Consider the possibility of including other public health issues on the Church agenda, based on the principles introduced during this project and on the skills developed among priests and other beneficiaries (e.g., mobilizing communities and providing

support in case of natural disasters, participation in health emergencies such as epidemic or pandemic diseases).

- Introduce pre-service and continued training and education for priests and social counselors. In collaboration with seminaries and universities, develop training programs that will provide clergy with the tools necessary to support social activities: social counseling, psychosocial support, advocacy, service delivery, or program management.
- Formalize collaboration with local government and service providers and build referral systems. While many priests and parishes have such collaborations, relationships tend to be informal and based upon personal relationships rather than formalized understandings of roles and responsibilities.
- Create and expand local Church-affiliated NGOs. A number of parishes have succeeded in such efforts, which has led to increased service delivery and an expanded role for local churches in community development. There is an opportunity—particularly with Romania joining the EU—to foster the creation of more of these NGOs to organize social advocacy efforts.
- Continue funding for on-going social programs: a number of the social support programs currently being implemented by the Church will lose their funding in the next year to eighteen months. It is critical to find additional resources to support the most successful Church efforts, which form a strong and significant foundation upon which to build an even stronger social advocacy initiative. These programs often involve priests and lay people collaborating to implement community-wide programs. This structure allows implementation of activities that should be supported with on-going funding.

While it need not be costly, it will be critical for the ROC to identify and commit resources—both financial and human—to undertake this effort. In addition, this is an opportunity for the ROC to collaborate with international organizations, such as the IOCC, to develop and implement a series of activities aimed at advancing a social advocacy agenda.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1:

TRAINING OF TRAINERS WORKSHOP SCHEDULE – REGION “A”, December 14–16, 2005

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
9-10,30	<u>HIV/AIDS</u> Introduction/Expectations Objectives Group norms, Pre-test HIV/AIDS Overview	PLWHA rights Combating stigma and discrimination	Social Roles Theories on domestic violence Characteristics, forms, and consequences of domestic violence
10,30-10,45	Break	Break	Break
10,45-13	HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention	ROC role in fighting AIDS	Dynamics of domestic violence
13-14	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14-15,45	Care and treatment of PLWHA	<u>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE</u> Introduction/Expectations Objectives Group norms Domestic violence overview Misconceptions, stereotypes about domestic violence	Aggressors’ and victims’ attitudes Impact of domestic violence on women and children Self-assessment
15,45-16	Break	Break	Break
16-17,45	HIV/AIDS social and individual impact	Definition of abuse and domestic violence. Types of abuses. Abusive behaviors	Programs against domestic violence
17,45-18	Reflections	Reflections	16,30-17 Final evaluation

ANNEX 2:

TRAINING OF TRAINERS WORKSHOP SCHEDULE – REGION “A”, March 1–7, 2006

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
9:00-10:45 Introduction to Training	9:00-10:45 Overview of the Training Process	9:00-10:45 Training Methods (continued)	9:00-10:45 Active Listening and Giving Instructions	9:00-10:45 Preparation of Practical Training Sessions	9:00-10:45 Practical Sessions	9:00-10:45 Practical Sessions
10:45-11:00 Break	10:45-11:00 Break	10:45-11:00 Break	10:45-11:00 Break	10:45-11:00 Break	10:45-11:00 Break	10:45-11:00 Break
11:00-13:00 Adult Learning Theory	11:00-13:00 Development of a Training Schedule	11:00-13:00 Criteria for the Selection of Training Methods	11:00-13:00 Asking and Responding to Questions	11:00-13:00 Preparation of Practical Training Sessions	11:00-13:00 Practical Sessions	11:00-13:00 Practical Sessions
13:00-14:00 Lunch	13:00-14:00 Lunch	13:00-14:00 Lunch	13:00-14:00 Lunch	13:00-14:00 Lunch	13:00-14:00 Lunch	13:00-14:00 Lunch
14:00-15:45 Experiential Learning Cycle	14:00-15:45 Components of a Session Guide for Training	14:00-15:45 Group Dynamics	14:00-15:45 Co-facilitation of Training Sessions	Free time for participants (trainers at their disposal, if needed, for preparation of practical sessions)	14:00-15:45 Practical Sessions	14:00-16:00 Post-test Evaluation of the Training
15:45-16:00 Break	15:45-16:00 Break	15:45-16:00 Break	15:45-16:00 Break		15:45-16:00 Break	Closing Ceremony
16:00-17:45 Feedback	16:00-17:45 Training Methods	16:00-17:45 Group Dynamics (continued)	16:00-17:45 Evaluation of Training		16:00-17:45 Practical Sessions	
17:45-18:00 Reflections	17:45-18:00 Reflections	17:45-18:00 Reflections	17:45-18:00 Reflections		17:45-18:00 Reflections	

ANNEX 3: TOT WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

You have just participated in the training of trainers workshop. Please respond to the following questions which will allow us to evaluate this training and improve future training.

I. Achievement of the objectives

Listed below are the general objectives of the training. For each general objective, please indicate to what degree you feel it was achieved, circling the number that best responds to your point of view. If an objective was not entirely achieved, explain why you felt it was not: a problem of time, inadequate explanation, lack of practice, inappropriate training method, or other reasons that you perceive.

1. I will be able to teach priests and religious teachers applying adult learning theory and the experiential learning cycle

Agree			Disagree
4	3	2	1

2. I will be able to maintain positive group dynamics within a training setting

Agree			Disagree
4	3	2	1

3. I will be able to apply the training techniques in accordance with the group needs and specific objectives proposed

Agree			Disagree
4	3	2	1

4. I will be able to design a training plan for HIV/AIDS and family violence prevention

Agree			Disagree
4	3	2	1

5. I will be able to apply the principles and methods taught to facilitate the training sessions

Agree			Disagree
4	3	2	1

II. Other aspects of the training

Below are some other aspects of the training. For each item, please circle the number that responds best to your point of view, and describe what you feel were the reasons for any weaknesses.

5=Excellent, 4=Good, 3=Satisfactory, 2=Less satisfactory, 1=Poor

1. Organization of the training

Very good		Satisfactory		Poor
5	4	3	2	1

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|----------|-----------|----------|---------------|
| 2. | Relevance of training content (to your role as Trainer) | | | | |
| | Very relevant | | Relevant | | Not relevant |
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. | Effectiveness of training methodologies | | | | |
| | Very effective | | Effective | | Not effective |
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. | Effectiveness of trainers (creation of a positive learning environment, facilitation of sessions, communication of information, responsiveness to participant questions and concerns, etc.) | | | | |
| | Very effective | | Effective | | Not effective |
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. | Usefulness of materials distributed | | | | |
| | Very useful | | Useful | | Not useful |
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. | Effectiveness of practice training (practicum) | | | | |
| | Very effective | | Effective | | Not effective |
| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

III. Open questions

1. What aspects of the training were the most important and/or useful for you? Why?
2. What aspects of the training were the least important and/or useful for you? Why?
3. On what subjects do you need more information and/or practice in order to improve your competence in training?
4. Are there other subjects that should have been included in this training? Which ones?
5. What modifications (changes) would you suggest in the organization of a future training of trainers?

