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FINAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

NGO PARTNERSHIPS UMBRELLA GRANT ACTIVITY - RASP
(ROMANIAN-AMERICAN SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS)

Cooperative Agreement No. 186-00-00-00113-00
Submitted to USAID/Romania

By

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Annex 1 – Building and Managing Partnerships – An Assessment and Guide

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Romanian-American Sustainable Partnerships (RASP) Project, a USAID initiative to support partnerships between Romanian and American not-for-profit organizations, began May 24, 2000. The initiative was implemented by World Learning under Cooperative Agreement (CA) No. 186-A-00-00-00113-00. It was originally slated to end May 30, 2002. However, the project was extended several times so that its actual end date was February 29, 2004.

The objective of the project was to build upon and expand Romanian-American partnerships by offering incentives and opportunities to channel American interest in ways that promoted sustainable partnerships. These partnerships would increase civil society development and help Romania become more integrated into the larger community of developed countries. Romanian needs would be met through the strengths of American civil society.

The mechanism for encouraging and supporting the partnerships was a sub-grants program to fund U.S.-Romanian partnerships to carry out activities in the mission's target sectors of health, child welfare, environment, energy efficiency, local government, democracy, and private sector development. Many of the projects funded addressed more than one of these areas. Funding was not limited to traditional NGOs. Professional organizations, other civil society organizations, hospitals, and universities were also eligible to participate. Both existing and new partnerships could apply. The project also brokered partnerships. Funded partnerships were meant to be ongoing relationships. The project was designed so that the partnership interaction would strengthen the technical, organizational, and public participation capacities thus increasing the potential for sustainability.

The project had two operational phases. The first phase grants were disbursed through two competitive RFAs, one for existing partnerships and one for new partnerships. The release of the RFAs was accompanied by an intensive outreach and publicity effort resulting in 110 applications. During this first phase, 21 of the proposed projects, covering a wide range of activities, were funded. The second project phase began in March 2002 and was limited to projects in the democracy sector including development of civil society, conflict prevention, and human rights. Potential candidates under this phase were referred to World Learning by USAID, most through an IFA process. Eleven additional projects were funded in the second phase. In total 32 projects were funded under RASP. USAID funding totaled $2.7 million dollars. The cost share was $3.2 million, an impressive 54.25% of total project costs.

The project maintained a website. In addition to providing information about RASP, the RFAs and IFA were posted there. It was also the site for a quarterly e-newsletter featuring the work carried out by the sub-grantee partnerships.

The RASP project itself did not provide training and technical assistance. Training and technical assistance was a function of the partnership interaction. There were, however,

two conferences under the project. The first was in December 2001 for representatives from the 21 partnerships receiving sub-grants at that time. The purpose was to 1) provide a forum for sub-grantees to present their activities to the larger group; 2) to debate partnership issues; and 3) to extract lessons learned from the partnership experience. The opportunity to network and exchange information during free time provided a valuable and effective ancillary learning experience.

The second conference was conducted in February 2003 and focused on local level partnerships i.e. between NGOs, local authorities, and the private commercial sector. The conference was useful to the mission's new local government (GRASP) activity. Thus participation was widened to include representatives from GRASP, other USAID implementing partners in democracy, USAID, EU PHARE, and the U.S. Embassy's Public Diplomacy Office.

An assessment was conducted at the end of the project to capture lessons about partnership and partnership projects. There was a mini-assessment in December 2002. Some valuable lessons emerged from these exercises. They include the importance of face-to-face contact both in the planning and implementing phases; the usefulness of the donor providing activities that build partnership capacity such as networking opportunities and technical assistance at critical times in the partnership evolutionary process; not underestimating the role that finances play in the ability of a partnerships to maintain its relationship at level where can continue to carry out joint activities; and the partners being clear about the purpose and intent of the partnership at the outset including written letters of commitment, laying out the specific contributions of each partner, and preparing an action plan that details the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Romanian-American Sustainable Partnerships (RASP) Project, a USAID initiative to support partnerships between Romanian and American not-for-profit organizations, began May 24, 2000. The initiative was implemented by World Learning under Cooperative Agreement (CA) No. 186-A-00-00-00113-00. It was originally slated to end May 30, 2002. However, the project was extended several times so that its actual end date was February 29, 2004.

The objective of the project was to build upon and expand Romanian-American partnerships by offering incentives and opportunities to channel American interest in ways that promoted sustainable partnerships. These partnerships would increase civil society development and help Romania become more integrated into the larger community of developed countries. Romanian needs would be met through the strengths of American civil society. Many American groups and individuals, including Romanian-Americans, began showing an interest in Romania in 1989. There were more than 100 U.S. voluntary initiatives assisting Romania when the project began in 2000. Many had been in existence for five years or longer particularly in the area of child welfare. The program sought to encourage and channel this American interest into significant

investments in the form of experience sharing, the transfer of "know-how" and other important contributions.

II.A. Sub-Grants Program

The mechanism for encouraging and supporting American interest and involvement was a sub-grants program to fund U.S.-Romanian not-for-profit partnerships to carry out activities in the sectors of health, child welfare, environment, energy efficiency, local government, democracy, and private sector development. Thus, even though the project fell under USAID's SO "Improved Democratic Governance at the Local Level" with a direct contribution to Intermediate Result 2.3.2 "Improved Interaction between Citizens and Local Public Institutions", all of USAID's strategic objectives were addressed through the various activities carried out by the partnerships. Thus, in addition to building the Romanian not-for-profit sector, the project contributed to and enhanced the Mission's country strategy by filling in gaps, and otherwise complementing its ongoing activities in support of its strategic objectives. Funding was not limited to traditional NGOs. Professional organizations, other civil society organizations, hospitals, and universities were also eligible to participate. The funded partnerships were meant to be ongoing, long-term relationships advantageous to both the Romanian and to the U.S. partner. By promoting partnerships through carrying out projects, RASP supported the development of Romanian civil society while at the same time benefiting Romanian communities through the activities carried out with partnership funding. Many times, sub-grants programs have a training and technical assistance component. This was not the case with RASP. The project was designed so that strengthened technical, service delivery and organizational capacity, and increased participation in public policy was developed through the partnership interaction. Increased capacity would translate into increased potential for sustainability.

The first two RFAs were issued in 2000. The first was for existing NGO partnerships while the second was for new partnerships. Full proposals were requested from the existing partnerships and concept papers from the new ones. Partnerships that submitted qualifying concept papers were invited to submit full proposals. A Selection Committee with representation from World Learning, USAID, and the Romanian NGO community were responsible for reviewing the proposals and concept papers. The RFAs were widely publicized. Three regional information sessions were held attended by 178 individuals representing 154 organizations. A press release was distributed to media agencies and broadcast outlets in Bucharest and the other major urban centers, and to publications with an NGO audience. The U.S. Embassy's Citizens' Outreach Coordinator also helped to publicize the project. Presentations were made at two Peace Corps conferences, and indeed several volunteers actively worked on proposals with their Romanian counterparts. Five hundred U.S. organizations were e-mailed about the RFA. The Romanian Embassy and the Romanian Honorary Vice-Consuls in the U.S. also received information on the RFA.

The result was a tremendous number of responses to the RFAs with 110 applications received. The $1.2 million grants pool meant that only 13 of the applications could be

funded. An additional $566,400 was added to the grants pool in May 2001 allowing a further eight partnerships to receive sub-grants. Thus, 21 activities were funded under what turned out to be phase one of the project. These 21 projects covered a wide range of activities including development of an industrial park, services for the treatment of alcoholism, services to families to prevent the institutionalization of children, prevention of child abuse, reforestation, community-based alternatives to the incarceration of juveniles, environmental management along the Black Sea coast, development of emergency medical care protocols, and development of hospice management standards. Many projects addressed more than one of the SOs.

During the first phase, the project offered a matching service for NGOs who wanted to participate but did not have a partner. Although the service was available to both American and Romanian NGOs seeking partners, almost all the inquiries came from the Romanian side. The project found early on, that an organization needed a clear idea as to what it wanted to do, and a clear idea as to what role it wanted a partner to fulfill, in order to find a match. Therefore, profile forms were created that asked the Romanian organizations to provide a brief description of its desired project and of the precise role that it would like a U.S. organization to play in that project. When U.S. organizations were approached, the interest of the person contacted was not sufficient for the organization to commit to partnering. That person usually also needed to gain the support both of top management and of the board of the organization. The profile forms proved to be an essential component of the process. They allowed prospective partners to have a clear idea of what they are being requested to do in terms of gaining initial interest and then for gaining the approval of the organization overall. Six Romanian organizations did qualify with U.S. partners being found for all six. Four of these partnerships submitted concept papers and all four were invited to submit proposals. Two of those proposals were funded.

The second phase of the project began in March 2002. At that time, the overall grants pool was increased to $2,557,013 and the project was extended through November 2003. During this phase the activities funded were limited to the democracy sector including development of civil society, conflict prevention, and human rights. The process for applying also changed with all candidates for funding being referred by USAID rather than using an RFA process. When this process only yielded two applications, an IFA was issued in July 2002. Interested partnerships were advised to submit Letters of Intent to USAID. USAID then passed on those applicants that it would like World Learning to consider. These applicants were then requested to submit full proposals. An additional 11 partnerships were funded under this phase bringing the total to 32. The activities funded in this second phase included cultural heritage, testing the new Freedom of Information Act, ethnic minority relations, prevention of domestic violence, anti-trafficking, and community mediation services.

The 32 sub-grants awarded during the life of the project received $2.7 million dollars from USAID. The cost share was $3.2 million an impressive 54.25% of total project costs and far exceeded the stated requirement of 25%. The majority of the partnerships funded continue to function. Some continue to jointly implement activities. As funding

does play a role in the ability to continue to work together, a number partnerships are seeking funding for further joint collaboration. Almost all communicate regularly via the internet. And in several instances, the continuing relationship is broader than just the original partners. DEEP is connected to a number of institutions and communities in West Virginia, not just West Virginia University. The Traverse City Rotary Club is raising funds for a number of projects in Sibiu aside from the industrial park. Hospice Casa Sperantei has formed particularly close relationships with some of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's members, most notably the University of Wisconsin.

II.B. Website

The project maintained a website through the end of the project to publicize RASP, and to share information including that about the projects being carried out by the various partnerships. One form of project outreach was posting the RFAs on the website. The website contained a list of all the partnerships funded and what sector or sectors each of the projects fell under. A quarterly e-newsletter was published. Each issue featured the work being carried out by several of the RASP partnerships.

The website received more than 1,000 hits, generating many inquiries about the project, most particularly about opportunities for funding. It was viewed around the world as a number of requests were received from other countries asking if similar funding was available for their respective countries.

II.C. Conferences

Although, the RASP project itself did not provide training and technical assistance to the sub-grantees, it held two conferences. The first was in December 2001 for representatives of the 21 partnerships who were receiving sub-grants at that time. The second conference, in February 2003, focused on local-level partnerships.

Representatives of all 21 partnerships funded by RASP at the time attended the Partnership Conference conducted at in December 2001. The purpose of the conference was threefold: (1) to provide a forum for the sub-grantees to present their activities to the larger group of which they were a part; (2) to debate partnership issues affecting project implementation; and (3) to extract lessons learned to date from the partnership experience *RASP* was providing. The chance to network and exchange information and experiences during free time such as coffee breaks and meals had its own value. One group that was just starting up at the time of the conference later said that what they learned during informal discussions about how others had handled problems was invaluable to them in starting up their own work. This underscores the value of providing networking opportunities and support in programs of the RASP type.

The event marked the first time the entire group had gathered for one event. In addition to sharing on the partnership experience, it demonstrated to the group the diversity of activities funded under *RASP*. Participants commented about how impressed they were

with the sheer number and range of activities being implemented under *RASP*. It also offered a glimpse of the World Learning role in trying to balance and keep track of this diverse portfolio.

Late in 2002, the Mission requested that a Partnership Conference be conducted under *RASP* to glean best practices and lessons learned from the *RASP* partnership experience. This conference was conducted in February 2003. While the conference conducted in December 2001, focused on Romanian-American partnerships, this one emphasized local-level partnerships, i.e., between NGOs, local authorities, and the private commercial sector. In addition to yielding useful information on what makes these partnerships successful, the conference was also viewed as useful to the mission's new local government (GRASP) activity that was designed to strengthen local governments through more effective local partnerships. The Conference addressed three general themes relative to partnerships at the local level: (a) citizen participation; (b) collaboration among local organizations, i.e., local authorities, NGOs, business community, etc; and (c) fund raising.

The professionally-facilitated conference was attended by 56 individuals representing current and concluded community-based RASP activities, their local government partners, USAID implementing partners (GRASP, NDI, IRI), representatives from the EU PHARE Program, USAID, and the U.S. Embassy's Public Diplomacy Office. A comprehensive Conference Report was prepared in Romanian and distributed to all participants. The report was all translated into English. The report includes conference deliberations as well as conclusions and lessons learned.

Participants cited poor communications among partners, preconceptions and suspicions about roles and motivations, unnecessarily complex or inadequate legislation, generally poor economic conditions, the slow pace of public sector reform, and inexperience of community residents with democratic processes as constraints to developing stronger local partnerships. Proposed solutions included improved relations with local and national media, greater use of participatory planning mechanisms in both the public and private sectors, and more regular and constructive communications between local authorities and the private (non-profit and for-profit) sector for increased trust and collaboration.

II.D. Partnership Lessons

Although many communities in Romania benefited from the projects carried out by the sub-grantees, RASP's original focus was partnership. Therefore, the project carried out an assessment in January and February 2004 to capture lessons learned about partnership and partnership projects (Annex 1). World Learning also conducted its own internal assessment on U.S. – Romanian partnerships in December 2002. The assessments provided an opportunity for the organizations participating in the project to reflect on the partnership experience itself. As to be expected, while carrying out projects, most of their attention was focused on the activity rather than on the partnership. Some valuable lessons on implementing partnership projects emerged from the assessment exercises

with the major ones discussed below. Some of these lessons pertain to those who are implementers of partnership projects and programs, and some for the members of the partnerships themselves.

Funding partnerships to do a project does act as a "carrot" for organizations to reach out and look for relationships that can then develop and sustain over the longer term. However, it is important to acknowledge that partnerships are relationships, and relationships usually require time and nurturing to develop. Therefore, when funding new partnerships, it is useful if the donor can provide support to allow the partners to get to know each other. This might be in the form of assuring a face-to-face meeting or meetings during the project planning phase. In order to maximize the partnership's chances of success, the partners need to be clear about the purpose and intent of the partnership from the outset. They need to draft letters of commitment, lay out the specific contributions to be made by each partner, and prepare an action plan detailing the roles and responsibilities of each. This even extends to routine day-to-day issues such as communications. How often, how long, how detailed, and how focused should they be? Working these out face-to-face is more effective than trying to do it from a distance. At the same time, the partners are afforded the opportunity to get to know one another. RASP found that projects worked best when the U.S. partner had an in-country presence. However, that's not always possible. Providing for a reasonable amount of in-person contact between partners helps to mitigate some of the disadvantage experienced when the U.S. partner is not in country. Implementers can also consider funding new partnerships to do small, limited projects a practical means for the partners to get to know each other and how to work with each other. Partnerships that are successful on a small-scale can then be funded to carry out larger activities. Longer-term partnerships will have already gone through the process of establishing their relationship. Those partnerships that were not going to make it will have already dropped by the wayside.

Training and technical assistance for the technical and service delivery skills, and for organizational development is a component of many sub-grants projects. In RASP they were addressed through the partnership interaction. But how to partner, being a partner is a subject in itself and also needs to be specifically addressed. When some of the organizations were asked what kind of support to partnerships beyond funding would be useful they said training on partnership including the dynamics, how to have a closer relationship, and providing partnership models. In addition to training, the project should build in opportunities for networking. This allows newer partnerships to take advantage of what others have learned through their experiences so that they do not make the same mistakes and allows them to take advantage of solutions that the other partnerships have found. Technical assistance in terms of partnership capacity building at critical times in the evolution of the relationship can be provided. Interestingly a partnership does not need to have a positive partnership experience in order to learn from it. An organization that participated in a failed partnership can analyze what went wrong, and then take those lessons learned on to its next partnership. And what is learned from a failed partnership can provide valuable lessons to others on pitfalls to be avoided.

It is important not to underestimate the role that money plays in allowing a partnership to continue to carry out joint activities. The U.S. organizations often did not have access to the significant amounts of unrestricted funds necessary to continue to jointly support or expand upon the activities that they began together under RASP. A few partnerships did have the funds. Some working in child welfare received grants under the USAID ChildNet project administered by World Learning. A number of others are seeking further funding through various donors and if funding is will continue to work jointly. On the other hand, a number of partnerships that were funded had plans that were two or three years old at the time that they applied to RASP. Those plans had not been implemented due to lack of funds. In those instances, it was RASP funding that allowed the activities to go forward. Whether implementing jointly with an U.S. partner or on their own, Romanian organizations need to diversify their funding bases to help assure their sustainability. Overall, U.S. organizations are more experienced than Romanian organizations in fundraising. Providing technical assistance to pass on these skills is a valuable contribution to the partnership. The U.S. organizations can also help in analyzing the local fundraising environment so as to devise strategies to make it more "fundraising friendly" such as organizing to advocate for tax laws that promote giving.