ANNEX 4: TOT RESULTS - REGION “A”

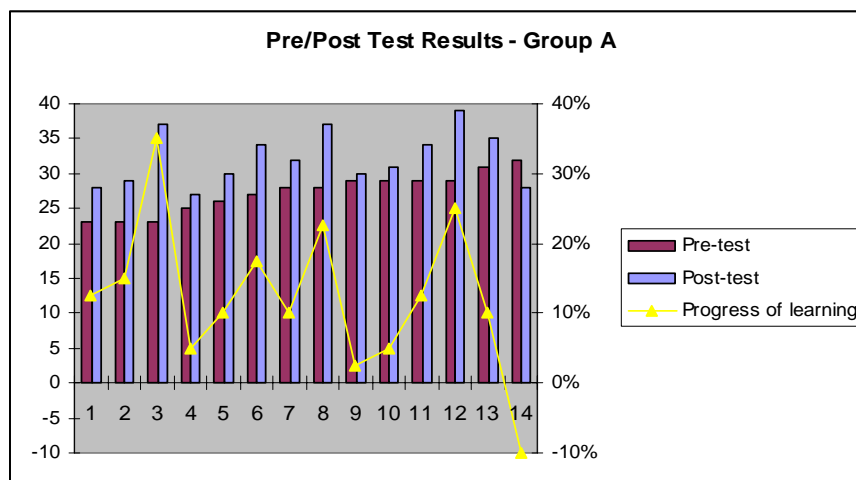
Results GROUP A

Group A was made up of 17 participants, coming from Bucuresti, Craiova, Constanta, Iasi, Neamt, Timisoara. The test completed by participants at the beginning and at the end of training indicated an average increase in learning of 12.3 percent (scores increased between 2.5 and 35 percent, with only one exception: a 10 percent decrease), as follows:

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14*
Pre-test**	23	23	23	25	26	27	28	28	29	29	29	29	31	32
Post-test**	28	29	37	27	30	34	32	37	30	31	34	39	35	28
Progress of learning	5	6	14	2	4	7	4	9	1	2	5	10	4	-4
	12.5%	15%	35%	5%	10%	17.5%	10%	22%	2.5%	5%	12.5%	25%	10%	-10%

* 3 participants didn't complete the post-test because they left before the workshop ended.

**Maximum possible score=40

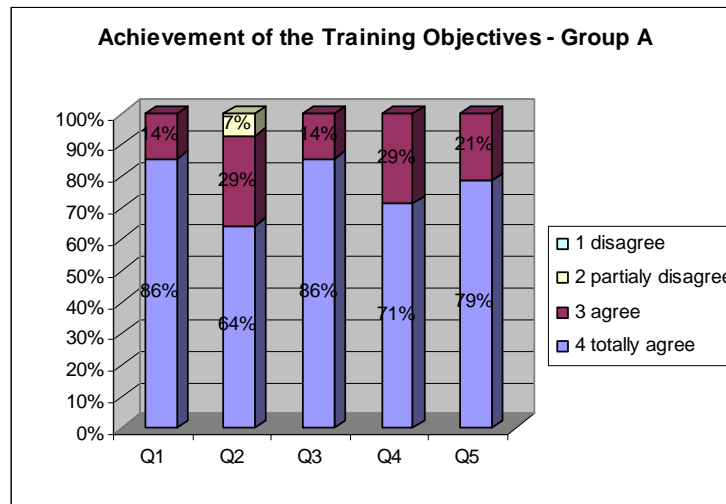


The evaluation form completed by participants at the end of the workshop (see Annex 3) indicated the following:

TOT objectives: A majority of participants considered that the training objectives were achieved, and that they will be able to train priests and religious teachers. Five questions were asked for evaluating the achievement of the objectives, based on trainees' perception of their ability to perform as trainers:

- Q1: ability to train priests and religious teachers applying adult learning theory and the experiential learning cycle
- Q2: ability to maintain positive group dynamics within a training setting
- Q3: ability to apply the training techniques in accordance with the group needs and specific objectives proposed
- Q4: ability to design a training plan for HIV/AIDS and FV prevention

- Q5: ability to apply the principles and methods taught to facilitate the training sessions



Other aspects of the training:

Q1. Organization of the training: 13 trainees (93%) considered that the organization of the workshop was very good; one participant (7%) shared the impression that the workshop organization was less satisfactory.

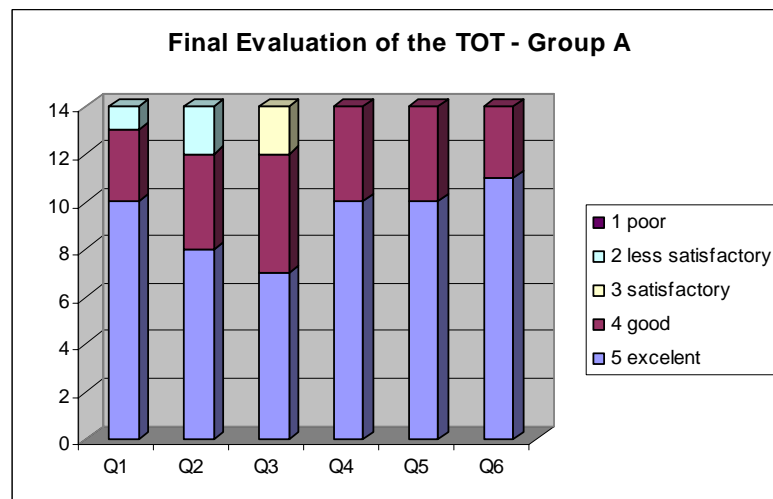
Q2. Relevance of training content: 12 participants (86%) appreciated the content of the training as relevant for their role as future trainers; two participants (14%) considered that the content was not so relevant for them as trainers.

Q3. Effectiveness of training methodologies: methods used were appreciated as very effective by 12 respondents (86%) and effective by two respondents (14%).

Q4. Effectiveness of trainers: the master trainers were highly appreciated by all participants.

Q5. Usefulness of materials distributed: all participants found the materials distributed during the workshop to be very useful.

Q6. Effectiveness of practice: the practical sessions were highly appreciated by all participants.

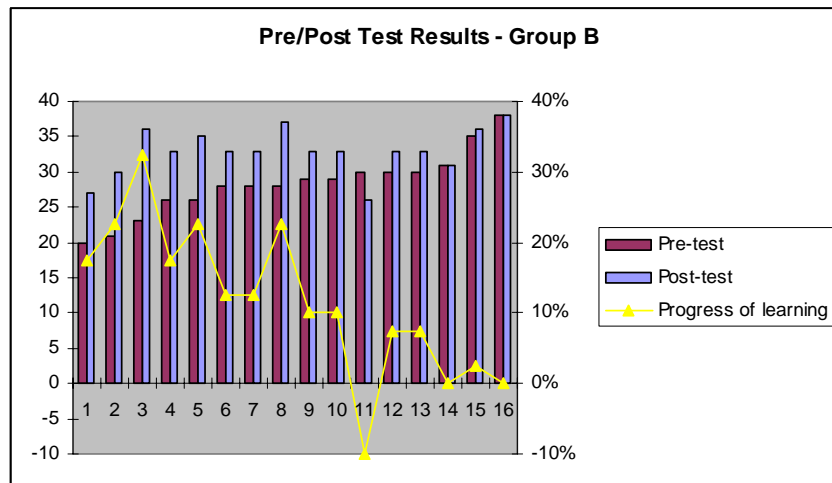


Results GROUP B

Group B was made up of 16 participants, coming from Craiova, Constanta, Iasi, Mehedinti, Neamt, Timisoara, five School Coordinators and 11 Community Coordinators. The test completed by participants at the beginning and at the end of training indicated an average increase in learning of 11.7 percent. The increasing of score was between 2.5 and 32.5 percent, with two cases of same values and one decrease of 10 percent), as follows:

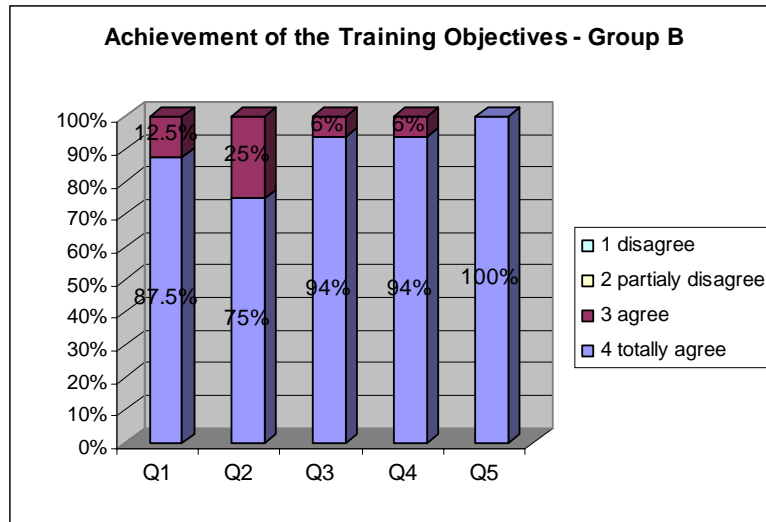
No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Pre-test*	20	21	23	26	26	28	28	28	29	29	30	30	30	31	35	38
Post-test*	27	30	36	33	35	33	33	37	33	33	26	33	33	31	36	38
Progress of learning %	7	9	13	7	9	5	5	9	4	4	-4	3	3	0	1	0
	17.5	22.5	32.5	17.5	22.5	12.5	12.5	22.5	10	10	-10	7.5	7.5	0	2.5	0

*Maximum possible score=40



The evaluation form completed by participants at the end of the workshop indicated the following:

TOT objectives: All respondents considered the training objectives achieved, and that they will be able to train priests and religious teachers. All five questions asked for self-appreciation on the ability to perform as a trainer, were highly quoted, with maximum results in 75-100 percent of cases.



The other **aspects of the training** were quoted as follows:

Q1. 13 trainees (81%) considered the organization of the workshop very good; three respondents (19%) considered it satisfactory.

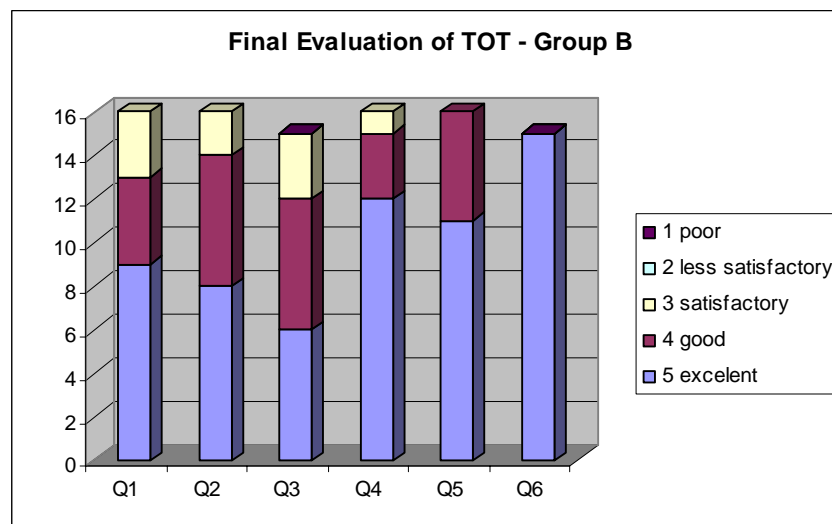
Q2. 14 participants (87.5%) appreciated the content of the training as highly relevant for their role as future trainers, and two participants (12.5%) considered that the content was relevant for them as trainers.

Q3. Methods used were appreciated as very effective by 12 respondents or effective by three respondents (1 participant didn't provide any answer to this question).

Q4. Trainers were highly appreciated by 15 participants (94%); one respondent considered them effective.

Q5. All participants found the materials distributed during the workshop very useful.

Q6. Practical sessions were very highly appreciated by 15 participants responding to this question (one participant didn't provide any answer to this question).



ANNEX 5:

TRAINING OF TRAINERS SCHEDULE – REGION “B”,

August 23 – September 2, 2006

FAMILY VIOLENCE MODULE

August 23 – 24, 2006

	DAY 1	DAY 2
9:00-11:30	Opening of the Training of Trainers workshop Presentations	Dynamic of violence-based relationship Obstacles which impede the victim from leaving the violent relationship The impact of violence on victims
11:30-11:45	BREAK	BREAK
11:45-13:15	Introduction to Family Violence Personal beliefs and stereotypes; myths	Romanian legislation for intervention and prevention of family violence Romanian National Strategy and principles for prevention and fight against family violence. Community network.
13:15-14:30	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK
14:30-16:30	Definition of family violence and abuse; types of abuse, abusive behaviors <i>(Film projection)</i> Human rights, personal rights	Conclusions Final evaluation
16:30-16:45	BREAK	
16:45-18:00	Theory of domestic violence. Characteristics, forms, and consequences of domestic violence	
18:00-18:10	SUMMARY	

HIV/AIDS MODULE
August 25 – 26, 2006

	DAY 1	DAY 2
9:00-10:30	Introduction Expectations, objectives Pre-test Facts about HIV/AIDS	Rights of the PLWHA
10:30-10:45	BREAK	BREAK
10:45-13:00	HIV transmission and prevention	ROC role in fighting HIV/AIDS Community strategies for preventing HIV transmission
13:00-14:15	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK
14:15-15:45	Care and support for PLWHA	Conclusions Final evaluation
15:45-16:00	BREAK	BREAK
16:00-17:45	HIV/AIDS impact on individual and social level	
17:45-18:00	SUMMARY	SUMMARY

TRAINING METHODOLOGY (TOT)
August 28 – September 2, 2006

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
9:00	Introduction Objectives Pre-test	Where are we? Experiential learning cycle Educational management	Training techniques (cont.)	Where are we? Co-facilitation Group dynamics	Implementing practical sessions	Implementing practical sessions (cont)
10:30	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
11:00	Communication and relationships during training	Developing a training plan Training techniques	Training techniques (cont.)	Group dynamics (cont.)	Implementing practical sessions (cont)	Implementing practical sessions (cont)
13:00	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK	LUNCH BREAK
14:30	Communication (cont.) Johary window Feedback	Training techniques (cont.)	Training techniques (cont.)	Preparation of the practical sessions	Implementing practical sessions (cont)	Post-test Final evaluation Closing ceremony
16:00	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	
16:30	Principles of adult learning Learning styles	Training techniques (cont.)	Training techniques (cont.) Meeting Iasi team	Preparing practical sessions (cont)	Implementing practical sessions (cont)	
18:00	WARM-UP	WARM-UP	WARM-UP	WARM-UP	WARM-UP	

ANNEX 6: TOT RESULTS – REGION “B”

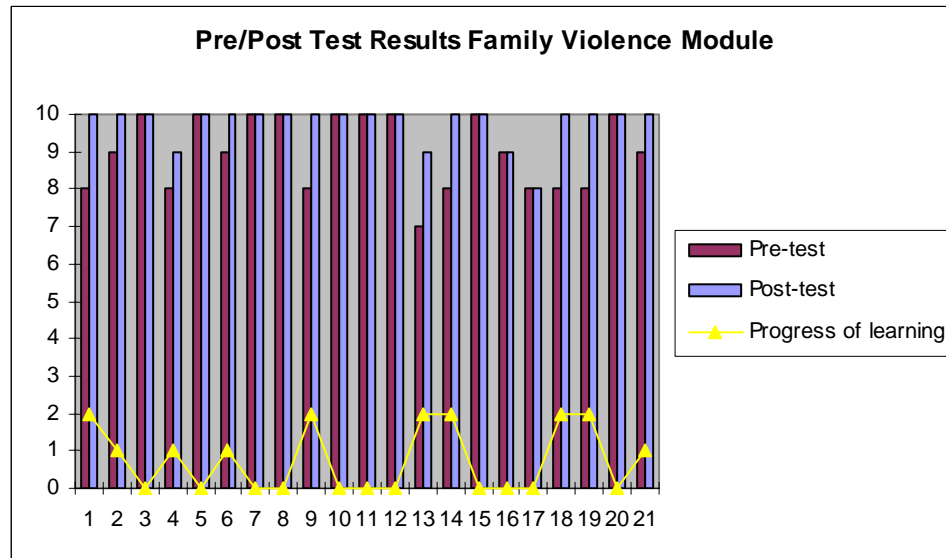
FAMILY VIOLENCE

The test completed by participants at the beginning and at the end of the module indicated an average increase in learning of 7.6% percent (scores increased between 0 and 20 percent), as follows:

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Pre-test*	8	9	10	8	10	9	10	10	8	10	10	10	7	8	10	9	8	8	8	10	9
Post-test	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	9	8	10	10	10	10
Progress of learning	2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	1
%	20	10	0	10	0	10	0	0	20	0	0	0	20	20	0	0	0	20	20	0	10

*Maximum possible score=10

It is remarkable that 9 participants out of the total of 21 (42.8%) demonstrated high level of knowledge on family violence prior to this training. This might indicate that the selection process of the local coordinators for region B was based on specific criteria and experienced persons were selected.



HIV/AIDS

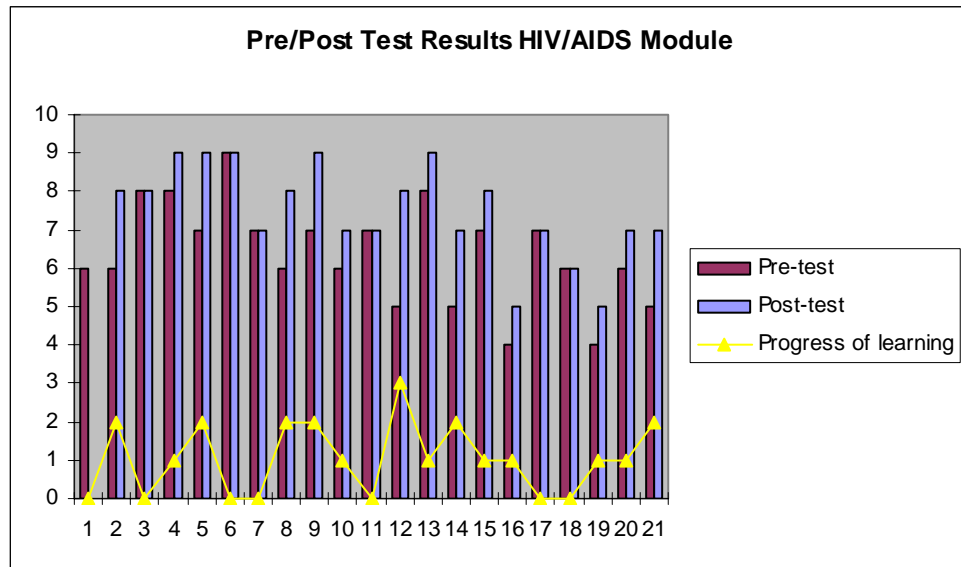
The test completed by participants at the beginning and at the end of the module indicated a average progress of learning of 11 percent (scores increased between 10 and 30 percent), as follows:

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Pre-test*	6	6	8	8	7	9	7	6	7	6	7	5	8	5	7	4	7	6	4	6	5
Post-test**	NA	8	8	9	9	9	7	8	9	7	7	8	9	7	8	5	7	6	5	7	7
Progress of learning	NA	2	0	1	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	3	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	2
%	NA	20	0	10	20	0	0	20	20	10	0	30	10	20	10	10	0	0	10	10	20

*Maximum possible score=10

**One participant didn't complete the Post-test and Finale Evaluation Form

The progress of learning was positive with only few exceptions, when the score was the same for both pre- and post-test.

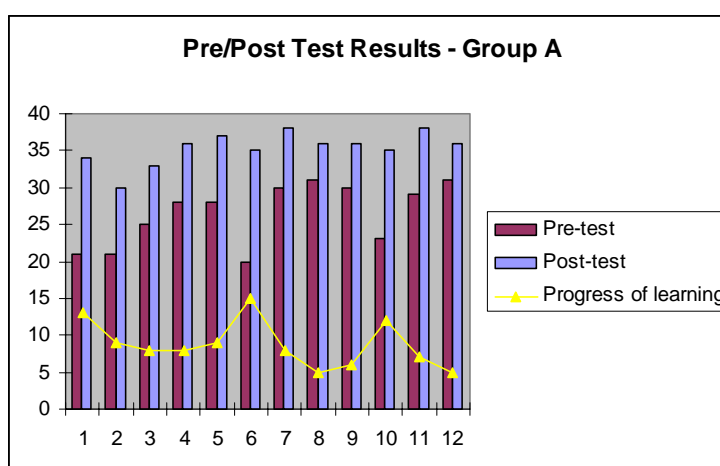


TOT Results group A

The test completed by participants at the beginning and at the end of training indicated an average increase in learning of 22.11% (scores increased between 13% and 38%, as follows:

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Pre-test*	21	21	25	28	28	20	30	31	30	23	29	31
Post-test	34	30	33	36	37	35	38	36	36	35	38	36
Progress of learning	13	9	8	8	9	15	8	5	6	12	7	5
	33%	23%	20%	20%	23%	38%	20%	13%	15%	30%	18%	13%

*Maximum possible score=40

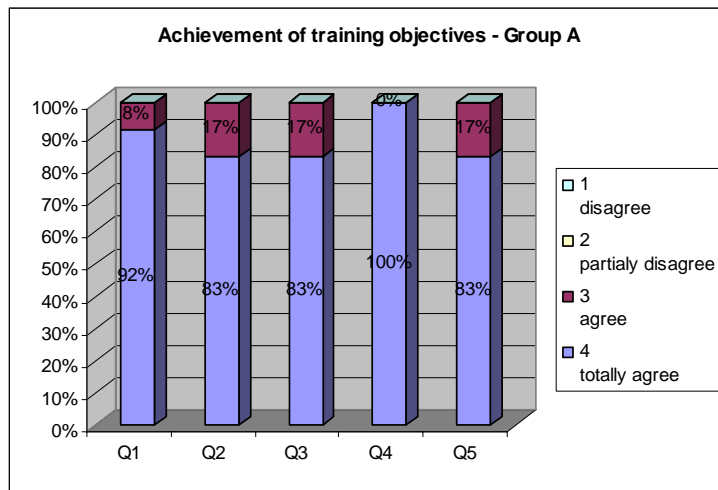


The continuous observation of the group by master-trainers and individual observation sheets completed for each trainee during the practical sessions demonstrated the important progress done by each participant in terms of attitudes and skills. All of them were recommended by the master-trainers as potential good trainers with no exception.