For the partnership to be successful there needs to be an approximate balance of power between the two parties. Whenever feasible, RASP gave the grants to the Romanian rather than the U.S. organization as a means of leveling the playing field. Between the partners themselves, it is necessary to work out a system of decision-making where each partner has an equal voice and input. It is important that the decision-making process is addressed and laid-out specifically. Otherwise it is easy for the partner who perceives itself as stronger and more experienced to take on a dominant, or even domineering, role, often unconsciously.

Cross-cultural relationships require an understanding of one another's culture. It is critical that a U.S. organization learn about the local environment and culture when partnering to implement a project in Romania. It must be flexible and realize that what worked in the U.S. almost always requires adaptation in order to work in another cultural and societal context. The U.S. organization must also appreciate the ins and outs of interpersonal communications and how things get and are done in Romania. However, it is also necessary for Romanian organizations to acquire a basic understanding of Americans and how they approach things so that they know where their American colleagues are coming from. This mutual understanding will help the partners to talk through and head off potential clashes of cultures.

III. Sub-Grant Overview

Partnership	Description	Results	Ongoing Status
1. Traverse Bay Economic Development & Corporation Sibiu Development Agency Dec. 18, 2000 to April 30, 2002	Lay the groundwork for the development of an industrial park in Sura Mica to serve Sibiu County. Development of a marketing plan, environmental study, feasibility study, and preparation of legal documents. Urban development and zoning plan, research of business/educational/cultural environment, securing necessary titles, training, fundraising, creating the company to administer the park.	Business plan and feasibility study completed and submitted as part of a package that successfully obtained necessary permits and documents. Cost estimates completed for utilities and road. Several shareholders made financial contributionsublic company created to oversee park's development and management.	A follow-up visit in September 2002. A sustainable partnership created between the Sibiu and Traverse City Rotary Clubs. Traverse City Rotary Club raising funds to carry out a list of projects including procurement of medical equipment, academic sponsorships, constructing and equipping an elder shelter, and city park recreational equipment.
2. International Orthodox Christian Charities & Romanian Orthodox Church Feb. 9, 2001 to May 31, 2002	Establish a Community Youth Center in Bistrita to provide educational, recreational, and cultural activities to 1,350 children and youth in a safe, non-threatening environment, as well as psychological and counseling services to youth and their families.	2041 participants in Literature, French, English, Dance, Computer, Arts, Sports, and Drama courses/activities. Computer classes for mentally handicapped children. Group counseling in areas such as self-knowledge/personal development, problem solving in addition to individual counseling. Counseling services for parents and families. Peer counseling program. Collaboration/partnerships with Bistrita's town library, elder shelter, prison, and Department of Interethnic Relations. Center to serve as an ongoing hub of social assistance in Bistrita.	Center to continue as fully registered Romanian NGO receiving capable of receiving grants on its own. IOCC continues to support the center as it can in amounts up to $11,000 per year. Has submitted a proposal for funding a joint activity on volunteerism to the U.S. Democracy Commission in the amount of $9,900. IOCC and the ROC continue to carry out joint activities including a ChildNet funded project on child abandonment in Dolj, Gorj, and Mehedinti.

3. Children's Resources International & Center for Educational & Professional Development Feb. 9, 2001 to June 30, 2002	Demonstrate that the Step-by-Step educational model for children can be applied and adapted for the purpose of reducing the incidence of child abandonment among poorer families with lower educational levels. Increased parental involvement in a child's educational activities would contribute to reduced child abandonment.	Sixty children (15 x 4 crèches) participated. Two trainings held: one on early childhood development and one on parenting (for those to lead parenting sessions). Resource materials developed for parents, caregivers, and crèche directors. Bi-monthly parenting sessions held. These parents discussed the benefits of the program with non-participating families. Families then successfully advocated with the municipalities to double enrolment. ECCO observation instrument showed significant gain in ratings particularly in "Interaction Among Teachers and Children" and "Family Involvement". Fifty-nine of the 60 children remain in care of their families.	Although the organizations had a history of working together, future collaboration was dependent upon gaining further joint funding.
4. Bethany Social Services & Healing Hands, Inc. Feb. 26, 2001 to June 15, 2002	Provide therapeutic foster care for children with special needs, a therapeutic day care center providing intensive therapeutic services to children with special needs, and educational programs and resources for families with special needs children.	Fifty-six of the projected 120 children received services, support and training. Many families not used to idea of sharing experiences with others. Addition of day care activity to 24-hour care activity attracted 21 of projected 26 additional children. All children increased fine and gross motor functioning, and cognitive and perception skills. Fifteen of 20 projected children placed in foster care. Sixty-three professionals (exceeding projected 41) trained in therapeutic services, foster care and supervision. Professional standards and procedural manuals developed and 400 copies distributed. Eighty people from Directorates for Child Protection (DPC) (exceeding projected 30) participated in training with American specialist.	Partnership to continue to function until turnover of financial aspects of project to DPC. Through December 2002 Bethany to maintain project implementation with Healing Hands paying staff salaries. Turn over of salaries to DPC in January 2003.

5. Baylor College of Medicine & "Speranta" Association March 9, 2001 to March 8, 2002	Improve the health, well being, and longevity for more than 700 children with AIDS in the Constanta area through provision of inpatient, outpatient and community outreach medical education and medical services.	Donation of antiretroviral drugs by Abbott Laboratories being used to treat 280 children. Developed computerized database of all children treated on-site. Peer support program for parents and families. Work begun on a mainly outpatient palliative care program for children with end-stage AIDS. Regular home visits conducted. Medications tracking system refined to ensure ongoing supply of drugs. Completion of a 22-chapter HIV curriculum in Romanian. Training in treatment protocols and in community outreach and education.	Long-term partnership of which RASP funding was not the major part. Partnership to continue through its other funding sources.
6. Foundation for Community Support & The Doe Fund March 19, 2001 to May 31, 2002	Discourage, reduce and prevent child begging as an economic option for poor families in Bacau. Create a model of family support services and job training to provide families with an alternative to begging and to implement a unified public/private sector plan to address the problem.	A group of 30 women from poor families participated in-group process and life skills activities. Twenty-six completed a job training and apprenticeship sequence. Another 40 have applied. Over 104 street children participated in the Stefanita education program with 35 attending on a regular basis. Nine transferred to regular classes with 20 more scheduled for the term following the completion of RASP support. An intensive public awareness campaign using publicity materials and the media was carried out. The volunteer program resulted in up to 12 volunteers participating in each of several activities. Further work is required to overcome job discrimination against Roma a major hurdle to overcome in ending child begging.	A grant from ChildNet allows the partnership to continue to carry out activities through May 2004. The Doe Fund has committed itself to serve as an ongoing partner by acting as a consultant, assisting in promotion, media relations and fundraising, and assisting in expanding the program to other Romanian communities.

7. West Virginia University & Foundation for Development Through Economic Education & Partnership March 30, 2001 to June 30, 2002	Make environmental improvements in the Jiu Valley by introducing a range of community and economic development options and community-based remediation programs.	The Jiu Valley Community Development Team (JVCDT) was developed and trained in basic skills in designing and implementing environmental projects. The JVCDT worked with 475 community members in community analysis projects, 14 environmental remediation and community beautification projects, and community meetings. A formal environmental strategy based on a needs assessment nearly completed by the end of RASP funding. Web portal in English and Romanian designed and completed. DEEP raised over $20,000 cash to support its activities.	Direct links to be expanded between WVU and institutions in West Virginia with organizations and institutions from the Jiu Valley. An internship program between West Virginia University and the University of Petrosani. Will work closely on addressing the problem of the pollution of the Jiu River. The depth and extent of the activities depend on the ability to secure financing.

8. Tiffin University & Humanitarian Association of Sts. Peter & Paul March 30, 2001 to April 12, 2002	Strengthen a juvenile justice probation center in Timisoara that finds community-based alternatives to incarceration, especially probation, for youth between the ages of 12 and 18. Development aftercare programs and treatment plans for juveniles on probation.	Seminars conducted in juvenile justice reform. Community Team created to work on the issue of juvenile justice reform. Family training sessions conducted at the probation center. RASP funds complemented other funding to build and equip a probation home for juveniles including a software system to monitor juvenile crime and delinquency. Number of juveniles incarcerated reduced from 128 to 26 (target 18). Services developed allow young offenders to be punished without being removed from their communities. One hundred per cent of 50 families served "signed on" to their treatment plans. Recidivism rate in Timis County is 30% lower than in Arad, Hunedoara, and Bihor counties. Poor record keeping in the court system prevented being able to significantly reduce the amount of time between arrest and adjudication. The Ministry of Justice accepted 90 % of the project model. The project was widely publicized in the media.	The Master's level program at West Timisoara University developed as a result of the project includes visiting professors from Tiffin University.
9. County of Loudon Virginia – Dept. of Social Services & Romanian Students League April 13, 2001 to May 31, 2002	Support activities that involve Citizen Advisory Boards (CABs) in ways that assist communities to decrease the incidence of domestic violence and child abuse through advocacy, public awareness and training.	CABs established in Prahova and Arges counties. In both counties educational and promotional materials on child abuse were distributed. The Departments of Child Protection in both counties held closing ceremonies for the project activities and developed protocols for continuing the project's work.	The partnership did not continue.

10. For Our Children & The Omni Institute April 24, 2001 to May 31, 2002	Build needs assessment and evaluation skills within the municipalities of Greci and Macin in Tulcea County and Dumbraveni and Gugesti in Vrancea County to diagnose social needs and deliver more effective social services for children and their families.	A social service department was set up and equipped in the town hall of each of the municipalities. Training of all the social referents, secretaries and mayors in social work, foster care, and administration. Creation of a social work methodology for intervention in cases of child abandonment, preventing school abandonment, and establishing criteria for selection of families to receive material aid. Creation of a guide for social services department organization. Abandonment and/or school abandonment was prevented in 99 families with 276 children. The mayors' offices have accepted responsibility to carry out these activities over the longer term.	Pentru Copiii Nostri and the Omni Institute continue to work together on projects for child protection. The project also involved partnership with local government and communities that is ongoing
11. Atlantic States Legal Foundation & Mare Nostrum May 11, 2001 to June 30, 2002	Address the issue of poor management along the Black Sea coastal resorts of Constanta, Mamaia, Eforie, Costinesti and Mangalia. Poor management is manifested in littered beaches along waters made unsafe for human contact due to contamination and human sewage.	Formal written agreements in place to open public information offices in the Environmental Protection Agency and the Romanian National Water Company. Slow in implementation as officials still hesitant to disclose environmental data. Inventory compiled of all relevant legislation for coastal zone environmental planning and management. Legal cases taken up relatively late in the RASP period so outcomes pending at project closure. Public awareness materials completed but not yet distributed at project closure.	The partnership was a difficult one so did not sustain. However, Mare Nostrum is using what it learned about partnership from the experience in new partnerships.

12. Auburn University & Composesorat Zetea July 6, 2001 to March 31, 2003	Establish a pilot activity in Zetea addressing the needs of approximately 2,500 owners of recently privatized forestland. Prepare forest management plans using a member-participation approach and educate members about appropriate management of forestlands.	Community meetings held for stakeholder input to develop a management plan and provide a basis for setting targets. First steps made toward a public awareness and education campaign on natural resources management including submitting a proposal for a youth education program, and establishing a relationship of Auburn and CompoZ with Transylvania University at Brasov to exchange and receive information. Advocated for early completion of a cadastral registry. Legal review of Romanian forestry legislation. Began a marketing plan for non-timber products such as forest fruits, medicinal herbs, and mushrooms. Scoping analysis whose data will be used to make a plan for forest certification. Two hundred thousand seedlings sown (target 10,000) that will be re-planted on reforestation sites.	Auburn has background in areas useful to CompoZ and interest in continuing the partnership. However, further activities are contingent upon obtaining funding.
13. Romanian Meat Association & American Association of Meat Processors July 9, 2001 to July 8, 2002	Increase market share, sales and profits of member companies through production of a consistently higher quality of meat product and improved marketing and promotion via a quality seal well known to customers.	The lab was set up and is functioning at full capacity. The membership is confident in the quality of and timeliness of lab results. Have set standards for all meat product categories. All participating establishments are well designed and observe hygiene and food safety regulations. All samples tested meet Romanian Meat Association standards.	The relationship between the partners preceded the RASP sub-grant and continues on. Communications are ongoing through e-mail, newsletter, and manuals. The U.S. partner tries to visit Romania when opportunities present themselves.

14. Brigham & Women's Hospital & Romanian Society for Emergency & Disaster Medicine Aug. 16, 2001 to July 31, 2003	Create collaboration for technical and academic assistance to develop a Romanian emergency medical system infrastructure to decrease morbidity and mortality in Romania. Identify current situation of emergency medicine, develop a superior system for the treatment of emergencies and disasters, establish protocols for treatment of trauma, and develop techniques and standards for air rescue and air transfer.	National strategy and physician training protocols for emergency medical management finalized and in print. Standards and training curricula for emergency medical physicians formulated and two publications finalized. Two leadership forums to set out national strategies and place emergency medicine in the frontline of policymakers held. Emergency transfers and flight protocols developed. Eighty trainers trained who have provided education to 700 further participants.	Brigham & Women's Hospital assisted Romanian Society for Emergency & Disaster Medicine obtain a grant from GRASP. Both partners continue to work together to develop emergency medical management in Romania.
15. American Soybean Association & Romanian Poultry Breeders Association Sept. 5, 2001 to Sept. 30, 2002	Introduce American feed formulation techniques for use by the Romanian poultry producers as a tool to simultaneously achieve production efficiencies and lower production and labor cost. Improve the quality of Romanian poultry while making it more affordable for Romanian consumers through greater production efficiencies and lower production costs.	Use of soy feed resulted in a 5-7% savings for broiler diets and 4-8% for layer and breeder diets. Brill Multiblend Software purchased by five poultry companies. Seminar attendance averaged 90% above those invited. Increased understanding of poultry nutritional needs and poultry disease control with handbooks produced on each of these topics. Understanding of the need for soybeans and their products caused significant increase in importing U.S. soybean product and equipment. Romanian Poultry Breeders Association membership increased from 109 to 126. Project targeted larger companies meant to set an example for medium and small companies.	American Soybean Association trainings are a marketing tool and these marketing efforts continue through the Romanian Poultry Breeders' Association.

16. Mount Vernon Nazarene College & Veritas Foundation Sept. 26, 2001 to Sept. 30, 2002	Provide educational opportunities for youth in Sighisoara to provide them with life enhancement skills, encourage them to develop and express their own opinions, and offer opportunities to make a difference through community volunteerism and unified action.	Twenty-nine training courses/activities with 218 participants (target 18 courses, 160 participants) including computers, social issues (substance abuse, sex education, family planning), small business development, and English. For high school students a theatre group, theatre, and a youth café. Youth café patronage low so to be converted to an internet café. At end small business status was international café ready to open, carpentry workshop set up, looking to extend desktop publishing out of house, and a tour guide service operating in the summer. A micro-farm worked out less well. Community newspaper stalled but expected in the future. Two community action projects, one to protest the Dracula Park, and the second an NGO and cultural festival to bring the NGOs themselves and the community together.	The working U.S. partner was the Romanian Studies Program of Mount Vernon Nazarene College. The Romanian Studies Program became independent of Mount Vernon Nazarene College. However, it is based in Sighisoara and continues to work with Veritas Foundation.

17. Hospice "Casa Sperantei" & National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization Sept. 26, 2001 to Sept. 30, 2002	Provided training for the commissioning of Romania's first in-patient hospice in Brasov as a model for replication in other counties. Develop, publish, and distribute national standards for palliative care services to both health authorities and health care professionals.	The in-patient hospice is up and running. Will operate at full capacity with completion of practical training of the last of the staff. Physicians from other parts of the country trained along side the hospice physicians. Fifth National Conference of ANIP (National Association of Palliative Care) attracted 111 participants. Suggestions for changes to the Law of Health Services to include palliative care submitted that were accepted by the Ministry of Health after the close of RASP funding. Next step is to have them entered into the law.	Hospice Casa Sperantei has ongoing relationships and contact with members of National Hospice & Palliative Care members most notably a three-member team from the University of Wisconsin. This team is providing expertise in governmental lobbying techniques as applied Romania's law on opioids. Overall there is an ongoing exchange of informative materials, access to conferences, workshop participation and elaboration of internal hospice materials. Post-RASP, the movement for palliative care continues with five new centers either open or set to open.
18. Recovery Resources & Blue Cross of Romania Sept. 26, 2001 to Oct. 31, 2002	To add outpatient services to the existing inpatient services for the treatment of persons with substance abuse disorders in Sibiu and surrounding areas. Facilitate treatment for populations such as young employed persons and mothers with young children.	Outpatient center opened. Intake assessment tools and information provided. Workshops conducted on intensive outpatient treatment model and step-by-step therapist's tool kit translated. Peer supervision system in place. Materials on integration of family and community in treatment translated although obtaining family involvement is challenging. Pre-treatment, aftercare, and relapse prevention protocols in place. Networking to approach addiction from a broad perspective taking place. Pamphlets and books being distributed as part of public awareness activities. Steps taken to try and establish Alcoholics Anonymous in Sibiu.	One-year renewable letter of agreement signed effective November 1, 2002 outlining the roles of each partner. Purpose is consultation, fundraising, and trips to Cleveland (finances permitting). Recovery Resources has raised funds from the Romanian-American community in Cleveland for Blue Cross of Romania.