The evaluation form completed by participants at the end of the workshop indicated the followings:

TOT objectives: The majority of participants considered that the training objectives were achieved, and that they will be able to train priests and religious teachers. Five questions were asked for evaluating the achievement of the objectives, based on trainees' perception of their ability to perform as trainers:

- Q1: ability to train priests and religious teachers applying adult learning theory and the experiential learning cycle
- Q2: ability to maintain positive group dynamics within a training setting
- Q3: ability to apply the training techniques in accordance with the group needs and specific objectives proposed
- Q4: ability to plan training activities for HIV/AIDS and FV prevention
- Q5: ability to apply the principles and methods taught to facilitate the training sessions



Other **aspects of the training** were evaluated, as follows:

Q1. Organization of the training: all 12 trainees (100%) considered that the organization of the workshop was very good.

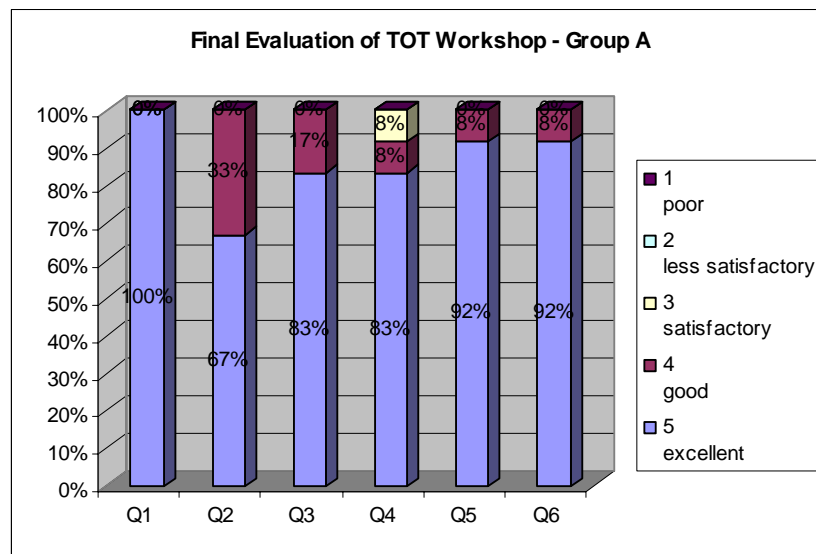
Q2. Relevance of training content: eight participants (67%) appreciated the content of the training as excellent for their future work as trainers; four participants (33%) considered that the content was relevant for them as trainers.

Q3. Effectiveness of training methodologies: methods used were appreciated as very effective by 10 respondents (83%) and effective by two respondents (17%).

Q4. Effectiveness of trainers: the master trainers were highly appreciated by 10 participants (83%), one participant (8%) considered them effective, and one participant (8%) declared him/herself only satisfied with the trainers' work.

Q5. Usefulness of materials distributed: 11 participants (92%) found the materials distributed during the workshop to be very useful, and one (8%) appreciated them as useful.

Q6. Effectiveness of practice: the practical sessions were highly appreciated by 11 participants (92%).



TOT Results group B

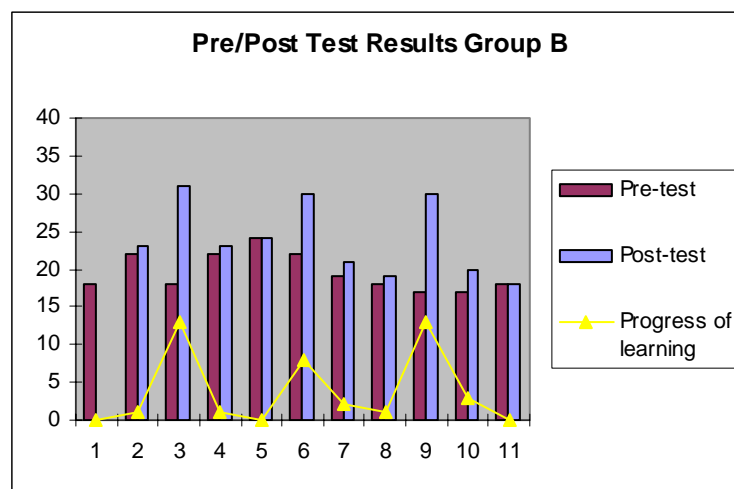
The test completed by participants at the beginning and at the end of training indicated an average increase in learning of 10.8%. The increasing of score was between 3 and 33%, with two cases of same values, as follows:

No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Pre-test*	18	22	18	22	24	22	19	18	17	17	18
Post-test**	NA	23	31	23	24	30	21	19	30	20	18
Progress of learning	NA	1	13	1	0	8	2	1	13	3	0
	NA	3%	33%	3%	0%	20%	5%	3%	33%	8%	0%

*Maximum possible score=40

**One participant didn't complete the post-test

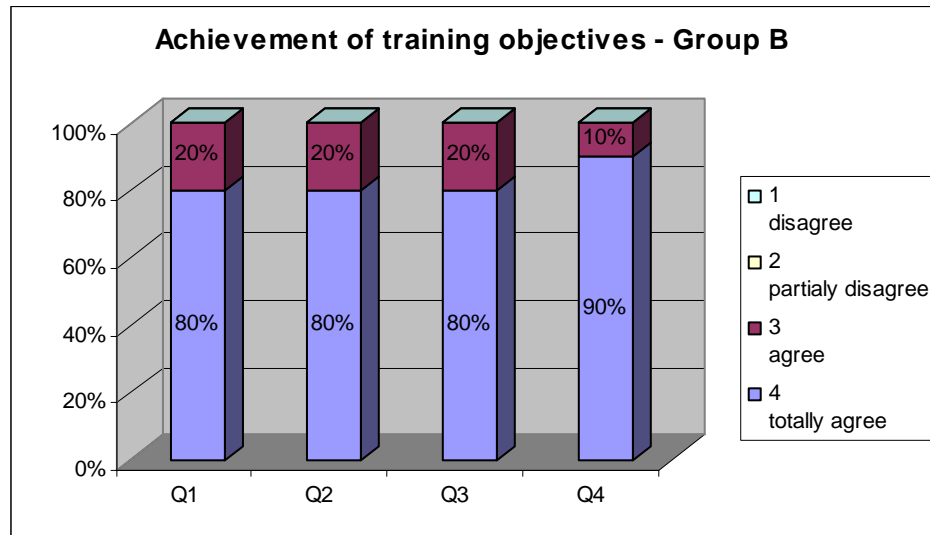
The progress of learning was positive, even if not so high as it was for the previous modules of training. This is totally understandable, taking into account that usually the test is measuring primarily the knowledge, and this last module was focused more on abilities.



The two master-trainers stated that the progress in developing skills was much more important than increasing the level of knowledge. The handouts received by each trainee will allow him/her to improve this aspect, too.

The evaluation form completed by 10 participants out of 11 at the end of the workshop indicated the followings:

TOT objectives: All respondents considered that the training objectives were achieved, and that they will be able to train priests and religious teachers. All five questions asked for self-appreciation on the ability to perform as a trainer, were highly quoted, with maximum results in 80-90% of cases.



The other **aspects of the training** were quoted as follows:

Q1. Eight trainees (80%) considered that the organization of the workshop was very good; one respondent (10%) considered it good, and one satisfactory.

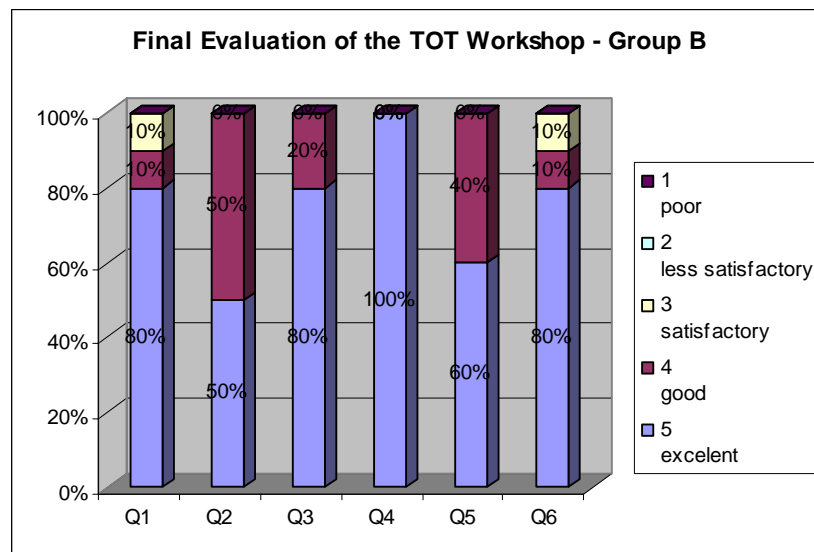
Q2. Five participants (50%) appreciated the content of the training as highly relevant for their role as future trainers, and the other five (50%) considered that the content was relevant for them as trainers.

Q3. Methods used were appreciated as very effective by eight respondents (80%) or effective by two respondents (20%).

Q4. Trainers were highly appreciated by all respondents (100%).

Q5. Six respondents (60%) found the materials distributed during the workshop as very useful, and four (40%) as useful.

Q6. Practical sessions were very highly appreciated by 8 participants (80%), as effective by one respondent (10%), and as satisfactory by one respondent (10%).



ANNEX 7: AGENDA OF THE FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

Day 1

9:00 – 9:45 Introductions

- Welcome, Warm-up
- Goals and Objectives of the Workshop
- Expectations
- Ground Rules

9:45 – 10:45 Sharing first experiences as trainers

Goal:

- To create a safe environment to encourage participants to share their successes and problems as trainers
- To remind participants the principles and rules for providing and receiving feedback

10:45 – 11:15 Break

11:15 - 13:00 Sharing training experiences (cont.)

Goal: To identify similar experiences encountered during the training activities implemented

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 15:45 How do conduct a training session

Goal: Identify existing skills and common mistakes in delivering training and how to avoid them

15:45 – 16:00 Break

16:00 – 17:00 How do conduct a training session (cont.)

Goal: Identify individual areas for improvement

Day 2

9:00 – 10:45 Strengthening training skills

Goal: Improve trainers' skills on:

- Preparing good presentations
- Facilitating group discussions
- Processing group activities
- Dealing with difficult situations
- Communication skills
- Motivating participants

10:45 – 11:15 Break

11:15 - 13:00 Strengthening training skills (cont.)

Goal: Improve trainers' skills on adapting existing curricula to participants' specific needs

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 16:00 Closing

- Lessons learned
- Explore new areas for personal development
- Institutional supportive supervision
- Develop an individual improvement plan – and a strategy for implement it (co-trainer support)

ANNEX 8: QUESTIONNAIRES FORMS USED DURING THE CONSULTANCY VISIT

I. Questionnaire for Social Counselors, Social Inspectorate, School Coordinators, Religion Teachers and Priests

Goals of focus groups and interviews:

1. What is advocacy
2. Prior experience in advocacy
3. Identify potential areas for advocacy efforts
4. Potential roles and responsibilities
5. Identify potential partners
6. Identify potential resources

“Advocacy is an ongoing process aiming at change of attitudes, actions, policies and laws influencing people and organizations with power, systems and structures at different levels for the betterment of people affected by the issue.”

Questions

1. What is advocacy? How would you define it?
 - a. Note: Differentiate between advocacy, IEC, community mobilization, networking/collaboration, fund raising, and addressing stigma.
2. Do they have personal experience doing advocacy?
 - a. Internal to ROC?
 - b. External?
3. Does the church in their community have experience doing advocacy?
4. What should be the goals and objectives of advocacy effort undertaken by the ROC?
5. What are the most important issues in which they feel they feel the church should play an advocacy role?
 - a. Internal to ROC
 - b. External to ROC
6. At what level should the Church be engaged in advocacy, both internal and external?
 - a. Local
 - b. National
 - c. International (?)
7. Who should be the target of advocacy efforts?
8. What are some approaches to advocacy that they would identify?
9. Who should be responsible for identifying issues for advocacy?
10. Who should be involved in implementing advocacy efforts?
11. How would you know if your advocacy efforts were successful?
12. Are there other potential partners to consider collaborating with regarding advocacy?
13. What resources would be needed to conduct advocacy?

II. NGO Questionnaire

Goal of NGO interviews:

1. SWOT perspective
2. Identify potential areas of overlapping interest

Questions

1. What is the status of the organization's HIV and AIDS advocacy efforts
2. What is their impression of the ROC's role in HIV and AIDS efforts in Romania?
3. What do they see as the role of the ROC in advocacy efforts?
4. What would be the strengths of working with the ROC?
5. What would be the challenges of working with the ROC?
6. What would be the opportunities of working with the ROC?
7. What would be the threats associated with working with ROC?
8. Are there possible collaborations with existing advocacy efforts?
9. Who within your organization would be responsible for deciding to work with ROC?

ANNEX 9: FINDINGS FROM THE CONSULTANCY VISIT

I. Findings from Church Focus Groups and Interviews⁴

As described previously, a series of focus groups and key informant interviews were held with selected members of the Church, as well as lay people who work with the Church to support social service delivery efforts. Following is a synthesis of the strengths, challenges, opportunities and barriers identified. As a synthesis, the themes and issues presented here represent the collective input of a wide-range of people. The statements do not necessarily represent “truth” or the actual presence of policies, but rather they represent peoples’ impressions or experiences which need to be taken into consideration as the Church considers developing a social advocacy agenda and program.

Strengths

A number of important strengths inherent in the structure and operation of the Church were identified. They include:

1. **Common understanding of advocacy:** Across all the groups interviewed, there was a shared understanding of the purpose and role of advocacy, who should be the targets of advocacy efforts and where it should be directed. Without exception, the groups stated that advocacy should result in change, particularly improved daily living of individuals. Advocacy efforts should be focused on influential leaders who have the ability to affect change and that there is a dual purpose to advocacy—both internal and external to an organization.
2. **Historical role of the Church:** There is a wide-spread appreciation for the role the Church played in providing and supporting social advocacy prior to the Communist regime’s rise to power in 1948. This foundation which spans back centuries and includes direct service provision as well as working with government and community leaders to provide services was largely dormant for more than forty years. Returning to a point where the Church meets the both the spiritual needs of the community and works in collaboration with others to meet the physical and social needs was important consideration for those interviewed.
3. **Spiritual mission of the Church:** The Church is unique in that it approaches social concerns and activities from a spiritual basis. While other NGOs focus on certain populations or technical areas, the Church focuses on the entire population and tries to address the spiritual and physical needs of individuals based on the teachings found in the liturgy.