19. The Lift Foundation & Reaching Out Oct. 16, 2001 to Dec. 31, 2002	Prevent the exploitation of young girls by the commercial sex trade. Includes NGO training and capacity building, promoting public awareness and prevention areas, educating at-risk youth, developing standards and framework for community response, and providing direct services to victims of trafficking.	A Building Capacity and Shelter Management Conference highlighting best practices held. Anti-trafficking publicity materials developed and distributed. Twenty-two prevention seminars in seven cities for girls in grades 6-12. Teachers trained in anti-trafficking education. Ten media events to heighten public awareness and positively portray its victims were held. Included radio and TV interviews and a press conference. Standards for establishing shelters completed and distributed to relevant agencies. To be used in government shelters when they're established. Shelter and re-integration services for 27 girls.	The partnership received a second RASP sub-grant.

20. Pro Vobis Volunteer Center & Points of Light Foundation Oct. 18, 2001 to Dec. 31, 2002	Establish volunteer centers in Ramnicu Valcea and Zalau. Includes training and mobilizing volunteers to participate in social and economic development activities benefiting these two communities.	The volunteer centers in Ramnicu Valcea and Zalau were both established and continue to function with the one in Zalau being the more successful. Zalau logged over 3000 volunteer hours and Valcea 1400. Zalau recruited 125 volunteers and Valcea 80. In Zalau 18 volunteers are regularly involved in center activities and 60 were placed and regularly participate in other institutions. Five and 60 for Valcea. In Zalau 55 volunteers contributed at least 50 hours in 2002. In Valcea, 40 volunteers. Volunteer management training sessions held in both locations. Website (www.voluntariat.ro) Zalau obtained 100% of resources necessary for 2003 operations. Valcea enough to cover the basics. Not successful in forming Advisory Boards although groups of community members are informally providing the function.	The partnership received a second RASP sub-grant.

21. Institute for Sustainable Communities & Clubul Ecologic "Transilvania" Nov. 15, 2001 to March 31, 2003	Adapt a community development approach in a collection of small communes in Huedin, Cluj County involving all elements of communities (local government, business, NGOs and citizens) to jointly address community economic and environmental problems through active citizen engagement.	Institute for Sustainable Communities' ENGAGE model translated into Romanian. Distributed to Clubul Ecologic partners and other interested NGOs. Two public forums attended by 120 people. Communities assisted to prepare detailed implementation plans reflecting community interests. Five communities received grants of $5,000 and then implemented the plans. Small grants of $100 to $300 received by 13 communities. Project served as a model and pilot. Process documented and disseminated. Four organizations in Transylvania to work together to replicate the experiences with non-USAID funding.	The partnership received a second RASP sub-grant.
22. B'nai B'rith International & Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania Oct. 28, 2002 to Jan. 31, 2004	Establish a database for two inter-related functions: a community archive and a heritage trail. The archive will eventually include 300 entries on Romanian Jewry. The heritage trail will label 100 sites of interest in Bucharest and Iasi for driving or walking tours that can be downloaded and printed onto handout maps.	Website (www.romanianjewish.org) created that includes a bi-lingual trail for 20 Romanian towns. Free newsletter with 145 recipients. Database with 5200 entries (target 2000 entries). Romanian Jewish Heritage Foundation and a U.S. based foundation both registered. Minority outreach conference held. Interactive CD-ROM on Romanian Jewish Cultural History completed, DVD of conference proceedings and printed version completed although copies for distribution not completed by RASP project end.	The intention is that the partnership will continue through the two new organizations (one Romanian, one U.S.) created during the project. It is not presently clear as to whether or not this will actually work out.

23. Pro Democracy Association & IRIS Center of the University of Maryland Dec. 2, 2002 to Jan. 31, 2004	Assess implementation of Romania's Freedom of Information Act, make recommendations to government and public authorities regarding how to strengthen implementation as a result of testing, and demonstrate to the public the usefulness of the law by putting to use the information gained through information requests.	Survey of 884 public authorities to get information on respective public information offices. Tested responses to public information requests. Results compiled into a report released via 21 press conferences held throughout the country.	The partnership is seeking funding for a joint project to monitor the transparency law 544/2001. The common missions and interests of the two partners bode well for an on-going relationship.
24. Humana Foundation & ACASA Foundation Dec. 18, 2002 to Dec. 31, 2003	Develop a community-based mechanism and strategic plan for the decentralization of public health services in Salaj County for potential replication in other counties. Outcomes are a strategic plan for the decentralization of the county's public health services, actual decentralization of one function of the public health care system, and education and cross training of local representatives in group planning and health care decentralization models so that the process can be replicated.	Methodology and strategic plan for decentralization not achieved. A firm philosophical base and general desired outcomes established for the plan. However, were not able to detail how to reach to goals before the end of RASP funding. Thus, the decentralization of one public health function did not take place.	The partnership will continue developing the decentralization plan and present it at a conference in Bucharest later in 2004. Humana maintains an interest in helping to create a Healthy Cities Network in Romania of which Salaj county would be a participant.

25. The Lift Foundation & Reaching Out Feb. 5, 2003 to Dec. 31, 2003	Follow-on to the first Reaching Out/Lift Foundation RASP sub-grant. Direct services to victims to facilitate their reintegration into society, consolidate into one location to include the shelter and an onsite workshop, strengthen links with the community and local agencies assisting disadvantaged youth, and create onsite vocational training to encourage the economic independence of the young women and to promote sustainability of Reaching Out.	Shelter to provide housing for 12 trafficking victims with an attached workshop for vocational training completed. The workshop producing bed linens partially functioning with four young women working and earning a small wage. Fifty eight percent of clients (target 65%) stayed in program three months or longer, 73% (target 50%) of those staying three months or longer were employed or in school, and 57% (target 50%) left the program with savings equivalent to one month's wage. Including orphanage graduates in the vocational training program is still to be realized.	Lift Foundation has provided Reaching Out with $20,000 for 2004. Lift is helping Reaching Out to find further funding, to find more grant research and writing opportunities in Romania, and will facilitate the participation of Reaching Out staff in training opportunities in Romania.
26. Foundation for Community Support & The Doe Fund Feb. 12, 2003 to Dec. 31, 2003	Prepare an action plan for Bacau's Roma community designed to improve their housing situation. Prepare local authorities, Roma leadership and beneficiaries to work together to permanently close the gap between the housing of the impoverished Roma and the housing of the majority population by mobilizing stakeholders through short-term neighborhood and housing improvement.	Task force comprised of government representatives, Roma representatives, and partnership staff identified three neighborhoods in which improvement projects were conducted. At end of RASP funding task force agreed that it would continue. Neighborhood residents participated in all aspects of project work including identifying problems to be addressed and carrying out actions to solve them. An unanticipated outcome was a dramatic increase in school attendance.	The Doe Fund representative is personally committed to Bacau greatly contributing to the continuation of the partnership, and the likelihood of a long collaboration.

27. Veritas Foundation & Cornerstone University March 14, 2003 to Jan. 31, 2004	Establish the foundation for a community-wide response to domestic violence in Sighisoara and surrounding villages. Includes raising public awareness, developing the capacity of Romanian public and private institutions to develop concrete approaches to address the problem, deliver targeted training to key leaders, strengthen community-wide ownership of the problem, and initiate a hotline and safe places for victims of violence.	Public awareness campaign through brochures and locals media resulted in 85 requests for services. Services provided included psychological counseling, legal counseling, social work interventions, support in court appearances, and shelter. Fifteen community task force members selected and trained. Forty social workers, psychologists, teachers, legal professionals and doctors trained in domestic violence. Domestic violence curriculum developed and library created. Domestic violence awareness and prevention website set up. Part time hotline set-up (goal is 24 hour hotline).	The partners have a formal commitment for at least one more year with the intent to build a relationship that will last longer. Worked jointly on fundraising ideas and have some local commitment for meeting ongoing needs.
28. Community Mediation and Safety Center & Victim Offender Mediation Association March 25, 2003 to Jan. 31, 2004	Establish a network of three conflict resolution centers in the Moldavian region to address family, community, and workplace conflicts, and strengthen conflict mediation services through building NGO capacity, creating public awareness of the need for mediation services, and completing the documentation needed to establish a new law on mediation.	Centers established in Roman, Botosani, and Suceava. Twenty-seven service providers trained in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) techniques. Eleven trainers of mediators trained. Launched first promotional ADR media campaign. Video clip broadcast on five TV channels. Workgroup formed to draft and lobby for ADR law. Law drafted and submitted with lobbying efforts ongoing after RASP closure.	Planned future joint activities include linking Romanian mediators to U.S. mediators on a person-to-person basis through VOMA. And to establish common international standards, code of ethics, and a certification process for ADR practitioners and educators.

29. Social Alternatives Association & MiraMed Institute April 1, 2003 to Dec. 31, 2003	Build a coalition of NGOs committed to preventing trafficking of young women and strengthening the capacity of NGO coalition members to administer their own counter-trafficking awareness campaigns.	Regional Coalition of with seven NGOs formed each representing one county in the Moldavian Region. An NGO in an eighth county expresses interest and thus at the conclusion of RASP funding eight NGOs signed a collaboration protocol. Two training workshops resulted in an awareness campaign from 10 September to 17 October 2003. Total of 64,406 pieces of materials, including posters, wall calendars, t-shirts, brochures, passport inserts, mouse pads, plastic bags, banners, and pens, divided for regional distribution. Each member organized educational sessions in schools, placement centers, unemployment agencies, dormitories and maternal centers as well as major public activities such as marches, poster contests, radio and TV talk shows, disco parties and dance and volleyball contests with local journalists invited to all events. A toll-free helpline from 10 September to 30 October received 1,631 calls, 20% on how to find safe work abroad. Campaign reached 66.41% of the regions population and 35.7% of its young women between 14-25.	Social Alternatives Association plans to continue communications with MiraMed Institute so as to take advantage of its expertise in prevention education for institutionalized children, embassy training, training for border police and local authorities, and alternative education programming such as street theatre and classroom drama.

30. Institute for Sustainable Communities & Clubul Ecologic "Transilivania" July 2, 2003 to Jan. 31, 2004	Follow-on to first RASP sub-grant Also to complement, enhance, and make more sustainable the rural development activities taking place through funding by the Mott Foundation. Includes training to enhance the capacity of citizen leaders and public officials in three new micro-regions (for a total of four participating micro-regions) of Cluj County; increase implementation funding for concrete, realistic projects identified and supported by community members; capture and disseminate lessons learned; and assist Romanian NGOs in implementing community action projects.	TOT training for 10 NGO partners. Community leadership training for 13 elected officials, municipal staff and NGO partners. Workshop on integrated rural tourism for members of tourism industry. Four Community Forums to select micro-projects and improve on project design (30 to 50 participants each). Twenty-four sub-grants in 14 communes totaling $12,000 (with $12,000 match from Charles Stewart Mott Foundation). Projects included road repair, restoring community centers, constructing playgrounds, rehabilitating recreational facilities, constructing wells, and promoting rural tourism. Prepared Participants Guide, Trainers Handbook, and overhead presentation on "Enhancing Community Leadership Skills" in Romanian and English.	Plan to continue to pursue joint funding opportunities. Clubul Ecologic Transilvania continues as a member of Institute for Sustainable Communities' partnership group. A staff member of Institute for Sustainable Communities was asked to serve on Clubul Ecologic Transilvania's board.

31. Pro Vobis Volunteer Center & Points of Light Foundation July 15, 2003 to Jan. 31, 2004	Develop corporate/employee volunteerism as a means of increasing the involvement of the business community in addressing societal injustices in their communities. Build Pro Vobis' capacity to develop corporate/employee volunteerism, prepare an action plan to develop this volunteerism, prepare in information clearinghouse on corporate volunteerism in Romania, and establish several Romanian companies as corporate volunteerism models for replication.	Completed five printed and online publications. Developed a corporate volunteerism website (www.win-win.ro) to be posted after the RASP funding period. An online history of corporate volunteerism in Romania completed and to be posted as part of the website. A set of case studies completed and submitted to the respective companies for their approval. Information sent to 250 companies as well as Chambers of Commerce on the corporate volunteerism program. Strategic plan completed. Five experts in corporate volunteerism developed. Found that cultivating corporate relationships is intensive and time-consuming thus were not able to establish the necessary relationships to implement the corporate volunteer projects by the end of RASP. Added a Corporate Volunteer Day in order to help solicit corporate interest resulting in five corporate expressions of interest. Press releases issued that did not generate the anticipated interest by the press. Part time PR expert hired to provide the necessary skills to successfully obtain media coverage.	Collaboration has been largely by e-mail, which will be easy to continue. Points of Light provided Pro Vobis information and contacts to an Open Society Institute scholar who will join the team as a volunteer for one year. Committed to seeing through together the activities planned for the corporate volunteer project that were not completed during the RASP sub-grant period.

32. National Center for Sustainable Development & Environment Law Institute July 21, 2003 to Jan. 31, 2004	Increase public participation in the decision-making process for local sustainable development, and build local capacity to identify, design, and implement priority community development initiatives in Medias and Sighisoara.	Two roundtables and partners meetings held in each of the two participating communities in preparation for picking partners and preparing proposals. Media coverage accompanied these activities. Support gained from both mayors. Medias' identified priority was a nature reserve. Sighisoara's environmental lobbying, legal actions, and management of protected areas. Targeted training in each community on sustainable development projects. Grant of $9,000 awarded to a partnership of four NGOs to carry out the activity in Medias. In Sighisoara one NGO awarded $4,500 to develop Serches Lake and a second NGO awarded $4,500 for "Adopt an Oak" program.	Intend to pursue further joint funding.

ANNEX 1

Building and Managing Partnerships

Lessons Learned from the Romanian-American Partnership Program (RASP)

Managed by World Learning

An Assessment and Guide

February 23, 2004

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Executive Summary

This is an assessment/guide that records lessons learned from the Romanian-American Sustainable Partnerships (RASP) program and presents the material in a user-friendly way. The purpose is to encourage project officers to think more deeply about partnerships as a development instrument and to be selective in the design and selection of this mechanism. Key questions are: What are the characteristics of a successful partnership? What are the instruments that can be used to make partnerships successful? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a partnership?

The RASP program was designed to build US/Romanian partnerships and to support the USAID Mission's country program. The approach used projects to test the viability of a relationship. Core insights included: the importance of the grant-making process in building relationships; the fact that capacity to partner improves regardless of whether the project is a success; the value of project money as a "carrot" that motivates organizations to build partnerships; the value of joint project implementation as the best way to test a partnership; the importance of physical proximity and periodic contact; the insight that partnerships seek their own direction and are difficult to manage against pre-established goals; and the lesson that American non-profits rarely have the funds to continue a relationship.

"Partnering" is a buzzword that means different things to different people. Normally, the concept means durability, mutual benefit or synergy, and a balance of power and influence. Partnership projects often involve finding the right balance between a focus on building the partnership and getting results from the partnership.

Key factors that tend to make partnerships successful include time and commitment, joint working experience, transparency and openness, organizational "fit", compatible goals and objectives, and physical presence and awareness.

Obstacles to partnering may be *external* – factors outside of the control of the participants (such as unfriendly laws), or *internal* - factors that can be addressed in project design. The chief financial obstacle is a lack of funds to keep the relationship alive. In general, RASP participants were not willing to make additional financial contributions beyond the life of the project. The difficult issue for a USAID project officer is to determine the level of subsidy that will ensure that the prospective collaborators have had a full opportunity to develop a relationship. There is a risk on counting on American PVOs to dedicate scarce discretionary income to building overseas partnerships. In the long run, if more and stronger partnerships are to develop, Romanian groups need to augment and diversify their local funding base while moving away from dependence on USAID and other donors. This will necessitate the development in Romania of a culture of philanthropy and charitable giving and an institutional and legislative structure to perpetuate these habits and practices.

With regard to organizational constraints, partnering difficulties are more frequent between large and small organizations, between organizations from different sectors, between single purpose advocacy groups, between organizations that raise funds from the same sources and between organizations with radically different management styles.

With regard to community and local government partnerships: skills that are learned from working with an overseas collaborator are skills that are broadly translatable to local conditions; inclusion of diverse stakeholders that can represent and speak for a variety of constituent groups is critical to the success of a community partnership.

Local government partnerships raise special issues: Will the partnership become a dependency relationship? Does the NGO have the necessary maturity and management ability? Is there a climate of antagonism toward NGOs that will undermine the relationship? Will the partnership with local government compromise the NGO's ability to raise funds from other sources? Particularly if the NGO is an advocacy organization, will it be able to continue its other programs while at the same time entering into a cooperative agreement with the government?

With respect to sustainability, USAID efforts should focus on helping to transfer US fund-raising know-how to local NGOs. This will help local NGO's from needing to depend on cash transfers from the US partner. US fund-raising techniques, attitudes, and positive "can-do" values were transmitted in some of the partnerships under RASP and appeared to have a positive and sustainable impact. These efforts should be increased.

Some partnerships that should not continue are kept alive by donors although they have no impact. Too much donor (subsidized) assistance can obscure a hard-headed assessment of the value of the partnership.

Practical tools for building partnerships

Partnerships have advantages and disadvantages. They can take advantage of comparative strengths and weaknesses, increase scale of effort, tap new resources, and bridge cultural, political, and ideological differences.

They can also be expensive, time-consuming, and an immense waste of organizational time and resources. What is most important is that the project officer thinks about partnerships as a deliberate instrument and attempt to tailor the partnership to the particular issue they are trying to address.

Partnerships may be a good instrument when you want to: influence policy; increase scale; expand market share; transfer technology or "know-how"; establish a positive image or reputation; transfer attitudes or values.

Partnerships may <u>not</u> be a good instrument when you want to: build the individual management capacity of one or both partnerships; provide additional revenue to the local organization.

Also, be careful about using partnerships in the following situations: organizations led by strong, charismatic, highly self-confident leaders; US groups that want to establish a foreign "presence"; cases where USAID wants to establish tight control over progress and outcomes.

The Assessment/guide suggests that USAID project officers should encourage partners to be clear and specific about the purpose and intent of their partnership; ask them to draft a letter of commitment and intent; make sure the two boards of directors have reviewed and approved this document; be willing to pay for headquarters visits and joint conferences; encourage partners to specify the monetary contributions that each will make.

USAID support should be structured to establish a balance of power and influence. Whenever possible, make the grant to the local group. Both organizations should prepare an action plan detailing their roles and responsibilities before they begin which will help them work together and avoid inflated expectations. An initial planning session can facilitate the future relationship as can face-to-face exchange. These meetings should occur early in the process and funding should be set aside specifically for this activity.

The partnering process will be improved if both organizations have a solid strategic plan and a clear and broadly shared consensus regarding goals and organizational mission. If these are not in place, USAID should consider inclusion of funds in the grant agreement to support and facilitate this process.

USAID should ensure that both executive directors are personally committed to the partnership. Headquarters visits are important and funds should be set aside for this purpose. It will also help if primary responsibility for the maintenance of the relationship is located in the office of the President or CEO. Particularly in larger organizations, it is important that both designate a partner "champion" who truly believes in the importance of the relationship.

USAID should be receptive to variation and encourage adaptability. Partnerships will often not stick to the same course and flexibility will encourage innovative thinking and joint problem solving. In many of the partnerships visited, the final relationship was quite different than the one initially planned. While in many projects, drastic changes can reflect poor performance, in partnerships drastic changes are often a sign of positive growth.

If partnership relations cannot adapt, they will come apart. Do not administer grant agreements rigidly. Large goals should remain similar, but tactics can alter. As with RASP, indicators should be grant-or project-specific.

A. Background

There is a link between the depth and number of exchanges and partnerships between Romania and the United States and the increasingly rapid integration of Romania into Western structures and practices. Since 1989, many American groups and individuals have shown a great deal of interest in Romania. There are more than one hundred US voluntary initiatives currently assisting Romania, many of which have existed for five years or longer, especially in the child welfare area.

Beginning in May, 2000, the USAID Mission in Romania initiated a mechanism for supporting partnerships between Romanian and American not-for-profit organizations. This initiative, the Romanian-American Sustainable Partnerships (RASP) program, was implemented by World Learning under a Cooperative Agreement.

The purpose of this activity was two-fold.

- First, by building Romanian-American partnerships, the RASP program was designed to increase civil society development and to help Romania become more integrated into the larger community of developed countries.

- Second, it was hoped that RASP sub-grants would support USAID/Romania's country program by filling in the gaps among several strategic objectives.

Finally, it was anticipated that RASP would build the institutional capacity of participants, thus advancing the prospects for longer-term financial viability of the sector.

The model, the approach, and the candid recognition of mixed results suggests that RASP could constitute a valuable case study pertinent to similar partnering efforts in ~~other~~ Romania and other countries.[1]

B. Project History and Description

RASP was comprised of thirty-two sub-grants with a total USAID funding contribution of $2.7 million, with sub-grantees making a cost-share contribution of an estimated $3.2 million. US partner organizations from seventeen states and the District of Columbia participated, and activities were implemented in more than 20 of the country's 41 counties.

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[1] While "partnerships" and "partnering" are given a great deal of rhetorical emphasis in the USAID literature and the terms are ubiquitous in virtually all of the Agency's policy pronouncements, there are relatively few activities focused expressly on forging partnership relations between development oriented organizations in the United States and transitional and/or developing countries. The important exception is the work being done under the Global Development Alliance. However, these efforts focus principally on building bilateral partnerships between USAID and a private sector entity such as the Gates Foundation. In the case of RASP, the Agency acts in a trilateral fashion as facilitator to catalyze and nurture independent partnerships.

The program provided sub-grants in areas such as: community-based services for children and their families; services to disabled children; decentralization of health services; industrial park development; treatment and counseling for children with HIV/AIDS and their families; development of emergency medicine protocols; development of hospice management standards; prevention of domestic violence and substance abuse; strengthening of business associations; beach beautification and tourism promotion; juvenile justice; prevention of trafficking of young women; forestry management; environmental protection; community empowerment; ethnic minority relations; and family/community mediation.

The RASP program was implemented in three rounds over a three-and-a-half-year period. Sub-grants were awarded on the basis of mutual benefit, a mutual commitment of resources, and the likelihood that the partnership would continue after USAID funding had ended. Joint proposal preparation was required and proposed activities were to fit broadly within USAID priority areas. Grants were reviewed on an as-ready rolling basis.

The RASP program was extremely popular, and roughly five concept papers and/or applications were received for every award. On the basis of interviews with approximately half of the recipients, most felt that the program was well managed and few, if any, voiced complaints regarding administrative oversight from either World Learning or USAID.

The evolution and activity of the RASP program is amply recorded in an excellent series of quarterly reports prepared by World Learning. These documents are direct, candid, and in-depth, and provide an evaluative picture of the project and the successes and difficulties that were faced. In addition, a series of workshops synthesized much of the experience under RASP and went far toward identifying the key components of successful partnering. This Report draws heavily on this prior material.

C. Purpose of Assessment/Guide

This report constitutes an assessment/guide, not an evaluation. The Mission is interested in gaining insights from RASP in order to shape strategies for maximizing the success of partnership activities in the future. To do so, the assessment/guide looks at the RASP model and approach, at the organizations and projects that were supported, and at the partnerships that were formed in order to identify lessons that would provide insight into how strong and effective partnerships might be forged in future programs.

The integrating questions addressed by this assessment are:

- *What are the dynamics and characteristics of a successful partnership?*
- *What tools or instruments can be employed to make partnerships successful?*
- *What are the advantages and disadvantages of using a partnership instrument?*

This assessment is written informally and is intended to be used as a practical guide for those interested in building and supporting partnerships. Much of the project description and lengthy background material that is usually set forth in an evaluation has been eliminated or shortened. Each of the central sections includes a **Key Points!** which are consolidated in Appendix A. Although the assessment employs examples and case studies, the names of the participants and organizations are shielded in order to allow a higher degree of candor.

The substantive portion of the assessment is divided into eight parts, as follows:

1. The RASP Model: Basic Lessons (Part E)
2. What is a "partnership"? (Part F)
3. What are the factors that make a successful partnership? (Part G)
4. What are the obstacles to a successful partnership? (Part H)
5. Local government and community-based partnerships. (Part I)
6. Financial sustainability. (Part J)
7. Practical tools for building partnerships. (Part K)
8. Using Partnerships as a development instrument. (Part L)

Partnerships are complex and characterized by ambiguity and occasional paradox. *This assessment does not attempt to offer rigid guidelines or simple solutions. In most cases the discussion points constitute approximations or probable correlations as opposed to solutions.*

The ultimate purpose of the assessment/guide is to encourage project officers to think more deeply about partnerships as a development instrument and to be selective in the design and selection of this mechanism.

D. Methodology

The assessment/guide was prepared by two consultants, one American and one Romanian. A World Learning (WL) staff member also provided important support during the process. In addition, the Romanian desk officer and the local CTO traveled with the team, participated in the interviews, and provided invaluable insights.

Interviews were conducted with a cross-section of RASP sub-grantees in order to be able to extract lessons learned. The sample included partnerships that worked very well; some that did not work so well; and some that, after a troublesome start, later overcame their difficulties.

Interviews were loosely structured around questions set forth in an interview guide (see appendix B). The interviews were purposefully designed to align with the unique experience of the sub-grantees, and the discussions were adaptive. Much of the material set forth in the assessment is qualitative and based on the views and opinions of interviewees.

E. The RASP model.

Key Points!

- *The grant making process (i.e. the announcement, application, review, award, etc.) can itself have a positive impact on the attitudes, procedures and program priorities of recipients. A professionally managed grant making process encourages the growth of professionalism among recipients.*

- *Regardless of whether an individual grant was successful in accomplishing an activity objective, recipients of RASP grants learned a lot about partnering and how to build and manage partnership relations. In some cases, a problematic collaboration was more educational than an easy success.*

- *The availability of grant funds is a powerful incentive to stimulate a search for new partners. The best way to encourage insular NGOs to reach out to offshore partners is to offer money to finance joint projects.*

- *In a related vein, working through the nuts and bolts of joint implementation of a project is the single best way to test the viability of a relationship.*

- *Physical proximity and day-to-day contact between two partners is very important, particularly when the local group is small and organizationally weak. Despite modern communication technology, face to face contact is essential at the beginning of a relationship.*

- *Once established, partnerships tend to seek their own direction and to deviate from their original objectives. This is a healthy process of maturation but it means that donors will have to be tolerant of change and allow flexibility in the relationship if it is to be successful.*

- *It can be a serious mistake to assume that a US group will continue to fund a partnership after project money disappears. Most American non-profits are severely short of discretionary income and unless the partnership is squarely within their mission, they will lack resources to continue to support it.*

- *On the other hand, many American non-profits are very good at fund raising and can transfer their fund-raising skills and attitudes. In the long run, this is more important*

than the direct transfer of money. In designing partnerships, it is important to emphasize the transfer of fund raising skills and attitudes.

Discussion.

The RASP program was distinctive in five respects:

1. It focused on partnerships as an instrument intended to have a development impact. In other words, there was an explicit recognition that the partnership added a qualitative dimension that would improve the effectiveness of the activity, project or program that was being supported.

2. It emphasized American/Romanian partnerships in order to strengthen the fabric of connections with western organizations and encourage expanded US/NGO presence in Romania.

3. It used joint project implementation to test the viability of a partner relationship.

4. It focused on community projects to improve the prospect of ownership, networking, and sustainability.

5. It was hands-off, focusing on putting the partnership first, i.e.:

- New partnerships were encouraged in order to enrich the range of relationships with US organizations and to encourage innovative collaborations.

- Indicators were project-specific, not program-specific, in order to allow flexibility and to reflect the unique aspects of each relationship.

- Where possible, funds were given to the Romanian group, in order to insure that the focus of activity would be on Romanian needs.

- Considerable advice and assistance were provided to applicants during the project design, grant application, and review process.

- Aside from financial certification, threshold organizational capacities were *not* mandated and extensive training and technical assistance were *not* provided; follow-on grants were relatively rare.

Sub-grantees were asked what they liked and disliked about the RASP approach and whether or not the program was an effective mechanism for forging and strengthening partnership relations. The following key points emerged:

- RASP had a positive impact on partnering that exceeded the 32 sub-grants that were awarded. The project strengthened the legitimacy of partnering as an effective mechanism for organizational development; encouraged many NGOs to search for and explore new relationships; and through hands-on experience deepened the understanding of what it takes to engage in a partnership.

- The impact of RASP on sub-grant participants went beyond the success or failure of the individual partnership. Regardless of whether the immediate relationship was a success, the Romanian groups increased their understanding of how to deal with an offshore partner.

- RASP funding was a powerful incentive to Romanian organizations to search for new partners in those cases where an existing relationship did not exist. (The Internet proved to be invaluable in this regard, and in one case a long-term partnership was identified and an initial relationship established in a single afternoon.)

- RASP underscored the lesson that joint implementation of a project is the single best way to test the viability of a relationship.

- However, RASP could have had a greater success if it had been able to offer capacity-building support at critical times in the evolution of a relationship.

- The physical presence of the American entity was a key factor to success. Partnerships between small, fragile local groups and large overseas organizations that do not have a country presence are not likely to work.

- The RASP emphasis on hands-off facilitation and the use of project money to catalyze a relationship was appropriate. Third-party donors cannot play a directive role in partnership formation.

- The US partner emphasis on participatory local planning was constructively influential in changing the way communities address local issues.

- The transfer of attitudes and new paradigms, particularly with regard to fund-raising and an understanding of the principles of philanthropy, was a significant auxiliary benefit of the RASP program.

- In general, US groups do not have discretionary funds to sustain a partnership relation. This means that a financially sustainable relationship will in the long run have to generate sufficient funds to cover its costs.

F. What is a "Partnership"?

Key Points!

- *"Partnering" is a buzzword that means different things to different people. Use it carefully and try to understand the assumptions that other people are making when they talk about a "partnership".*

- *If the following elements are lacking in a relationship, it is probably not a partnership:*

Durability over a period of time.

Shared decision making in areas of collaboration.

Mutual benefit and added value or "synergy".

An approximate balance of power and influence between the two parties.

Be aware of the difference between the partnership process and the partnership result. Some projects are designed to build partnerships and stop at that point. Other projects are designed to build partnerships in order to accomplish a particular objective. In the first case, primary emphasis should be placed on building the capacity to manage relationships; in the second case primary emphasis should be placed on the technical content of the relationship.

Discussion.

The word "partnership" is overused and frequently misused to apply to all types of relationships that are far from being a "partnership" in any true sense.

In order to identify the factors that are correlated with a successful partnership, it is important to be clear about what is meant by the word and what is expected as a result of success.

When we say, *"It was a good partnership,"* what precisely do we mean?

- **Durability.** In general, when we talk about partnering, there is an implicit assumption that the relationship has withstood a reasonable test of time. This does not mean that the partnership should last forever or that the partners should invest in the relationship simply to keep it going. And there are some single-project partnerships that are immensely effective for a short duration. But most good partnerships that

produce real benefits for both entities involve relations of sufficient duration to ensure that the parties know each other and can work together.[2]

- **Synergy.** The second imbedded principle that underlies the word "partnership" is the concept of synergy. Implicit in any assessment of a partnership that is worth establishing, whether in the commercial or non-profit sector, is the premise that it yields *mutual benefits* and that these benefits exceed the cost of maintaining the relationship — that *the whole of the partnership is thus greater than the sum of the parts.*[3] Since the non-measurable costs of managing a partnership are very high, a relation that does not meet this test acts as a significant drain on both organizations.[4]

- **Equitability.** Although partnership relations are seldom perfectly balanced, in order for most partnerships to function there must be a *perception* of approximately equal influence. The key factor is that both organizations believe that the benefits and costs of the relationship are distributed in roughly equal shares. Even when an organization profits from a relationship, if there is a pervasive belief that the other partner is achieving greater benefit, tensions are likely to arise. This is a complicated area, because within each organization there may be quite different perceptions about the value of the relationship, and it will be very important for the leadership to make it clear that the partnership is important.

- **Shared decision making.** Particularly for not-for-profit organizations and for non-governmental groups (NGOs), the word "partnership" normally conveys an assumption that both parties will *participate in making those decisions that are critical to the success of the joint endeavor.* As a corollary, there is normally an unspoken assumption that the relationship will operate on the basis of transparency, shared information and open communication. Frequently, this set of initial expectations can give way to the rude awakening that only one of the parties has control of the funds, that the distribution of influence and power is far from balanced, that information is not shared and that decision making is centralized. A perception of imbalance can be particularly common in the case of relationships between powerful American groups and indigenous organizations where the American entity begins with the natural advantage of perceived power and expertise. *In an important sense, a "partnership" is only a true partnership if the parties in the relationship* believe *it to be so.*

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[2] The word "durable" is more relevant than sustainable or long-lasting because it implies resiliency and adaptability which tend to be characteristic of partnerships that evolve and adjust over time based on the maturation paths of the participants. Sustainability is of course important and is discussed in Section ___.

[3] The benefits that the partners get may be organizational (e.g. development of human resources, organizational systems, visibility and public relations, new donors, cost cuts) or programmatic (e.g. new services, new markets). Most partnerships supported by RASP have undertaken training activities which have contributed to Romanian partners' developing some of the resources needed for new services. Certain partnerships had an indirect benefit of more strategic organizational development.

[4] An interesting corollary that derives from this observation is that partnerships between dissimilar groups may have a greater potential for impact than partnerships between identical organizations. Of course this risk of failure is also greater but it is important to stress that far from being a disadvantage, differences can make lead to productive partnerships.

G. What are the factors that make a successful partnership?

Key Points!

- ***Time and Commitment.*** *Have you allowed adequate time for this partnership to jell? Have the chief financial officers met and discussed bookkeeping procedures? Have the heads of the two organizations met face to face? Have the two boards of directors endorsed the importance of the partnership? Has the US group had experience in the country? Have the two groups ever engaged in joint planning? Should you consider a small planning grant or an allocation of funds for a headquarters visit?*

- ***Joint working experience.*** *Is there a simple way for these groups to work together on a project? Would the US group be willing contribute funds to experiment with the relationship? Is there another donor that would finance a joint project? Could the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation in Washington provide support?*

- ***Transparency and openness.*** *Have the two groups talked about communication protocols? Do they have a written agreement and an established set of principles regarding the sharing of information? Do they raise money from the same donor and, if so, have they talked about how to handle this potential conflict? Have the partners talked about exchanging salary information? Information on overhead rates?*

- ***Fit.*** *Do these groups complement each other or do they simply duplicate skills? Have they openly talked about complementarities so they both know how to tap this potential?*

- ***Goals and objectives.*** *Are long-term institutional goals compatible? If the goals are similar, what about the means of achieving them? Is the value of the benefits to each organization roughly the same? Will the two partners know how to measure the costs and benefits of the relationship?*

- ***Presence and awareness.*** *Do the two groups know how to work together? Do they have adequate personal contact at the right levels within the organization? Is there an important language barrier? Are differences in size and structure an impediment to cooperation? Is the framework for cooperation clearly spelled out?*

Discussion.