⁴ Based on *Social Advocacy and the Romanian Orthodox Church Report* prepared by Andrew Fullem, Senior HIV and AIDS Advisor JSI Research and Training Institute

4. **Systems and structure to support social advocacy:** Throughout the Church there are systems and structures which could lend themselves to the development and implementation of a social advocacy. In particular:
 - a. Social counselors at the diocese level are in a position to support parish specific and diocese wide interventions;
 - b. Monthly Deanery meetings provide an opportunity for priests to share experiences and receive continuing education and support;
 - c. Councils and the National Church Assembly: Parish, diocese and synod level Councils and the National Assembly are mechanisms that could be tapped into to provide input into the development and monitoring of a social advocacy agenda;
 - d. The Federation of Church NGOs: This newly created body can serve as a means of sharing expertise and technical assistance across Church-based NGOs and serve as a more efficient means of accessing financial resources.
5. **Models of success:** There are a growing number of pilot programs and priest-led initiatives which could be expanded and replicated within and across dioceses. Given that the focus groups were held in Bacu, one of the areas participating in the family violence and HIV program, there was considerable interest in identifying ways to build upon this effort to address other social issues, to expand the efforts within the diocese to have greater interaction with other stakeholders, and to expand the effort to more schools and regions of the country.
6. **Priests:** Parish priests who are engaged in the community face some of the same challenges faced by parishioners and other community members will be an incredible resource to the Church's efforts. In many communities they are seen as proven problem solvers who pragmatically address the needs of individuals, households and the community at large.
7. **Autonomy:** Priests and the diocese have significant autonomy to act and develop initiatives and activities without formal approval from the Church hierarchy. Priests often develop and support social advocacy efforts, including the development of NGOs, with little approval needed from the diocese or Patriarchate. Similarly, diocese can implement programs and provide support to parish priests as they see fit and deem appropriate.
8. **Local philanthropy:** Parish churches have a long history of contributing resources to support social services. Often it is done in an ad hoc manner, addressing individual or specific family or household needs, but the potential exists to organize and harness this largess to have greater and more directed impact. ‘
9. **Use of non-financial resources:** While priests and parish committees have experience in raising local funds to support social development needs, there is also a strong experience in identifying and efficiently using non-financial resources to address community social challenges.
10. **Supportive Bishops:** There are a handful of progressive and supportive Bishops are leaders in social advocacy and who are engaged with priests and deaneries in the development and support of social advocacy efforts. However, this is not representative of all bishops.

11. **Informal linkages and collaboration:** There are a number of existing, non-formal relationships within the Church, as well as with government and international NGOs which are supportive of social advocacy efforts. These informal relationships have provided training and funding opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable. These relationships could be more widely utilized to have greater impact across broader geographic and technical areas.

These largely internal strengths are critical for the development and adoption of any social advocacy agenda. They represent a wide range of support across the system and demonstrate an ability to implement and manage social change within an understand mission.

Weakness/challenges/barriers

While there were a considerable number of strengths identified among those interviewed, there were also significant systemic challenges which will impact the ability of the Church leadership to develop, implement and monitor a social advocacy agenda. The most important of these include:

1. **Perceived internal value of social advocacy:** The social role of the priests, in comparison to the secular and spiritual role of the priests is not valued, appreciated or emphasized. The hierarchy, and particularly the bishops, does not place an emphasis on priest engaging in social advocacy efforts and there are limited resources to support such efforts.
2. **Lack of national strategy:** Those interviewed were not aware of any national strategy related to a broader social advocacy mission or agenda for the Church. Interviewees felt there is often greater emphasis placed on spoken words and issue-driven policies rather than on supporting direction action that impacts the challenges facing many Romanians. Also, the lack of a written policy or mission leads to some level of confusion regarding the understanding of the balance between government and Church responsibilities to lead social advocacy efforts.
3. **Patriarchy statements on social issues:** Social concerns at the community level are not reflected in Patriarchate priorities. Also, those statements that are disseminated are widely known of tend to be putative rather than supportive. Also, those statements, as well as other policies are not well disseminated or shared down the system.
4. **Level of hierarchy's engagement:** The Church leadership is seen as being bound to the physical structure of the Church rather than the challenges of modern living. There is limited engagement with social problems that individuals and families face daily. This affects the perceived relevance of the Church in a modern world.
5. **Church structure and hierarchy:** A number of elements of the Church structure are often barriers or challenges which will have to be addressed or understood and taken into consideration. These include: (a) the role of the Bishop is decision making. The Bishop, and his Office, is critical to any undertaking and ultimate wide-spread support for social advocacy efforts. Without explicit support and direction from the Bishop, many felt future efforts would remain very locally focused and have limited replicability

- across dioceses; (b) in addition to the Bishops, seniority among the priests is often a hindrance to change. Older priests are seen as being more conservative and more focused on the secular nature of the priests' role and not supportive of these efforts to engage in social issues; and (c) the bureaucracy of parish, deanery and diocese at times hinders priests from seeking support to engage in social advocacy.
6. **Inefficient use of existing systems:** As mentioned above, the Church has a number of systems and structures in places which could be supportive of social advocacy efforts. However, it was felt that currently they are not used to their greatest potential. Most meetings focus on administrative matters and do not address issues such as social concerns. Decisions made at these meetings are not widely communicated.
 7. **Modern challenges of priesthood:** Parish priests face a wide range of social and spiritual demands that affect their ability to take on social advocacy and development. Given the breadth of these issues--the balance between the liturgical and social role of priest, financial support for daily living, social challenges and individual needs—it is often difficult to determine the role and extent of social advocacy.
 8. **Lack of infrastructure to support social advocacy:** Participants felt that there were insufficient internal mechanisms to support priests' efforts to lead social advocacy. In particular, priests and others working at the parish level felt there were not opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned with other priests engaged in similar efforts.
 9. **Lack of training:** Most priests have limited or no training beyond theological education. While in seminary there are few if any opportunities to receive training in social counseling, psychosocial support, social service program service delivery or program management. Also, for those priests who have completed their formal education, there are no opportunities to gain continuing education in these areas.
 10. **Lack of resources:** There is no financial support from central systems to support social advocacy or service delivery needs at the parish level. Also, the reported limited salary support for priests and the need to engage in additional employment outside the Church doesn't necessarily allow them to take on greater responsibilities. The human resources available at the parish level are not commensurate with the need. Priests don't typically have other lay staff with whom to work with as part of a team.
 11. **Urban vs. rural:** The social challenges facing Romanians varies significantly between urban and rural. There is no one set of challenges or approaches that will address the challenges.
 12. **Reliance upon volunteerism:** Social advocacy and service delivery efforts at the parish level are heavily dependant on volunteer efforts by parishioners. Motivation and management of volunteers, as well as on-going recruitment and retention, are challenges that potentially undermine expansion of social advocacy efforts. Priests have limited training in management of volunteer-staffed initiatives.
 13. **Lack of formalized collaboration and referral systems:** While many priests and parishes collaborate with local government and service providers, the relationships tend to be informal and based upon personal relationships rather than formalized understandings of roles and responsibilities

Opportunities

There was a general consensus that there are significant opportunities available to begin developing a formal process to support social advocacy efforts. There is a real need at the parish level, there are leaders who have emerged and on-going activities which could serve as catalysts. Specific opportunities include:

1. **Internal Advocacy:** There is significant opportunity within the Church to begin to formalize and expand social advocacy efforts. Initiatives at the diocese and parish level are on-going which can serve as a springboard for further efforts. The ongoing family violence and HIV and AIDS efforts supported by the ROC and IOCC were mentioned as natural starting places for social advocacy efforts. There are trained liturgical and lay staff working together who could take on a greater role to expand this program and take on other social advocacy needs identified at the parish and diocese level.
2. **Build on existing structures and meetings:** There are a number of regular meetings which could be altered in their content and scope to provide support to priests. The monthly deanery meetings and the diocese meetings could have part of the time and agenda dedicated to sharing of lessons learned and identifying social advocacy needs at the parish and diocese level.
3. **Create and expand local Church affiliated NGOs:** There has been success with this effort in a number of parishes which has led to a greater service delivery and an expanded role for local churches in community development. There is an opportunity, particularly with Romania joining the EU, to foster the creation of more of these NGOs to organize social advocacy efforts. Also, capitalize on the recent formation of the Federation of Church NGOs to bolster both internal support and sharing and to coordinate fundraising efforts.
4. **Collaboration with other faith groups:** Other religious organizations, in particular the Roman Catholic Church, are also engaging in social advocacy efforts. In communities where multiple denominations are working, there is opportunity to work together to have great impact in addressing community social issues. In addition to linking with other faith groups in the community, there is also opportunity to work in collaboration with international faith groups that can provide critical technical and financial support.
5. **Introduce pre-service and continuing training and education for priests:** In collaboration with seminaries and universities, develop training programs that will provide clergy with tools necessary to support social advocacy activities. Training could include program and financial management and building of counseling skills.
6. **Engaged efforts in social advocacy could draw people to the Church:** By engaging in a public social advocacy program that people are aware of there is the potential to bringing people into the Church and have them become regular participants in the spiritual mission and activities of the Church.