While we have a reasonably coherent image of what a successful partnership is, it is more difficult to isolate those factors that *cause it to come into being* or that *influence its long-term success.* This is in part because there are so many internal and external variables and in part because several of these are qualitative or inherently subjective. While there is no definitive list of the conditions or organizational qualities that must be in place to improve the prospects that a brief encounter will lead to a long-term constructive partnership, the RASP project provides us with some useful markers. These are the "markers" that project officers and chiefs of party should look for, emphasize, or include when designing and awarding a partnership grant.

- **Adequate time for courtship to occur.** While intuitively self-evident, it is often difficult for USAID to appreciate the importance of gradualism in a relationship and the importance of building in adequate time for the relationship to jell and find its optimal configuration. Virtually all of the Romanian grantees under RASP alluded to inadequate time to build a strong relationship and fully understand the skills, procedures and practices of their American partner. While added time is not a sufficient condition to ensure the emergence of a viable partnership, it is almost always necessary for two entities to go through an exploration process where they familiarize themselves with the skills, systems, attitudes and values of the other organization. If this is not done there is a high probability for misunderstanding and poor communication. The importance of adequate time raises a difficult dilemma for the project officer. In virtually all partnership programs supported by USAID, the twin purpose is to build the relationship *and* to have a meaningful impact project impact. But these two goals may be in conflict. While partnership building often requires extended time, ~~while~~ program impact and results often demands speed.

Example: A US medical college with a research interest in pediatric medicine developed a rudimentary knowledge of Romania's medical system. They identified a geographic area where they might work and a qualified professional medical service with which they might partner with. Exploratory discussions were held with city officials and a needs assessment was conducted. A second set of discussions was held with the NGO community. A proposal was developed, reviewed by the board of the college and endorsed. Joint activities started slowly and modestly with a small education program. Later the relationship was expanded to include joint management of a clinic. The maturation process took about 3 years. Progress was tentative and cautious and based on a deepening understanding of the unique characteristics of each organization. Today the two organizations jointly manage a fully integrated program. The benefits of the partnership flow both ways: Romania benefits from top quality health care while US students get the kind of experience that they could never get in the US. Because of its relation with a US school, the Romanian NGO has been able to attract significant contributions from various US drug companies.

The CEO's of these two organizations describe the partnership in this way:

"We work together. We make joint decisions about therapy. We talk problems over as partners and try to arrive at some joint decision about the best thing to do."

"We are absolutely meticulous about following through on every single commitment we make. It certainly took some time to establish this trust. But as people came to know us, the relationship became very easy. Mutual respect is absolutely critical. For us mutual respect means that everyone is involved in the decision making, that everyone is well informed that all of the work is absolutely transparent."

- **Transparency and openness.** Particularly in the financial area, transparency and the willingness to share information that would often be viewed as proprietary is a small but very important ingredient to a good partnership relation. This can be particularly difficult in the case of US/overseas partnerships because of the large salary differentials and the disparities in overhead rates. While it is generally not necessary to reveal this information when collaborating on a single project, a long-term functioning partnership agreement will generally require that both parties integrate their financial data in order to work together.

Example. A partnership was developed at the initiative of a US citizen living in Romania. The project was launched with a great deal of enthusiasm. At first, the US partner was instrumental in providing expertise and inspiration and served as a model to the Romanian organization. However, the details of the cost sharing element of the grant had not been fully discussed or understood. There was no written agreement between the two organizations and little face-to-face contact between leaders. When the US organization realized the extent of its obligation, it reached a conclusion that the costs exceeded the benefits and withdrew from the partnership.

- **Clearly differentiated structure of strengths and weaknesses.** At the beginning of a relationship, it is important that at least one partner have a competence or skill that it can provide to the other in order to substantiate a perception that the partnership will provide a long term benefit because it will access new skills or resources. Very often the new skills will be technical but they may include access to new constituents or networks, access to new attitudes and values or membership in a group that will provide certification or professional legitimacy. Sometimes, although rarely, the benefit will involve direct access to a new source of income.

Example. A US university center devoted to freedom of citizen access and a Romanian democracy group worked together to evaluate and publicize the effectiveness of freedom of information legislation. The American group provided the model, technical capacity, and data processing skills to assess the adequacy of government responses to freedom of information requests, while the local group provided the outreach, coverage, and manpower necessary to conduct the study. The result: a hard-hitting and well-publicized report on the differential ability of various municipalities around the country to respond to freedom of information enquiries.

- **Consensus with regard to goals and objectives.** It is obviously important that collaborating organizations agree on project goals if they are to work together on a particular activity. In addition, for a long term relationship to flourish, it is important

that both groups have a *compatible* institutional goals and a *compatible* set of values or organizational culture. This does not mean that both groups have to be identical or support the same programs or have the same mission. In fact, dissimilarities are often the most powerful argument for working together since differences between organizations may increase the likelihood that positive synergies will result. For this reason, it is important to be open to the fact that in a good partnership the benefits to one group may be very different from the benefits to the other.

Example. An American environmental group was motivated to work in Romania not because the intrinsic environmental issues are important on a global scale but because the addition of a subsidiary will augment the capacity of the parent entity, improve its credibility among international donors and deepen its knowledge base. Fundamental values and long term institutional goals are compatible but nevertheless quite different.

- **A clear picture of how both entities will integrate and complement each other.** Opportunities for collaboration can only be exploited when each party has a profile of the programs and competencies of their prospective partner. With regard to cross-border cooperation, this awareness is complicated by distance, language, and cultural barriers and different legislative and legal structures. What may be an obvious area of mutual compatibility to the project officer may be very difficult to discern if you are a small NGO with little technical understanding of the programs supported by your partner.

Example. It was very hard for a small Romanian environmental group to learn how to benefit from a relationship with a large, sophisticated American group. They worked in roughly the same area but the legislative and regulatory context was quite different. The Romanian group felt their partner's program was scattered, confusing and too difficult to understand and that there were too many choices to make in order to work together. This confusion was exacerbated by the fact that the American group did not have adequate understanding of Romanian law and was itself going through a process of strategic re-positioning.

- **Leadership Commitment.** Inevitably, the establishment of a new partnership involves additional costs that will place added pressure on tight budgets. In addition, a new collaboration may be seen as an important change in strategic direction or as an impending re-structuring of the organization with new responsibilities and possible staff reductions. In some cases, the new partner may be viewed by some within the organization not as collaborator but rather as a competitor. Thus, new partnerships frequently generate strong internal opposition that will erode support and undercut the initial enthusiasm for working together. For these reasons, unequivocal leadership support is very important if the new relationship is to mature. Leaders must be clear that they value the relationship, that they are willing to absorb the costs of building it and that they are willing to devote the time and energy to ensuring success.

Example: The US partner is a huge organization with a staff of 300. The CEO did not visit Romania and was either not aware of the partnership grant or felt that it was too small to warrant a significant investment of time. The executive director of the very small 10-member NGO had difficulty locating or obtaining access to top management in the United States and could not obtain the level or quality of service anticipated in the grant agreement. Most of the work in Romania was done by external consultants hired by the US partner organization. Several of the assumptions on which activities were designed were not correct and the US partner viewed their role as providing specified inputs rather than working collaboratively with the local group. The partnership was a disappointment and was not continued.

H. What are the obstacles to a successful partnership?

Key Points!

- *Some obstacles are outside the relationship and beyond the control of the participants, and some are internal and derive from the nature and type of organizations that are partnering.*

- *Projects to support partnering should be designed to remove or minimize both types of obstacles. Project design should carefully identify these obstacles and articulate a strategy to deal with them.*

- *It is difficult for non-profits to find the funds to support international partners. For this to happen, the partnership must be squarely within the mission of the organization and relationship must be an activity that the non-profit can raise money for.*
- *The best way to test a partnership is to provide an opportunity for new partners to work together on a project.*

- *Former partners often claim that lack of funds was the key impediment to continuation of the relationship. In fact, most organizations can find the funds to continue if they make a cost/benefit decision that it is in their interest to do so.*

- *A small infusion of funds for travel or a conference may be critically important to moving a partnership process forward.*

- *When looking at a new partnership, try to spot structural, procedural, or cultural differences that will make cooperation difficult. Ask the partners to talk about these differences and figure out ways to address them.*

- *Keep an eye out for differences in systems or procedures that will complicate communication. Ask partners to be clear with regard to sensitive matters like salary differentials.*

- *Make sure that the two boards of directors have reviewed and approve new partnerships. Consider the possibility of funds for board training or include these resources in project design.*

Discussion.

The obstacles to cross-border partnering can be usefully divided into *external* factors that impinge on the relationship but that are largely outside the control of the cooperating organizations and *internal* factors that emerge from the programs, financial structures, values, and systemic attributes of the two organizations. (By and large, external factors did not appear to significantly influence partnerships formed under the RASP program; however, they are listed here for reference purposes.)

Important *external* factors can include:

- *Legal restrictions* on the operation of foreign organizations including regulations that apply to registration and incorporation, regulations that hinder the transfer of foreign currency, the establishment of bank accounts, and the ownership of property.

- *Statutory differences* in governance practices, particularly with regard to the role and responsibility of the board of directors and the executive director, coupled of course with cultural differences regarding governance, volunteerism, and philanthropy in general.

- Markedly *different policy and legislative approaches to similar problems*, particularly in such areas as environmental protection, education, and health. When national policies are dramatically different, the relevance of shared experience begins to decline.

While external factors should be researched, in general they are far less important to the success of a relationship than the internal influences that derive from attitudes, organizational structure, and the financial condition of the collaborating entities. In none of the partnerships funded by RASP did they constitute an insurmountable barrier.

Internal factors are more complex, more varied, and more qualitative.

Financial Obstacles: In theory, the discontinuation or suspension of a relationship involves a cost/benefit judgment that the value of the partnership does not warrant the investment of additional resources. The obverse of this is that a willingness to invest discretionary funds in the maintenance of a relationship is an excellent indicator that the

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partnership has value to the participants. In reality, these decisions are probably not made in such a structured manner.

Respondents in this assessment frequently stated that the single most important impediment to the continuation of collaborative relationship was the lack of money to finance the partnership. *In general, the American and Romanian non-profit organizations that participated in RASP did not appear willing to make significant additional financial contributions to keep the partnership alive.*

If the construction of durable and successful partnerships is the primary intent, *the most difficult question for the implementer or USAID project officer is to determine that level of subsidy that will ensure that the prospective collaborators have had a full opportunity to thoroughly assess the value of a continuing relationship.* Once this is accomplished, the need for a continued subsidy to build a partnership no longer exists. This is complicated by the fact that partnerships often need relatively modest amounts of non-project or core funding. In several interviews during this assessment, participants indicated that an additional small amount of money for travel, joint planning, or to attend a conference could have been pivotal in the perpetuation of the relationship. *Because partnerships rely so heavily on personal interactions, leadership commitment, and shared values, these requests are often legitimate and plausible.*

A separate part of this assessment discusses the challenge of sustainability and the critical importance of shifting attitudes if the habits of philanthropy and charitable giving are to take root in Romania. A key point in this discussion is that it is illusory to believe that American PVOs have the discretionary income to invest significant amounts in building overseas partnerships. In the long run, if more and stronger partnerships are to develop, both American and Romanian groups will have to diversify their funding base and move away from dependence on USAID and other donors.

Organizational and Structural: There seems to be little correlation between such classification variables as organization size, organizational type (e.g. membership, advocacy, and research), sectoral category, and the success or failure of partnerships. In none of the interviews did a respondent identify these factors as problematic or beneficial. On the other hand, there are some self-evident principles that emerge from the assessment and other literature:

- Relations between large organizations and small groups may be problematic because of a perceived power imbalance and the practical difficulty of obtaining the attention of the senior management in the larger groups. These relations can be particularly difficult when the US organization does not have a field presence.

- Relations between organizations from different sectors may be difficult or at least take more time to become established because of the technical barriers and differences in culture and language.

- Relations between single-purpose advocacy groups tend to be difficult because of the strongly held convictions and the culture of imperative necessity that these organizations adopt in order to be effective.

- Relations between organizations that raise funds from the same sources may be difficult because of competitive pressures.

- Relationships between organizations with radically different management styles may be problematic because of the difficulty of making joint decisions.

Systems and procedures. Differences in *systems and procedures* are likely to be as important as differences in organizational structure. These can be particularly disruptive because they can be difficult to spot at the beginning of a relationship and undermine the collaboration from within. Examples include:

- Differences in the accounting system, particularly differences in the approach to the calculation of overhead rates and especially when the cost structures of the two collaborating entities are different.

Example. A two-month delay in transferring funds from a US sub-grantee to the Romanian partner caused serious cash flow problems. The delay was caused by misunderstandings related to financial reporting and submission of financial information between partners and the US organization's complex and cumbersome accounting procedures.

- Differences in salary structures and personnel policies and practices. (Interestingly, in the case of RASP there was virtually no antagonistic comment with regard to the differential between US and Romanian salaries, as is frequently the case in other countries. This may reflect the short-term nature of most of the partnerships and the fact that the focus was principally on project implementation and stopped short of organizational integration.)

- Differences in basic operating procedures. Even organizations that work in the same area can have significantly different operating practices. Often these are deeply ingrained in the culture of the organization and are viewed as the "right way to do things".

Example. An American and Romanian NGO worked together on the design and management of a health clinic. Although the partnership went smoothly, a potentially divisive issue arose between the partners related to different patient scheduling practices and physician responsibility for keeping scheduled appointments. In America, patients are accustomed to making advance appointments and coming on time and doctors are obliged to see those patients who keep their appointments. The Romanian system is more informal and flexible. The result of these different approaches was that the two partners had to sit down and work together to devise a system that was mutually acceptable.

- Differences in the approach to governance, the role of the board of directors, and the nature of the relationship between board and staff. This is an area of incompatibility that deserves much greater attention. Too often it is assumed that the principles and procedures on which the US governance system stands are universal. In most Central European countries, including Romania, the role of the board of directors has not clarified or developed. Boards tend to be small, comprised of friends and well-meaning colleagues, and seldom become engaged in strategic planning, fund-raising or executive transition, and the three most important functions that boards perform. This can constitute both an obstacle to collaboration and an opportunity for the transfer of much-needed management expertise. Regardless, it is an important subject that should be fully discussed at the beginning of a partnership so that both entities can fully understand the constraints established by the governance process.

I. Local Government and Community Based Partnerships: The RASP experience.

The RASP project supported a limited number of activities that involved American partnerships with Romanian NGOs that in turn were further engaged in partnerships with local government and/or community based organizations. In these cases, the assessment was interested in identifying partnering approaches and lessons that might be applicable in similar situations. Because the number of community-based examples was small, the following observations have limited reliability.

Key Points!

- *Partnering skills that are learned from working with an overseas collaborator are skills that are broadly translatable to local conditions.*

Example. A local environmental group wanted to generate community support for a long term environmental plan. They turned to their ~~local~~ US partner to help them design an approach that would ensure wide spread participation and the open discussion of many different points of view. A Community Forum was held and brought together a diverse number of stakeholders to evaluate the future and develop a "Community Vision". The Forum had a practical result by establishing 5 action plans that are currently being implemented in the region. These plans are designed to encourage citizens to take initiative in order to improve the quality of their lives. The project resulted in the introduction to Romania of an innovative method to assess the real needs of rural communities. The guide for applying this approach has been translated into Romanian and widely distributed so that it can be applied in other rural areas of the country.

- *Inclusion of diverse community stakeholders that can represent and speak for a variety of constituent groups is critical to the success and effectiveness of a community partnership.*

Example. An environmental NGO had an interest in a mountain area designated as a national park. It became clear that sustainable development of the area was dependent on community support. The NGO partnered with a US NGO experienced in facilitating community development. The target region consisted of a small city and its surrounding 12 communes. Stakeholders and community members met in a community forum to determine their vision for the future and identify the priority areas of action. The partners facilitated the process and provided support (including financial) for five initiatives designed to increase the confidence of community members in their capacity to solve local problems. The project mobilized community members and got full support from local authorities, although it faced resistance from some county authorities. In general, success was attributed to the clear identification of community needs that increased community understanding and willingness to act; and to the deliberate inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders that represented and spoke for a variety of constituent groups.

- *The principles and factors that apply to partnering in general also apply to NGO/local government relationships (e.g. transparency, comparative advantage, and durability).*

- *In addition, there are several specific issues that need to be kept in mind in structuring local government/NGO activities:*

  Will the partnership become a dependency relationship? (What is the share of total revenue that will come from local government? Does the NGO have a diversified base of support? Will the NGO ~~will~~ be forced to acquire assets or assume debt in order to perform desired services?)

  Does the NGO have the necessary maturity and management ability to work effectively with a larger bureaucratic organization? (A failure in a partnership relation with local government can be fatal to the NGO.)

  Is there a climate of political antagonism or suspicion toward NGOs that will undermine the relationship?

  Will the partnership with local government compromise the NGO's ability to raise funds from other sources? (Conversely, will significant support from other sources such as USAID compromise the relationship with local government?)

  Particularly if the NGO is an advocacy organization, will it be able to continue its other programs while at the same time entering into a cooperative agreement with government?

Discussion.

Local government collaborations with NGOs generally fall within one of the following four categories:

1. The provision of services that *substitute* for services that would otherwise be provided by local government, such as management of health centers.

2. The provision of services that *augment* the programs offered by local government but that would not be provided if the NGO was not functioning, such as staffing of a hospice program that supplements the health care system.

3. The provision of programs and mechanisms designed to *improve communication and understanding* between citizenry and local government, such as an information center or sponsorship of forums on local government programs and issues.

4. Advocacy organizations that attempt to *persuade* local government to act or take a position on a particular subject.

Except for advocacy groups (where a close partnership relation may be inappropriate) and service provision on a contract basis (where the principles of partnering don't apply), there are important opportunities for collaboration in three of these four categories.

For most NGOs and for many donor agencies, local government/NGO collaboration is highly desirable and viewed as a "win-win" solution. For government, it promises cost-effective expansion of services and/or a mechanism to improve public understanding; for NGOs, it can offer a steady and reliable stream of income to perform the social services that the organization is committed to provide.

But these benefits can hide some very serious costs. Most NGOs are much smaller and more financially fragile than the governments they work with. They frequently have inflated ideas of what they can accomplish, a tendency to promise more than they can, weak financial systems, and poor monitoring procedures. In this context, a contract or a large grant agreement with a local government can spell disaster. Even if the NGO has sophisticated procedures and strong bargaining ability, a relationship with government can over the long run create a dependency that cannot be reversed.[5]

There are several frequent problems that confront collaboration between NGO's and local government:

- The local climate for development can change very quickly. Political attitudes can shift; laws can change overnight; new programs and policies can become popular and prior initiatives can become "yesterday's fashion".

- Well-meaning initiatives can become politicized which in turn can generate a lack of trust between various local stakeholders and make dialogue and service delivers extremely difficult.

[5] Ironically, this is most evident in the United States where the growth of the private voluntary community was fueled by USAID with these organizations become more and more dangerously dependent on Agency support.

- NGOs sometimes have a "management style" characterized by time-management problems, lack of reliability in pursuing agreed deadlines, and overly ambitious growth planning.

- The early phase of NGO/local government collaboration tends be immature and characterized by unrealistic expectations and communications difficulties. The local government thinks that the NGO is a source of funding because it can tap foreign donors, and the NGO thinks that government is a source of funding because it has access to public revenue. The NGO resents policy oversight and the local government resents independent initiatives that NGOs like to pursue.

- Local governments sometimes think that they are the only ones that can deal with a social issue such as juvenile delinquency. ("This is a public problem. We, the public institutions, have to deal with this issue; it is not for NGOs to get involved ").

Example. A successful approach was used on issues of domestic violence and trafficking of women by two Romanian NGOs working with their US partners. These issues are high on the national political agenda but local awareness is limited. Both partnerships started with awareness programs in the schools, through family doctors, the police, and local media. These were expanded to offer joint training activities. Relationships between local actors were strengthened and local government officials began to respond more actively than had previously been the case. Agreements were concluded with these institutions, and one of them has created a task force which meets regularly to coordinate efforts.

J. Financial Sustainability

Key Points!

- *Don't count on internal cash transfers from the US partner. Very few non-profit organizations have discretionary funds that are available for building partnership alliances per se. For this reason, it is usually essential that each partner be motivated primarily by a programmatic goal. In the long run, the result of the partnership must be seen as generating more resources than the cost of the partnership*

- *Do leverage US fund-raising know- how. US fund-raising techniques, attitudes and positive "can do" values can be transmitted through a good partnership and can have a very valuable impact.*

- *There are some partnerships that should not be sustained. Very effective, results oriented alliances can come into being for a short duration and terminate quite successfully after the task is complete. These partnerships can have all the beneficial characteristics of a long-term, fully integrated relationship.*

- *Some partnerships are sustainable but have no impact. Particularly for not-for-profits, sustainability is no guarantee of results. In some instances, partnership sustainability means only that the partnership is able to generate sufficient incremental resources from the relationship to cover incremental costs. In this sense, although partnership activity is sustained, the two entities may be no better or worse off than they were before.*

- *Too much donor (subsidized) assistance can obscure a hard-headed assessment of the value of the partnership. Over time, it is essential that partners make a realistic cost/benefit assessment of their relationship. If the relationship is attracting donor support there will be a tendency to keep it going. As a general rule, donor support should be limited to an amount that does not exceed the level that will obscure an objective and fact-based assessment of the merits of continuing the partnership.*

- *Consider a joint-project-based approach to testing and building partnerships. One of the important characteristics of RASP was that it did not place a great deal of up-front emphasis on guaranteeing sustainability. RASP's practical approach was to bring prospective partners together to work on a problem and to use this experience as a crucible for the participants to forge a long-term relationship if this seemed desirable. While there may have been a few cases where further RASP assistance was warranted, this "free market approach" to partnership formation is consistent with the organic nature of the partnership process and has much to recommend it.*

Discussion.

A frequent argument in favor of creating partnerships is that it will enhance the financial and/or organizational sustainability of one or both of the partnering entities. Donors in particular have promoted partnering as a way to ensure continued support to NGOs that they have created and supported after the donor presence ends. It is anticipated that enhanced financial wellbeing can occur in several ways, including the adoption of improved fund-raising practices, access to new sources of support, and direct cash transfers between the partners. More broadly, it is anticipated that the improved organizational capacity that results from a constructive collaboration will in the long run enhance the appeal of one or both of the partners and lead to more productive fund-raising.

In general and aside from the sub-grants themselves, it does not appear that the RASP program has led to a direct improvement in the financial status of the Romanian partners. While the program involved significant cost sharing of 25% minimum from each partner, and while there were a few examples of US organizations that augmented their contributions, few of the Romanian participants in this study identified a *direct and immediate* financial benefit from their relationship with the American group. *On the other hand, there is persuasive evidence that in several cases the Romanian participant was introduced to new fund-raising techniques and, more importantly, to a dramatically different and more effective approach to fund-raising and institutional development.*

As is the case in most Central European countries, Romanian NGOs are skeptical regarding the willingness of individuals and local corporations to provide philanthropic support. There is broad consensus among NGOs that public fund-raising will be unsuccessful and a prevalent belief that the only reliable source of charitable support is the international donor community. This attitude is exacerbated by a view that fund-raising is a form of begging, by the belief that NGOs in general are held in low public esteem and by the naive assumption that the donors will be in place for many years to come. It is made further problematic by a deep reluctance to charge for services or to engage in revenue generating activities which are viewed as anathema to the social purpose mission of these groups. The result is apathy toward private sector fund-raising and increasing dependence on foreign donors who will inevitably depart.

In the long run it is essential that the independent sector in developing and transitional countries adopt a more positive and aggressive attitude toward fund raising and alternative forms of revenue generation in order to shift public attitudes and to nurture the habits and institutions of philanthropy that will sustain the sector. The single most important challenge to the viability of the independent sector in CEE countries is the absence of imbedded traditions and practices of philanthropy.

Fund-raising techniques and, more importantly, an attitude toward the validity and principled necessity of fund-raising is an area of comparative advantage for American

non-profits. To the extent that this approach can be translated, adapted, and adopted by local groups, public attitudes toward philanthropy and the legitimacy of charitable giving can begin to change.

Example. In the United States it is understood that people give not only because they believe in a particular cause but because they want to be recognized as leading citizens of their community. Social events and celebrity participation are often used in support of philanthropy and charitable giving. A similar approach was adopted several years ago by a Romanian Volunteer Center in collaboration with an American advisor. An elegant social event was sponsored and leading members of the community were invited. Previous donors were given a great deal of public praise and attention and awards were given in recognition of important contributions to the welfare of the community A special award for charitable giving from a local business was established. Representative from the media and from sporting groups and arts organizations were included in order to attract public attention and generate positive publicity. These annual events have become increasingly popular. Not only do they generate income but they give charitable giving an aura of respectability and help to build long term habits of philanthropy.

K. Practical tools for building partnerships

Key Points!

- *Encourage partners to be clear and specific about the purpose and intent of their partnership. Ask them to draft a letter of commitment and intent. Make sure the two boards of directors have reviewed and approved this document. Be willing to pay for headquarters visits and joint conferences. Encourage them to specify the monetary contributions that each will make.*

- *Structure support in order to establish a level financial playing field. If possible, make the grant to the local group. Ask both organizations to prepare an action plan of how they will work together before they start and be willing to fund the initial planning session.*

- *Be willing to invest in third-party assistance and consider an outside consultant to help the partners structure their relationship. Ask both parties to adopt a dispute resolution system before they begin to work together.*

- *Help prospective partners sharpen their goals and mission. Provide strategic planning assistance to both the individual partners and to the partnership itself. Include funds for strategic planning in the grant and encourage partners to seek outside help.*

- *Make sure that the two executive directors are personally committed to the partnership. Encourage CEOs to commit publicly to the new relationship. Be responsive to requests for funds for headquarters visits. Locate primary responsibility*

for the maintenance of the relationship in its early stages in the office of the President or CEO. Particularly in larger organizations, encourage both partners to designate a partner "champion" who truly believes in the importance of the relationship.

- *Tolerate variation and encourage adaptability. Do not expect that partnerships will stick to the same course. If partnership relations cannot adapt, they will come apart. Do not administer grant agreements rigidly. Large goals should remain similar but tactics can alter. As with RASP, indicators should be grant or project specific.*

Discussion.

The key building blocks to a successful partnership (mutual perception of benefit, transparency and openness, consensus on goals, a coherent understanding, and a prior working relationship) provide a basis for identifying the tools that can be employed to increase the likelihood that a project-based collaboration will blossom into a long-term partnership relation.

1. **A written letter of intent.** In commercial relations it is imperative that cooperating entities set forth the nature of their collaboration in a written document. Unfortunately, this is less true with non-profits. The discipline of putting down on paper an outline of the anticipated benefits of the relationship together with an approximate contribution of both parties not only forces clarification and reduces future disappointment, but also tends to concentrate leadership attention on the new relationship. In the case of RASP, the project proposal and sub-grant agreement served this valuable purpose.

Example. The direct participation of the board of directors in a decision to enter into a partnership is very important because it sends a signal to the rest of the organization that the partnership is of high value. On the other hand, a lack of board participation can lead to later difficulties when problems arise as they inevitably will. One way of ensuring board participation is to require that the board pass a resolution committing the organization to the importance of the partnership. Another approach is to ask that both partners cooperate in mutually developing a business plan or a strategic plan. In one case involving the establishment of an outpatient center the US partner worked with its Romanian counterpart to establish criteria and standards for board representation and operation and then worked with the board to develop a 5 year strategic plan.

2. **Designation of the weakest entity as the primary recipient of the grant.** The perception of a level playing field is very important to a cordial long-term working relationship. In general, the American organization will be larger, more sophisticated, better funded, and certainly better paid than the indigenous entity. In these

circumstances, it makes sense to vest financial responsibility in the local NGO, as was done in roughly half of the sub-grants awarded under RASP. Not only does this tend to level the psychological playing field, but it gives the local organization invaluable experience in grants management.

3. **Support for conferences, seminars and exploratory meetings.** It is axiomatic that the more one partner knows about the other prior to the commencement of joint operations, the fewer the number of obstacles that will be encountered. While there were wonderful examples under RASP of a local group finding a partner in 24 hours on the web, there was broad consensus among interviewees that good relations demanded personal meeting and interactions.

4. **Support for joint planning and joint problem solving.** Organizations that are clear about their mission and their goals are better able to enter into constructive partnerships than organizations that are confused and unfocused. They are better able to target what they need and better able make strategic choices about whom they should partner with. One important way to improve an organization's ability to partner is to help it develop a coherent strategic plan. Planning is also very important in the early stages of a partnership. The most effective way to illuminate organizational differences and areas comparative advantage is through a joint planning process. In the case of advanced partnerships, strategic institution-centered planning that concentrates on important positioning decisions may be appropriate. In the case of project-based partnering efforts such as the RASP activity, a facilitated team planning retreat can be immensely valuable in introducing both organizations to the challenges and opportunities they will face working together.

5. **Mandatory letter of commitment and intent from the Executive Director.** The success of a partnership will be heavily influenced by the commitment and interest of the executive director and the board of directors. Inevitably, powerful partnerships will threaten internal constituencies and established norms. This can be minimized if it is clear to all that the leaders of the organization are solidly on board and believe that the collaboration is relevant to the mission of the organization.

6. **Assignment of responsibility and designation of a focal point.** Partnerships are voluntary. Because these relationships are new, different, and often quite costly, the initial disincentives can be quite substantial. If the partnership is to be successful, it often needs a designated "champion" within each organization who believes that the effort to work across significant boundaries is worth the effort. In the case of RASP, the Romanian organizations were quite small and the executive director became the principal advocate of the relationship. However, this was not always true with the larger US organizations. In these instances, the clear identification of a "champion" would have helped perpetuate an interest in collaboration.

7. **A willingness to tolerate deviance.** As noted, partnerships are organic and tend over time to seek their own unique direction based on unfolding screens of mutual perception. This can be problematic if the intent of the program is to address a

specified problem, since the relationship may evolve in a quite different direction from that originally intended. On the other hand, if the purpose is principally to forge durable relations, it is important for the donor to stay the course and support the shifts in direction as they occur.

L. Using partnerships as a development instrument.[6]

Key Points!

- *Partnerships have advantages and disadvantages. They can take advantage of comparative strengths and weaknesses, increase scale of effort, tap new resources, and bridge cultural, political, and ideological differences.*

- *They can also be expensive, time-consuming, and an immense waste of organizational time and resources. What is most important is that the project officer thinks about partnerships as a deliberate instrument and attempt to tailor the partnership to the particular issue they are trying to address.*

Partnerships may be a good instrument when you want to:

Influence policy.

Increase scale.

Expand market share.

Transfer technology or "know-how".

Establish a positive image or reputation.

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[6] Donors finance partnerships between organizations because they believed that these engagements will produce a more cost-effective response to a particular social, cultural or economic dilemma. At the same time, there are cases where the long-term solution is only dimly perceived and the partnership is funded primarily for the sake of the relationship itself. For example, research organizations may work together because they believe their work is complementary even though it is fully evident that ultimate solutions are years away. Or, as in fact is the case with RASP, cross border partnerships may be formed in order to establish fabrics of relations between American and overseas groups that will improve communication between nations and accelerate international integration.

The distinction between a *results* motive and a *process* motive is important in the design and implementation of a partnership program because the instruments and techniques that are used to build partnering *capacity* may be quite different from the instruments that are used to finance a successful demonstration project. The dilemma can be particularly difficult where there is appropriate pressure to accomplish tangible results since these are difficult to measure if the primary purpose is focused primarily on the partnership per se.

In part this is a definitional issue. Donors are likely to continue to insist that they support partnerships because of positive impact while at the same time retaining the flowery language that suggests that their emphasis on partnering reflects the intrinsic value of the partnering process.

Transfer attitudes or values.

Partnerships may not be a good instrument when you want to:

Build the individual management capacity of one or both partnerships. (Strengthening organizational capacity may be a by-product of partnering, but it should not be the primary purpose.)

Provide additional revenue to the local organization. (Very few non-profits have discretionary funds available to transfer to an overseas partner.)

Also, be careful about using partnerships in the following situations:

Organizations led by strong, charismatic, highly self-confident leaders.

US groups that want to establish a foreign "presence".

Cases where USAID wants to establish tight control over progress and outcomes.

Discussion.

This assessment/guide has talked about factors that make a successful partnership and obstacles that undermine partnerships.

The final question is when and how to use a partnership for a development purpose?

- *Partnerships have advantages and disadvantages. They can take advantage of comparative strengths and weaknesses, increase scale of effort, tap new resources, and bridge cultural, political, and ideological differences.*

- *They can also be expensive, time-consuming, and an immense waste of organizational time and resources. What is most important is that the project officer thinks about partnerships as a deliberate instrument and attempt to tailor the partnership to the particular issue they are trying to address.*

It is difficult to make simple generalizations about when to use a partnership to accomplish a particular objective because the variety of potential relationships is so large.

The following are some broad guidelines that may be of some help.

Partnerships may be a good instrument when you want to:

Influence policy. If, for example, the goal is to disseminate the principles of palliative care, a partnership between a service facility and a national advocacy group can be a powerful mechanism to establish credibility and influence. The service facility can provide persuasive examples of palliative care in the home while the national organization can translate this information into advocacy and policy reform.

Example. A local hospice program wanted to expand its impact beyond the municipality that it served. Initially it looked for a similar partner with similar experience. The RASP program sponsored a partnership with a national US organization with a different focus. The American organization worked at the national level, promoted the hospice movement in the United States, and had developed a set of common standards and procedures that could be adopted and used in different places and countries. The relationship flourished in part because the Romanian NGO had prior experience partnering with a UK group. As a result of the RASP-sponsored collaboration, a set of hospice standards especially for Romania were prepared. These were disseminated to other hospice programs throughout the country, and a network was created with an office in Bucharest that can influence national legislation. The NGO has also established a US office to help raise money for the network and to sponsor more partnerships between Romanian and American hospice providers.