Threats

While tangible opportunities were identified, a number of threats were also mentioned. These threats relate to the impact of an expanded social advocacy program and include:

1. Unless the hierarchy of the church publicly supports an increased role of priests and parishes in social advocacy, it was felt that efforts would continue to depend on the individual determination of priests.
2. Drift from the spiritual role of the Church: Concerns were raised that if individual priests and the Church as a whole took a more active role in social advocacy, there could be a drifting away from the spiritual and theological role of the Church.
3. Diminish focus on individual and household support: Currently, much of the social advocacy and support services provided at the parish level focus on individuals and families. If priests add to their focus a broader scope to include more of the community there is concern that there will be less time for and attention paid on the very real needs of individual parishioners.
4. Negative impact of accepting government and EU funding: Funding from the private sector, either from international, national, municipal or county sources, could affect Church policy, requiring the Church and its members to support stances and activities which are contrary to Church policy and teachings.

II. NGO Findings

Strengths

A number of critical strengths were identified by NGOs that will be important foundations for efforts to build a social advocacy strategy. These strengths include:

1. **Priests:** They are seen as being linked to the community and face many of the same social and daily living challenges as those faced by community members at large. In rural areas they are often important community leaders. In many communities the priests have significant autonomy to address the social needs of community members and to work with others to address gaps in services and support.
2. **Priests' Wives:** Like their husbands, priests' wives face many of the same challenges as other women in the community. They are empathetic group with important insight and information regarding the needs of community members.
3. **Information dissemination:** The Church and priests in particular, are important conduits for information. A number of NGOs mentioned the positive role that individual priests had played in providing complimentary or supportive information that bolstered program and service efforts. Priests who were open to being provided accurate and up-to-date information and developing means of broadly communicating information to parishioners were very powerful spokesmen..
4. **Church-affiliated NGOs:** In a number of communities and settings there are Church-affiliated NGOs that provide services to clients. Typically headed by priests, these

organizations receive funding to support services and efforts that are complimentary to the work being undertaken by other NGOs.

Weaknesses/Challenges/Barriers

The NGOs frankly discussed what they viewed as challenges and barriers to the Church taking on a more active role in social advocacy. These challenges reflect both actual experience as well as general impressions of those interviewed. It is important to note that the purpose of the interviews was not to debate the veracity of any of the statements, but rather to identify the impressions of those interviewed so that the Church had information important to the development of an overall approach and strategy.

Specific areas of concern that were discussed include:

1. **Church policies and practices:** The Church has adopted and promulgated a number of official statements and supported activities which are in direct conflict with NGOs and are seen as discriminatory to some of the populations which they serve. In particular the Church's stance on abortion, condom promotion, family planning and homosexuality were identified as barriers to these NGOs working in collaboration with Church on a social agenda. Of particular note was concern regarding the Church's stance on women's empowerment. A number of NGO representatives felt that the Church is not actively engaged in efforts to improve and support the ability of women to make independent choices regarding their lives, particularly as it relates to sexual and reproductive rights.
2. **Discrimination and stigma:** Given the policies and practices mentioned above, the Church as an institution is viewed as being discriminatory and either directly or indirectly supporting social stigmatization. These points together make it a challenge for NGOs to identify ways of collaboration or support for social advocacy efforts.
3. **Lack of written mission on social responsibility:** A number of the NGOs said there was not, or they were not aware of, a written policy regarding the Church's self-identified role in social advocacy efforts. The lack of such a document makes or would make it difficult for NGOs to understand how the Church sees its roles in this area and how to best identify areas of common interest.
4. **Hostility to NGOs:** The Church hierarchy is seen as being in conflict with these NGOs, often as it relates to the services they provide and the populations they serve. Public statements made about these NGOs in general or specifically have been interpreted as being hostile, misinformed, inaccurate and biased. A number of the NGOs felt that the Church did not understand the role and mission of the NGOs and was uninterested in learning more about the actual services provided by these groups.
5. **Priests:** While the priests were identified as one of the great strengths of the Church, they were also seen as a barrier. The representatives related experiences in trying to work with priests who were not interested in social advocacy issues as they felt their sole role was in meeting the spiritual needs of individuals and families.
6. **Standing outside the system:** The Church as an institution is often seen as standing outside and separate from the rest of civil society. They do not participate in

- organizations, such as the Country Coordinating Mechanism of The Global Fund, which require consensus building and sharing and acceptance of often competing and different opinions and approaches to social problems.
7. **Leadership and hierarchy:** Leaders in the Church, particularly those at the Patriarchate and Diocese level, are seen as being out of touch with the daily concerns of Romanian people. They are not fully engaged in the daily challenges that individuals and families face and focus more on retaining the status quo than on serving as agents of change. Also, the hierarchical nature of the Church does not allow for grassroots or democratic decision or involvement of priests and lay people in advising and development of Church policies.
 8. Church spending. NGO representatives are under the impression that the Church has significant financial resources available to it and opts to use those resources for the construction of new Churches rather than support social advocacy and delivery of services.

Opportunities

While significant weaknesses and challenges were identified by the NGO representatives, they did identify a number of areas where they felt the Church had a role in social advocacy, either working alone as an institution or in collaboration with the NGO and civil society community. These areas include:

1. **Develop joint messages:** Working with NGOs, the Church could develop and disseminate appropriate messages that meet both the needs and expectations of potential partner NGOs and the Church. Messages could focus on areas of common interest, such as addressing family violence, protection of children and anti-stigma efforts related to HIV and AIDS. More contentious areas could be avoided, with the understanding that there are some areas and topics where neither group is likely to move.
2. **Collaborate with young priests:** The NGOs see this group as natural allies in addressing social advocacy, particularly at the community level. In general, these young priests are engaged in the community, understand the challenges that individuals and communities face and have an interest in engaging in broader social activities.
3. **European Union accession:** With Romania's accession to the EU in January 2007 and the expected increase in social service support funding in the country, there will be unique opportunities for NGOs and local parishes and diocese to collaborate to develop comprehensive and holistic social service programs.

These opportunities present a foundation from which the Church and the interviewed NGOs could move forward. They would serve as the basis of an evolving collaboration that could grow over time as the NGOs and the Church come to better understand one another and jointly identify areas of mutual concern where they together can have greater impact.

Threats

Expanded involvement of the Church in social advocacy, and training to carry out an action plan, has two threats to the NGOs. They are:

1. Collaboration with by the NGOs with the Church on social issues may be perceived as weakening of the NGOs' mission and policies to support the clients they serve. The NGOs interviewed often work with some of the most marginalized people in Romanian society and those that may feel at some level persecuted by the Church. Working in collaboration with them may be seen by some clients as not representing their best interests.
2. Training the Church do conduct social advocacy may provide it with the skills necessary to undermine public and political support for NGO-supported activities. One area that was mentioned was abortion. If they Church is provided training in lobbying and legislative action, would that expertise then be used to work in Parliament to change support for abortion accessibility, something many of the NGOs would not support.