Increase scale. In some projects, the purpose is to simply increase the scale of activity or coverage. For example, the goal of a project that supports linkages between professional engineering and medical associations in order to upgrade professional standards is to increase the size of the membership base. Partnerships are a good way to accomplish this.

Expand market share. For competitive reasons, organizations may partner in order to increase market share or reach a "critical mass" of influence. For non-profits this can have important fund-raising benefits; it can also help advocacy groups broaden their impact by providing them with the ability to cultivate constituents in several countries.

Transfer technology or "know-how". Partnerships between organizations that possess different competence structures make good theoretical sense. On the other hand, each organization must "bring something to the table".

Example. There has been a great deal of recent path-breaking research in the United States on the physiology of alcoholism that supports the conclusion that alcoholism is an illness and not a moral failing. The implications of this research are important in the design of treatment programs and with regard to public education regarding alcoholism and the alcoholic. A Romanian NGO in collaboration with a highly respected team of US researchers designed a workshop to address this topic. The NGO provided access and outreach and was able bring together health professionals and policy makers while the

American group provided strong technical insights. The Team from the United States provided a lecture on the physiology of alcohol addiction, outlined a model of the alcoholic family and described and delineated an appropriate treatment modality for each family member. After these presentations, participants were given hands on assistance in the development of an action plan for their communities that embodied findings from the new research.

Establish a positive image or reputation. A partnership with a respected well-known organization can help establish credibility or overcome a negative image. For example, a partnership between a small local environmental group and a national or international organization can add an imprimatur of respectability that had been previously lacking.

Transfer attitudes. In some cases, a partnership may be a good way to transfer attitudes or values. The best example is in the area of philanthropy, fund-raising, and institutional development, where American organizations have both technical know-how and a market-based approach which can be very effective. A second example would be in the area of community based participatory planning with its emphasis on inclusion and the constructive management of conflict.

Example. This partnership helped five thousand owners of a newly privatized forest develop an environmentally sound forest management plan. Employing a participatory planning model that had been used in the United States but adapted to the Romanian situation, a series of community meetings were organized to generate input. An "open gate" process was used that encouraged all stakeholders to participate and put their views on the table for discussion. Because the forest constituted a significant economic asset, participation was large and the level of controversy was potentially high. Key political leaders attended as did foresters, the president of the forest owners association and the mayor. Follow-on meetings were organized and the results of previous meetings were presented for further discussion and refinement. "Focus groups" were used to address the more complex and controversial issues and to work with the key leaders of the forest owner association. The strategic plan that was developed as a result of this process was a document that went far toward calming a potentially polarizing community issue.

Partnerships may not be a good instrument when you want to:

Build the individual management capacity of one or both partnerships. Strengthening organizational capacity may be a *by-product* of partnering, but it should not be the primary purpose. Rarely do non-profits have the resources to invest in building the capacity of another organization.[7] Cross-border partnerships are particularly weak in this regard due to problems of communication and distance.

[7] Except in those cases where the non-profit has been expressly established with capacity building as a primary purpose.

Provide additional revenue to the local organization. As emphasized in this assessment/guide, very few non-profits have discretionary funds available to transfer to an overseas partner. Most American non-profits receive their donations from individuals, foundations, and companies supporting a specific program purpose who do not want to see their donations transferred to another group. In fact, some American PVOs find themselves competing with foreign non-profits for corporate or foundation support. On the other hand, an American partner can open doors, help a local organization tap new sources of support, and provide invaluable advice and support.

Support a charismatic and influential leader. Organizations established and run by dynamic and innovative founder-leaders may not constitute the best organizations to partner with. These organizations are at a stage where they are not particularly good at strategic planning, their growth path is unpredictable, they tend to have passionate and inflexible convictions and they are not inclined to adjust their practices to accommodate the procedures of another group.

Help a US group establish a local "presence". Frequently, an American group will decide that it should expand into the international area and will start by looking for an offshore partner. Although well-intentioned, these efforts frequently fail for lack of funds or because the American group did not fully appreciate the difficulty of operating in an overseas environment.

Cases where USAID wants to establish tight control over progress and outcomes. As discussed, partnerships are organic, difficult to control, and tend to seek their own direction. Where tight control is desirable, a bilateral contract is a preferable vehicle.

Appendix A

A Guide to Forging Partnerships
Lessons Learned from RASP
A Summary of Key Points!

The RASP model.

Key Points!

- *The grant making process (i.e. the announcement, application, review, award, etc.) can itself have a positive impact on the attitudes, procedures and program priorities of recipients. A professionally managed grant making process encourages the growth of professionalism among recipients.*

- *Regardless of whether an individual grant was successful in accomplishing an activity objective, recipients of RASP grants learned a lot about partnering and how to build and manage partnership relations. In some cases, a problematic collaboration was more educational than an easy success.*

- *The availability of grant funds is a powerful incentive to stimulate a search for new partners. The best way to encourage insular NGOs to reach out to offshore partners is to offer money to finance joint projects.*

- *In a related vein, working through the nuts and bolts of joint implementation of a project is the single best way to test the viability of a relationship.*

- *Physical proximity and day-to-day contact between two partners is very important, particularly when the local group is small and organizationally weak. Despite modern communication technology, face to face contact is essential at the beginning of a relationship.*

- *Once established, partnerships tend to seek their own direction and to deviate from their original objectives. This is a healthy process of maturation but it means that donors will have to be tolerant of change and allow flexibility in the relationship if it is to be successful.*

- *It can be a serious mistake to assume that a US group will continue to fund a partnership after project money disappears. Most American non-profits are severely short of discretionary income and unless the partnership is squarely within their mission, they will lack resources to continue to support it.*

- *On the other hand, many American non-profits are very good at fund raising and can transfer their fund-raising skills and attitudes. In the long run, this is more important than the direct transfer of money. In designing partnerships, it is important to emphasize the transfer of fund raising skills and attitudes.*

What is a "Partnership"?

Key Points!

- *"Partnering" is a buzzword that means different things to different people. Use it carefully and try to understand the assumptions that other people are making when they talk about a "partnership".*

- *If the following elements are lacking in a relationship, it is probably not a partnership:*

Durability over a period of time.

Shared decision making in areas of collaboration.

Mutual benefit and added value or "synergy".

An approximate balance of power and influence between the two parties.

Be aware of the difference between the partnership process and the partnership result. Some projects are designed to build partnerships and stop at that point. Other projects are designed to build partnerships in order to accomplish a particular objective. In the first case, primary emphasis should be placed on building the capacity to manage relationships; in the second case primary emphasis should be placed on the technical content of the relationship.

What are the factors that make a successful partnership?

Key Points!

- ***Time and Commitment.*** *Have you allowed adequate time for this partnership to jell? Have the chief financial officers met and discussed bookkeeping procedures? Have the heads of the two organizations met face to face? Have the two boards of directors endorsed the importance of the partnership? Has the US group had experience in the country? Have the two groups ever engaged in joint planning? Should you consider a small planning grant or an allocation of funds for a headquarters visit?*

- ***Joint working experience.*** *Is there a simple way for these groups to work together on a project? Would the US group be willing contribute funds to experiment with the relationship? Is there another donor that would finance a joint project? Could the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation in Washington provide support?*

- ***Transparency and openness.*** *Have the two groups talked about communication protocols? Do they have a written agreement and an established set of principles regarding the sharing of information? Do they raise money from the same donor and, if so, have they talked about how to handle this potential conflict? Have the partners talked about exchanging salary information? Information on overhead rates?*

- ***Fit.*** *Do these groups complement each other or do they simply duplicate skills? Have they openly talked about complementarities so they both know how to tap this potential?*

- ***Goals and objectives.*** *Are long-term institutional goals compatible? If the goals are similar, what about the means of achieving them? Is the value of the benefits to each organization roughly the same? Will the two partners know how to measure the costs and benefits of the relationship?*

- ***Presence and awareness.*** *Do the two groups know how to work together? Do they have adequate personal contact at the right levels within the organization? Is there*

an important language barrier? Are differences in size and structure an impediment to cooperation? Is the framework for cooperation clearly spelled out?

The Obstacles to Partnering

Key Points!

- *Some obstacles are outside the relationship and beyond the control of the participants, and some are internal and derive from the nature and type of organizations that are partnering.*

- *Projects to support partnering should be designed to remove or minimize both types of obstacles. Project design should carefully identify these obstacles and articulate a strategy to deal with them.*

- *It is difficult for non-profits to find the funds to support international partners. For this to happen, the partnership must be squarely within the mission of the organization and relationship must be an activity that the non-profit can raise money for.*
- *The best way to test a partnership is to provide an opportunity for new partners to work together on a project.*

- *Former partners often claim that lack of funds was the key impediment to continuation of the relationship. In fact, most organizations can find the funds to continue if they make a cost/benefit decision that it is in their interest to do so.*

- *A small infusion of funds for travel or a conference may be critically important to moving a partnership process forward.*

- *When looking at a new partnership, try to spot structural, procedural, or cultural differences that will make cooperation difficult. Ask the partners to talk about these differences and figure out ways to address them.*

- *Keep an eye out for differences in systems or procedures that will complicate communication. Ask partners to be clear with regard to sensitive matters like salary differentials.*

- *Make sure that the two boards of directors have reviewed and approve new partnerships. Consider the possibility of funds for board training or include these resources in project design.*

Local Government and Community Based Partnerships: The RASP experience.

Key Points!

- *Partnering skills that are learned from working with an overseas collaborator are skills that are broadly translatable to local conditions.*

- *Inclusion of diverse community stakeholders that can represent and speak for a variety of constituent groups is critical to the success and effectiveness of a community partnership.*

- *The principles and factors that apply to partnering in general also apply to NGO/local government relationships (e.g. transparency, comparative advantage, and durability).*

- *In addition, there are several specific issues that need to be kept in mind in structuring local government/NGO activities:*

  Will the partnership become a dependency relationship? (What is the share of total revenue that will come from local government? Does the NGO have a diversified base of support? Will the NGO will be forced to acquire assets or assume debt in order to perform desired services?)

  Does the NGO have the necessary maturity and management ability to work effectively with a larger bureaucratic organization? (A failure in a partnership relation with local government can be fatal to the NGO.)

  Is there a climate of political antagonism or suspicion toward NGOs that will undermine the relationship?

  Will the partnership with local government compromise the NGO's ability to raise funds from other sources? (Conversely, will significant support from other sources such as USAID compromise the relationship with local government?)

  Particularly if the NGO is an advocacy organization, will it be able to continue its other programs while at the same time entering into a cooperative agreement with government?

Financial Sustainability

Key Points!

- *Don't count on internal cash transfers from the US partner. Very few non-profit organizations have discretionary funds that are available for building partnership alliances per se. For this reason, it is usually essential that each partner be motivated primarily by a programmatic goal. In the long run, the result of the partnership must be seen as generating more resources than the cost of the partnership*

- *Do leverage US fund-raising know- how. US fund-raising techniques, attitudes and positive "can do" values can be transmitted through a good partnership and can have a very valuable impact.*

- *There are some partnerships that should not be sustained. Very effective, results oriented alliances can come into being for a short duration and terminate quite successfully after the task is complete. These partnerships can have all the beneficial characteristics of a long-term, fully integrated relationship.*

- *Some partnerships are sustainable but have no impact. Particularly for not-for-profits, sustainability is no guarantee of results. In some instances, partnership sustainability means only that the partnership is able to generate sufficient incremental resources from the relationship to cover incremental costs. In this sense, although partnership activity is sustained, the two entities may be no better or worse off than they were before.*

- *Too much donor (subsidized) assistance can obscure a hard-headed assessment of the value of the partnership. Over time, it is essential that partners make a realistic cost/benefit assessment of their relationship. If the relationship is attracting donor support there will be a tendency to keep it going. As a general rule, donor support should be limited to an amount that does not exceed the level that will obscure an objective and fact-based assessment of the merits of continuing the partnership.*

- *Consider a joint-project-based approach to testing and building partnerships. One of the important characteristics of RASP was that it did not place a great deal of up-front emphasis on guaranteeing sustainability. RASP's practical approach was to bring prospective partners together to work on a problem and to use this experience as a crucible for the participants to forge a long-term relationship if this seemed desirable. While there may have been a few cases where further RASP assistance was warranted, this "free market approach" to partnership formation is consistent with the organic nature of the partnership process and has much to recommend it.*

Using partnerships as a development instrument.[8]

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[8] Donors finance partnerships between organizations because they believed that these engagements will produce a more cost-effective response to a particular social, cultural or economic dilemma. At the same time, there are cases where the long-term solution is only dimly perceived and the partnership is funded primarily for the sake of the relationship itself. For example, research organizations may work together because they believe their work is complementary even though it is fully evident that ultimate solutions are years away. Or, as in fact is the case with RASP, cross border partnerships may be formed in order to establish fabrics of relations between American and overseas groups that will improve communication between nations and accelerate international integration.

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Key Points!

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- *They can also be expensive, time-consuming, and an immense waste of organizational time and resources. What is most important is that the project officer thinks about partnerships as a deliberate instrument and attempt to tailor the partnership to the particular issue they are trying to address.*

Partnerships may be a good instrument when you want to:

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Increase scale.

Expand market share.

Transfer technology or "know-how".
Establish a positive image or reputation.

Transfer attitudes or values.

Partnerships may not be a good instrument when you want to:

Build the individual management capacity of one or both partnerships. (Strengthening organizational capacity may be a by-product of partnering, but it should not be the primary purpose.)

Provide additional revenue to the local organization. (Very few non-profits have discretionary funds available to transfer to an overseas partner.)

Also, be careful about using partnerships in the following situations:

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US groups that want to establish a foreign "presence".

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accomplish tangible results since these are difficult to measure if the primary purpose is focused primarily on the partnership per se.

In part this is a definitional issue. Donors are likely to continue to insist that they support partnerships because of positive impact while at the same time retaining the flowery language that suggests that their emphasis on partnering reflects the intrinsic value of the partnering process.

Cases where USAID wants to establish tight control over progress and outcomes.

Appendix B

PARTNERSHIP ASSESSMENT TOOL

If you are a manager of an NGO and are planning to enter into a partnership with another organization, you may want to use this device to help you decide whether or not this is a good idea. You may want to do this with your staff and/or with members of your board of directors.

The following are known as "proxy" indicators. They are anecdotal and suggestive. It may not matter if the two CEOs have had dinner together but it will matter in the long run if they don't like each other

Use your best judgment in scoring these indicators. Check the boxes and rate each indicator from 1 to 4.

Indicators of compatibility	Name of Strategic Partners			
	1	2	3	4
1. The Mission statement uses similar words.				
2. Traditions, celebrations, holidays and rituals are similar.				
3. Each organization has a unique strength that the other group thinks is "cool".				
4. The board of directors has reviewed the partnership and is enthusiastic.				
5. The two organizations have collaborated before.				
6. Both organizations have a written strategic plan.				
7. Both organizations have the same approach to sharing confidential information.				
8. The Revenue structure is different. (The two groups do not share the same donors.)				
9. The two executive directors have had dinner together.				
10. Both organizations have discretionary income. (Neither is "broke")				
11. Both organizations can remain in personal contact.				
Total Points for Each Partner				

While your individual assessment is useful in determining the general state of the partnership, we encourage you to consider having key members of each partner organization complete the questionnaire as well as other key stakeholders who know the organization and the partnership relationship well enough to make sound judgments.

Appendix C

The Romanian/American

Sustainable Partnerships Program

Interview Guide

An Introduction to the Interview Guide

Background and Purpose

This guide is designed to solicit information regarding the dynamics of partnership relations. We are interested in why some partnerships have worked well and why some have not and the common factors and conditions associated with a healthy and effective relationship. We are interested in the "glue" that holds a partnership together and improves its effectiveness and the elements that make the partnership or the partners themselves more sustainable.

Our focus is on partnership relations between Romanian and American organizations funded by USAID and administered by World Learning during the last 3 ½ years. We hope that findings from the study can be extrapolated to similar situations.

Confidentiality

The responses to the interview guide are confidential.

The Interview Guide will be administered to many people and organizations, and the results will be combined so that the identity of participating organizations and respondents will be protected.

The Final Report may contain case studies but advance permission will be sought.

Not an Evaluation

This study is not an evaluation, nor is it in any way designed to be a critique of organizational performance. We are attempting to understand the factors that influence partnerships, not whether a particular partnership has been successful.

Not an Assessment of World Learning

This study is not a critique of World Learning's performance either with respect to the management of the RASP Project or with regard to results accomplished under that project.

Unrelated to USAID Funding

The completion of the Interview Guide and participation in the study have no relationship to future USAID funding decisions.

Interview Guide

1. Facts and Background

a. Name(s) of respondent(s):

b. E-mails of respondents:

c. Names of participating Romanian organizations:

d. Very brief history of the partnership relation (Was this an ongoing partnership or new relationship? Are the partners the same or new? Have there been significant changes in the basic structure of the partnership?)

e. What was the original primary purpose of the partnership? (For example.)

Work on a joint project together.
Build capacity building of local organization
Provide technical assistance to local NGOs.
Establishment of an affiliate
Advocacy Other (please specify)

f. Is the partnership still in existence?

g. If "No:' please explain why: (For example.)

Partnership was limited to implementation of single project or activity Local partner ceased to exist
Different mission and/or values
Difficulty in establishing working relationship
Other (please explain)

h. If "Yes," how often do you currently have contact with your partner? (For example.)

Frequently (monthly)
Limited (every couple of months)
No particular pattern.

i. Please describe the type of relationship you currently have with your partner. (For example.)

Limited to social or representational interactions
Limited to exchange of information
Receive or provide financial support
Receive training or management support
Coordinate programs
Joint implementation

2. Assessment of the RASP program

a. Please comment on the grant-making process. (For example)

The amount of preparatory work?

Transparency and fairness?

Clarity and coherence of the grant guidelines?

Timing, efficiency and responsiveness to questions?

Other?

b. Please comment on the implementation process. (For example.)

Monitoring and reporting.

Dispersal of funds.

Grant period

Other?

3. Assessment of the Partnership Relation

We would like to get your overall assessment of this partnership relationship, and then we will talk more specifically about individual factors that may have influenced the relationship.

a, Do you feel that this collaboration was or is a "partnership" in the usual meaning of the word?

b, What were the qualities or characteristics of the relationship that in your judgment made this relationship a partnership?

c. What were the characteristics or qualities that were missing in the relationship?

d. Do you feel the partnership was or is of significant benefit to your organization? How?

e, Do you feel the partnership accomplished the objectives that you initially had in mind?

f. Do you feel the partnership was financially sustainable? Did the partnership improve the financial sustainability of

your organization? How did it do that?

g, Can you give us some specific examples of things that happened as a result of the partnership that improved financial sustainability?

h. What are or were the specific characteristics or attributes of the partnership that held it together or that continue to hold it together?

4. The impact of the partnership on working in the community.

a. Did this partnership affect your work within your community or at the community level in any way? Please explain.

b. If your work with local government, what are the primary obstacles that you face?

c. Did this partnership with a US organization help or in any way hinder your work with local government?

d. Did the RASP program have an effect on the strengthening of civil society in general in your community?

5. Specific Factors and Conditions that Have Influenced this Partnership

a. External Factors.

Were there any external factors outside of your influence that had an important positive or negative influence on the shape and nature of the partnership relation? (For example, legal impediments, tax requirements, legislative restrictions, departure of a major donor, or a change in donor priorities.)

b. Internal Factors. (For example)

Maturity of partner organization (age and experience of your partner)

Size of partner organization (similarity or dissimilarity of the organizations in terms of size as measured financially or

by number of employees)

Similarity of programs (Was the durability of the relationship related to a similarity in the work of the two organizations?)

Similarity of norms and organizational culture (How important were values and organizational culture to the durability of the partnership?)

Similarity of governance structure (How important were differences or similarities in the governance system - the structure of the board, role and function, etc?)

Structure of the income/revenue base (How important were similarities or dissimilarities in the funding structure to the partnership relation?)

The compatibility of management systems (How important were differences or similarities in systems for establishing overhead rates, approaches to performance appraisal and promotion, salary structures, and approaches to long-term strategic planning?)

Perceived balance of power (perception that there is an approximate parity of power and influence in the relationship, and a mutual belief that both parties have an approximately equal capacity to determine content and direction of the relationship).

The existence of a common vision and similar organizational mission (shared and guiding vision of the basic goals of the partnership, that transcends the modalities of day-to-day relationships)

Clarity with regard to roles and functions (existence of a clear understanding regarding roles, functions, and relationships)

Sensitivity to and understanding of cultural differences

The commitment of the leaders of the organization to the partnership (strong and vocal support from the senior leadership of both organizations)

Adequate time for the partnership to mature (absence of tight timetables)

Early attention to issues of sustainability (those financial and organizational factors that are likely to enhance the likelihood that the relationship will be maintained over time)

Transparency of decision making (belief among both parties that important decisions were made in an open and transparent manner)

Joint program planning (existence of a joint planning mechanism to ensure effective program integration such as a working committee or special task force)

Do you think that the relationship with the organization(s) that funded the partnership had an influence on the nature and content of the partnership relationship?

Please list any other factors not identified above that had an important influence on the partnership..

Finally, could you make some suggestions with regard to how the RASP program might be improved or made more effective?

Many thanks for your help!

Appendix D

List of interviewees

1. Pro Democracy Association (PDA)
Headquarters: Costel Popa, Deputy Director, Mioara Hrebenciuc Project Manager
Cluj Regional Coordination Office - Iulia Manolache

2. National Center for Sustainable Development (NCSD)
Headquarters: George Romanca, Project Officer

NCSD partner - Environmental Partnership Foundation: Laszlo Potocky, Director

NCSD local partners
County Environmental Agency Mures - Director
Sighisoara - The city hall: ViceMayor, Sighisoara Sustainable and Sighisoara Women Association
Medias - local Branch of Romanian Birds Society - Mr. Peter Weber, President

3. Romanian-American Pediatric Center for HIV/AIDS
Rodica Matusa, Director

4. Mare Nostrum
Lucian Ionescu, Executive Director

5. Asociatia Alternative Sociale
Catalin Luca, Cosmin Angheloni

6. Community Safety and Mediation Center
Laura Albu, Executive Director
Cornel Loghin, Project Coordinator

7. Hospice "Casa Sperantei"
Malina Dumitrescu, Executive Director

8. Veritas Foundation
Petra Popa, Project Coordinator
Benone Mehedin, Former Project Coordinator

9. Pro Vobis Volunteerism Center
Ioana Muresan, Executive Director

10. "Transilvania" Ecological Club (CET)
Gabriel Parauan, Andrei Kelemen

11. Reaching Out Association
Iana Matei, Executive Director

12. Foundation for Community Support (FSC)
Gabriela Achihai, President
Stefan, Ciobanu, Executive Director
Leslie Hawke and Maria Gheorghiu, Project Coordinators
Lidia Balan, Romstar (the Rroma NGO partner in the project)

Appendix E

SCOPE OF WORK

Final Assessment of Romanian American Sustainable Partnerships Program

(Cooperative Agreement No. 186-A-00-00-00113-00)

I. BACKGROUND

There is direct linkage between the depth and number of exchanges and partnerships between Romania and the United States and the more rapid integration of Romania into Western structures, values and practices. At the same time, many American groups and individuals (including Romanian-Americans) continue to show a great deal of interest in Romania since 1989. There are more than one hundred US voluntary initiatives currently assisting Romania, many of which have existed for five years or longer, especially in the child welfare area. Such interest had to be encouraged and channeled into significant "investments" in Romania in the form of experience sharing, transfer of "know-how" and other important contributions.

Beginning in May of 2000, USAID's Mission in Romania initiated a mechanism for supporting partnerships between Romanian and American not-for-profit organizations. This initiative called the Romanian-American Sustainable Partnerships (RASP) program has been implemented by World Learning under the Cooperative Agreement (CA) No. 186-A-00-00-00113-00. The completion date of the CA is February 29, 2004.

By supporting Romanian-American partnerships, the RASP program was designed to increase civil society development and help Romania become more integrated into the larger community of developed countries. The RASP Umbrella Grant Program provided sub-grants that were building upon Romanian-American linkages by offering incentives and opportunities to channel American interest in ways that would promote sustainable partnerships. RASP was demand-driven, responding to Romanian needs through the strengths of American civil society.

RASP sub-grants contributed to and enhanced USAID/Romania's country strategy by filling in the gaps across strategic objectives and otherwise complementing its ongoing activities. The sub-grants advanced overall the Mission strategic objective in the Democracy area: "Improved Democratic Governance at the Local Level" with a direct contribution to the Intermediate Result 2.3.2 "Improved Interaction between Citizens and Local Public Institutions". Partnerships contributed indirectly to results under the

Mission's other strategic objectives through crosscutting initiatives in health, child welfare, anti-trafficking, environmental protection, and private sector development.

Partnership assistance served as a mechanism to broaden and extend USAID's outreach and capacity to support Romanian partners and to expand USAID's virtual partners engaged in its project activities across strategic objectives. While building the institutional capacity of local partners, RASP simultaneously strengthened project implementation, improved service delivery capacity, and increased public policy involvement all of which advanced prospects for longer-term financial viability. This activity built local competencies to increase the sustainability of local partners in key sectors.

Partnership assistance aimed to build the capacity of Romanian organizations in the context of jointly conducted activities that fall within the Mission's country strategy. Sub-grants supported partnerships that resulted in mutual benefit from the RASP-supported activities, involved shared commitment to the activity with each partner bringing resources to the relationship, and were likely to continue, in some form, after USAID funding.

The program sought to support sustainability in a broadly defined manner. Sustainability had to be demonstrated by: (a) a deepened partnership relationship in which further USAID assistance was not needed at the conclusion of funding from this program; (b) creative and innovative programs which have been strengthened; and (c) Romanian organizations with enhanced capacity to achieve their organizational missions.

RASP was comprised of thirty-two sub-grants with a total USAID funding contribution of about $2.7 million. Sub-grantees made cost-share commitments of more than $3.2 million. US partner organizations from seventeen states and the District of Columbia participated and activities were implemented in more than 20, out of 41 counties all-over the country.

Partnerships made important contributions in Romania covering a wide range of development issues, such as: community-based services for children and their families, services to disabled children, decentralization of health services, industrial park development, treatment and counseling for children with HIV/AIDS and their families, development of emergency medicine protocols, development of hospice management standards, preventing domestic violence and substance abuse, strengthening business associations, beach beautification and tourism promotion, juvenile justice, prevention of trafficking of young women, forestry management, environmental protection, community empowerment, ethnic minority relations, and family/community mediation. The majority of the partnerships continue to function in substantive ways beyond USAID support, clearly evidencing successful and sustainable development partnerships at the community level.

II. TITLE

Activity Title: Final Assessment of the Romanian-American Sustainable Partnerships Program (RASP)

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this final assessment are to:

1. Document lessons learned from RASP for possible replication within Romania and throughout the E&E Region. Special attention will be given to the identification of the most successful partnership activities at the community level and the key elements that led to their success that could be replicated in other communities.

2. Formulate recommendations to USAID/Romania on how to effectively use partnership assistance in future programs supporting civil society and community development in Romania, including within the existing Governance Reform and Sustainable Partnership (GRASP) program.

IV. STATEMENT OF WORK

This is an independent assessment of RASP for USAID/Romania. The purpose of the assessment is to document lessons learned out of RASP and make recommendations on how partnership mechanisms could be effectively used for future civil society and community development support programs.

The ultimate questions will then be: What are the dynamics of a successful partnership? Is the current partnership approach appropriate? What are the advantages and disadvantages of partnership assistance? The Mission is interested in gaining insights on the contribution that Romanian-American partnerships made to the development of Romanian civil society, and also in identifying possible strategies for maximizing that contribution. Specifically, the assessment should answer the following questions:

- What are the most successful partnerships and why?
- What are the obstacles to successful partnerships between US and Romanian organizations?
- Which of these obstacles are also relevant to other kind of partnerships, particularly those involving NGOs, communities and local governments;
- What was the impact of RASP activities at the community level?
- What are the key factors that contribute to successful community work and to successfully working in partnership with local government?

- What are the major obstacles for community work and work with local governments?
- What was the contribution of RASP to the development of Romanian civil society? What are some strategies for maximizing that contribution?
- What was the potential for sustainability? Are partnership activities continuing after the USAID funding has ended and in what form? What were the key elements that led to sustained programs?
- What are the most successful mechanisms for attracting local resources to the project?
- Were the grant guidelines for partnerships helpful, effective and efficient? If not, how could they be improved? Was the review process for awarding grants adequate? If not, why?
- Other observations that are considered relevant.

WORK SCHEDULE/LEVEL OF EFFORT

The assessment requires two consultants: one American and one Romanian. A World Learning (WL) staff member will also provide support during the evaluation process.

It is anticipated that the team will conduct the assessment in two weeks in Romania with an equivalent of one week additional time for pre-field preparation and post-field finalizing the report. The in-country work is to begin o/a January 22, 2004 and end approximately three weeks after commencement, no later than February 19, 2004.

It is expected that the time will be allocated as follows:

- The equivalent of two days allowed for preparation time for document review and preliminary questionnaire design before the team meets in Bucharest;
- Two days for questionnaire and work with US partners;
- Two weeks of in-country team work (including Saturdays):
  1. One day for preliminary discussion on the methodology of assessment with WL and USAID staff;
  2. 9 days to interview, travel, and collect information; start drafting report;
  3. Four days to present the outline of the report and debrief WL and USAID staff. Receive comments and incorporate them into a preliminary draft report.
- The equivalent of five working days to finalize the report by the team leader.
- Incorporate USAID final comments no later than February 19, 2004.

V. METHODOLOGY

It is expected that the assessment will be firmly based on relevant documentation and interviews with relevant individuals. A list of documents is provided in Section VII below. World Learning will make these documents available to the team at the beginning of their assignment.

The in-country work is composed of two parts:
Part I: Week 1 and the first half of Week 2 are allocated for interviewing 11 to 16 sub-grantees under the RASP program;
Part II: The final part of the Week 2 is allocated to prepare the assessment report in the form of a practical "how to" document.

The consultants will have consultations with the WL representative and USAID staff prior to their site visits to the selected NGOs. The two external consultants will conduct the site visits.

The interviews will be with a cross-section of RASP sub-grantees in order to be able to extract lessons learned. The sample will include those partnerships that worked very well: those that did not work so well, and those that did not get off to a good start but then overcame their difficulties. The latter group should be particularly instructive for extracting lessons-learned. As the GRASP project is working with local government and communities, emphasis will be placed on meeting with RASP sub-grantees who implemented projects at the community level.

Before performing the interviews, the team will prepare a questionnaire to use as a guide for the interviews. The questionnaire will include open questions so that they encourage the sub-grantees to talk freely about their experiences. The interviews will be conducted in such a way that this is perceived as an assessment for lessons learned and best practices rather than an evaluative or judgmental activity. In order to assure confidentiality and so that the organizations interviewed will feel free to speak openly, the report eventually generated will not mention organizations by name.

The design of the questionnaire should elicit information on:

- Things about partnerships that went well, and the dynamics that contributed to those successes. The dynamics of a successful partnership;
- Things about the partnerships that did not go well, and why they did not;
- Actions taken when partnerships were not going well to overcome the problems;
- Obstacles to successful partnerships between US and Romanian organizations. Which of these obstacles are also relevant to other kinds of partnerships, particularly those involving NGOs, communities, and local governments?
- Are partnership activities continuing, and in what form? If they are not continuing or continuing in a limited form, why is this happening? What

factors would allow those partnerships that are continuing in a limited form to continue on a stronger and fuller basis;

- Do particular types of organizational structures better support partnership than others? Is the degree of organizational sophistication a significant factor for a successful partnership?
- Does the type of organizational structure impact upon successful community work and successful work with local governments? Is the degree of organizational sophistication significant for successfully working with communities and with local governments?
- The contribution that Romanian-American partnerships make to the development of Romanian civil society. Strategies for maximizing that contribution;
- The key factors that contribute to successful community work and to successfully working in partnership with local government;
- Major obstacles for community work and work with local government. Strategies for overcoming those obstacles;
- Strategies for improving the ability of civil society and local government to work together successfully; and
- Impact upon communities when civil society and local government work together for improvement of community life.

The consultants will have consultations with the WL representative and USAID before finalizing the report. A first draft report should be in place by the end of Week 2 and submitted to USAID for review. USAID will return the report with comments within two working days. The team leader will incorporate the comments and deliver the final draft for USAID review within one week after the in-country work. The final report, incorporating USAID final comments, should be delivered no later than February 19, 2004. The report will be a practical "how to" guide that can easily be used by GRASP, and others as relevant, to implement partnerships projects, particularly Romanian-American partnership activities.

VI. AVAILABLE INFORMATION SOURCES

The following is an illustrative list of documents to be made available to the team:

- RASP program description;
- RASP sub-grant project descriptions;
- RASP narrative reports;
- RASP partnership report of December 2002;
- Report on RASP Workshop on "Best Practices in Working with Local Communities" February 2003;
- USAID/Romania Strategy;
- GRASP program description

VII. DELIVERABLES

The team will distill the information gathered into a practical "best practices" guide.

The guide shall be organized in the following manner:

An Executive Summary not more than two pages in length. It should include a statement of conclusions and recommendations on the objectives listed under Section III above.

The body of the guide shall describe the background, objectives and methodology of the assessment, findings under the objectives listed in Section III above, and recommendations on how USAID/Romania might enhance its contributions to civil society organizations strengthening and promoting community participation and interests through partnership assistance. In sum, the body of the report should address the issues listed in Section IV above.

The guide will be divided into two main sections: one on partnerships and one on working with communities, local government, and other partners (i.e. private sector).

Each section of the guide will contain:

- A narrative on best (and worst) practices. The narrative will be written in a style and arranged in a format that allows the reader to easily access and use the information, i.e. to adapt and replicate best practices and avoid worst practices. Strategies for getting work and relationships back on track when there are problems will be included.

- Case studies to illustrate the points made in the narrative. Case studies will be representative of partnerships and activities that went well, those that did not go well, and those that illustrate how to overcome obstacles and problems.

- Criteria that can be used for making decisions on which applicants have the highest probability of working in a successful and ongoing partnership. The section on working with communities and local government will also include criteria on which kinds of project design have the greatest probability of being successful. This information is particularly important for GRASP, and possibly other users, that will be making decisions regarding the funding of Romanian-American partnerships, and for community activities including those involving partnerships with local government.

Annexes:

The guide will have annexes including a list of relevant individuals and organizations consulted and documents reviewed.